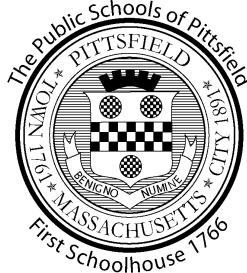


# Policy Handbook for Parents and Students

## 2011-2012 School Year



### Pittsfield Public Schools Pittsfield, Massachusetts

#### Mission Statement

**To serve** our community and its children by creating a school environment where lifelong learning is valued, excellence is expected, and improvement is continuous;

**To meet** the needs of each student by providing the information, encouragement, support, and instruction required to meet or to exceed the district's high expectations and rigorous academic demands;

**To prepare** every student for postsecondary education, career satisfaction, and lifelong economic, social, and civic success.

To Families and Students: This publication contains important information. Please read it and sign both sides of the Parent and Student Agreement in this packet and return it to the school. Thank you.

A familias y estudiantes: Esta publicación contiene información importante. Por favor lea y firme ambos lados del acuerdo entre Padres y Estudiantes dentro de este manual y envíelos a la escuela. Gracias. Para la ayuda adicional con esta guía o el programa del Inglés como una segunda lengua, contacta por favor Sra. Virginia Guglielmo en 499-6304.

Aux Familles et aux Etudiants: Cette publication contient l'information importante. S'il vous plaît le lire et signer les deux côtés de l'Accord de Parent et Etudiant à l'intérieur et le retourne à l'école. Merci. Pour la plus ample assistance avec ce manuel ou le programme d'Etudiant de Langue anglais, s'il vous plaît contacter Mme Virginia Guglielmo à 499-6304.

Às Famílias e Estudantes: Esta publicação contém informação importante. Por favor leia-o e assine ambos lados do Pai e Acordo de Estudante dentro e retorna-o à escola. Obrigado. Para mais auxílio com este manual ou o programa de Aprendiz de Língua Inglêsa, por favor contata Senhora Virginia Guglielmo em 499-6304.

# PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY HANDBOOK

## **Pittsfield School Committee**

Kathleen Amuso, Chairperson  
Mayor James Ruberto  
Alfred Barbalunga Churchill Cotton Daniel Elias  
Erin Sullivan Katherine Yon

## **Pittsfield Public Schools**

Dr. Howard Jacob Eberwein III, Superintendent  
Ms. Barbara Malkas, Deputy Superintendent  
Ms. Kristen Behnke, School Business Administrator

This publication summarizes many laws, policies, regulations and practices that are important to Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) students and their parents and guardians. It is not intended to be a complete directory of all laws and policies relating to students and parents. Federal and state laws, PPS policies, regulations and practices at the system-wide and school building levels are subject to change.

Visit the PPS on the Web:

***[www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net)***

September 2011

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in accordance with its non-discrimination and zero tolerance policy, does not discriminate in its programs, activities, facilities, employment, or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, disability, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability and does not tolerate any form of discrimination, intimidation, threat, coercion and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others by interfering with their freedom to learn and work.

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PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (PPS) – PARENT AND STUDENT AGREEMENT

PARENT AND STUDENT AGREEMENT

Please read *both sides* of this page carefully, complete all the information, sign where requested (*both sides*), and return it to the school on or before **September 30**. Your signature after each section indicates agreement to the entire section. If you do not agree to a specific part of this agreement, please cross it out.

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

1. We have received a copy of the **Pittsfield Public Schools Policy Handbook for Parents and Students**.
2. We understand that the Policy Handbook contains important information on Promotion and Graduation, Anti-bullying, School Attendance, the Code of Student Conduct and Student Discipline, Acceptable Use of the Internet, Non-Discrimination, Student Records, Student Transportation, the care and return of textbooks and library books, and other school rules and policies.
3. We understand that the rules and codes of conduct identified here and within each school handbook have been reviewed by each School Council and approved by each high school's School Council and that students who violate them may lose certain privileges or be subject to disciplinary action.
4. We agree to work with school staff to be sure the above-named student will attend school every day (except for excused absences) and completes homework.
5. We have read the summary of the Code of Discipline in Section VII and understand that each school has its own additional school-based rules, which will be distributed at the start of the school year. We have discussed Student Discipline and Due Process Rights and the school-based rules. We agree to work with school staff to make sure that the student above follows the Code of Discipline and school-based rules.
6. We understand that video and/or audiotaping is used on school buses.

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

As parent/guardian of the above-named child I recognize that a School Committee policy permits release of certain information about students without their parent's consent (*see* Sec. XI.C. below), including, as required by Federal law, to military recruiters. I further recognize that a Committee policy allows the display of students' work, the publication of student photographs, and other publicity involving a child's name and image (*see* Section XI.H. below). I hereby notify the Pittsfield Public Schools that for the 2011-2012 school year I WITHHOLD PERMISSION TO RELEASE the following information on my child (*Initial the information you WITHHOLD permission to release*):

\_\_\_\_ Directory information to military recruiters

\_\_\_\_ Directory information to any source

\_\_\_\_ Publication of an identifiable picture of my child on a school website

\_\_\_\_ Publication of an identifiable picture of my child by print or broadcast media

PITTSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (PPS) – PARENT AND STUDENT AGREEMENT

Acceptable Use Policy for Networks, Including the Internet

It is the policy of the Pittsfield Public Schools that students and staff will use all technology to access electronic (“computer”) networks, including the Internet and e-mail, in a responsible, legal and ethical manner. Failure to do so may result in the loss of network privileges for the user, disciplinary action under the Code of Discipline, or prosecution under federal or state law.

I have read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy for Pittsfield Public Schools Internet use in Section VII of this Policy Handbook. I understand that use of the Internet and e-mail in school is a privilege, not a right. It is designed strictly for educational purposes. I also understand that the PPS is taking measures to restrict access to any material deemed inappropriate; but because no filtering system is perