



Parent / Guardian Guide

2026-2027

www.somerville.k12.ma.us

617-629-5200

167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144

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All policies are available at <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/SchoolCommittee>.

If you do not have access to the internet, please call the Office of the Superintendent at 617-629-5211 to request that a copy of these policies be mailed to you.

Rev. August 15, 2025

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Welcome from the Superintendent of Schools



Dear SPS Community,

It is my honor and privilege to serve as Superintendent of the Somerville Public Schools. As a team—SPS administrators, staff, educators, families, and students—we are guided by our values and mission of addressing the needs of all of our students through our “whole child” approach to teaching and learning. We are deeply committed to ensuring not only that our students have the tools and resources to learn and succeed, but also to thrive.

This Parent / Guardian Guide includes important information about our schools, our policies, and resources for families to support us in our collective efforts. Every parent or guardian sending a child to Somerville Public Schools should review this guide, which is available on our [district website](#).

Other resources to help you stay informed of all the great things happening in our district include our monthly district [e-newsletter](#), school and program newsletters, and social media platforms.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of our Somerville students. I wish each of you an excellent school year!

Dr. Rubén Carmona

Our Vision, Mission, and Philosophy

Our Vision

We believe in developing the whole child – the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential of all students – by providing students with the skills, opportunities, and resources that will nurture innovative ideas, foster pride in diversity, inspire students to become lifelong learners, and empower them to enrich their communities.

Our Mission

Ours is a multicultural school community dedicated to the realization of the full intellectual, physical, social, and emotional potential of all students. In this pursuit, we shall maintain a safe environment that nurtures the curiosity, dignity, and self-worth of each individual.

This vision of our schools impels us to advocate the following:

Our students are capable of high achievement and we are committed to meeting the individual needs of each student.

- We will motivate our students to strive for excellence.
- We will support instruction in a broad realm of academic, health, and vocational studies to provide for a well-educated and diverse student body.
- We will supplement formal education with a variety of extracurricular programs and activities to enrich the lives of students and enhance their interests in education.
- We will employ a variety of instructional materials and techniques that accommodate the broad spectrum of developmental levels, individual needs, and learning styles.
- We will base instruction on the strengths of our students, transcending recall of information and mastery of basic skills to a full engagement in the critical and creative levels of cognition.
- We will celebrate the multicultural nature of our student population in our curriculum and schools.
- We will maintain educational practices that enhance the aspirations and self-concepts of all students.
- We will maintain appropriate support services for instructional programs.

Our schools will be places of innovation marked by the active involvement of all members of the Somerville community.

- We will maintain an environment that encourages individuals to explore issues and adopt innovative techniques.
- We will encourage collegial relationships within our school community.
- We will reflect the diversity of our population in all school programs and levels.

- We will encourage classroom and school-based decision-making within the parameters established by the larger school community.
- We will nurture professional growth and engagement with educational literature as a basis for sound educational decision-making.
- We will involve families and other members of the Somerville community in our schools.

Our students will be prepared for adult life and provided with the vision and determination to contribute to an ever-changing world.

- We will provide students with the skills and guidance necessary to become responsible adults.
- We will prepare students for entrance into the world of work and/or further education.
- We will establish in students respect for our democratic ideals and a sense of service to the community.
- We will provide students with needed skills and an appreciation for lifelong learning.
- We will foster in students an appreciation of the environment and their membership in the global community.

Every student has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

- Encouraging and maintaining positive attitudes are an important part of the learner experience.
- Certain basic constitutional and statutory rights underlie all behavior in the schools throughout the City of Somerville. A student shall not be subjected to ridicule, harassment, intimidation, or demeaning treatment that would diminish his or her personal dignity or exclude the student from his/her peer group.

Behavior by a student or school official which would consequently put a stigma of inferiority on another student or in any way demean a student, represents a clear and unacceptable violation of the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

2023–2025 School Committee Goals

SPS defines equity as providing access to the opportunities, support, environment, expectations, and resources that every student needs to achieve educational success, feel valued, and contribute to a thriving community. In order to address the root causes of systemic inequity in our schools, the Somerville School Committee and SPS commit to the following goals, knowing that these can only be achieved through ensuring meaningful partnerships with all Somerville families as well as district staff, city government, and community partners.

SPS has aimed to reduce persistent gaps in the educational attainment of all students for the past decade. Despite our efforts to provide equitable access and opportunities for our entire community of students, past goals and initiatives have not given rise to persistent deep progress for our Black and Brown students. Our three-year long-range goals attempt to address deep-rooted systemic barriers that have prevented us from achieving our district vision of equity and excellence and ensure that all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, have the supports and resources they need to achieve educational success in our district now and in the future.

1. Whole Child Teaching and Learning

We believe that all SPS learning experiences should be rich, rigorous, engaging and build high levels of knowledge and skills and meet the diverse needs of our students. We also believe that the time students spend in SPS should cultivate learning experiences that value, and empower students in their full, intersectional identities so that students feel a sense of connection, demonstrate a passion and curiosity for learning, and apply learning in authentic and meaningful ways. To this end, by 2025, we will:

- have prepared students to demonstrate strong literacy and mathematics foundation by grade 3, grade 6, and grade 10, as measured by SPS formative assessment designed at the district and classroom level, with 75% of students in the designated grades meeting or exceeding the defined formative assessment benchmark by 2025;
- provide all students with integrated classroom lessons from a high quality social-emotional learning curriculum that helps students value and develop their ability to build relationships with other students, to be self aware and socially aware, to self regulate, and to make responsible decisions, resulting in a 50% reduction in conduct referrals by 2025 compared to 2021, improved ratings on questions coded as SEL on the Student Conditions for Learning Survey compared to the SY21 baseline survey, and improved results on the Somerville Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) compared to the 2021 YRBS baseline data.
- expand access to real-world learning experiences so that at least 80% of students participate in Early College, Advanced Placement courses, CTE, and/or other learning experiences that help students build critical 21st century skills as

measured by a 5 percentage point increase in the 4-year graduation rate (overall and by subgroup), 95% of students having met with their college and career counselor in their junior and senior year, and 90% of graduating students with a defined post-secondary plan including college enrollment, military enrollment, gap year enrollment, and/or a secured career path.

2. Equitable Access to Programming

Because we believe that no group of students should be disproportionately impacted by district enrollment policies and that all students should have access to support they need, by 2025, we will 1) conduct a district enrollment study to understand the prospective future population of the district and 2) create and begin implementing a strategy for school building development, school assignment, and programming that aligns with the district's equity policy, and which is based on results of the enrollment study and the projected 10+ year plan for school facilities. We will engage students and families in this process to design a school assignment policy grounded in equity and in the values of our community.

3. Workforce Diversity

Because research shows that all children benefit from a highly skilled and diverse educator workforce that reflects SPS students and families, we will, by 2025, increase the percentage of support staff of color, teachers and counselors of color, and administrators of color by 6% per group compared to SY22 rates through evaluating and strengthening all elements of our personnel system – recruitment, processes, training, retention, development, advancement, and staff data collection systems on which we base and measure our improvement efforts. We will engage staff and community as authentic partners in this work.

4. Equitable Resource Allocation

Because we know that every student has unique needs and interests and should have access to rich learning opportunities that help them thrive, we will design, evaluate, and partially or fully implement student-based budgeting by 2025, or identify alternative mechanisms to more equitably allocate district resources. We will do this through a transparent process that welcomes and embraces the engagement of stakeholders at all levels to develop a system where students are funded equitably, regardless of which SPS school or program they attend.

Somerville School Committee rev. January 2026

Members

Emily Ackman, Ward 1 (Chair of School Committee)
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Leiran Biton, Ward 7 (Vice Chair of School Committee)
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Andre L. Green, Ward 4
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Superintendent Dr. Rubén Carmona, Secretary to the School Committee.
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School Directory

Somerville High School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/shs

617-629-5250; internal extension: 611018

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- Blair Williams, K-12 Health and Phys. Ed. Dept. Supervisor, bwilliams3@k12.somerville.ma.us, x611530

Albert F. Argenziano School at Lincoln Park

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/argenziano

290 Washington St. (02143)

617-629-5460; internal extension: 6300

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Benjamin G. Brown School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/brown

201 Willow Ave. (02144)

617-629-5620; internal extension: 6400

Christopher Ames, Principal, comes@k12.somerville.ma.us

Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/capuano

150 Glen St. (02145)

617-629-5480; internal extension: 3600

Isabel Barros, Principal, ibarros@k12.somerville.ma.us

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East Somerville Community School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/escs

50 Cross St. (02145)

617-629-5400; internal extension: 3700

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Benjamin Parad, Asst. Principal, bparad@k12.somerville.ma.us

Next Wave/Full Circle Schools

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/nwfc

81 Highland Ave. (02143)

617-629-5640; internal extension: 610500

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Arthur D. Healey School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/healey

5 Meacham St. (02145)

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John F. Kennedy School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/kennedy

5 Cherry St. (02144)

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West Somerville Neighborhood School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/wsns

177 Powder House Blvd. (02144)

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Winter Hill Community Innovation School

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/whcis

Edgerly Building, 8 Bonair St. (02145)

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Central Administration and Departments

Superintendent's Office

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Superintendent

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Out-of-School Time (including Community Schools Afterschool)

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Personnel

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Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC)

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Technology

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Absences and Attendance

Research shows that consistent attendance directly correlates with academic and social-emotional success in school. While there are valid reasons for a student to be absent from school, coming to school *on time every day* is a habit and life skill to be set even with very young children. The Somerville Public Schools are committed to supporting students in this endeavor by maintaining safe, welcoming, and engaging learning environments that promote feelings of belonging and self-esteem through restorative practices, social-emotional learning curricula, and a robust multi-tiered system of supports.

Each school has one or more deans of students/redirect teachers whose responsibilities include monitoring daily absences and long-term patterns of attendance. If a student is absent from school, and the parent/guardian has not notified the school, the Dean/Redirect will contact the family to verify that the student is safe and accounted for, and to inquire about the reason for the absence. Deans/Redirects will also reach out to families of students who have missed multiple school days to establish ongoing communication, and schedule solution-focused meetings.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year - equivalent to 18 days, regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused. Just two absences per month can place a student on a trajectory toward chronic absenteeism. Throughout the year, schools will closely monitor attendance data and reach out to families when a student is at risk of becoming chronically absent. In such cases, meetings will be scheduled to identify concerns and develop appropriate interventions to support regular attendance.

The Somerville Public Schools also have two district-wide Supervisors of Attendance, whose responsibilities include monitoring patterns of attendance, identifying students at risk of chronic absenteeism, and providing individualized supports and interventions. Supervisors of Attendance participate in Student Support Team meetings, and serve as liaisons between the school, home, and community agencies. As necessary, Supervisors of Attendance conduct home visits to provide support to students who are having difficulty getting to school regularly, as well as wellness checks.

If a student is going to be absent from school, it is expected that the parent/guardian will call the school's safety line and inform the dean or office staff. Please use the following phone numbers to report absences:

Argenziano

- **(PK-4):** 617-629-5465
- **(5-8):** 617-629-5472

Brown: 617-629-5620

Capuano: 617-629-5480

East Somerville

- **(PK-4):** 617-629-5417
- **(5-8):** 617-629-5418

Healey: 617-629-5421

Kennedy: 617-629-5546

West Somerville: 617-625-0378

Winter Hill: 617-629-5685

Somerville High: 617-625-6600

- **Beacon Community:**
x612130
- **Broadway Community:**
x613130

- **Elm Community:** x611043

- **Highland Community:**
x614140

Next Wave/Full Circle:

617-625-6600 x610500

School Committee Policies Related to Attendance

Attendance – Policy #JE

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 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

Policy #JH

Absences and Excuses (Student)

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The School 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.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20

Revised: January 18, 1996; Amended: December 2009; Amended: October 6, 2014

Attendance – High School – Policy #JE-E

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 Principal/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 990 hours of structured learning time each year.

Adopted: November 2009

Attendance Policy Addendum – Grades K-12 – Policy #JE-E1

State and federal law require schools to make reasonable accommodation 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 school 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.

Adopted: November 18, 2002 - Reviewed: September 2009

Academics at Somerville Public Schools

The Somerville Public Schools offer curriculum, instruction, and assessment services that are aligned with both the Massachusetts Education Reform Act and current research in education.

In order to provide our students with a comprehensive education, the Somerville Public Schools offer the following services in curriculum, instruction, and assessment across grades PK-12.

- A wide variety of subjects and course offerings, including music and art in all grades
- Updated textbooks, and other instructional and multimedia materials, to support subjects and course offerings
- The availability of current technology to supplement subjects and course offerings, including 1:1 chromebooks for all students in grades 3 and up
- Significant emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving across all subjects
- Emphasis on learning environments that encourage collaboration and interdisciplinary projects
- Emphasis on interdisciplinary projects that encourage research and a variety of assessments
- Opportunities for students to be engaged in the arts through interdisciplinary projects
- After-school programs that provide enrichment activities aligned with school system objectives
- Regular assessment to monitor student mastery and drive instructional and curricular decision making
- A year-round schedule of professional development for our teachers to enhance skills
- A Somerville Public Library partnership aligned with our year-round reading program

Find more information on the [Academics Department](#) page.

Math

In SPS, our math curriculum and instructional practices emphasize conceptual understanding and procedural fluency. The K-8 districtwide curriculum, Illustrative Math, supports students' mathematical understanding and creates coherence across K-8. At the middle grades, the Illustrative Math curriculum ensures a strong transition from the elementary grades program, and includes a significant amount of algebra content for all students.

English Language Arts

A good introduction to literacy needs a strong foundation. In early grades, our curriculum and instruction strive to build a strong literacy foundation. The building blocks of effective reading instruction, as defined by the [National Reading Panel](#) and reinforced by the latest research on literacy development and dyslexia, include phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Together, these five pillars make up the components of successful reading instruction by shaping learners' brains to learn to read and understand the written English language. In PK, we use the SEE Every Child curriculum. In grades k-5 we use

FunDations, DIBELS, i-Ready (grades 3 and up), and are partnering with the Hill For Literacy to go through a curriculum review process.

In our middle grades, the purpose of our ELA curriculum is to help students to discover and further develop the joy of reading and expression. Students will gain a broad understanding of the world and the human experience through reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students will develop skills to investigate and analyze a text. They will also express their thinking orally and in writing, and consider multiple perspectives and audiences. Our curriculum is standards-based, intellectually challenging, invites critical thinking, and encourages discourse. In grades 6-8 we use the Fishtank Curriculum.

Science, Technology, and Engineering

We believe that strong science education fosters a child's curiosity about the world, developing critical inquiry and problem-solving skills needed for college and career readiness. On any given day, you might see students developing experiments about matter, building bridges, or creating a website about energy conservation. Since 2016, the district has continued to collaborate with a team from Boston University to develop science units for grades K-5. The units are all designed around anchoring phenomena that guide students to make sense of scientific concepts. Grades 6-8 is in a curriculum review process and is piloting curricular units from both Amplify Science and OpenSciEd.

Social Studies

We believe the purpose of Social Studies is to help students develop into effective, informed, and engaged citizens of local, national, and global communities. Our curriculum promotes values of compassion, empathy, curiosity, perspective taking, and respect for human differences. We strive to provide knowledge & skills for students to investigate interests and critically analyze information. Currently, we use educator developed standards based curriculum and are in the process of implementing the Investigating History Social Studies curriculum.

In addition to the core curriculum subjects, Somerville Public Schools offers:

Art Instruction

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/art

The district provides a diverse and comprehensive visual arts instructional program that encourages all students to integrate the arts into their core curriculum and their social and emotional well-being. The Visual Arts Department endorses the research that shows that students who participate in a visual arts program develop basic skills that encourage visual awareness and are fundamental to intellectual growth and creative self-expression.

Health/Physical Education

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/health-pe

The district provides a comprehensive health and physical education instructional program that encourages all students to make healthy decisions and live an active lifestyle to the best of their ability across their lifetimes. School-based physical education instructors provide rigorous, fun, and active class instruction. Health topics are taught by a combination of classroom teachers, physical education instructors, guidance staff, school nurses, and community partners.

Science and Health Topics:

- Hygiene
- Nutrition and Food Groups
- Personal Safety
- Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs
- Accident Prevention, Household Safety
- Staying Healthy: Mental, Physical, Family, and Social
- *Growth and Development*
- *HIV/AIDS Awareness, Diseases, Immune System*
- Family, Values, Attitudes, Respecting Others
- Basic First Aid
- *STDs*
- *Puberty and Body Changes*
- Violence Prevention, Conflict Resolution, and Decision-Making
- *Reproduction*
- *Abstinence*
- Wellness, Self-Esteem, Depression, Suicide Prevention, and Fitness
- Heimlich Maneuver, Introduction to CPR
- Eating Disorders

The list above shows the Science and Health Topics that will be taught in your child's school. You may exempt your son or daughter from the ***italicized topics only***. In order to request an exemption, you must send the request to your child's school principal in writing. Please include your child's name and grade. Students will be provided with alternate assignments. If you have questions as to the content, or would like to look at a lesson plan, please feel free to request this also.

Policy #IHAM-R

(Exemption Procedure)

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students enrolled in our schools will be provided in writing with an outline of the curriculum offered in grades PreK-12 that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Parents /guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If the planned curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum health topics covered by this policy and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian may be given an alternative assignment.
2. inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parent/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the material at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of schools/designee.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request.

LEGAL REF.: MGL Chapter 71, Section 32A Adopted: June 1, 2009

Revised: March 6, 2023

Library / Media Instruction

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/library-media

The primary goal of the Library Media Department is to help develop information-literate students. Such students are able to locate information in a variety of formats (including text-based, audiovisual, computer formatted, and Web-based). Information literacy is best taught through the integration of library media use skills into subject specific activities, including research papers, projects, computer generated presentations, etc. Using methods that include

the Big Six steps of research, the library media specialists' goal is to work cooperatively with staff and students to develop activities that reinforce and expand classroom learning. The library media center is a place where students go to use computers, check out video equipment, and create technology rich curriculum projects. Students can do independent work and research, and check out books for school assignments and to read for pleasure. We have a collection of the most popular periodicals for students and access to online databases and the World Book Encyclopedia through the Massachusetts Library System, a state supported collaborative network that promotes access to excellent library services to all students in the Somerville Public Schools.

Music Instruction

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/music

The Music Department faculty believes it is their mission to inspire and guide every student in active music making through the use of a sequential and creative curriculum that nurtures the human spirit. The SPS offers weekly music instruction to students in grades PK-8. In addition, free instrumental music lessons are available to students in grades 4–8. SHS offers many music electives and an opportunity for “major” study in music theory and practice. Performance is an important part of the instructional process. Elementary and high school student performance ensembles perform regularly in school and in the community.

Reading Instruction

Literacy skills are taught in all curriculum areas and across all grades. For students needing additional support, services may be provided by certified Reading Specialists. Our services vary and include: intensive support for early readers, in-class help for students needing more attention during reading and writing activities, and small group instruction to support successful comprehension of content area reading.

World Language Instruction

www.somerville.k12.ma.us/world-languages

The Somerville Public Schools is devoted to helping young people build 21st century skills through a variety of initiatives. The World Language Department endorses the research that shows that students who learn another language reach higher academic performance, display greater cognitive benefits, and develop a more positive attitude toward the target language and the speakers of that language. Middle school world language instruction in Spanish was introduced in 2012–2013. High school world language instruction includes opportunities to master Spanish, Italian, French, and Portuguese.

Third Grade Swim Lessons and Special Pool Programs

All third grade students are offered free swim lessons during the school year and school day, as part of the Physical Education curriculum. The swim program is a collaboration between the Somerville Parks and Recreation Department, which manages the Ginny Smithers Pool at the Kennedy School (5 Cherry St.), and Somerville Public Schools. Team-building adventure programs for special education and at-risk students are also conducted at the pool. These

programs provide students with a solid foundation in water safety and introduce them to the lifelong benefits of swimming and water activities.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Somerville Public Schools, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

Adult Learning

Parent / Guardian English Classes

English Classes are offered to parents/guardians of SPS students. Participants can practice and strengthen their English language skills in these classes offered through the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative (SFLC) in partnership with The Welcome Project. Please visit the [SLFC website](#) to learn more.

SCALE (Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences)

SCALE is the full-time adult learning center of the Somerville Public Schools and provides classes and support services to adult students (16 years and older). The curriculum follows the Massachusetts Department of Education Adult Basic Education Curriculum Frameworks, of which technology is an integral part. All classes are free.

SCALE offers a wide range of programming to meet the unique needs of our adult learners. At present, we provide English Language Learning (ELL) classes, High School Equivalency (HSE) in English and Spanish classes, Adult Diploma Program (ADP), paraprofessional educator training programming, digital literacy and financial literacy. Classes are held in the morning, afternoon and evening.

SCALE ELL classes integrate English speaking, listening, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, and writing. Digital Literacy is integrated into all classes as well. Students receive educational and career advising services to assist them in planning for entry into postsecondary, training and/or workforce.

SCALE High School Equivalency classes focus on improving students' skills in reading, writing, social studies, science, and math so that students will be prepared to pass the HiSET or GED exam (the high school equivalency test) and to enter college.

The Adult Diploma Program (ADP) is a sequence of classes and / or academic tasks, the goal of which is for students to earn an accredited, verifiable high school credential issued by the Somerville Public School district to successfully transition into and succeed in postsecondary education, training, and employment. SCALE runs a High School Equivalency Test Center, which offers HiSET exams (High School Equivalency Test) and GED services and testing.

Our Paraprofessional Training program prepares adult learners for the ETS ParaPro Assessment exam, so they can enter the field of education as a Teacher's Assistant.

SCALE's Test Center offers HiSET, GED and ParaPro testing to our enrolled students as well as the community.

SCALE follows the SPS Calendar during the academic year and is open during the summer. Please visit the SCALE website for more information and to enroll.

<https://somerville.k12.ma.us/SCALE>

Asbestos Inspections

As per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Asbestos in Schools requirement 763.93 (g), management plans are available in each school and at the main office of the Lead Education Agency (LEA), the Somerville Public Schools.

Asbestos-Related Activities within the Somerville Public Schools: The City of Somerville Custodial and Maintenance personnel have completed their Awareness Training for Asbestos, as required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA). In addition, the Somerville Public Schools completed their most recent three-year inspections, as well as a six-month surveillance. [You can find updated plans and information at this link on our website.](#)

Assessment Practices

The Somerville Public Schools has a comprehensive system of assessing student progress that includes teacher developed classroom assessments, quarterly grade reports, formative assessments, and statewide standardized tests. Assessment data is used to individualize instruction in the classroom, make decisions about student needs, and improve instruction across grades and departments.

Formative Assessments

Providing teachers with "real time" data on how their students are progressing toward their grade level standards is the reason for the Somerville Public Schools' adaptive, formative assessment program called i-Ready. Data from i-Ready Reading and i-Ready Math testing for students in grades 3–8, administered by teachers three times per year in the fall, winter, and spring, allows teachers to better understand individual students' mastery of lessons and concepts so they can adjust instruction accordingly. In addition, we administer the DIBELS 8 assessment three times a year in grades K–5, which provides teachers with data on early literacy skills such as letter recognition, sound awareness, and fluency.

In the early years, the Somerville Public Schools screens all incoming preschool and kindergarten students. The purpose of the screening is to review a child's development and help us ensure that children have a successful school experience. Preschool teachers use the PELI assessment in the fall, winter, and spring which measures students' early literacy skills. Kindergarten teachers use the internally developed KESI assessment in the fall, and use the DIBELS 8 assessment in the winter and spring of the school year.

MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)

The MCAS is currently administered to students in grades 3-10 in the spring of each school year. Please see Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System in this guide for more information.

Report Cards

Somerville Public Schools use quarterly report cards to assess and report on student progress. Please see the [School Year Calendar](#) for quarter end dates.

Grade PK: Please visit the Somerville Early Education website [Assessment & Documentation page](#).

Grades K-5: The Somerville Public Schools uses a Standards-Based Report Card for students in grades PK-5. Committees of teachers and administrators worked collaboratively to create and revise this report card based on the Massachusetts Frameworks. The Standards-Based Report

Card allows students to be aware of what is expected of them. It gives teachers across the district an understanding of what each child should know and be able to do at each grade level and guide their instruction to match each student's needs. It provides parents with a detailed outline of the expectations in each of the major academic areas (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and History and Social Science) as well as Art, Music, Physical Education, Library Media, and Student Responsibilities, including Work Habits and Conduct.

The report card includes detailed items relating to the knowledge and skills your child should attain by the end of the year. Secondly, instead of letter grades, it uses four categories to show your child's progress toward meeting each standard.

- E: Exceeding the grade level standard consistently
- M: Meeting the grade level standard and producing quality work
- S: Progressing toward the standard and producing required grade level work with teacher assistance
- N: Not meeting the standard and not yet able to produce required grade level work
- N/A: Standard not addressed this term. You should expect to see some N/As used in the first two quarters. This is because the entire curriculum cannot be taught at once. While some learning standards will be addressed throughout the entire year, others will be phased in as the school year progresses.

Grades 6-8:

Beginning in grade 6, students will receive more traditional report card grades. These grades will include how students are performing as it relates to the standards and the classroom teacher's expectations. There are five categories to show how students progress to meet each standard.

- A: Exceeding the grade level standard and expectations consistently
- B: Meeting the grade level standard and expectations and producing quality work
- C: Progressing toward the standard and expectations and producing required grade level work with teacher assistance
- D: In danger of not meeting the standard and not yet able to produce required grade level work
- F: Not meeting the standard and not yet able to produce required grade level work.

Grades 9-12:

For more information on SHS grading, please see the SHS Program of Studies at sommerville.k12.ma.us/shsguides.

The practice outlined below is currently under review for the Class of 2026 and later.

1. Somerville High School calculates Grade Point Average (GPA) based on a weighted scale using the Grade Values in the chart below. Students wishing to calculate an unweighted GPA should use the CP values only.
2. GPA is available in student X2 accounts upon completion of four consecutive quarters at

Somerville High.

3. All courses, with the exception of courses designated Pass/Fail in the Program of Studies, will be used to compute GPA.
4. All courses NOT designated in the Program of Studies as "Advanced Placement" or "Honors" or "CP" will be considered "CP" courses for the purpose of computing GPA.
5. Students who transfer into Somerville High School during their high school career will have their GPA computed after the completion of two semesters (one full school year) within Somerville High School. Courses completed prior to their entrance into Somerville High School will NOT be used in the computation.
6. Courses taken outside of SHS (i.e., online Edgenuity Course) and Credit Recovery Courses will not be used in the computation.
7. Courses taken as part of a pre-approved Dual Enrollment partnership with SHS will be factored into a student's GPA. All other college/university courses not in the dual enrollment program are not factored into a student's GPA.

GRADE VALUES

<u>Grade</u>	<u>AP</u>	<u>Honors</u>	<u>CP</u>
A+	5.333	4.833	4.333
A	5.000	4.500	4.000
A-	4.667	4.167	3.667
B+	4.333	3.833	3.333
B	4.000	3.500	3.000
B-	3.667	3.167	2.667
C+	3.333	2.833	2.333
C	3.000	2.500	2.000
C-	2.667	2.167	1.667
D+	2.333	1.833	1.333
D	2.000	1.500	1.000
D-	1.667	1.167	0.667
F	0.000	0.000	0.000

Bomb Threat Policy

Policy #EBC-R-1

This policy is intended to allow the Somerville Public School System to respond to issues relative to suspicion of Bombs on Campus in a very serious and concerned fashion while remaining in control of the situation as much as possible, avoiding panic, minimizing the disturbance and disruption of service, and maintaining a safe and healthy educational environment.

LEVEL 1- BOMB THREAT

In the event that a bomb threat is received the following procedure is to be followed:

- The person receiving the call is to immediately use the bomb threat worksheet to gather as much information as possible. The worksheet will be given to the principal who will immediately forward a copy to the attention of the superintendent at central office.
- The person receiving the call is to immediately dial 911 and inform the Police Department who will in turn notify the Fire Department. Upon notifying the Police said person would provide them with your name, telephone number or extension, and location.
- The person receiving the call will immediately call the City Hall Switchboard Operator and notify the operator so he/she can initiate the action plan as it relates to the Bomb Threat Protocol.
- The person who received the call will next notify the building principal or his/her designee that a bomb threat has been received.
- The building principal and/or his/her designee will immediately report the threat to the Superintendent and to the Director of Student Services.
- Based upon information received, the building principal or his/her designee either solely, and/or in conjunction with the office of the Superintendent, will make a decision to evacuate the entire school building, to conduct a partial evacuation, or to not evacuate the building. Students will take their backpacks and immediate belongings with them.
- Based upon information received, and when deemed appropriate, previously designated teams may be assigned to certain sections of the school building and conduct a search (sweep) of the building, looking for suspicious and/or unusual items. If it is determined that a search needs to be conducted, the corridors may be cleared and the staff and students may be required to remain in their current location until notified and/or the search has been completed and the building declared all clear. Teachers and other staff members will be asked to check their specific area for any suspicious and/or unusual items as well. The teams will be assisted with the search by the Somerville Police Department whenever possible.
- In the event that the building is evacuated, teachers will need to be in possession of their student rosters and the daily attendance for their specific class. These items may become very useful to account for the whereabouts of each student who appears on the school register.

- A check off list will be used when searching the building. The checklist becomes part of the information provided to the principal for use in determining if the building is all clear.
- The principal or his/her designee will make an announcement utilizing the Public Address System to communicate with the students and staff prior to any evacuation, as well as immediately following the evacuation, in the event that they are allowed to re-enter the building.
- In the event of a complete evacuation, the Fire Alarm may be used to assist with the evacuation. In the event the Fire Alarm is used to assist with the evacuation, the principal and/or his/her designee must notify the Fire Alarm Office (extension 8300) of the reason the alarm was activated.
- In the event that a search of any type is conducted, the team will report when areas are clear to the principal. If any type of evacuation has taken place and no device has been found, the principal will make a decision as to whether it is safe for the students and staff to return to any areas previously evacuated.
- In the event that any type of evacuation is ordered, a letter will be sent home with the students on the day of the incident or, the next school day if not possible, explaining the day's event to parents and guardians.

LEVEL II- BOMB FOUND

- In the event a suspicious or unusual item is found, the Police on site are to be notified immediately. The Somerville Police will then notify the appropriate agency. The individual who discovered the suspicious item should not touch or examine it, but just report it.
- The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee will notify the Mayor's office.
- Cataldo Ambulance will be notified by the Fire Department.
- In the event that an evacuation is deemed necessary, all students and staff will be instructed to remain in the building until an appropriate sweep has been completed outside of the building and evacuation routes have been declared clear.
- Evacuate areas as deemed necessary. If evacuation sites are to be used, follow the plan as designed using the primary and secondary sites described for each building in the evacuation policy.
- If evacuation sites are used, the City Hall Switchboard must be notified and the school Department will establish dedicated phone lines so that the parents/guardians who call can be informed of the location of the students.
- Teachers will need to be in possession of student rosters and have parents/guardians sign their children out if the parent/guardian comes to the evacuation site to get his/her child.
- A command post will be established if deemed necessary. The appropriate site of the command post will be determined by existing conditions. Individuals located at the command post might include the Superintendent of Schools, the school principal, representatives from the Police Department, Fire Department, Mayor's office, and any other personnel as deemed necessary due to conditions.
- If needed, a location will be designated for the media. The Superintendent of Schools or his designee will address the media and provide formal information about the issue.

LEVEL III – BOMB/EXPLOSION/FIRE

- In the event of an explosion, students should immediately crawl beneath their desks, close their eyes, and cover their heads with their arms, coats, or books. Evacuation occurs only after explosions and flying debris have stopped. The building must be secured to minimize the potential of further loss.
- Follow evacuation procedure as described in Level II.
- Notify Police and Fire Departments by calling 911.
- If the fire alarm is not sounding, pull the alarm.
- The Fire Department notifies the Ambulance Company.
- The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee notifies the Mayor's office.
- A Command post will be established as described in Level II.
- Assemble the school crisis team and plan what to do.
- The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee notifies the Board of Health.
- Coordinate with the Fire Department and local utility companies to shut off gas, electricity, and other utilities as deemed appropriate.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The School Department will determine if and when notices should be sent, and to whom they should be sent.
- A location will be established by the School Department to respond to telephone calls placed by parents/guardians inquiring about existing conditions and to answer questions relative to the who, what, where, and when.
- Appropriate training will be requested, on an as-needed basis, from the State Police as well as other agencies as it relates to Bomb Threats on Campus and how to properly respond including, but not limited to, education on what and how to look for and how to identify suspicious and unusual items. A three-hour video will be produced with a copy for every building (procedural). An annual staff training session will be conducted for new personnel to the Somerville Public Schools. An annual drill for all staff, regarding this policy on evacuation, will take place with police, fire, and public safety representatives.

Approved and Adopted: February 17, 2000 - Revised: August 2009

Bullying in Schools Policy

Policy #JFCIB

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

(revised July 2025)

Overview

Bullying is *“the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of the 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 a paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target by the perpetrator that:*

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;*
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her 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 participants and observers, bullying and harassment interfere with learning and healthy growth – both emotionally and academically. 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. A goal of the Somerville Public Schools is to enhance and sustain safe and healthy learning environments in part by reducing the reported incidence of bullying in every school through a multi-tiered strategy that includes prevention, effective and compassionate intervention, and community-wide social promotion.

Prohibition

Bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation are 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 Schools or their contractors, or through the use of technology or electronic devices owned, leased or used by the District.

Bullying, cyberbullying, and/or retaliation that create a hostile environment at school for the target(s), infringes on the rights of the target(s) while at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school – regardless of whether said bullying takes place on school grounds, nearby properties, at school functions or using school technology, are also prohibited.

It is the responsibility of the School Administration and Principals to make clear to students and staff that bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation, and/or harassment in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school sanctioned transportation, or at school sponsored functions will not be tolerated.

Reporting, Response and Investigation Procedures

School Principals or their designees have primary responsibility for implementation of bullying prevention and intervention procedures, including investigating and responding to all charges of bullying, cyberbullying, and/or retaliation.

Violations of School and/or District policy and procedures will be addressed in conformance with existing disciplinary policies. In addition, 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 LBGTQIA+ (lesbian, bisexual, gay,- transgender, questioning/queer, intersex, asexual+) youth and youth LBGTQIA+ 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, immigration status, 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.

- A. Reporting bullying or retaliation: A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation that the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses.

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others. These reports may be oral or written and can be made face-to-face, via telephone, by email, or through the Internet when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously.

The Somerville Public Schools will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, an email address, and a secure web interface. Use of the District’s Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report.

The school or District will:

- Include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and in the *Parent/Guardian Guide*
- Make the Incident Reporting Form available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee
- Make the Incident Reporting Form available as an interactive form and as a downloadable document on the School and District website.

The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or District will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal or designee, will be incorporated into:

- Student handbooks,
- Parent/Guardian Guide
- Colleague Guide
- On the School and District website.

A1. Reporting by Staff:

Any staff member who encounters an interaction that may be construed as bullying will first be asked to try to address the incident between the target(s) and aggressor(s). The staff member will then report the incident immediately to the Principal or designee so the investigation process may begin. This initial report should ideally include:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
- Individuals involved and their roles (e.g., target, aggressor, bystander)
- Information about if/how the incident is part of a pattern of bullying
- Any actions taken by the staff person to defuse the situation.

This initial report may be done orally, by email, or via a written note. The initial report must be followed by a written report using the Incident Reporting Form within 72 hours of the initial report of the incident.

A2. Reporting by Students, Parents/Guardians, and Others

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal or designee. This may be done by telephone, face-to-face, by email, in writing, or anonymously.

- a. Students, parents/guardians, and others are not required to complete the Incident Reporting Form to report an incident or alleged bullying or retaliation.

Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report.

Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age- and developmentally-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee. Students who are non-verbal or not yet proficient in English will be assisted in making reports of alleged incidents of bullying and/or retaliation.

If a student, parent/guardian, or other member of the school community makes an oral report of a bullying incident the Principal/Designee will complete an Incident Reporting Form to document in writing the allegation.

An Incident Reporting Form may also be completed by the Principal/designee to complement written reports of bullying by a student, parent/guardian, or other school community member in those instances where additional data is secured to substantiate or complete the allegation. This form may be completed by school staff to complete the incident file.

- b. Anonymous reporting will be managed at the District level. Students, parents/guardians and others will be able to make anonymous bullying reports by telephone, by mail, and through an anonymous web interface. Anonymous reports will ideally include at least the following information:
 - Date, time, and location of the incident
 - Individuals involved and their roles (e.g., target, aggressor, bystander)
 - Any knowledge of prior incidents that were reported or not
 - The relationship of the reporter to the incident (e.g., witnessed firsthand, third party report)

Upon receipt of an anonymous report the District will initiate a preliminary investigation. If the anonymous allegation is deemed to have potential merit an Incident Reporting Form will be completed by the investigating staff member, and the investigation process at the school level will proceed.

No disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

B1. Safety

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal and a team designated by her/him will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to:

- Creating a personal safety plan
- Pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus
- Identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target
- Altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target.

The Principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

Following the investigation, the Principal and her/his team will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from further acts of bullying, retaliation any students who (a) report bullying or retaliation, (b) witness bullying or retaliation, (c) provide information during an investigation of allegations of bullying or retaliation, or (d) has reliable information about an alleged act of bullying or retaliation. Strategies that may be used to create a safer environment for the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) may include to:

- Increasing adult supervision at times and/or in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.
- Temporarily and/or permanently changing the aggressor(s)’s class schedule and/or seating arrangements to reduce opportunities for retaliation.
- Establishing a safe zone for the target when s/he feels vulnerable.

This is not an exhaustive list. The creation of safe environments for targets, aggressors, and/or other people impacted by the incident will be considered for each individual person and incident.

B2. Obligations to Notify Others

The Principal or designee has primary responsibility to notify the following constituencies in writing – through a letter or email message - when bullying or retaliation has occurred. All written or electronic communication with these constituencies must be carbon copied to the Director of Student Services so they are (a) appropriately informed, and (b) can assist with response as needed.

- a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

- b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal education and privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation: The Principal or designee will promptly investigate all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the Principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the Principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the Principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The Principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the Principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation.

C1. Investigating Anonymous Reports

Upon receipt of an anonymous report a designated senior Central Administrative staff member will initiate a preliminary investigation. If the anonymous allegation is deemed to have potential merit an Incident Reporting Form will be completed and the investigation process at the school level will proceed.

D. Determinations: The Principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances.

The Principal/designee and/or a team designated by her/him will:

- Determine what remedial action is required, if any
- Determine what responsive actions is necessary, and/or
- Determining disciplinary action is necessary.

Remedial, responsive and disciplinary actions will balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behaviors in order to enhance the safety of the learning environment.

The Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what (a) disciplinary and (b) future prevention action is being taken. All notice to parents/guardians must comply with applicable local, state and federal education and privacy laws and regulations. All notices to parents/guardians will be linguistically appropriate.

Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the Principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent/guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, DESE, requires that the Principal or his designee notify the parents or guardians of the victim about the DESE problem resolution system and the process for filing a claim.

E. Responses to Bullying and Allegations of Bullying: The creation of school environments where every student feels a sense of belonging is integral to student success.

After an investigation of bullying, cyberbullying, retaliation and/or harassment, regardless of whether the claim is substantiated, the Principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that any student involved in the incident is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities.

To this end, the Somerville Public Schools will modify or institute procedures by grade level as necessary to provide a safe environment at all times of the school day including

non-classroom times such as lunch, bus rides, recess, and after-school and other out-of-school time, particularly for students who have been targets of substantiated allegations of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation, as well as aggressors of said actions as needed to restore a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

E1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the Principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O(d)(v). Skill-building approaches that the Principal/designee and/or a team designated by the Principal may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curriculum
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand prosocial ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents/guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Adopting behavioral plans or contract to include a focus on developing specific social skills
- Making a referral for any further evaluations as appropriate.
 - If a student who is found to be the target or aggressor in a substantiated bullying incident has an individualized education plan (IEP) and the cause of the incident is related to her/his disability, then the provision of skill building training and any other appropriate accommodations or services as agreed upon by the Team shall be integrated into that student's IEP.

E2. Taking Disciplinary Action

- a. If the Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.
- b. Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.
- c. If the Principal or designee determines that a false allegation of bullying or retaliation has been made appropriate actions will be taken. This may include disciplinary actions for those incidents where the accuser is a student.

E3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

Upon the completion of the investigation, the Principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and the sense of safety for others as well.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the Principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the Principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

- a. Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal and a team of people he/she designates may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development, professional mediation, or other supportive services.
- b. Depending upon the circumstances, the Principal may choose to invite the Special Education Department to conduct a safety evaluation of the target(s) and/or aggressor(s) in order to inform strategies for promoting safety of students and the school environment.
- c. If deemed appropriate and agreed upon by both the target and the aggressor, the matter may be referred to a professional mediator. If the professional mediator determines if the situation is appropriate for mediation a time will be scheduled and mediation will proceed using best practices in professional mediation with youth and teens.

Support Services

Each school shall have a team of professionals organized by the Principal who shall be responsible for helping to create and monitor the safe and supportive learning plan for targets and/or aggressors of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation and other acts of aggression among and between students. This team may be an existing group with expanded function (e.g., Student/Teacher Assistance Team) or a new team convened exclusively for this purpose. Activities of the team may include the following:

- Making and monitoring referrals to counseling and related youth and family support services
- Providing social skills programs to prevent bullying
- Offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors
- Organizing and monitoring classroom or school-wide programming to address the deleterious effects of bullying, retaliation or allegations of bullying and/or retaliation on the school environment
- Preventive activities intended to promote positive behavior
- Other activities as needed to promote safe and supportive school environments. Schools may consider current tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula.

- A. Students with disabilities: As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability, including but not limited to autism spectrum disorder, that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider the instructional services, accommodations or other service the individual student may need in her/his IEP to support the development of the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.
- B. Services for other vulnerable populations: If an incident of bullying and/or retaliation is found to be related to a student's identification with a protected class, the Principal/designee or other District officials may consult with local experts on the provision of specialized support services for the individual(s) involved and the school community. Examples include consulting the Somerville Human Rights Commission if an incident is found to be related to race or ethnic identity, working with the District's Title IX officer if the incident is related to a student's gender, or leveraging resources available through the Somerville LGBT Liaison if an incident is related to a student's sexual orientation or gender identity, or that of her/his parent(s) or siblings.

Instructional Services

In the long term, preventing bullying from happening is the goal of the District. Instructional activities will focus on helping students develop healthy social relationships with their adults and peers, and creating a positive school culture. Activities will include:

- A. Bullying instruction: Developmentally appropriate instruction in bullying prevention skills, strategies and attitudes shall be provided to students in grades K-12.
- B. Orientation to student responsibilities in bullying prevention: Annually at the start of the school year teachers will review the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with students in their classes. Students new to the school community after the start of the school year will be offered this overview by the Principal/designee. In addition, this information will be documented in student handbooks updated regularly by some schools. Links to the District's online Bullying information and resource page will be clearly labeled on each school website.

Anti-bullying messaging and information about student rights and responsibilities will be integrated into elementary evidence-based social competency instruction provided by teachers and Counselor Educators. As appropriate, information about the bullying plan and student rights and responsibilities will be integrated into peer mediation sessions facilitated by the Somerville Mediation Program.

- C. Cyber safety instruction: All students are provided with instruction and guidance in cyber safety and media literacy skills through their Library/Media Studies instructional block. The Library/Media Instructors use the Netsmartz.org cyber safety website created and maintained by the Center for Missing and Exploited Children as one of their resources when teaching the students about cyber safety. The students are also engaged in project-based learning activities which focus on the areas of internet safety,

cyberbullying, and bullying. Students are oriented to the District's Student Internet Use Policy which (a) provides guidelines for the safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies, and (b) specifically prohibits use of the District's computers for cyberbullying and other forms of hostile and anti-social purposes.

- D. Evidence-based prevention instruction: A program of evidence-based social/emotional learning instruction is offered to all students in all schools from grades PK-8. The curricula used in all District elementary classrooms - Al's Pals, Second Step, and/or Open Circle - are approved by the federal Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools for their effectiveness in addressing individual risk and protective factors¹ associated with bullying. These include:

Counteract the following risk factors

- Inadequate school climate / Poorly organized and functioning schools / Negative labeling by teachers
- Antisocial behavior and alienation / Delinquent beliefs / General delinquency involvement / Drug dealing
- Early onset of aggression and/or violence
- Victimization and exposure to violence
- Poor refusal skills
- Lack of guilt and empathy
- Cognitive and neurological deficits/ Hyperactivity
- Mental health concerns / Conduct disorders

Enhance the following protective factors:

- Good relationships with peers
- Presence and involvement of caring, supportive adults in school
- High expectations of students
- High quality schools / Clear standards and rules
- Opportunities for prosocial school involvement
- Effective parenting

Risk and protective factor list from www.findyouthinfo.gov, a clearinghouse of federal government resources pertaining to youth healthy development.

- Good relationship with parents / Bonding or attachment to family
- Individual social competencies and problem solving skills
- Positive / Resilient temperament
- Healthy / Conventional beliefs and clear standards
- Self-efficacy
- High individual expectations
 - Perception of social support from adults and peers

The District will continue to implement these programs with fidelity in order to ensure all students have opportunities to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that will (a) prevent bullying and other forms of violence, and (b) promote positive social relationships and community culture. These *might* include:

- Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications;

- Engaging students in a safe, supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference;
- Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance.

E. General teaching approaches that support bullying prevention efforts: The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- Setting and reinforcing clear expectations for positive, pro-social behaviors and attitudes in the learning environment
- Setting and communicating District and school standards for identifying, naming, and rewarding good behavior including introducing positive behavior awards as part of quarterly Superintendent's Award program
- Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, LGBT students, and homeless students
- Setting and communicating District and school standards for adult supervision during lunch, recess, bathroom and other unstructured time
- Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength by striving to increase the amount of organized, sports alternatives offered to youth during morning, lunch, and other recess time
- Modeling the safe use of the Internet and monitoring students' Internet use at school to reward positive behavior and redirect unsafe activities
- Supporting non-violent conflict resolution, including supervised, peer mediation
- Other prevention activities will be considered annually by the Bullying Plan Subcommittee of the District's Health/Wellness Advisory Committee.

Professional Development And Staff Training

The goal of professional development and staff training programs is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on: (i) developmentally (or age-) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;

- (ii) developmentally (or age-) 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 cyberbullying; and
- (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

A. Annual staff training on the Plan: The District will annually offer professional development and training to **all** staff, relevant community partners who work with students (including but not limited to crossing guards, bus drivers, Somerville Afterschool Training Network), and

parents/guardians that includes the following topics:

- Orientation to the District's Plan, including staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an Bullying Intervention – which shall include: (a) definition of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation; (b) orientation to the District procedures for reporting, responding, and intervening in incidents of bullying; and (c) signs and symptoms a student may be a target of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation
- Cyber safety – which shall include: (a) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying, and (b) strategies for promoting cyber-safety
- Overview of the role of the District's elementary social emotional learning curricula and peer mediation program and their role in preventing/addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.

Annual, mandatory professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities that may impact social skills development and/or may increase their participation in or vulnerability to bullying, harassment, teasing.

A1. Mid-year hires: Staff members hired after the start of the school year shall be required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

A2. Substitute teachers and volunteers: Training for substitute teachers and volunteers shall be expanded to include orientation to the District's bullying prohibition, reporting and intervention procedures, and behavioral and other expectations of staff and students.

B. Ongoing professional development: The District will, as resources allow, offer additional professional development and staff training on topics intended to build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. This will include skills training in bystander empowerment – which shall include: (a) complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witnesses, (b) research findings on bullying including categories about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment, and (c) developmentally appropriate strategies for intervening in stop bullying incidents.

Other, complementary professional development topics will be identified and developed annually as part of the Annual Title IIA/Staff Professional Development Survey and the annual evaluation of the implementation of the District's evidence-based social emotional learning programs.

C. Written notice to staff: The District will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan through the print and electronic versions of the Colleague Guide and the Human Resources Database.

Communication and Collaboration with Families and Partners

Clear communication and consistent collaboration with staff, families, students, and community partners is essential to achieving bullying prevention and other health and safety goals within the Somerville Public Schools. Communication with these and other constituents shall include information about the (a) dynamics of bullying including signs and symptoms of bullying/cyberbullying/retaliation, (b) strategies for preventing cyberbullying and promoting online safety, (c) strategies for preventing bullying and/or retaliation in the classroom, across the school community, at home, and in the community, (d) information about how to report bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, and (e) District procedures for responding to and investigating bullying, including strategies for creating a safe learning environment for targets and reinforcing positive behavior standards among aggressors. This shall include communication of the District's Bullying Policy, Disciplinary Policies, and Internet Safety/Acceptable Use Policy.

All communication will be developmentally and linguistically appropriate.

A. Parent and community notification: To ensure all constituents understand both intervention and prevention activities the District will minimally:

- Publish bullying reporting, response, and investigation procedures in (a) student handbooks, and (b) the annual parent/guardian guide;
- Public bullying reporting, response, and investigation procedures in the annual colleague guide
- Create a bullying page on its website (http://www.somerville.k12.ma.us/no_bullying as a resource for (a) anonymous reporting, (b) clarifying procedures for reporting, responding, and investigating allegations of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, (c) communicating District and school positive behavior standards, and (d) expanding access to prevention education resources for families, teachers, students and community partners;
- Participate annually in No Name Calling Week as declared by the Governor every January. Other communication and social promotion campaign activities will be considered annually by the Bullying Plan Subcommittee of the District's Health/Wellness Advisory Committee.

B. Parent/guardian education and resources: The school or district will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PT(S)A, School Councils, Somerville Family Learning Collaborative, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

Leadership and Continuous Improvement

A. Planning and oversight: Members of the Superintendent's Cabinet will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Specific planning and oversight responsibilities will include:

- Receiving reports on bullying

- Collecting and analyzing building- and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes
- Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressor
- Planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law
- Planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors
- Choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use
- Developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them
- Amending District-level parent/guardian and staff handbooks and codes of conduct; offering assistance to Principals on the amendment of school or program-based student handbooks and codes of conduct
- Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials
- Reviewing and updating the Plan biannually as required by law.

B. Biannual update of the Plan and community involvement: This Bullying Plan will be reviewed and updated biennially by the Bullying Plan Subcommittee of the District's Health and Wellness Advisory Committee to (a) ensure its effectiveness, and (b) establish strategies and indicators of continuous improvement in the effort to promote safe and supportive learning environment. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O the Bullying Plan Subcommittee shall include representatives from the following groups:

- Teachers
- School staff (e.g., cafeteria workers, afterschool staff)
- Professional support personnel
- School volunteers
- School administrators
- Community representatives
- Local law enforcement
- Students
- Parents/guardians.

A period of public comment will be open for at least three weeks soliciting feedback on improvements to the Bullying Plan from members of the community who may not be able to or comfortable with participating in a public meeting.

C. Outcomes and assessment: The biannual update of the plan shall include a review of available data on social and emotional learning, the environment for the delivery of social emotional instruction in schools, and data on school climate. This data includes:

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey data collected and analyzed in partnership with the Somerville Health Department
- Peer mediation and/or other data on student conflicts
- My Voice surveys and/or other school climate data.

This data shall be used to identify areas of programmatic strength, resource gaps and the most significant areas of need. Based on these findings, schools and districts will revise or develop policies and procedures; establish partnerships with community agencies, including law enforcement; and set priorities.

This data shall also be used to set and monitor progress towards biannual improvement goals.

By the next biannual review we hope to accomplish the following goals:

1. The district will choose and implement during SY 2023/24, an updated SEL curriculum that includes bullying lessons.
2. The district will train and implement a districtwide Restorative Justice practice.
 - a. SY 2022/23 Tier one training for 80 teachers, administrators, and support staff
 - b. SY 2023/24 Tier one training for 80 additional teachers, administrators, and support staff
 - c. SY 2023/24 Tier two training for 80 teachers, administrators, and support staff
 - d. SY 2023/24 Tier three training for 40 teachers, administrators, and support staff
3. SY 2022/23 Middle school YBRS survey will be administered and data analyzed
4. SY 2024/25 High and middle school YBRS survey will be administered and data will be analyzed.
5. SY 2025/26 Yearly RJ Circle Keeper training for all new employees.

The outcomes, which shall be updated biannually, will be considered in alignment with the District's Safe and Drug Free Schools Plan and Wellness Policy Implementation Plan.

These goals and progress data shall be reported to the School Committee and other elected officials, and to the community on a regular basis:

Definitions

Aggressor: A student or 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 who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bullying: The Somerville Public Schools Bullying Policy (**File: JICFB**), pursuant to Massachusetts General Law (MGL: Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010) specifically defines bullying as:

"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:

- vi. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;*
- vii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;*
- viii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;*
- ix. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or*

x. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”

Cyberbullying: Bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, Internet postings, electronic mail, Internet communications, and/or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying 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. Cyberbullying 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.

Hostile environment: Defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education.

Retaliation: Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff: Includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target: A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Relationship to Other Local, State, and National Policies, Regulations, and Laws

A. Relationship to non-discrimination laws: Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person’s membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

B. Relationship to existing disciplinary regulations: In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

C. Relationship to other District policies: This Plan is related to the following District policies:

ACAB - SEXUAL HARASSMENT

EEAEC - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

IGBF - STUDENT TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAMS (STAT)

IHAMA - DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO EDUCATION

IJNDB - SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR
STAFF

IJNDB-A - SOMERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS STUDENT INTERNET SAFETY USE
POLICY

Calendars

The [school year calendar](#), approved by the Somerville School Committee, is found on the district website. An [event calendar](#) can also be accessed from every page of the district's website.

Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The Center for Career and Technical Education (CTE) at Somerville High School offers students the opportunity to major in one of the following fourteen Chapter 74 programs where they will earn industry-recognized credentials. The curriculum in all Career and Technical Education programs at Somerville High School is based on the Frameworks as outlined by the Massachusetts Career Technical Education Department along with industry standards. Each program includes intensive technical training to prepare for post-secondary education and/or immediate employment after graduation, related theory and embedded academics. Programs offered through Somerville CTE are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Automotive Technology
- Early Education and Care
- Electrical
- Carpentry
- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts
- Dental Assisting
- Drafting Design / Pre-Engineering
- Graphic Communications
- Health Assisting / Pharmacy Tech
- HVAC-R
- Metal Fabrication
- Plumbing

Automotive Technology

The Automotive Technology program offers vehicle service options to local residents. To learn more visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/automotive.

Culinary Arts Highlander Café

Students in the Culinary Arts program operate a restaurant that is sometimes open to the public for lunch during the school year. Information about café public hours is available on the website. www.somerville.k12.ma.us/culinary

Salon Services

The Cosmetology program offers low-cost opportunities for local residents to receive salon services from our talented students. Call to learn more about available services, prices, and appointment times. (617) 629-5250, x611550

College Entrance Examination Board Testing Programs

Somerville High School CEEB Code Number: **221948**

PSAT/SAT: Visit the [Somerville High School College Entrance Testing website](#) for college entrance testing information.

Advanced Placement Tests (AP): Advanced Placement Tests (AP) take place in May. AP students will receive specific instructions for AP Exam registration in the winter.

Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injury

The Somerville Public Schools (SPS) is committed to the safety and well-being of all its students. Due to the severe nature and complexity of concussions, SPS in conjunction with state law has developed policies and procedures that include concussion education and both return to school and return to physical activity plans for all K-12 students. All suspected concussions or head injuries, whether they occurred during sport or not, should be reported to the school.

The following procedures have been adopted by the school committee for all K-12 Somerville Public School students:

1. Immediate removal of student from all physical activity including recess.
2. Ensure student is evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional. This may include immediate attention at the emergency room and/or seeing a primary care physician.
3. Follow up with the District Coordinator for Concussion Management who provides a gradual reentry academic and recovery plan.
4. Once written clearance is provided by the primary care physician, the student will be provided a gradual return to physical/sport activity. Full return to activity without restriction takes at least 1 week, in some cases longer.

A concussion is type of traumatic brain injury that causes an alteration of mental status resulting from the brain being jolted inside of the skull due to a blow to the head or body. Among the many symptoms associated with concussion, headache, dizziness, confusion, amnesia, nausea, and disorientation are commonly reported. Loss of consciousness however, only occurs in less than 10% of all injuries and is not an indicator of concussion severity. Students may also have other difficulties such as sensitivity to light and sound, forgetfulness, fatigue, and emotional changes such as anxiety or depression. Red Flags that warrant an immediate trip to the ER include loss of consciousness, headaches that worsen significantly, unequal pupils, slurred speech, increased confusion/irritation, repeated vomiting, or neck pain or any weakness or numbness in arms and legs.

Most athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as the brain has time to heal before sustaining another hit. But 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 of injury, the severity of concussive injuries, 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. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play too soon, 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.

Concussion is one of the most complex injuries faced by medical professionals as the signs and symptoms are not always straightforward and the effects and severity of the injury can be difficult to determine. The injury occurs in absence of structural changes in brain tissue, generally making traditional neuro-diagnostic tests such as CT, MRI, and EEG insensitive.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services requires that all high schools subject to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules adhere to the following law:

Student athletes and their parents, coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, and physicians must learn about the consequences of head injuries and concussions through training programs and written materials. The law requires that athletes and their parents inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of the season. If a student athlete becomes unconscious, or is suspected of having a concussion, during a game or practice, the law now mandates taking the student out of play or practice, and requires written certification from a licensed medical professional for “return to play.”

Parents and student athletes who plan to participate in any sports program at Somerville High School must also participate in mandatory concussion education each year, whether they take one free online course or attend our annual sports information evening.

Two free online courses have been made available and contain all the information required by the law.

The first online course option is offered through the National Federation of High School Coaches. You will need to click the “order here” button and complete a brief information form to register. At the end of the course, you will receive a completion receipt. The entire course, including registration, can be completed in less than 30 minutes:

<https://nfhslearn.com/?courseID=15000>.

The second online course option is offered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at: <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>.

State law and Somerville Public Schools are following the policy outlined below when it comes to suspected head injuries:

1. Remove the student athlete from all physical activity.
2. Ensure proper evaluation by a primary care physician or immediate attention at the local emergency room.
3. Provide a graduated academic reentry plan.
4. Follow up care with the athletic trainer who will provide a battery of tests that include a combination of self-report symptoms, balance, and neuro-cognitive testing.
5. When safe to do so, be provided a graduated return to play progression.

Due to the serious nature of concussions, we ask that parents report any concussion that occurs both in sport and outside of school so that it may be managed appropriately.

For further information on concussions and the Somerville Public School protocols/policies please look online at the High School Sports Medicine page, at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/sportsmedicine or contact the District Coordinator for Concussion Management and Head Athletic Trainer Michelle Kelly, mkelly@k12.somerville.ma.us.

For more information, see policy: #JJIF on the School Committee section of our website (www.somerville.k12.ma.us).

Digital Resources, (Access to) Policy

Policy #IJND

ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

The School Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate manner.

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Technology, shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer or tablet use, ethical use of digital resources and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of digital resources for prohibited or illegal activities and for the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet as defined by the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA);
- Safety and security of minors when they are using e-mail, instant messaging applications, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including hacking, viruses, and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors.

The School District shall provide reasonable public notice to address and communicate its internet safety measures.

Empowered Digital Use

All students and faculty must agree to and sign an Empowered Digital Use form prior to the student or staff member being granted independent access to digital resources and district networks. The required form, which specifies guidelines for using digital resources and district networks, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the

student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Director of Technology with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use district email, district devices, and district networks only for purposes directly related to educational and instructional purposes.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. All guests will be prompted to, and must accept the district's Access to Digital Resources Policy, before accessing the district network.

Disregard of Rules and Responsibility for Damages

Individuals who refuse to sign required Empowered Digital Use documents or who violate district rules governing the use of district technology or networks shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, and network.

Individuals shall reimburse the district for repair or replacement of district property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

Adopted: August 2015

Note: FCC regulations that went into effect April 20, 2001, implementing The Children's Internet Protection Act (47 U.S.C. § 254) require each school/district to certify compliance with certain policy requirements in order to maintain eligibility for Internet access discounts and other services provided by the federal government.

Discipline

Somerville Public Schools are committed to practices that promote safe and welcoming learning environments in which students can thrive, and disruptions are minimized. Restorative practices and social-emotional curricula are implemented to help build strong communities, and provide students with the skills and frameworks to appropriately solve problems and resolve conflicts.

The Code of Conduct is based on a system of progressive discipline with a goal of limiting the use of suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other alternative measures have been considered, as appropriate. The administrator will exercise discretion in determining disciplinary consequences. When students violate the code of conduct, supportive and restorative measures will be implemented first, when safe and appropriate. When these are not appropriate, and/or have not proven effective, discipline will be progressive (moving from lesser to more severe consequences), consistent, and logical. When possible and appropriate, teachers will handle discipline at the classroom level. Classroom interventions may involve positive reinforcement/incentives for expected behaviors, loss of privileges, behavior intervention plans, and parent/guardian collaboration. Alternative consequences may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

The Code of Conduct of the Somerville Public Schools is administered within the framework of the United States Constitution and state laws and regulations with regard to due process for students. The Code of Conduct is intended to be administered for disciplinary infractions that occur on school grounds or at school-sponsored events (on and off school grounds) OR for disciplinary infractions that occur off school grounds but substantially disrupt the educational environment or create a hostile environment at school.

When behaviors are ongoing or more serious, and a student is not responding to classroom interventions, the Dean of Students and/or Administrators will become involved, and more significant consequences may be considered.

The Somerville Public Schools adheres to the Student Discipline Laws and Regulations as set forth in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37 H1/2 and 37 H ¾, and 603 CMR 53.00 et seq.

The following specific offenses are considered major infractions, and may result in short- or long-term suspension or expulsion (removal for more than 90 days), pending due process, including a full investigation, disciplinary hearing, and appeal rights for exclusions over 90 school days:

1. Possession of weapons or dangerous weapons. The school will secure the weapon and notify law enforcement as appropriate.
2. Assaulting a teacher, administrator, paraprofessional, or other authorized school personnel. In appropriate circumstances, law enforcement will be notified.

3. Possession of a controlled substance in school, including marijuana.
4. Fire - Starting or attempting to start a fire in the building or on school grounds.
5. False fire alarm, bomb scares, willfully discharging fire extinguisher. A student in violation of this policy, in addition to school department action, will be referred to appropriate authorities.
6. Violation of the Civil Rights of any member of the school community. A student in violation of this policy, in addition to school department action, will be referred to appropriate authorities.
7. The use, possession, distribution, or sale or transfer of alcohol, tobacco products, and drugs, including vaping materials. A student in violation of this policy, in addition to school department action, may be referred for substance abuse counseling.
8. Physical assault of another student.
9. Smoking or using tobacco products in the school or on school grounds. In addition to suspension, elementary students using tobacco products must also meet with the counselor educator to discuss risks of tobacco use and to assess if additional support services are needed.
10. Any and all other serious offenses resulting in danger to the staff or other students, significant damage to the school, or disruption of the educational process.
11. Violent Threat against a School. Law enforcement will be notified as appropriate and the student may be referred for a clinical assessment and support.
12. Hazing. Law enforcement will be notified as appropriate.
13. Hate crimes. Law enforcement will be notified as appropriate.

Disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, may also be considered for the following offenses:

1. Discrimination or harassment based upon a student's sex, gender, race, national origin, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, sexual identity, disability, native language/culture, or ethnic origin.
2. Entering the school without permission on release days, before school, or after dismissal.
3. Possessing fireworks, matches, or a cigarette lighter.
4. Repeated disruption in the class, the cafeteria, corridors, or playground.
5. Throwing snowballs, stones, or other projectiles.
6. Using vulgar language or making obscene gestures.
7. Vandalism or willful destruction of school property. (Restitution will be sought.)
8. Theft of individual or school property. (Restitution will be sought.)

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

In general, all students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in the student handbook and the school's code of conduct. In accordance with Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and with federal law IDEA 2004: Section 615 (k), and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: 29 U.S.C. Section 794 (A), the school may suspend or remove your child from his or her current placement for no more than 10 school days. Special

provisions are outlined below for students with a documented disability who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan.

Suspension of Students with Disabilities

Procedures for suspension(s) not exceeding 10 school days:

- Any student with a disability may be suspended for up to ten (10) days during a school year. Disciplinary decisions are the same as for students without disabilities.
- Special circumstances exist if your child: possesses, uses, sells, or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school-sponsored event; or inflicts serious bodily harm upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event. Under these circumstances, the principal may place your child in an interim alternate educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days. Your child may remain in this IAES for a period of time not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, your child will return to the previously agreed-upon placement unless a hearing officer has ordered another placement, or you and the school agree to another placement.

Procedures for suspension of students with a disability when suspension exceeds 10 school days.

- If your child is suspended for more than 10 school days in a school year, this removal is considered a “change of placement.” A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under federal special education law and Section 504.
- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change of placement, the school will convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address your child’s problematic behavior.
- Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school must inform you that the law requires the school district to consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis of the disciplinary action is related to your child’s disability. This consideration is called a “manifestation determination.” Parents/Guardians have a right to participate in this process. All relevant information will be considered including the IEP or Section 504 Plan, teacher observations, and evaluations reports.
- At a manifestation determination meeting, the Team will consider:
 - Did the student’s disability *cause* or have a *direct and substantial relationship* to the conduct in question?
 - Was the conduct a *direct result* of the district’s failure to implement the IEP?
- If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary action *was* related to the disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement (unless under the special circumstances). The team will review the IEP or Section 504 Plan and any behavioral intervention plans.
- If the manifestation determination decision is that the disciplinary action *was not* related

to the disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of conduct. For students with IEPs, during the period of time of removal from school that exceeds 10 school days, the school district must provide educational services that allow your child to continue to make educational progress. For students with Section 504 Plans, there is no automatic right to receive educational services beyond the 10th school day of suspension.

Special circumstances for exclusion

Special circumstances exist if your child: possesses, uses, sells, or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event; carries a weapon to school or a school-sponsored event; or inflicts serious bodily harm upon another person at school or a school-sponsored event. Under these circumstances, the principal may place your child in an interim alternate educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days. Your child may remain in this IAES for a period of time not to exceed 45 school days. Thereafter, your child will return to the previously agreed-upon placement unless a hearing officer has ordered another placement, or you and the school agree to another placement. For students with Section 504 Plans, there is no automatic right to receive educational services beyond the 10th school day of suspension.

School personnel will provide Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards (Special Education) or Notice of Parent and Student Rights Under Section 504 for students with disabilities prior to any suspension exceeding 10 school days in one school year. These notices will provide an explanation of the process should there be disagreement regarding the manifestation determination or any placement decision. Parent/Guardian and/or student may petition the Bureau of Special Education Appeals for a hearing or the Office of Civil Rights (Section 504). Until issues are resolved, the student remains in his or her current placement.

SPS School Committee Policy on Discipline

Policy #JIC - 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 under 37 H 3/4

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 under 37 H 3/4

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) under 37 H 3/4

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, or 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 Appeal Hearing Under 37 H 3/4

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 for Offenses under 37 H and 37 H 1/2

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 or his/her designee 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.

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

Amended: October 6, 2014

Massachusetts General Laws and DESE Regulations Governing Discipline

Section 37H3/4

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. The principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school- or district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however, that school- or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion

prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

Section 37H

The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities, or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Said policies shall further restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds, consistent with section 16B of chapter 90 and regulations adopted pursuant thereto and by the department. The policies shall also prohibit bullying as defined in section 37O and shall include the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by said section 37O. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

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

In each school building containing the grades 9 to 12, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The student handbook shall include an age-appropriate summary of the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by section 37O. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

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

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

Definition of a Dangerous Weapon and Reporting Requirements of Weapon Possession

The building principal has the right to decide, based on sound judgment, whether any object is to be considered a weapon or a “dangerous weapon.” The Somerville Public Schools, as interpreted by the building principal, will define a weapon or a “dangerous weapon” in the broadest sense to protect the health and safety of all students, staff, and visitors and to prohibit the possession of any gun, or form of a knife, or sharp objects, capable of causing harm.

According to MGL Chapter 269, Section 10(j), it is a crime for any officer in charge of a school, and any faculty or school administrator not to report the possession of a “dangerous weapon” to the local Police Department. If there is any uncertainty about whether a particular object is a “dangerous weapon” the police will be consulted.

While our schools will work with students to develop responsible behavior, threats to the safety of others or disruptions to the educational process will not be tolerated.

Section 37H1/2

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

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

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

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

expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

Section 37L

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time. Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall then file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of social services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment. A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incident involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

CMR 53 ~ Regulations Regarding Student Discipline

53.01: Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of 603 CMR 53.00 is:

- (a) for those discipline offenses subject to M.G.L. 71, § 37H³/₄, as set forth in 603 CMR 53.01(2)(a), to limit the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered and tried as appropriate;

- (b) to promote engagement of a student's parent in discussion of the student's misconduct, and options for responding to it;
- (c) to assure that every student who is expelled or suspended, regardless of the reason for suspension or expulsion, has the opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion; and,
- (d) to keep schools safe and supportive for all students while ensuring fair and effective disciplinary practices.

(2) 603 CMR 53.00 sets forth, for all public preschool, elementary, and secondary schools and programs in Massachusetts, including charter and virtual schools:

(a) at 603 CMR 53.03 through 53.11, the minimum procedural requirements applicable to the suspension of a student for a disciplinary offense other than:

1. possession of a dangerous weapon;
2. possession of a controlled substance;
3. assault on a member of the educational staff; or
4. 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, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½;

(b) the minimum requirements and procedures necessary to ensure that all students who have been suspended, in-school or out-of-school, or expelled, regardless of the type of offense, have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities; and

(c) requirements pertaining to school discipline data reporting and analysis.

53.02: Definitions

Commissioner means the commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education appointed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 15, § 1F, or his or her designee.

Department means the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Disciplinary offense means any alleged or determined disciplinary infraction by a student, except for:

- (a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
- (b) possession of a controlled substance;
- (c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or
- (d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½ . A disciplinary offense, as defined, is subject to the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾ and 603 CMR 53.00.

Disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½ means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions:

- (a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
- (b) possession of a controlled substance;
- (c) assault on a member of the educational staff; and
- (d) 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, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½.

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½ for:

- (a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
- (b) possession of a controlled substance;
- (c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or
- (d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½.

In-school Suspension means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten consecutive school days, or no more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes.

Long-term Suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten consecutive school days, or for more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H(a) or (b), or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than 90 school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Parent means a student's father, mother, or legal guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or legal guardian.

Principal means the instructional administrative leader or headmaster of a public school or his or her designee for purposes of school disciplinary matters. The board of trustees of a charter school or virtual school shall designate in the school discipline code who will serve as the principal for purposes of 603 CMR 53.00.

School-wide Education Service Plan means the document developed by a principal, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21, that includes a list of education services available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days.

Short-term Suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Superintendent means the chief executive officer employed by a school committee or board of trustees to administer a school system, charter school, or virtual school pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 59, 59A, 89, or 94, or his or her designee appointed for purposes of conducting a student disciplinary hearing. The board of trustees of a charter school or virtual school shall designate in the school's discipline code who will serve as the superintendent for the purposes of 603 CMR 53.00.

Suspension means short-term suspension and long-term suspension unless otherwise stated.

53.03: Policies and Procedures

Each school committee and board of trustees shall ensure that policies and procedures are in place in public preschool, elementary, and secondary schools and programs under its jurisdiction that meet, at a minimum, the requirements of M.G.L. c.71, §37H³/₄, M.G.L. c. 76, § 21, and 603 CMR 53.00.

53.04: Investigation of Disciplinary Incidents

Nothing in 603 CMR 53.00 shall prevent a school administrator from conducting an investigation, including student interviews, of a school-related disciplinary incident.

53.05: Alternatives to Suspension under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H³/₄

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; 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 interventions and supports.

53.06: Notice of Suspension and Hearing under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾

(1) Except as provided in 603 CMR 53.07 and 603 CMR 53.10, a principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.

(2) The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language:

- (a) the disciplinary offense;
- (b) the basis for the charge;
- (c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- (d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
- (e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- (f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
- (g) if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
 - 1. the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and
 - 2. the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

(3) The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

(4) Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, or email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and parent.

53.07: Emergency Removal under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾

(1) Nothing in 603 CMR 53.00 shall prevent a principal from removing 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 temporary removal shall not exceed two school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- (a) 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 set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (b) Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the principal that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or (3), as applicable, 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.
- (d) 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 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and (d) or (3)(c) and (d), as applicable.

(2) A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

53.08: Principal's Hearing under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H^{3/4}

(1) The principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense. If the consequence may be long-term suspension from school, the principal shall afford the student, at a minimum, all the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3) in addition to those rights afforded to students who may face a short-term suspension from school.

(2) Principal Hearing - Short-term Suspension

- (a) The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student 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 603 CMR 53.05. 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.
- (b) Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
- (c) 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 provided in 603 CMR 53.13(1). The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

(d) If the student is in a 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.

(3) Principal Hearing - Long-term Suspension

(a) The purpose of the hearing is the same as the purpose of a short-term suspension hearing.

(b) At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:

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

(c) 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.

(d) Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as set forth in 603 CMR 53.05, 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, or email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in 603 CMR 53.13(4)(a);

5. 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, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
 1. the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five 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 additional calendar days; and that
 2. the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.
- (e) 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, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

53.09: Superintendent's Hearing under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H^{3/4}

(1) 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.

(2) The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) (d) 5.a. 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.

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

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b).

(7) The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(d)1. through 4. 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.

(8) The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, charter school, or virtual school, with regard to the suspension.

53.10: In-School Suspension under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H^{3/4}

(1) The principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

(2) The principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense under 603 CMR 53.10, provided that the principal follows the process set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(3) through (5) and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as set forth in 603 CMR 53.13(1).

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

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

(5) The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(4), if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, or email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

53.11: Exclusion from Extracurricular Activities and School-Sponsored Events

The principal may 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 procedures in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H³/₄ or 603 CMR 53.00.

53.12: Disciplinary Offenses under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H¹/₂

(1) School districts shall adopt disciplinary policies and procedures applicable to a student who is accused of a disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, or 37H¹/₂. Such policies and procedures shall be consistent with the applicable statute and provide due process of law.

(2) The principal may remove a student who has committed a disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, or 37H¹/₂ from school for more than 90 days in a school year.

(3) Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, or § 37H¹/₂ shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in 603 CMR 53.13.

53.13: Education Services and Academic Progress under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H¹/₂, and 37H³/₄

(1) Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, 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 when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

(2) Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

(3) 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 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 M.G.L. c 69, §§ 1D and 1F.

(4) Notice of Education Services for Students in Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion; Enrollment Reporting.

(a) 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.

(b) For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten 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.

53.14: Student Suspension and Expulsion Data Collection and Reporting

(1) Every school district, charter school, and virtual school shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, access to education services under 603 CMR 53.13, and such other information as may be required by the Department. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

(2) 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 reviewing the data, the principal shall assess the extent of in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, and emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, and the impact of such disciplinary action on selected student populations. The principal shall further determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify disciplinary practices due to over-reliance on expulsion, or in-school or out-of school suspension, or emergency removals, or the impact of such suspensions, removals, and expulsions on selected student populations compared with other students.

(3) In the fall of each year, the Department shall publish an analysis and report of student discipline data disaggregated by district and school, and by selected student populations, included but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status. The data shall be reported in a manner that protects the identity of each student and shall be made available to the public online in a machine readable format.

(4) The Department shall annually determine the schools with the highest percentage of students expelled or placed on long-term suspension for more than ten cumulative days in a school year. After review of the discipline data described in 603 CMR 53.14(3) and other relevant school and district information, including but not limited to student demographics, student performance, promotion, attendance, attrition, graduation, and dropout rates, the Commissioner shall identify schools that need assistance to reduce over-reliance on long-term suspension or expulsion as a consequence for student misconduct. The Department shall identify models that such schools may use to incorporate intermediate steps before long-term suspension and expulsion and to foster positive school climate.

Through use of statistical analysis, the Commissioner shall identify schools and districts with data that reflect significant disparities in the rate of suspension and expulsion by race and ethnicity, or disability. Such schools and districts shall develop and implement a plan approved by the Department to address such significant disparities.

Regulatory Authority:

M.G.L. c.69, s. 1B & c.71, s. 37H & 37H 3/4

School Committee Policies

Specific Disciplinary Regulations (behaviors)

Link to [SHS Handbook / Code of Conduct](#)

Suspensions and Expulsions

Chapter 222 of the Acts of 2012

An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School

A. Discipline procedures: suspensions and expulsions

The law:

- Amends G.L. c. 71 by adding a new section 37H³/₄ that addresses all suspensions and expulsions for reasons other than those covered in section 37H (dangerous weapons, controlled substances, and assaults on education staff) and section 37H ¹/₂ (felony complaint);
- Under section 37H³/₄, directs school decision makers at student disciplinary meetings or hearings to: 1) exercise discretion in deciding consequences for the student; 2) consider ways to reengage the student in the learning process; and 3) avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been tried;
- Under section 37H³/₄, requires that districts provide 1) written notice to the student and parent or guardian of the reasons for suspension or expulsion in English and the primary language spoken in the home of the student, and 2) the opportunity for the student to meet with the principal or headmaster to discuss the reasons for suspension or expulsion, before the suspension or expulsion takes effect. The principal must make reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in the meeting with the student.
- Defines the process that school officials must follow under section 37H³/₄ if the decision is made after the meeting to suspend or expel the student, including notice of the student's appeal rights, if applicable, and the appeal process;

- Limits the length of suspensions or expulsions under section 37H¾ to 90 school days;
- Requires the principal to notify the superintendent in writing of the out-of-school suspension of a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3, the alleged misconduct, and the reasons for out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect;

B. Opportunity for students to make academic progress while suspended or expelled

The law:

- Amends sections 37H and 37H½ to require districts and charter schools to continue to provide educational services to any student suspended or expelled under these sections;
- Requires principals and headmasters to create a “school-wide education service plan” for all students who are suspended or expelled for more than 10 consecutive school days, whether in or out of school, so that students have an opportunity to make academic progress. Education service plans may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, alternative placement, Saturday school, and online or distance learning;
- States that students who are suspended from school for 10 or fewer consecutive school days, whether in or out of school, must be provided an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments, and earn credits missed;
- Establishes that if a student moves to another district during a period of suspension or expulsion, the new district must either admit the student or provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or exclusion;
- Provides for partial reimbursement under G.L. c 71B, § 5A, the circuit breaker provision, for the instructional costs of providing alternative educational services to suspended and expelled students. First payments will be made in fiscal year 2016, partially reimbursing eligible costs incurred in the 2014-15 school year.

Donations / Public Gifts

Donations offered to the Somerville Public Schools (SPS) may be made through www.somerville.k12.ma.us/donate or by calling the district central office at 617-629-5200. Donations to the SPS must be approved by the School Committee prior to being accepted. This is a simple process managed by the office of the Superintendent / designee.

Public Gifts to the Schools

Policy #KCD

The superintendent has the authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the Somerville School Committee when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school sites will be subject to Somerville School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school system. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the Somerville School Committee, as provided by law.

The Somerville School Committee is responsible for accepting all donations/gifts with an estimated value of \$100 or more or as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for developing and monitoring a process of donation/gift acceptance and appropriate expression of appreciation on behalf of the School Committee.

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

Adoption date: January 1996 Reviewed: January 2010 Revised: November 2014

Emergencies

Policy #EBC - EMERGENCY PLANS

Advance planning for emergencies and disasters is essential to provide for the safety of students and staff; it also strengthens the morale of all concerned to know that plans exist and that students and staff have been trained in carrying out the plans.

The Superintendent will develop and maintain plans that meet the requirements of state law for preparedness in case of fire, civil emergencies, and natural disasters.

The Superintendent shall develop, in consultation with school nurses, school physicians, athletic coaches, trainers, and local Emergency Medical Services agencies, an Emergency Medical Response Plan for each school in the district. Each Plan shall include:

1. A method establishing a rapid communications system linking all parts of the school campus, including outdoor facilities, to local Emergency Medical Services along with protocols to clarify when EMS and other emergency contacts will be called.
2. A determination of EMS response times to any location on the campus.
3. A list of relevant contacts with telephone numbers and a protocol indicating when each person shall be called, including names of experts to help with post-event support.
4. A method to efficiently direct EMS personnel to any location on campus, including the location of available rescue equipment.
5. Safety precautions to prevent injuries in classrooms and on the school campus.
6. A method of providing access to training in CPR and first aid for teachers, athletic coaches, trainers, and other school staff which may include CPR training for High School students; provided that School Committees may opt out of instruction in CPR pursuant to Section 1 of Chapter 71.
7. In the event the school possesses Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), the location of all available AEDs, whether the location is fixed or portable, and a list of personnel trained in its use.

Plans shall be submitted at least every 3 years by September 1. Plans must be updated in the case of new construction or other physical changes to the school campus.

Building Principals will meet all requirements for conducting fire drills and Emergency Response drills to give students practice in moving with orderly dispatch to designated areas under emergency conditions, and the staff practice in carrying out their assigned responsibilities for building evacuation.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. [69:8A](#) Section 363 of Chapter 159 of the Acts of 2000

CROSS REF.: [EBCD](#), Emergency Closings:

[JL](#), Student Welfare

[JLC](#), Student Health Services and Requirements

Adoption date: January 1996
Reviewed: December 2008
Revised: August 2012

Enrolling in School

Somerville Public Schools offers programming for students from prekindergarten through high school graduation. Please find comprehensive enrollment information and enrollment staff information on the [Enrollment Office webpage](#). We have multilingual enrollment staff ready to support your family through this process. In addition to registration support, staff will provide information about school choice, how to go on a school tour, English language learning, special education programs, after-school academic and recreational programs, adult education, and cultural programs/events.

Parents of children with special needs should contact the Special Education Office at 617-629-5645 if you have any questions.

Residency Policy and Guidelines

It is the policy of this school district not to admit non-resident students under the terms and conditions of the Inter-district School Choice Law [M.G.L. 76.12].

Enroll in Somerville Public Schools

Enrollment in Somerville Public Schools is done online and in-person support is available through the Enrollment Office. Please visit the Enrollment Office website to start the registration process: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/enrollment. Parents and guardians may also contact multilingual enrollment staff by phone 617-629-5670 or by [email](#) to make an appointment or ask questions.

Controlled Choice

The Somerville Public Schools offers parents/guardians the option of choosing schools based on their child's needs and values subject to the criteria outlined in the "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Policy adopted by the Somerville School Committee with the approval of the Massachusetts Department of Education in 1994. Somerville's "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Policy is designed to accomplish three goals: 1) to offer parents choices of which school their children will attend, 2) to ensure equal and fair access to all schools and programs by all population groups, and 3) to improve the quality of instruction at each school.

The Somerville Public Schools encourages parents of kindergarten students and new students to the district to visit schools and/or the Enrollment Office.

Controlled Choice Student Assignment Criteria Grades K-8

All assignments will be made according to the "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Policy.

According to this policy, children will be assigned in order of the following fairness preferences:

1. Programmatic Priority Placements (for example, special education children are placed into special classes at schools with those respective programs)

2. Sibling Preference Placements
3. Proximity Preference Placements
4. Lottery: If the fairness preferences listed above are not sufficient to determine placement, assignments shall be based on a random lottery.

Students already enrolled in the Somerville Public Schools who submit a timely school-transfer application will be given priority before other newly enrolling students.

Documents Required for Enrollment

The following documentation is required for new registration or re-admission:

- A completed registration form online
- Proof of age (birth certificate)
- Parent/guardian's government issued photo identification
- One proof of residency, such as a copy of a signed, current lease or most recent mortgage payment indicating the parent/guardian's name and address
- One proof of occupancy, such as a current utility bill (e.g., gas, electric, cable, or telephone)
- Most recent immunizations and health records
- Prior school records (grades 1-12 only)
- Other required documents:
 - Official withdrawal form (for out of state or private schools) for grades 1-12
 - Individual Education Plan (IEP), if applicable
 - Previous school report card, if applicable
 - Transcripts for grades 9-12
 - Discipline records for grades 9-12

Physical Examination

A complete physical examination (done within one year of school entry) is required of all children new to the Somerville Public School system as well as those children entering PK, kindergarten, 4th, 7th, and 11th grades. Annual physicals are required for students playing team sports. No child will be able to attend school without providing all required health documentation. Please find more information at the [Required Health Documentation](#) webpage.

Waiting Lists

Every effort will be made to accommodate parent/guardian preferences within the system of priorities, educational seating capacity, and the district's fairness guidelines. Parents/guardians of students who are not assigned to a first choice school are automatically added to the waitlist of their first choice school. Students will only be added to one waitlist, and must be currently enrolled or have a complete application via our online enrollment system. The Enrollment Office will inform you when a space becomes available for your child to attend your first choice school.

The waiting list for all schools will expire on November 1.

Intra-District Transfer

All K through grade 8 students requesting a school transfer within the Somerville Public Schools are required to submit a school transfer application form to the Enrollment Office for approval. All 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 in consultation with the Department of Student Services

Transfer applications for the upcoming school year will be accepted at the Enrollment Office beginning in April of the current school year.

Accommodations for Students with Mobility Challenges Wishing to Enroll in Special Programs

Students with mobility challenges who seek to be enrolled in special programs should contact the Special Education Director to discuss accommodations. The Special Education Department can be reached at 617-629-5648.

Accommodations will be made so that students with mobility challenges will have full access to these district-wide special instructional programs in a fully accessible site.

Evacuation Plan

Evacuation Plan

The Somerville School Department will enforce the following Evacuation Plan when it is determined by the Administrator of the Building, the Police Department, Fire Department, or any other agency in authority that an emergency condition exists in the building or the surrounding neighborhood. During the first week of school, the plan will be sent to parents with a cover letter from the Superintendent. All new registrants through the year should also be given a copy upon admission to the Somerville school system.

This Evacuation Plan shall be included in the Somerville Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. If the plan needs to be enforced for any reason, the Superintendent's office must be notified immediately. The staff in turn will notify the Police Department, Fire Department, and city switchboard operator, to enable them to inform parents if they call, where their children are. It is understood that parental permission is not required before evacuation when it has been deemed appropriate to evacuate. Individual emergency evacuation plans for the disabled will be designed on site as needed.

Evacuation Sites:

<i>School</i>	<i>Primary Site</i>	<i>Secondary Site</i>
Argenziano		
Grades K-3	SHS field House	Kennedy School
Grades 4-8	SHS Café	Kennedy Café
Brown	Kennedy Gym	WSNS Café
Capuano	East Somerville	SHS Café
ESCS		
Grades K-4	Capuano Café	SHS Gym and Field House
Grades 5-8	Capuano Gym	SHS Gym and Field House

Healey		
Grades K-3	SHS Café	SHS Field House
Grades 4-8	SHS Gym	Argenziano
Kennedy		
Grades K-4	WSNS Café	SHS Café
Grades 5-8	WSNS Gym	SHS Field House
West Somerville		
Grades K-8	Tufts Administrative Building	Kennedy Gym & Café
Winter Hill at Edgerly		
Grades K-3	ESCS Café	SHS Auditorium
Grades 4-8	ESCS Gym	SHS Auditorium
SHS & NW/FC		
NW/FC	ESCS Gym	Edgerly Gym
Grades 9-10	ESCS Gym	Kennedy Café
Grades 11-12	Argenziano Cafeteria & Gym	Healey Café

Food and Nutrition Services Department

All of the meals and snacks offered by the award-winning Somerville Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services Department (FNSD) meet the nutritional and meal pattern requirements set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for participation in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Visit [the USDA website](#) for more information. Daily school menus can be accessed through the [Food and Nutrition Services Department website](#).

School Breakfast and Lunch

The Somerville Public School district qualifies as a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district. A CEP district provides free breakfast and lunch every day and for every student in Somerville Public Schools.

PIN Numbers

Students record breakfast, lunch, and milk choices at a point of sale system at each cafeteria, using an assigned personal identification number (PIN). Each PIN is associated with that student's account. For record keeping and medical purposes, FNSD requires that every student enter a PIN number.

Medically-Required Dietary Restrictions

Special, medically-documented dietary restrictions, such as food allergies, can be accommodated. Please reach out to your school nurse to discuss your child's needs.

Fundraising

Policy #JJE

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

CROSS REFS.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations

KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

Adopted: November 20, 1989

Amended: January 2010

Hazing

Hazing is 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.

Hazing is prohibited in the Somerville Public Schools. Leaders of student clubs and athletic teams are required to review this policy and prohibition at least annually, and must agree to zero tolerance for hazing. If claims of hazing by student athletic teams or organizations are substantiated, the aggressors will face disciplinary consequences.

Policy #JICFA

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

Adopted: November 2009

Policy #JICFA-E

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. 18. 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 the 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

Health Services

Each school has a nurse who is available to address student health needs throughout the school day. We recognize that the primary responsibility for the student's health and well-being belongs with the family and we encourage parents and guardians to work with school nurses to ensure optimal outcomes. Find information, forms, and nurse contact information at <https://somer ville.k12.ma.us/nursing>.

Health Services Provided at School:

- Liaison between home, school, and community resources
- First aid and illness assessment for students
- Care for chronic diseases
- Health education, including epinephrine training for staff
- Case management of students needing Individual Health Care Plans / Emergency Action Plans in school
- State mandated health screenings including hearing, vision, scoliosis, SBIRT (brief motivational interview about substance use), and height and weight (BMI)
- Health counseling
- Care of students with special health care needs, including those assisted by medical technology
- Medication administration – see Medications in School (below)
- Review and reminder of required immunizations – see Immunizations (below)
- Referral for health care, insurance
- Help obtaining glasses or other health-related items

Documentation Requirements

Physical Examination

A complete physical examination (done within one year prior to school entry) is required of all children new to the Somerville Public School system as well as those children entering Prekindergarten, Kindergarten, 4th, 7th, and 11th grades. In addition, yearly physical exams are required for students who wish to participate in school-sponsored athletic teams.

Immunizations

Immunizations, Lead Test and TB Test/Risk Assessment

MGL Ch. 76, Sec. 15 requires that children be up to date with immunizations for school entry. The medical record must indicate dates of immunizations – month, day, and year. Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines (105 CMR 460.050) also require a lead test prior to PK or K entry. All children must also have a TB risk assessment or, if deemed high risk, a TB skin test or IGRA. If you need help obtaining insurance or locating a local doctor, please call 617-625-6600, x6967.

	Prekindergarten	Kindergarten	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-8	High School
Hepatitis B	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses	3 doses
DTap/Td	4 doses	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses History of primary series
DTap/Td	4 doses	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses *4 if fourth given on or after 4 th birthday	5 doses History of primary series
TdaP				1 dose (required for entry to Gr. 7)	1 dose
Polio	3 doses	4 doses *fourth dose must be on or after 4 th birthday	4 doses *fourth dose must be on or after 4 th birthday	4 doses *fourth dose must be on or after 4 th birthday	4 doses *fourth dose must be on or after 4 th birthday
MMR	1 dose/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/ proof of immunity
Varicella	1 dose/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity	2 doses/proof of immunity
MenACWY (Meningococcal)				1 dose	2 doses *2nd dose must be given on/after 16 th birthday
Hib	1-4 doses				
Lead Test	Within 12 months	Previous result			
Physical Exam	Within 12 months of school entry	Within 12 months of school entry	Within 12 months of school entry	Within 12 months of school entry	Within 12 months of school entry
TB Assessment	Documented low risk or TB test result	Documented low risk or TB test result	Documented low risk or TB test result	Documented low risk or TB test result	Documented low risk or TB test result

Medical exemptions (dated statement signed by a physician stating that a vaccine(s) are medically contraindicated for a student) and religious exemptions (dated statement signed by a parent/guardian, or by the student if 18 years of age, stating that a vaccine(s) are against sincerely held religious beliefs) must be renewed annually, at the start of school.

Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions at School

If your child has a life-threatening food allergy or dietary restriction and will be eating lunch provided by the school, please be sure to review the menus every day with your child. If your child's allergies cannot be accommodated by the school menu, please reach out to the Food and Nutrition Services Department.

Meal menus are available on the SPS website: [Food and Nutrition Services Department \(FNSD\) | Somerville Public Schools](#) You can select the allergens you want to know about (the nine most common are listed) and if you hover over a menu item, you can see whether that food contains

the selected allergens. Please make a plan with the school nurse and be sure to provide all necessary documentation along with emergency epinephrine (if prescribed).

Medications in School

The administration of medication in school is regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (105 CMR 210.00) and by MGL, Ch. 71, Sec. 54B.

Before any medication can be given at school, the following requirements must be met:

- A current doctor's order must be on file for any prescription medication and, if needed, emergency medical plans such as a seizure action plan or allergy/asthma plan.
- A Medication Administration Plan must be signed by the parent/guardian giving consent to the school nurse to administer medication.
- A parent/guardian or other responsible adult must deliver all medications to the school nurse.
- Medications must be in a pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, dose, and instructions.
- New medications should be started at home and monitored by the parent/guardian for 24 hours prior to administration at school.
- Students with life threatening allergies **MUST** have an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) or nasal epinephrine for school.
- Students with asthma **MUST** have a rescue inhaler if indicated.
- Students who require medications at school or at school-sponsored events must have current orders and medication administration plans to participate in events such as field trips and off-campus activities.

Medications must be kept in the nurse's office with the following exceptions:

- Students who have parent/guardian and school nurse permission may carry rescue inhalers, epinephrine, insulin and glucose testing equipment and enzymes required for cystic fibrosis provided there is a current order and self-administration plan on file. Other medications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Parents, students, and school nurses must work together to ensure safe and age-appropriate monitoring of such conditions.

Over the Counter Medications

Over the counter (OTC or non-prescription) medications such as Motrin and Tylenol may not be carried in school. They can be administered by school nurses only if parents have given verbal

or written permission. An OTC permission form can be filled out online or on paper and returned to the school nurse.

Medication for Short-Term Conditions

Medication for short-term conditions, such as antibiotics for strep throat or an ear infection, should be administered at home for 24 hours before your child returns to school. These medications can be administered in school without a doctor's order provided they are delivered to school in a pharmacy-labeled prescription container with your child's name, dosage, and instructions. We strongly recommend you ask the pharmacy for two containers: one for home and one for school so it does not need to be transferred back and forth.

Health Forms

Health forms can be found online on the [Medications in School page](#) or by contacting your school nurse.

Screenings

Massachusetts requires the screenings listed below. If you do not want your child to participate, please let your school nurse know as soon as possible. You may opt out of all screenings, or just specific screenings. Contact information for your school nurse can be found on the SPS website: [School Nursing & Health Services | Somerville Public Schools](#).

- Pure Tone Hearing (ability to hear sounds at different frequencies): Grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, 10.
- Near Vision (for reading): Grades PreK, K, 1, 2, 3
- Far Vision (for seeing things that are far away): Grades PreK, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10
- Stereopsis (how well the eyes work together): Grades K, 1, 2, 3
- Height & Weight (identifies trends in weight and height): Grades 1, 4, 7, 10
- Postural (checks for curvature of the spine): Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
- SBIRT (brief motivational interview about avoiding drugs and alcohol): Grades 7, 9

Your child's school will also notify you when screenings are scheduled. Kindergarten vision and hearing screenings begin the first month of school.

When to Contact the School Nurse

Contact the school nurse about any special health considerations such as: daily medications, allergies, asthma, diabetes, hearing or vision difficulties, seizures, tube feedings, special dietary needs, or difficulty with mobility. The nurse will help plan any accommodations and discuss with the parent/guardian what level of education other school staff may need regarding the special

health care concerns. Ongoing restrictions in physical activity, including outdoor recess and physical education, should be noted in writing by the primary care provider.

When to Keep Your Child Home

Children learn best when they are rested and feel well. In order to maintain the health of all children, students who are actively ill (and most likely contagious) should not attend school.

Please keep your child home in the following situations:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Undiagnosed rash
- Antibiotic treatment until the child has been treated for a full 24 hours
- Contagious illness such as COVID-19, influenza
- Feeling too ill to participate in usual activities

A student with a fever should remain home for at least 24 hours after the fever has resolved without use of medication.

Pediculosis (Head Lice) Policy

School Nurses will confidentially communicate with parents/guardians of any student found to have pediculosis, and provide information regarding proper treatment and follow-up care. Per the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, children do not need to be excluded or sent home early from school because of head lice. Students found to have pediculosis will be allowed to remain in school, at the discretion of the School Nurse, for the remainder of the school day. Upon return to school, a follow-up evaluation will be performed by the School Nurse to determine that a treatment plan has been initiated.

Recess

In order to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle, children are expected to participate in recess daily. Please make sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather and safe play (i.e., outerwear to protect from cold weather – coats, hats, gloves; closed-toe shoes that will not easily slip off of feet when a child is running or climbing; avoid loose or dangling articles of clothing that could get entangled in play equipment). We will send students out to recess as often as the weather allows. Recess is not withheld from students as a routine consequence for

classroom behavior. Recess can be withheld from students by the school principal in cases where a student is exhibiting unsafe behavior at lunch or recess.

Homework

Policy #IKB

Definition and Purpose

The Somerville School Committee recognizes that homework can be an integral component of the learning process when it is developmentally appropriate. The Somerville School Committee defines homework as any task "assigned to students by school teachers that is meant to be carried out during the non-school hours." The Somerville School Committee views the purpose of homework as a way to improve the learning process, to aid in the mastery of skills, to create and stimulate interest on the part of the student.

Background

Current academic research suggests that the association between achievement and homework grows progressively stronger for older groups of students. The Somerville School Committee therefore believes that homework should have a different purpose at different grade levels:

- For students in the earliest grades (K-2), educators should encourage reading nightly and when assigned, homework should increase gradually from grade to grade, and should foster a positive home to school connection and a love for learning.
- For students in the upper elementary grades (3-5), homework should play a gradual and supportive role in building academic skills, time management, organization and persistence. Nightly reading is expected.
- In grades 6 through grade 12, homework should play an important role in building academic skills, time management, executive functioning, and persistence.

Guidelines for Homework

The School Committee recognizes the importance for educators, families, and students to promote a healthy lifestyle by balancing academic and non-academic activities, including, but not limited to clubs, extra-curriculars, and private family time. In our commitment to developing all learners' capacities to approach learning with persistence, resiliency, reflection, and adaptability, homework assignments shall be crafted in accordance with the following principles:

- Meaningful and valuable to the learning goals of the curriculum
- Necessary and relevant to classroom learning and/or real-life experiences
- Manageable for students to complete with reasonable time and effort
- Developmentally appropriate for students in terms of time, scope, and expectations

In addition, homework should:

- Have a clear purpose, which is communicated to students
- Allow students and educators to gain a sense of a student's understanding and provide opportunity for constructive feedback
- Be accessible to all students

When assigning homework, all district staff are asked not to make assumptions about resources available in the home, including access to technology.

With those points in mind, when assigning homework, educators will:

- Assign Purposeful Homework: Legitimate purposes for homework include practicing a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently, elaborating on information that has been addressed in class, and provide opportunities for students to explore their own interests.
- Design Homework to Maximize the Chances that Students Will Complete It: Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but still find it challenging.
- Involve Parents or Guardians in Appropriate Ways: Parents or guardians should be involved in homework and keep communication with school open but should not feel responsible for teaching any of the concepts covered.
- Carefully Monitor the Amount of Homework Assigned: Homework that is assigned should be appropriate to students' age levels and should be manageable for students to complete with reasonable time and effort.

Time Recommendations for Homework

The time recommendations will increase gradually from grade to grade. The guidelines below should remain flexible and individual differences among children should be taken into consideration. These specific time parameters for homework are recommendations/guidelines for the amount of time a student should be spending on homework. Additionally, for students in grades K-8, no homework shall be assigned over weekends, holidays listed on the district academic calendar, or school vacation weeks. However, homework may be assigned over a longer timeframe that may include the weekend but excluding all holidays and vacations. For all grades, assignments will not be due on the day of or the day after holidays listed on the district's official academic calendar. If a student observes other holidays, their teacher will adjust assignment due dates accordingly for that individual or for the entire class at their discretion. When students receive homework assignments from more than one teacher, all staff should be mindful of the cumulative amount and collective impact on students.

- Kindergarten students should not be assigned homework. Nightly reading is strongly encouraged.
- Grades 1-2: If assigned, homework should not exceed 20 minutes each day inclusive of nightly reading, no more than 2 days per week. In grades 1-2, homework shall not be a factor that is tied to a grade and is generally not recommended. When homework is not assigned, nightly reading is highly encouraged.
- Grades 3-5: 30 minutes (2-3 nights per week); in addition, nightly reading is expected.
- Grades 6-8: 60 minutes (2-3 nights per week per subject and teachers are encouraged to coordinate assignments); in addition, nightly reading is expected.
- Grades 9-12: the amount of homework will vary by subject.

Adopted: January 1996
Reviewed: May 2009
Revised: February 2019
Revisited: November 2021
Revised: May 9, 2022

Idling on School Grounds

Policy #EEAJ

MOTOR VEHICLE IDLING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

No motor vehicle operator shall cause or allow any motor vehicle operated by him or her on school grounds to idle unnecessarily, except for any of the following reasons: traffic conditions; queuing at a school for the purpose of picking up or discharging students; turbo-charged diesel engine cool down or warm up; maintenance of appropriate temperature for school buses when accepting or discharging passengers not to exceed three minutes in any fifteen minute period or one minute in any fifteen minute period for other motor vehicles; for circumstances involving safety or emergencies and for servicing or repairing motor vehicles; and as these exceptions are more completely described in the below referenced regulations. The term "school grounds" shall mean in, on or within 100 feet of the real property of the school whether or not it is in session, and shall include any athletic field or facility and any playground used for school purposes or functions which is owned by the municipality or school district, regardless of proximity to a school building, as well as any parking lot appurtenant to such school athletic field, facility or playground. Reasonable efforts shall be made by the district to identify by signage all known and actual air intake systems, which may be within 100 feet of an idling motor vehicle. A motor vehicle operator shall not idle a motor within 100 feet of such air intake system, unless the Somerville School District has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety or are not cost effective.

The Somerville School District shall erect and maintain in a conspicuous location on school grounds "NO IDLING" signage as described below. All such signage shall contain appropriate sized font so as to be visible from a distance of 50 feet.

NO IDLING

PENALTIES OF \$100 FOR FIRST OFFENSE AND \$500 FOR SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES

M.G.L. C. [90. § 16B AND](#) 540 CMR 27.00

It shall be the responsibility of the school administration to ensure that each school bus driver employed by the Somerville School District and not by a school bus contractor shall, upon employment and at least once per year thereafter, sign a document acknowledging the receipt of copies of M.G.L. c. [90. § 16B](#) and 540 CMR 27.00. The prohibitions contained in M.G.L. c. [90. § 16B](#) shall be enforced by state or local law enforcement agencies.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c. [71:37H](#), c. 90:16B and 540 CMR 27.00

Adopted by the School Committee: March 1, 2010

Revised: April 2011

Language Access

The Multilingual Services Office is part of the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative Department and works to increase the capacity of families and schools to communicate effectively in a multilingual community, and to develop innovative ways to improve school-parent partnerships that support teaching, learning, and student achievement.

Teachers and support staff can request assistance on behalf of a family at any time. Please see the *For Staff: Information and Resources* [page](#) to learn more.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is currently administered to students in grades 3 through 10 in the spring of each school year. Students are tested in designated major subject areas of Reading, English/Language Arts, History/Social Science, Mathematics, and Science/Technology. These MCAS tests are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Somerville Curriculum Guide. Parents and guardians are encouraged to review these curriculum materials and to impress upon their children both the importance of the MCAS and the need to accomplish as high a score as possible.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their principal with regard to any information about the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. Visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cal.html?section=19-20> for the latest MCAS testing information and schedule.

McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The McKinney Vento Homeless Education Liaison for Somerville Public Schools is housed in the [Basic Needs and Housing Supports Services Office](#), part of the Somerville Family Learning Collaborative.

Homeless students have the following rights:

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to attend school; a permanent address is not needed to enroll in school.
- Children in homeless situations have the right to stay in the school they attended before becoming homeless or where they last enrolled (school of origin) if the parent or guardian so chooses.
 - Schools must provide a written explanation if a placement dispute occurs; parents/guardians may contact the district's Homeless Liaison.
- A homeless child cannot be denied school enrollment just because school records or other enrollment documentation are not immediately available, and must be enrolled immediately.
- A homeless child has the right to participate in extracurricular activities and all federal, state, or local programs for which he/she/they is eligible.
- A homeless child is entitled to free breakfast and lunch, transportation assistance, and to receive Title I services.

Unaccompanied youth, homeless youth not living with parent(s) or guardian(s), have these same rights.

Policy #JFABD

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 Elementary Education (MADESE) 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 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 Regina Bertholdo. She may be reached at 781-468-6422 or by email at rbertholdo@k12.somerville.ma.us.

Enrollment

The Somerville Public Schools will immediately enroll 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 the 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, childcare 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 childcare 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 that 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

Mediation Program

The Somerville Mediation Program provides mediation, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention services to the Somerville Public Schools. The program promotes peaceful resolution of conflicts, racial understanding, cooperation, and tolerance through group work, activities, and classroom workshops. Mediation is a method of resolving differences between individuals or groups using a neutral third party who listens to both sides of the conflict and explores possible solutions, and creates understanding between them. As a violence prevention tool, the program addresses school and community conflicts between and among groups of students before situations can escalate.

Under adult supervision, student mediators who have participated in a two-day training, assist their peers in arriving at a mutually satisfactory agreement. Each year, the program trains 20 new students, so that the pool of available mediators at Somerville High School always numbers 50. In each PK-8 school, 10 middle school students are trained each year. Student mediators are a reflection of the school community in terms of gender, race, cultural backgrounds, and academic abilities.

Mediators assist students in looking for solutions to problems such as harassment, threats, bullying, fights, and racially motivated incidents. In addition to full-time staff at the high school, mediation services are also available at all of the PK–8 schools. We are also available to mediate student/teacher, parent/child, and personnel issues.

The program also conducts conflict resolution workshops addressing problems such as bullying, teasing, intolerance, and diversity issues for students in the elementary schools. We provide advanced training to a core group of SHS peer mediators who then teach conflict resolution skills through role-plays and discussions to middle school students. The middle school mediators teach the primary grade students how to resolve conflicts peacefully through stories and skits. The program also provides workshops to faculty and staff on bullying prevention, conflict resolution, and the peaceful classroom.

The student mediators also perform community service and mentor younger students in the elementary schools. For more information, please contact 617-625-6600 x611093.

Multilingual Learner Education

Mission and Values

The MLE department oversees the implementation of equitable and effective programming and services for multilingual learners and their families in Somerville from initial identification through reclassification. Our department's core focus areas are to:

- Provide effective, research-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment designed to build on students' assets.
- Develop and support educators and leaders via professional learning, collaborative structures, and career pathways.
- Partner with families throughout their students' educational experience.

Programs for Multilingual Learners

Somerville Public Schools provides a variety of programming for multilingual learners at all stages of learning English. Our two main programs are Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) and Dual Language Education. We also offer specialized programming for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). Across all of our programming, multilingual learners are supported in their academic achievement and English Language Development, as well as Spanish development in our Dual Language Programs. In the summer, we offer the SPELL program to our beginning multilingual learners to continue their English language development.

Multilingual Learner Parent Advisory Council (MLPAC)

The Somerville MLPAC is a group of parents and guardians with children who are current or former multilingual learners in Somerville Public Schools. The MLPAC discusses social and academic topics that are important to multilingual learners and their families, which helps create a partnership between schools and families. The MLPAC helps SPS staff understand the educational needs of their children and helps us improve educational outcomes for multilingual learners. Please visit the [MLE webpage](#) to learn how to get involved.

Non-Custodial Parents Rights

Policy #KBBA

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

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, Sec.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) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request 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 electronic and postal 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 G.L. c. 71, Sec. 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.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:34D](#); [71:34F](#); [71:34H](#)

603 CMR [23.07](#) (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

Updated: May 2006

Approved: May 7, 2007, Reviewed: January 2010

Non-Residential Vocational Education Tuition

Secondary school students seeking admission to a vocational program not offered in Somerville must present the non-resident application in person to the office of the Superintendent of Schools by April 1st of the preceding school year.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/policies/admissions/default.html>

No School

No School Announcements

During inclement weather conditions, “no school” announcements will be broadcast by local media outlets starting as early as the day before a predicted severe weather event. Announcements will also be posted on our website at www.somerville.k12.ma.us, aired on local cable, shared to social media feeds when possible, and shared directly to staff and families using the district’s direct messaging platforms, such as Blackboard.

The superintendent of schools uses their best judgment as to whether school should be held during inclement weather. However, parents and guardians also are urged to exercise discretion with regard to sending their children to school during inclement weather. **Please do not call police, fire, or the school department for “no school” information.**

Policy #EBCD - Emergency Closings

The superintendent may close the schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening hour, or to dismiss students early, the superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory, and operational activity is continued as may be possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school will be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principal ones relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the children:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.
5. Ability to contact media outlets in sufficient time to permit adequate publication of “no school” announcements.
6. The superintendent will weigh these factors and take action to close the schools only after consultation with public works and public safety authorities and with school officials from neighboring towns. Students, parents, and staff will be informed early in each school year of the procedures that will be used to notify them in case of emergency

closings. When schools are closed for emergency reasons, staff members will comply with the Somerville School Committee policy in reporting for work.

Revised: January 1996 - Reviewed: December 2008

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:4; 71:4A

Parental Notification

If a decision is made to cancel school, close school early, or open school late because of inclement weather conditions or other natural or facility concerns, parents/guardians will first be notified using the district's auto dial phone system. As time allows, automated messages will be sent to parents/guardians in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole. The phone numbers and email addresses you provide on the Emergency Contact forms are the numbers the Somerville Public Schools will use to contact you if school is closed or opens late.

Out of School Time Programs

The SPS Out of School Time Department coordinates after-school programs that include enrichment, recreation, and educational opportunities that complement the school day and offer students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills through high-quality, developmentally appropriate enrichment activities. Students also benefit from daily academic support including homework assistance and targeted tutoring services. After school services in all elementary schools are available during the regular school year for students in PK-5, from the time of dismissal until 5:30 p.m. during the school year. We follow the Somerville Public Schools calendar and are closed on all major holidays. Registration for all grades takes place in March following PK and K school registration once school day placements have been assigned. Families register for the school they have been assigned to.

The Community Schools Program, part of the Out of School Time Department, is an afterschool program run directly by the Somerville Public Schools. Community Schools is supported by various funding sources, and receives funding and reimbursements from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC), Child Care Choices of Boston, and from fees collected during program registration. There are many fee and payment options available for the Somerville Public Schools' after school program. An expanded sliding fee scale makes after school programming more accessible to families. We encourage you to apply or contact our office to learn more at 617-625-6600 x6970.

Complete a scholarship application form, available by calling 617-629-5510, or on the website at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/afterschool to determine eligibility.

Opportunities outside the Community Schools Afterschool Program, that include enrichment after school and during vacations, are also available for Somerville Public Schools students with specific academic needs through internal and partner programming.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

All Somerville Public Schools have very active and productive Parent Teacher Associations.

The purpose of the Somerville PTA is:

- to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, and community.
- to raise the standards of home life.
- to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- to bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts, as will secure for all children and youth, the highest advantages in physical, mental, and social education.

If you are interested in joining or supporting the PTA at your child's school, please contact the building principal for information. Membership is open to everyone throughout the year.

Photography/Publicity

Photo Permission

The Somerville Public Schools publishes a variety of information about our schools and their activities both in print and electronically. Your child's name or photograph may be published in print, on our website, or on various district or school online platforms in order to recognize achievement, publicize school-related programs, or in conjunction with the display of your child's work. You will be asked to give permission for your child's name or photograph to be published by the Somerville Public Schools, as part of the yearly online student information update process. You may also be asked to fill out a paper photo release form.

Policy #JRD - 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

Physical Restraint of Students

Policy #JKAA

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: September 20, 2001 - Reviewed: December, 2009 - Amended: December 2015

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 46.00 M.G.L. 71:37G

Plan Your Route to School

The City of Somerville and Somerville Public Schools participate in Safe Routes to School (SRTS), a program through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. The [Massachusetts Safe Routes to School](#) program works to increase safe biking and walking among elementary, middle, and high school students by using a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation. Find Somerville-specific resources to plan your route to school [here](#), including walking maps, arrival and dismissal guidelines, and other SRTS initiatives in SPS.

Public Preschool Programs

Somerville Public Schools offers a variety of tuition-free preschool programs to meet the needs of all students. For additional information, please contact the Enrollment Office at 617-625-6600 x6962.

Prekindergarten

Prekindergarten classrooms are open to four-year-old children who are in their year before kindergarten. The school day runs from 8:45 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. and includes universal free breakfast and lunch for all children. Enrollment in prekindergarten is based on a lottery system. Classrooms are located throughout the city in the following schools: [Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center](#), [Albert F. Argenziano School](#), [Arthur D. Healey School](#), [East Somerville Community School](#), [John F. Kennedy School](#), [West Somerville Neighborhood School](#), and [Winter Hill Community Innovation School](#).

Sonrisa

Sonrisa is a bilingual prekindergarten classroom located at the East Somerville Community School for four-year-old students from families who speak Spanish as their native language. This heritage language program will use an 80 / 20 Instructional model. The children will receive 80% of their instruction in Spanish, focusing on foundational literacy in Spanish first, and 20% of their day will be taught in English. In the Sonrisa program, children will have the opportunity to affirm their cultural heritage and develop age-appropriate first and second language and literacy skills in Spanish and English. Please visit the [Public Preschools page](#) to watch a video about this program.

Specialized Preschool Services

Some preschool programs are designed to meet the needs of students who have been found eligible for special education services through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP)

The Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECIP) is an inclusive, multisensory preschool program. The ECIP program is designed to meet the needs of children ages 3–5 who have been identified in need of specially designed instruction due to a disability. ECIP includes peer partners from the community to serve as community peers. Students with and without disabilities benefit from this philosophy, as the classes provide a rich, language-based curriculum with a multisensory, developmental approach to teaching. Peers being considered for admission must be three years old and screened. Classrooms are located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center. Visit the [ECIP informational page](#) to learn more.

Adapt, Include, Motivate (AIM)

The Adapt, Include, Motivate (AIM) program provides a highly structured preschool classroom grounded in the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). It is designed for young children who require intensive, individualized instruction and support to access early learning. Placement is determined through the IEP process based on each child's unique needs. AIM prekindergarten classrooms are located at the Capuano Early Childhood Center.

Professional Development Days

SPS educators engage in several professional development opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities allow educators to collaborate, learn, and grow together in order to provide the best possible educational experiences for our students. There is no school for students on full-day professional development dates and those dates can be found on our [school year calendar](#).

Common Planning Time

Following the adoption of a Common Planning Time (CPT) proposal, presented by the district and the Somerville Educators Union and approved by the School Committee in spring 2023, every Wednesday during the school year is an early release day. CPT is a practice where districts utilize contractual hours for educators to develop a consistent, structured time for planning and educator collaboration across all grades, departments, and schools. Through CPT, educators across the district will engage in both individual and collaborative planning for each grade level. You can find additional information on our [Common Planning Time webpage](#).

Promotion and Retention of Students Grades K-8

Policy #IKE

The Somerville School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building principal in consultation with the Assistant Superintendent of Academics.

Approved: November 17, 1997; Revised: March 6, 2006; Amended: April 2010

Promotions Grades 9-12

Policy #IKEB

Promotion is dependent upon the accumulation of course credits. A full year course counts for 5 credits; a semester course counts for 2.5 credits.

Credits needed to be promoted:

To sophomore class:	25 credits
To junior class:	50 credits
To senior class:	70 credits
Full-Year courses (2 semesters):	5 credits/class
Half-Year courses (1 semester):	2.5 credits/class

ALL STUDENTS in grades 9-12 must carry a full-time program equaling 990 hours of instruction each year.

Adopted: January 1998; Reviewed: May 2009; Amended: April 2014

Recording Devices

Policy #IJNDB- R

No individual may use any type of camera, video, audio, or computer recording device in any manner that interferes with or is disruptive of the educational process, invades the privacy of any individual, or violates the academic integrity of any school activity.

Students may not possess or use any cameras or video or audio equipment on school property or at a school-sponsored event, except under the following conditions:

- A student may possess and use the camera or video or audio equipment at the direction of and with direct supervision by a classroom teacher as part of classroom activities.
- A student may possess and use a camera or video or audio equipment if that student receives prior written permission from the school principal for a specific purpose. At no time will permission be granted for socializing or other non-essential purposes, or if the use will violate another individual's privacy.
- A student may possess and use a camera or video or audio equipment while attending and not participating in an event held on school grounds after school hours and open to the general public, as long as the possession and use are neither disruptive or in any way unlawful. This privilege may be revoked on a case-by-case basis at any time for any reason by the principal or school administrator, or by their designee.

Cell phones with camera and/or video functions must not be used to take or transmit any image or video at any time, even if the use of the cell phone is otherwise permitted.

For the privacy and safety of all, the use or appearance of use (showing the device in such a way that could lead an individual to believe they are being photographed or recorded) of any electronic device is not permitted in any locker room or bathroom in the SPS or in any locker room or bathroom at any school sponsored event. Photographing or recording is prohibited in the SPS unless authorized for educational or school purposes.

Safety Drills

As part of the district's comprehensive School Safety Plan, the district works in conjunction with the Somerville Police Department and the Somerville Fire Department to implement school safety drills periodically throughout the year, including fire drills and school lockdown drills. Implementation of school lockdown drills became effective June 2015. The Massachusetts Task Force on School Safety and Security strongly recommends that all school districts become efficient in responding to crisis situations. Annual safety drills, including fire drills and school lockdown drills, help ensure that staff members and students understand and are ready to implement the protocols and procedures that are in place to help maintain their safety during an emergency situation.

Safety Precautions

Stranger Awareness

Children need to be aware that occasionally there may be someone who does not have their best interests in mind. Children must learn strategies to keep themselves safe from unkind strangers. Children should be advised never to get into a stranger's automobile, but to run in the opposite direction from the way the vehicle is facing. Should a child be bothered by a stranger, it is important that he or she yell: "No, I don't know you," and flee to a safe place. A child should know his or her complete name and address, including city and state, and how to use the telephone to call home or the local police department. Teachers, administrators, and parents can assist in these areas of safety.

Animals in School

The Somerville Public Schools is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment. No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building principal. School principals, in consultation with the Health Services providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the principal shall be final.

Recess Safety

In order to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle, children are expected to participate in recess daily. Please make sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather and safe play (i.e., outerwear to protect from cold weather – coats, hats, gloves; closed toe shoes that will not easily slip off of feet when a child is running or climbing; avoid loose or dangling articles of clothing that could get entangled in play equipment).

School Hours: Grades PK–12

Early Childhood Integrated Program (ECIP)

8:30 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.*

Prekindergarten and Sonrisa

8:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.*

Kindergarten – Grade 8*

8:10 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.

K-8 students will be considered tardy if they are not present at school at 8:15 a.m.

Somerville High School (Grades 9-12)*

7:55 a.m. to 2:32 p.m.

SHS students will be considered tardy if they are not present at school at 7:55 a.m.

Next Wave Junior High School*

8:20 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Next Wave students will be considered tardy if they are not present at school at 8:20 a.m.

Full Circle High School*

8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Full Circle students will be considered tardy if they are not present at school at 8:00 a.m.

As per the State Education Department Regulations (603 CMR 27.00), all students in grades 1 through 8 must be scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours of structured learning time during the school year. All students in grades 9 through 12 must be scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours of structured learning time during the school year.

***Early Release Wednesdays for ALL STUDENTS**

Every Wednesday during the school year is an early release day for all students.

Early release times on Wednesdays are as follows:

- Prekindergarten: 12:00 p.m.
- Grades K–8 (except Next Wave): 1:00 p.m.
- Next Wave/Full Circle: 12:10 p.m.
- Somerville High School: 1:33 p.m.

For more information about early release Wednesdays and the decision to provide educators with Common Planning Time, please visit www.somerville.k12.ma.us/CPT.

Searches and Interrogations

Policy #JIH

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. 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

Policy #JIHA

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

Security Cameras in Schools

Policy #ECAF

The School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents, constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement and emergency response agencies. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings where there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras have been installed and may be used at any time. Students or staff identified on security cameras in violation of School Committee policies will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system as the situation requires.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2022

Smoking on School Premises

Policy #ADC

Use of any tobacco products* within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications. Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the district policy and requirements of state law.

*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: January 1996 - Reviewed: October 2008 - Amended: December 2015

Also reference Policy GBED – Use of Tobacco Products on School Property by Staff Members; and

Policy JICG – Tobacco Use by Students

Social Emotional Learning

Somerville Public Schools supports every student's social and emotional development through curriculum and practices called SEL (Social Emotional Learning). SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>

We do this by providing all elementary and early childhood learners with social competency instruction in their classrooms using these programs approved by the federal government because research shows they work. These programs are:

- Second Step (<http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step>) is implemented in all PK through grade 8 classrooms at all schools.
- Restorative Justice practices are currently being implemented in all PK to grade 12 schools. (<https://www.suffolk.edu/cas/centers-institutes/center-for-restorative-justice>)

Learn more: <https://somerville.k12.ma.us/sel>

Social Networking Policy

Policy #IJNDD

Social Networking Policy

1. Network Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) still in force.

This policy is adopted in addition to, and not as a substitute for, the Somerville Public Schools Network Acceptable Use Policy, which governs use of the Somerville Public Schools technology resources.

2. Overview.

The Somerville Public Schools has instituted this “Social Networking Policy,” and announces its expectations for staff members’ use of social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.; personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic technologically based communication systems.

All online, electronic, or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

In addition to never posting and exchanging inappropriate information on social networking platforms, staff should always refrain from inappropriate communication with members of the community (including, but not limited to, students, parents, and coworkers) through any verbal, written, or electronic communications method (including, but not limited to, text messaging and email). The Somerville Public Schools recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one’s professional life and personal life will be blurred. Staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should a staff member “friend” a student on a social network, subscribe to a student’s “social network” account, regularly engage in email “chat” with a student, exchange text messages with students, or engage in other electronic communication, the school district is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator’s authority to maintain discipline, encourage appropriate behaviors, and/or compromise the educator’s ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one’s own personal resources, as opposed to Somerville Public Schools resources, compromises the staff member’s, as well as the school district’s, ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth’s public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive, or maintain records in their capacity as public employees, to retain, disclose, and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law.

All emails using the Somerville Public Schools email service are considered public records.

This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through school-based resources, such as staff email or school sponsored web pages, such records are retained and archived through the Somerville Public Schools information technology department. If, however, a staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

3. Expectations of Staff

- No matter what medium of communication a staff member selects, he/she should adhere to appropriate professional boundaries. A staff member is a role model, not a student's or parent/guardian's friend, and as such, should always act in accordance with this understanding.
- Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. For example, social networks require account holders to take specific steps to "privatize" the information they place online. Staff must educate themselves to those features of any social networking site selected. Staff will be responsible should any information intended to be "private" becomes "public" due to ignorance of the features of the social network chosen for use or failure to properly use such features. All communications, of any nature, should be crafted with the expectation that the communication could be "public."
- Staff must also know that any information shared privately with a recipient could be redistributed by such recipient, without the knowledge or consent of the staff member. The same principles applied in face-to-face communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. In essence, nothing posted online is ever truly "private." The distributor of all content is responsible for the content and the appropriateness of all materials.
- If a Somerville Public Schools employee receives inappropriate content from a student or a minor arising from their employment, the employee must inform their supervisor or law enforcement authorities as soon as practicable. The content must NOT be forwarded or deleted without authorization of the supervisor/designee or authorities.
- The Somerville School Committee expects staff to keep the line between professional life and personal life clearly drawn at all times. There is no reason why this cannot be done, even in light of the proliferation of social networking sites. All that is required is some forethought before using social networking for both professional and personal reasons, to be sure that these lines never become blurred. For example, if the district

does not maintain a web portal for staff to communicate outside of school hours as necessary with students and families, and a staff member wishes to establish a social network or personal email account for communicating with students, the staff member should establish a social network identity and email identity that is separate from his/her “personal” social network identity or personal email account. Staff should only use an educational social network account or educational email account to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians on matters directly related to education. The “friends” associated with such educational social network account should only be members of the educational community, such as administrators, staff, students, and parents of such students. It is strongly recommended that staff members reject friend requests from individuals who do not fit into any of these categories.

- At all times, and in the use of any form of communication, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties. For example, through an educational social network account, a staff member may not post confidential student information on the “wall,” the “information” section, or through any part of the social network account that would be accessible to other of the staff member’s social network “friends” associated with that account. If a staff member wishes to communicate privately with a student through the educational social network account, such communication shall be conveyed only through the private email/message feature of the social network, so that only the student may view the message and respond to it.
- Staff members are encouraged to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only, and only through Somerville Public Schools resources, such as school-provided email or web portal accounts. Use of a personal email account or social networking account to discuss school business with students and parents is discouraged. It should be noted that, just because a staff member uses his/her personal email as opposed to a school email account, this does not shield such email from the provisions of the public records law or from discovery litigation. It only prevents the archiving of such messages through the school district’s automatic email archiving system. We again remind staff members that information sent or received by them, even through personal email or social network accounts, which are related to their capacity as a school employee, are still subject to public records retention, exemption, and disclosure requirements.
- If a staff member conveys school related messages to students and parents on his/her private account, he/she should save such email or any communication conveyed through a social networking site, or print and save a paper copy of such email or other online communication, and file it, and regard its privacy, as he/she would any other document concerning that student. The staff member should forward copies of any such emails or online communications to his or her school based email account so that it can be

properly retained and archived in compliance with the requirements of the public records law. Any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention, and perhaps disclosure, under the public records law.

- This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member's right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of job duties. However, when staff members speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning work, the staff member is speaking as an employee and not as a citizen, restrictions may be placed upon staff's freedom of expression. Those restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain staff's status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, be able to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, and remain objective with respect to students.
- Staff members are discouraged from using home telephones, personal cell phones, personal email accounts, and personal social network accounts to communicate with students. Communication with students, even if Somerville Public Schools resources for such communications are not used, are within the jurisdiction of the school district to monitor as they arise out of the staff member's position as an employee. Any conduct, whether online or not, that reflects poorly upon the Somerville Public Schools or consists of inappropriate behavior on the part of a staff member, may expose an employee to discipline up to and including discharge. Even if staff are not using a school telephone, computer, classroom, or the like to engage in contact with a student, such contact is not outside of the Somerville Public Schools' authority to take appropriate disciplinary action. If the behavior is inappropriate, undermines the staff member's authority to instruct or maintain control and discipline with students, compromises objectivity, or harms students, the Somerville Public Schools reserves the right to impose discipline for such behavior. A staff member may also face individual liability for inappropriate online communication with students and/or parents and guardians, as well as exposing the district to vicarious liability in certain instances.

At the same time, the Somerville School Committee recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular school hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with school sponsored events for which staff members serve as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to school based email accounts, school provided telephones, or school based web pages. In such limited circumstance, the district anticipates that employees will make reasonable use of their cell phones or smart phones to convey time sensitive information on scheduling issues and the like. When Somerville Public Schools staff members communicate with students in connection with school sponsored events, a copy of the communication must be sent to the staff member's immediate supervisor.

- Staff members are not to distribute pictures of students, staff members, or school activities without the expressed permission of the individual(s) who are shown in the pictures.
- If a staff member is communicating as an employee of the Somerville Public Schools in online communications, the staff member must be aware that readers will assume he/she “speaks for the school district.” Therefore, all online communications, when actually acting on behalf of the district, or creating the appearance of doing so, must be professional at all times and reflect positively on the school district.
- During the use of any social networking site, staff may not, without express permission from the Superintendent of Schools/designee, use the school’s logo, likeness, or any school photographs or other property that belongs to the Somerville Public Schools.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Approved and adopted by the Somerville School Committee: October 6, 2014

Somerville Childcare Center

The Somerville Child Care Center (617-625-6600 x611101) is located in the Somerville High School building (81 Highland Ave.), and is available to children of Somerville Public School teachers and employees, City of Somerville employees, and residents. The Center has staff qualified by the Department of Early Education and Care and can accommodate 16 to 18 children daily. The children range from 2.9 to 5 years of age. The Center follows the public school holiday schedule but is open the full year, including school vacations and during the summer. The Center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the Somerville Public School year and from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. during the summer months. Slots are available for full-time (5 days / week) enrollment. Learn more about the Somerville Childcare Center at www.somerville.k12.ma.us/childcare.

Special Education

The Special Education Department (www.somerville.k12.ma.us/sped) is responsible for ensuring all students who require special education services in order to make effective progress in their learning are identified and their individualized learning needs are met in the least restrictive environment possible. Special Education Department staff work with teachers, administrators, and families to ensure Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students are implemented with integrity. Inclusive learning, where students with identified special needs are appropriately integrated into classrooms and the school community with all of their peers, is the primary goal of the Special Education Department. (617) 629-5645.

Students with Disabilities, Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

For more information, please see the Title IX section of this guide.

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The Somerville Special Education Parent Advisory Council (S-SEPAC) is a group of parents with children who receive a wide range of special education services through the Somerville Public Schools Special Education Department. The S-SEPAC provides support and resources to parents and their children with disabilities. There are monthly meetings and workshops throughout the school year covering various areas in special education. The S-SEPAC advises the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, and participates in the planning, development, and evaluation of special education programs. Learn more at: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/ssepac.

Student Crisis and Assessment Protocol

If a student expresses self-harm, a team of clinically trained counselors will consult and assess the level of risk.

Based upon the initial assessment, the disposition could be as follows:

1. If the student is deemed safe and there are no safety concerns, the student will be able to return to class after the parent / guardian is notified of the situation.
2. If the student requires further evaluation, an appropriate plan will be established. This may include contacting the CHA Crisis Team, the student's mental health provider, or referring the student to the Behavioral Health Urgent Care for an assessment to identify any behavioral health issues and treatment needs.
3. The student's parent / guardian will be notified of the situation and the recommended plan.

Student Dress Code

Policy #JICA

File: JICA - STUDENT DRESS CODE

The responsibility for the personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items (e.g. backpacks and book bags) of the students will rest with individual students and their parents or guardians, unless a specific school dress code has been voted on and adopted by the school community, in which case student attire will be in accordance with the dress code adopted. Students are permitted to dress in compliance with this dress code in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that student attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items do not interfere with the health or safety of any student and do not contribute to a hostile or intimidating environment for any student.

Student, faculty, or parent groups may recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions, however, students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their attire and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

Core Values

As a teaching and learning community that values diversity, we believe:

- Students should be able to dress for school and style their hair for school in a manner that expresses their individuality without fear of unnecessary discipline or body shaming.
- All students have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. The enforcement of our dress code policy will not create disparities, reinforce or increase the marginalization of any group, nor will it be more strictly enforced against students because of racial identity (*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length, and protective hairstyles), ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation, cultural or religious identity, household income, body size/type, or body maturity.
- Students and staff are responsible for managing their personal distractions.
- Opportunities for growth and learning shall be the driving force behind efforts to address non-compliance with this policy.
- Every effort should be made to support students and minimize loss of time on learning, including having clothing items available for loan as needed.

Universal Dress Code

Students may not come to school shirtless, pantless, shoeless, or visibly displaying their underwear. Students must wear the following and not face unnecessary barriers to school

attendance if they are in compliance, so long as their attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any students or contribute to a hostile or intimidating environment for any student, as noted above.

- Top that covers the majority of the torso and does not expose private parts. Appropriate tops include but are not limited to a shirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, tank.
- Bottom that does not expose private parts or undergarments. Appropriate bottom clothing items include pants, shorts, skirt, dress.
- Footwear.

Students are expected to follow all school rules with respect to wearing any protective clothing, footwear, safety glasses, or other protective or safety equipment that may be required for participation in specialized programs. Additionally, this policy allows for reasonable variation in required student attire for participation in activities such as swimming.

Students may not wear clothing, jewelry, or personal items that:

- Are pornographic, contain threats or vulgar language, or promote illegal or violent conduct such as the unlawful use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or drug paraphernalia;
- Demonstrate hate group association/affiliation and/or use hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or other protected groups;
- Intentionally show private parts (nipples, genitals, buttocks) or undergarments (with the exception of bra straps). Clothing must completely cover private parts in solid, non-sheer material;
- Cover the student's face to the extent that the student is not identifiable (except clothing/headgear worn for a religious or medical purpose); or
- Demonstrate clear gang association/affiliation.

Attire worn in observance of a student's religion is not subject to this policy.

Clothing that displays profanity or other vulgarities create an intimidating and/or hostile environment and disrupt the learning environment, and are not permitted.

Policy Enforcement

Principals are required to ensure that all staff are aware of and understand the core values and associated guidelines of this policy.

Conversations about student apparel should be facilitated where both parties have an equal voice. Such conversations should not occur in front of a class or other students.

Staff will use reasonable efforts to limit disciplining or removing students from class as a consequence of wearing attire in violation of this policy unless the attire creates a substantial

disruption to the educational environment, poses a hazard to the health or safety of others, or factors into a student behavior rule violation such as malicious harassment or the prohibition on harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Further, no student shall be referred to as “a distraction” due to their appearance or attire.

Typical consequences for a violation of this policy may include parent/guardian contact or conference and the directive to cover, change, or remove the non-complying attire. A student may be instructed to leave their classroom briefly to change clothes, and every effort shall be made to have clothing items available for loan at the school. The Principal or their designee will notify a student’s parent/guardian of the school’s response to violations of the student dress code policy. Refusal to abide by this policy and/or repeat violations could result in progressive discipline.

Legal References: Dress and appearance of students protected [\[M.G.L. c. 30. §83\]](#) *[Acts of 2022, Chapter 117](#)

Adopted: June 1996

Revised: March 1998

Amended: April 3, 2023

Student Information (Release of)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Policy #IJNDC

INTERNET PUBLICATION

I. PURPOSE

The School District has established a district-wide web page that links users to web pages for the district's individual schools. The School District maintains these web pages for educational purposes only, in furtherance of the educational mission of the School District. All published pages and corresponding links to other sites must relate to the district's educational mission.

II. SUPERVISION AND APPROVAL OF WEB PAGES

The Superintendent (or his/her designee) may select the person or persons ("the Webmaster") responsible for overseeing the school district's web pages and maintaining the web pages in a manner consistent with this policy and the school district's Access to Digital Resources Policy. The Webmaster must approve all links from the district web pages to other sites on the Internet. The Webmaster will review the links to ensure that the links are related to the district's educational mission.

Staff members may publish web pages related to their class projects or courses on their school's web site. Staff members must submit their material to the Webmaster for approval before the material can be published. Staff members may not publish or link to personal web pages as part of the school district web site.

Student or staff work (e.g., voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork) may be published on the district's web pages, as detailed below. All work that is published will be accompanied by a copyright notice written by the Webmaster that prohibits copying the work without the written consent of the copyright holder.

III. CONTENT STANDARDS

All web page materials are expected to be accurate, grammatically correct, and free of spelling errors. Student work may deviate from this standard depending upon the age and grade level of the student. Web pages should be well-organized and professional in appearance. Web pages must not contain copyrighted or trademarked material belonging to others unless written permission to display such material has been obtained from the owner and the owner is credited on the school's web page.

IV. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

A. In general

Identifying information about students, such as first and last names, personal phone numbers, or home addresses, will not be published. First names or first names and the first letter of the student's last name may be used where appropriate.

B. Student photographs

- Student photographs may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

- Student photographs will not be accompanied by identifying information about the student(s).

C. Student work

Student work, e.g., voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the written consent of the student's parent or guardian.

D. Staff photographs, identifying information and work

- Photographs of staff members, accompanied by the staff member's full name, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.
- Staff work, e.g., voice, likeness, quotes, written material, musical pieces, and graphic or other artwork, may be published only with the staff member's written consent.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: August 2015

Student Internet/Social Media Use Guidelines

Policy #JRE

Network Acceptable Use Policy for Students

Purpose

The Somerville Public Schools is pleased to offer its students access to the school's computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the school's 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 believe that there is educational value in the Internet, and recognize the potential support to our curriculum. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. Many educationally valuable files may be downloaded from the Internet. Because of its enormous size and resources, the Internet's educational potential is boundless. Because of its broad reach, however, the Internet also contains the potential for misuse. These 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 (username 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 to 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: Cyberbullying

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bill S2404, Section 5, defines cyberbullying 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. Cyberbullying 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. Cyberbullying 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, cyberbullying 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 buses 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 cyberbullying 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 email 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 online 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 devices 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.

Adopted: June 3, 2002; Revised: November 27, 2007; Approved: December 17, 2007

Amended: June 2009; Amended: March 2015

Sexting

Sexting refers to the sending of a photograph or other visual image, depicting a person in the partial or total state of nudity, via text message from one cell phone to another. Depending on the age and appearance of the person in the photo and the means of how it was obtained and disseminated, the act of "sexting" could violate the laws of child pornography, possibly resulting in the issuance of criminal charges. Somerville Public Schools is bound by Mass General Laws to report all cases of "sexting" to the Somerville Police Department who will investigate and possibly forward the case to the Middlesex District Attorney's Office. We ask all parents and guardians to be vigilant in educating their school-aged children about the long-term consequences of "sexting." We ask that all parents stress to their school-aged children that once a photo is disseminated, it can never be retrieved.

Student Records (Access to)

603 CMR 23.00 is promulgated by the Board of Education pursuant to its powers under M.G.L. c.71, § 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, § 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 23.00 is in conformity with federal and state statutes regarding maintenance of and access to student records, and are to be construed harmoniously with such statutes.

23.07: Access to Student Records

(1) 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.

(2) Access of Eligible Students and Parents. The eligible student or the parent, subject to the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07 (5), shall have access to the student record. Access shall be provided as soon as practicable and within ten days after the initial request, except in the case of non-custodial parents as provided in 603 CMR 23.07 (5). Upon request for access, the entire student record regardless of the physical location of its parts shall be made available.

- (a) Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be furnished to the eligible student or the parent. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. However, a fee may not be charged if to do so would effectively prevent the parents or eligible student from exercising their right, under federal law, to inspect and review the records.
- (b) Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, section 34A to receive a copy of his/her transcript.

(c) The eligible student or the parent shall have the right upon request to meet with professionally qualified school personnel and to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.

(d) The eligible student or the parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent, prior to gaining access to the student record.

(3) Access of Authorized School Personnel. Subject to 603 CMR 23.00, authorized school personnel shall have access to the student records of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the eligible student or parent shall not be necessary.

(4) 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 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.

(a) A school may release the following directory information: a student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place 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 without the consent of the eligible student or parent; 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.

(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 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.

(5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 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 or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student 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, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request 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 all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the 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 that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §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.

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 23.00: M.G.L. c. 71, 34D, 34E.

See also: Somerville Public Schools Student Records Policy #JRA

Summer Programs

SPS offers numerous summer learning and enrichment activities. Visit the [SPS Summer](#) page for a list of other summer camps, activities, and programs.

Research shows that students who do not participate in learning activities over the summer may experience a loss of learning. When they return to school in the fall, these students require a review of the previous year's material before they can begin to do work at their grade level. To prevent this loss of learning, Somerville Public Schools offers a variety of programs and services for students.

Summer Reading

Somerville students entering grades 1-12 are encouraged to read over the summer, and are required to complete a book project early in the new school year. Summer reading lists provide suggested books for each grade level. Students do not have to read books from these lists; they are provided to help guide book selection for students who may not know what they want to read. Suggested summer reading lists are distributed to students at the end of the academic year. They can also be found on the district's website and in the local public library. Many local bookstores also have copies of the suggested reading lists and can provide recommendations on books for your child or teen.

Summer Meals Program

Free breakfast and lunch is available for several weeks during the summer for youth under the age of 19. Information on dates and locations of the free Summer Meals Program will be provided in the spring through local agencies and the City of Somerville offices.

Title IX, Chapter 622, and Section 504

Somerville Public Schools Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Somerville Public Schools does not discriminate in its programs, facilities, or employment or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, religion, disability, pregnancy, home status, marital/civil union status, sex/gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship status, place of birth, national origin, ancestry, cultural identity, genetics or military status, and does not tolerate any form of retaliation, or bias-based intimidation, threat, or harassment that demeans individuals' dignity or interferes with their ability to learn or work. The following Somerville Public Schools administrators have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Section 504

*Elizabeth Doncaster
Director of Student Services
Somerville Public Schools
167 Holland Street; Somerville MA
02144
(617) 625-6600 x6028*

Title IX or Chapter 622

*Mariana MacDonald
Director of Human Resources
Somerville Public Schools
167 Holland Street; Somerville, MA
02144
(617) 625-6600 x6015*

Students with Disabilities, Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his or her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Title IX

Important pieces of legislation affecting the public schools were passed during the past several years. **Title IX** of the 1972 Education Amendment is the first comprehensive federal law which prohibits sex discrimination in the programs, policies, and practices of educational programs and activities.

Chapter 622

The state law, **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 study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

These laws make it clear that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to females as well as males and to minority groups. No school may exclude a child

from any course, activity, service, or resource available in that public school on account of race, color, sex, disability, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination Statute

An Act Relative to Gender Identity (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011), which became effective on July 1, 2012, amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories, to include discrimination on the basis of gender identity. The law defines gender identity as:

“...a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth. Gender-related identity may be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held as part of a person’s core identity; provided, however, that gender-related identity shall not be asserted for any improper purpose.”

Among the statutes amended under *An Act Relative to Gender Identity* is G.L. c. 76, §5, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity against students who enroll in or attend the public schools. G.L. c. 76, §5 now reads as follows:

Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly-attended public schools. **No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.**

In June 2012, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted revised Access to Equal Education Opportunity Regulations, 603 CMR 26.00, and Charter School Regulations, 603 CMR 1.00, to reflect the broadened student anti-discrimination provision in G.L. c. 76, §5.

File: ACAB-R - GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL

HARASSMENT UNDER TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972

The following grievance procedures apply to all complaints made by students or staff of sexual harassment, sexual assault or sexual violence under Title IX of the Education Amendments of

1972 and in accordance with School Committee Policy ACAB.

I. Reporting of Sexual Harassment Complaints

A. How to Report a Complaint of Sexual Harassment

Students and employees who believe they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment should notify the District's designated Title IX Coordinator, Mariana L. MacDonald (mmacdonald@k12.somerville.ma.us). If the complaint concerns allegations against the Title IX Coordinator, then the complaint should be filed with the Superintendent or designee.

Employees who witness sexual harassment or have a reasonable belief that it is occurring, are required to report it immediately to the Title IX Coordinator.

Reports of sexual harassment may also be made by employees to their direct supervisor and by students to a teacher, counselor, school nurse or building administrator, who shall immediately bring such report to the attention of the Title IX Coordinator.

The complaint may be filed by the alleged victim or any other party. Any person filing a complaint is encouraged to do so within a short time after the occurrence giving rise to the complaint, to assure a prompt investigation and fair resolution.

B. Handling of Sexual Harassment Complaints

All complaints shall be processed in a fair, expeditious and confidential manner. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the complaint response, including implementation of supportive measures and the grievance/appeal process. In doing so, the Title IX Coordinator may delegate certain duties to a designee. Complaints can be investigated by a building administrator, district-level staff member, or the Title IX Coordinator. The decision-maker must be a separate individual from the investigator. The Title IX Coordinator (or designee), investigator and decision-maker shall not have a conflict of interest or bias. All Title IX personnel shall receive appropriate training in accordance with Section VIII below.

II. Supportive Measures and Filing of a Formal Complaint

A. Supportive Measures

Once a report of sexual harassment has been received, the Title IX Coordinator or designee will promptly contact the alleged victim (the "Complainant") to discuss the availability of supportive measures and consider the Complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures. The District must investigate sexual harassment allegations in any formal complaint. The District must inform the Complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without filing a formal complaint, and explain to the Complainant the process for filing a formal complaint. Supportive measures shall also be

offered to the Respondent as necessary to ensure continued and equal access to the education program and/or activity during any investigation.

"Supportive measures" are individualized services reasonably available that are nonpunitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures must be offered to both the Complainant and the Respondent, and may include, but not be limited to: no contact orders, change of class schedules, modifications of assignments/work, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and other appropriate measures.

In addition to the above supportive measures, the District, in its discretion, may consider the emergency removal of a student in accordance with applicable student discipline regulations. The District may place an employee on paid administrative leave during the course of an investigation of sexual harassment allegations against said employee as determined appropriate and consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

B. Filing a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint may be filed in writing by the Complainant or presented verbally and put into writing and signed by the Title IX Coordinator or designee. The District will respect the wishes of the Complainant with respect to whether the District investigates a report of sexual harassment, unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a formal complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the Complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known Circumstances.

C. Contents of a Formal Complaint

A formal complaint is signed by a Complainant or the Title IX Coordinator or designee alleging sexual harassment against a Respondent and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment. At the time of filing a formal complaint, a Complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the District. A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator or designee in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information set forth herein.

The District must investigate sexual harassment allegations in any formal complaint. If the allegations in the formal complaint do not meet the definition of sexual harassment as set forth under Title IX, or did not occur in the District's education program or activity, the District must dismiss such allegations for the purposes of Title IX, but may still address the allegations in any manner that the

District deems appropriate consistent with its policies, procedures and code of conduct, including but not limited to its anti-bullying policies and plan.

III. Informal or Formal Resolution of Complaint

The District must offer the Complainant a formal resolution process and may offer an informal resolution process. If the District does not provide the option of informal resolution, the formal resolution process shall be followed.

A. Informal Resolution Process

If the District elects to offer an informal resolution process, such process shall be offered and implemented at the election of the Complainant and only after receipt of voluntary, informed, written consent of both the Complainant and the Respondent. The Complainant may elect informal resolution of a complaint at any time prior to a final determination by the decision-maker. This may include conciliation and/or mediation by an individual trained to conduct such processes. At any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, either party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the formal complaint grievance process. The District shall not offer an informal resolution process when a student alleges sexual harassment by staff.

B. Formal Resolution Process

The formal complaint process will comply with the grievance procedures outlined below.

IV. Grievance Procedure

In accordance with Title IX and its supporting regulations, the District shall implement the following process when investigating formal complaints of sexual Harassment:

- A.** The Complainant and Respondent will be treated equally throughout the investigation process and be provided with written notice of the allegation (including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview), the grievance process, the range of possible remedies the District may provide a Complainant and disciplinary sanctions the District might impose on a Respondent, following determinations of responsibility. Both parties have the right to have a representative/advisor participate in the process on their Behalf.
- B.** Any interim supportive measures, as appropriate, will be offered to both parties.
- C.** The investigator will conduct an objective evaluation of all available evidence. This shall include an interview of both the Complainant and the Respondent, during which each party shall have a full opportunity to state their case through the presentation of witnesses and other evidence. Witnesses and other persons relevant to the complaint, if any, may also be interviewed. Please note that, during the investigation, rape shield protections apply to the Complainant and Complainants may generally not be asked about their prior sexual behavior.
- D.** During the investigation process, the parties shall not be prohibited from discussing the complaint or collecting evidence.

- E. The investigation shall be completed in a reasonable time frame within thirty (30) school days except for good cause. Good cause may include, but not limited to, unavailability of a party, concurrent pending law enforcement investigation, or need for interpreter or accommodation of any party or witnesses' disability.
- F. During the investigation, there is a presumption that the Respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- G. The investigator will make findings based on a preponderance of the evidence Standard.
- H. The investigator will not request or solicit information from any party or witness that constitutes disclosure of information that is protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the holder of the privilege voluntarily waives the privilege.
- I. Prior to the conclusion of the investigation, and at least ten (10) calendar days prior to completion of the investigation, the Complainant and Respondent will both be provided a copy of the investigation report and an opportunity to submit any additional information they would like considered by the investigator before their report is finalized. Both parties shall be provided the opportunity to submit written, relevant questions that a party wants asked of any party or witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party.
- J. Once the investigation has been completed, the investigator will submit their investigation report, with recommendations with regard to responsive measures, to the decision-maker. The Complainant and Respondent shall also be advised, in writing, of the investigator's findings and recommendations.
- K. The decision-maker will review the investigation report and hold a disciplinary hearing with the Respondent, in accordance with applicable procedures (for student or employee).
- L. The decision-maker will advise both parties of the final determination and any related remedial/responsive measures in a manner that complies with applicable laws regarding student confidentiality and appeal rights. The Respondent will be notified of any disciplinary action and other remedial measures, if the complaint is substantiated. Notice of such final determination will be made in writing and sent simultaneously to the parties along with information about how to file an appeal.

V. Disciplinary Action

If a complaint is substantiated, the District will act promptly to eliminate the behavior and will refer the matter to the proper supervisor or administrator for appropriate responsive measures, including but not limited to disciplinary action and restoring a sense of safety for the

Complainant. For students, discipline will be imposed consistent with the Code of Conduct and Massachusetts Student Discipline Law.

Discipline of employees will be consistent with collective bargaining procedures, if applicable, and may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Responsive measures will also include any steps necessary to prevent the recurrence of any discrimination and/or harassment and will include corrective action aimed at eliminating any discriminatory effects on the complainant and others, as appropriate.

VI. Retaliation Prohibited

Retaliation in any form against any person because of or related to a sexual harassment or retaliation complaint, or because of or related to cooperation with an investigation of a sexual harassment or retaliation complaint, is unlawful and prohibited. Retaliation is also prohibited against any individual that participates or chooses not to participate in the grievance process. If retaliation occurs, it could be considered grounds discipline, up to and including suspension and/or discharge for employee(s), and appropriate disciplinary action for Students.

VII. Appeal Procedure

Both parties have the right to appeal the decision-maker's determination to the Superintendent or designee. Any appeal should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the final determination. The Superintendent or designee in reviewing the appeal may consider the following Factors:

- A. Was there any procedural irregularity with the investigation process?
- B. Is there any new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the Investigation?
- C. Did the Title IX investigator have a conflict of interest?

The decision of the appeal process is final and is not subject to further review by the School Committee.

VIII. Training Requirements

All Title IX personnel including Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, people who facilitate any informal resolution process shall receive training as required by Title IX and its supporting regulations. All training materials shall be made available to the public for inspection upon request.

Parents

The complaint procedure shall be that 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 therefore from the responsible 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 school committee shall respond promptly, but not later than thirty (30) days, in writing to the complaining party. The 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 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.

Teachers

The grievance procedure shall be the same outlined in Article III of the agreement between the Somerville School Committee and the Somerville Educators Union.

Notice of Parent/Guardian and Student Rights

Under Section 504, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504," is a non-discrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. One purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

Complaints or grievances regarding compliance with Section 504 may be addressed to the district's Section 504 Coordinator, Liz Doncaster, 617-625-6600 x6028 and/or the ADA Coordinator, Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, 02144. (617) 625-6600 x2400

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who (a) currently has, or (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, or performing manual tasks.

DUAL ELIGIBILITY: Many students will be eligible for educational services under both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA/PL 94-142). Students who are eligible under the IDEA/PL 94-142 have many specific rights that are not available to students who are eligible solely under Section 504. It is the purpose of this notice form to set out the rights assured by Section 504 to those disabled students who do not qualify under the IDEA/PL 94-142.

The enabling regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. You have a right to be informed by the school district of your rights under Section 504. (The purpose of this notice form is to advise you of those rights). 34 CFR 104.32.
2. Your child has the right to a free appropriate public education designed to meet his/her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met. 34 CFR 104.33
3. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
4. Your child has a right to placement in the least restrictive environment. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to facilities, services and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
6. Your child has a right to an evaluation prior to an Initial Section 504 placement and any subsequent significant change in placement. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. Testing and other evaluation procedures must conform with the requirements of 34 CFR 104.35 as to validation, administration, areas of evaluation, etc. The district shall consider, as appropriate, information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and

achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, adaptive behavior, physical or medical reports, student grades, progress reports, parent observations, anecdotal reports, and other sources. 34 CFR 104.35.

8. Placement decisions must be made by a group of persons (i.e., the Section 504 Committee), including persons knowledgeable about your child, the meaning of the evaluation data, the placement options, and the legal requirements for least restrictive environment and comparable facilities. 34 CFR 104.35.

9. If eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic formal or informal re-evaluations, generally every three years. 34 CFR 104.35.

10. You have the right to notice prior to any action by the district in regard to the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.

11. You have the right to examine relevant records. 34 CFR 104.36.

12. On Section 504 matters you have a right to file a complaint with the district's Section 504 Coordinator (or designee), who will investigate the allegations to the extent warranted by the nature of the complaint in an effort to reach a prompt and equitable resolution.

13. If you wish to challenge the actions of the district's Section 504 Committee in regard to your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, you should file a written Notice of Appeal with the district's Section 504 Coordinator after you receive written notice of the Section 504 Committee's action(s).

14. You may also request a hearing directly from the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals in Malden (781) 338-6407. Specifically, you have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the district's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.

15. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer, you have a right to a review of that decision by a court of competent jurisdiction. 34 CFR 104.36.

16. You also have a right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights. The address of the regional office which covers Massachusetts is:

Office for Civil Rights, Region 1
U.S. Department of Education
John W. McCormack, POCH, Room 701
Boston, MA 02189-4557

Volunteering

Somerville Public Schools offers many ways volunteers can engage with students and staff to support, expand and enrich student learning. Volunteers can read with a student, provide 1:1 or small group tutoring, support multilingual learners, assist with a music or visual arts lesson, mentor a first-generation college-bound student, help out in a computer sciences or robotics class, be a guest speaker, organize a book room or book drive, assist in an afterschool program, bring your therapy dog for classroom or staff wellness visits and there are many other ways to volunteer. SPS Volunteers are parents, guardians, grandparents, retirees and semi-retirees, community members, working professionals, college and high school students, and caring individuals who want to help every student thrive.

SPS strives to match volunteers with staff and students for a mutually rewarding experience. Volunteers wishing to serve regularly should complete a short application, including a C.O.R.I. (background check). To find out more visit: www.somerville.k12.ma.us/volunteer or contact the SPS Volunteer Coordinator: 617-625-6600 x6023. Parents and caregivers may also obtain a Volunteer Application and C.O.R.I. form at their child's school.

WELLNESS POLICY FOR PK -12 POLICY

File: EFD

WELLNESS POLICY FOR PK -12

POLICY:

Somerville Public Schools envisions that all students and staff are healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged. SPS recognizes that physical, social, and emotional health are linked to academic achievement and college, career, and community readiness. Students learn better in healthy schools with healthy employees.

This policy is intended to (1) promote healthy lifestyles by establishing guidelines and placing an emphasis on District-wide programs and efforts designed to support overall student wellness, and (2) help address the national challenge of childhood obesity at a local level.

Definition of Wellness:

The definition of wellness long used by the National Wellness Institute is consistent with these tenets: Wellness is an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence.

Guiding Principles:

SPS shall establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication and monitoring of the Wellness Policy and its established goals and objectives.

1. SPS recognizes that optimal health looks different on different bodies in different circumstances and wishes to help students develop a healthy relationship with all foods and offer a variety of physical activities for students to engage in.
2. Students in SPS shall have access to healthy foods and drinkable water throughout the school day including access to the USDA's Child Nutrition Program and will have sufficient time to eat lunch within the lunch period.
3. All students in grades PK-12 shall receive standards-based health, nutrition, and physical education that provides students with learning experiences to develop the skills to live a healthy, well-rounded lifestyle.
4. All students in grades PK-12 shall have opportunities to be physically active. PK-8 will have sufficient recess time to provide opportunities for social development & expend energy in a safe environment.
5. Neither food nor physical activity opportunities (recess, etc.) shall be used to motivate or punish students unless there is a safety reason to do so.
6. SPS shall create and maintain healthy and safe physical environments that promote learning.

7. All students shall have access to strategies and supports to develop knowledge and skills for social-emotional health.

8. All students shall have access to health services to support students in chronic conditions management, first aid, and promote wellness through school based-nursing staff.

9. SPS is committed to establishing strong partnerships with students, employees, families, community members, and community organizations to ensure engagement and involvement between school and other settings to maximize the impact of wellness programming.

District Wellness Procedures for ensuring that specific goals and objectives designed to meet all Guiding Principles outlined in this Wellness Policy shall be developed by the District Wellness Committee and reviewed/revised by said committee at least every three (3) years, and presented to the Superintendent for approval. The approved procedures shall serve as the basis for evaluating schools' and district departments' compliance with this Wellness Policy, to assess progress toward the district's wellness goals, and to inform any recommended Wellness Policy changes. The Wellness Committee will report back to the School Committee on an annual basis.

LEGAL REFS: Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act), Public Law 111-296, added Section 9A to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1758b), Local School Wellness Policy Implementation.

The provisions set forth in Section 204 expand upon the previous local wellness policy requirement from the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).

Adoption Date: March 6, 2006

Revised: November 27, 2007 Date

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Revised: August 2009

Revised: May 2013

Revised: December 2018

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PROCEDURES

I. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Goal/Objective: At least once every three years, the district will evaluate compliance, strength of policy, and progress toward goals.

- a. Under the direction of the Superintendent's designee a District Wellness Committee will be established and convened annually for the purpose of evaluating policy adherence, and regularly as required by Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 to discuss possible improvement efforts in the area of student and staff wellness.
- b. The Superintendent's designee shall ensure compliance with district wide wellness policies. In each school, the building administrator or designee shall ensure compliance.
- c. Schools are encouraged to convene a wellness team to support wellness initiatives at their school and/or to incorporate discussions about wellness initiatives into other school-based meetings.
- d. Every effort will be made to ensure that representation on the District Wellness Committee includes the Somerville School Committee, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), English Learners Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SSEPAC), School Councils, School Health Services, Physical Education Department, School Food and Nutrition Services Department, Somerville Community Schools Program, Superintendent's Office, Somerville Teachers' Union, community health agencies, student(s), parents/guardians, and school principals or their designees. Representation may occur through subcommittee work supporting district wellness. The District will utilize various methods of outreach throughout the year to encourage participation on this committee.
- e. The District Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment of the policy every three years using the Wellness School Assessment ToolWellSAT-3.0 and the Well-SAT-I. Based on the results of the assessment, this committee will develop recommendations for the School Committee & the Superintendent to review and update/change the policy & procedures. Results of the triennial assessment will be posted to the SPS website.
- f. The Superintendent's designee will develop information to disseminate about the updated Wellness Policy during the next school year and a final version of the policy will be shared publicly.

II. Nutrition

Goal/Objective: The district aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating to help all students develop healthy lifestyle practices.

1. School Meals

- a. Meals served through the SPS Food & Nutrition Service Department (FNSD) shall comply with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served, as specified in 7 CFR 210.10 or 220.8, as applicable.
- b. SPS is committed to offering breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks that are accessible to all students, are appealing and attractive to children, and are served in a clean setting.
- c. The FNSD will continue to work on improving the nutritional quality and student acceptance of school meals by developing new culturally relevant recipes, giving students as many choices as possible, focusing on food presentation, and giving students opportunities to sample new foods.
- d. The FNSD will work to support regional agriculture and the consumption of fruits and vegetables through the inclusion of locally grown produce in school meals.
- e. Schools will allow at least 20 minutes when possible for students to eat meals within the designated period.
- f. Schools will ensure water is made available and accessible to all students during meals and during the school day without charge.
- g. SPS qualifies for district-wide Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) until 2027. The district will provide all students with a 4-digit pin in order to not overtly identify students in any way. Applications for free/reduced priced meals are made available on the district website. Paper applications are available upon request.

2. Staff Qualifications & Professional Development

- a. All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

3. Competitive Foods & Beverages

- a. Items sold by the FNSD through the A La Carte program at Somerville High School will meet the guidelines established by the A-List for competitive foods and beverages sold or provided in public schools during the school day. (*)

4. Food Allergies

- a. School Health Services, Food and Nutrition Services, school-based staff, families and students will work in collaboration to manage life-threatening food allergies in the school

environment and on field trips in accordance with current SPS food allergy policy (JLCDD & JLCDD-R). (*)

5. Celebrations, Rewards and Snacks

- a. Teachers and parents/guardians can access a list of recommended classroom snack foods and beverages online developed by the Somerville Food and Nutrition Services Department. (*)
- b. Schools and classrooms are encouraged to replace food at parties and celebrations with other celebratory items and activities. (*)
- c. All food items brought into the schools are required to contain nutritional content information due to potential food allergies. 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."
- d. School staff will not use food or candy as a reward for children's accomplishments involving attendance, behavior, or academic performance.

6. Fundraising

- a. Students, staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to consider fun, healthy fundraising options. Fundraisers conducted during the school day should encourage and promote good health habits. (*)
- b. Schools are encouraged to hold non-food fundraisers. (*)
- c. School fundraisers where food is sold will only be offered after school meals are over and will comply with USDA Smart Snacks In School standards. (*)

7. Health Promotion

- a. All school staff will promote a school environment supportive of healthy eating & physical activity.

8. Nutrition & Garden Education

- a. Nutrition education lessons that are skills based will be offered to all pre-K-8 students when possible.
- b. School garden and nutrition instruction are encouraged as part of other relevant curriculum areas such as science
- c. Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the HS comprehensive health education curriculum.

9. Essential Topics in Health Education

a. The district will offer a comprehensive health education curriculum K-12 aligned with the Health Education Policy (IHAM). (*)

10. Out of School Time Programs

a. Any snack provided by the Somerville Food and Nutrition Services Department will meet the guidelines outlined in this policy.

b. Any snack served by community-based after school programs that receive school department funding will meet the guidelines outlined in this policy.

c. Parents/guardians will be strongly encouraged to provide nutritious snacks for their children in an after-school program.

d. Health and wellness professional development will be provided to afterschool staff annually.

e. Candy and other foods that do not meet District nutrition guidelines will not be used as an incentive or reward during in-school or out-of-school-time programming.

III. Physical Activity

Goal/Objective: To provide students with opportunities for quality physical education and daily physical activity before, during and after school in order to learn the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

1. Physical Education

a. Physical Education (PE) will be a required subject in all grades and every other grade at the high school level.

b. The district's comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum identifies the progression of skill development in grades preK-12 and will be aligned with established state and federal physical education standards.

c. All Somerville Physical Education teachers will be certified as is consistent with federal and state laws.

d. The district shall provide all PE teachers with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education and physical activity topics and competencies.

e. Fitness assessments will be incorporated into PE at all schools.

f. The district discourages students from substituting other school or community activities for physical education class time or credit in place of required physical education.

g. All students regardless of their ability are integrated into PE class throughout the district.

2. Recess

a. Recess provides academic, social and physical benefits. Students should be given at least 20 minutes when possible to provide opportunities for social development in a safe environment, to expend physical energy and in order to increase alertness in the classroom.

b. Recess should not be used to motivate or punish students unless there is a safety reason to do so.

c. Principals are encouraged to provide recess before lunch for Prek-8 students when possible.

d. Outdoor recess should take place unless the temperature, including the wind chill, is below 20 or if the heat index (temperature plus humidity) is above 95 or if conditions are deemed unsuitable or unsafe due to rain, snow, sleet or ice. (*)

e. Indoor recess should take place if air quality index is purple (200 or above). Recess should be no longer than 15 minutes if air quality index is red (150 or above). Indoor activities should be offered for children with asthma or other respiratory conditions if the air quality index is orange (100 or above). (*)

3. Classroom Physical Activity Breaks & Active Academics

a. Classroom teachers will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to incorporate movement as part of the classroom activities and provide short physical activity breaks between lessons and classes. (*)

4. Before & After School Activities

a. Physical activity, outdoors whenever possible (see guidelines under III.2.d), will be incorporated as a consistent practice throughout the District in the afterschool program.

b. The district shall provide physical activity opportunities before and/or after school for students.

5. Active Transport

a. Schools will participate in the Safe Routes to Schools program to promote safe walking, biking and “actively commuting” to and from school. (*)

IV. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Goal/Objective: The district will coordinate and encourage initiatives and school based activities that are designed to promote student well-being, optimal development, strong educational outcomes and staff health and wellness.

1. Social Emotional Learning

a. Schools will receive ongoing professional development around Social Emotional Learning and all pre-K-8 teachers will implement a social emotional curriculum in the classroom. (*)

2. Community Partnerships

a. Schools will participate in programs that support food security and be encouraged to expand programming as needed. (*)

3. Digital Health & Wellness

a. The district will support balanced, safe & responsible use of technology.

4. Health & Wellness Information

a. The district will provide current, research-based information about health promoting behaviors.

5. Staff Health and Wellness Promotion

a. The District will promote staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members that are accessible and free or low-cost. (*)

6. Professional Learning

a. When feasible, the district will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and the school.

7. School Health Data Reporting

a. Height and weight data will be collected annually on all children in Grades 1, 4, 7 and 10, as required by Massachusetts. Results will be made available to families upon request. This

information is confidential information consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and to the maximum extent possible under the law.

b. School & City officials will meet to review the Youth Risk Behavior Survey data and share the results with the school community. (*)

8. Sustainability

a. The District will work with other city departments to strengthen sustainability efforts in schools.

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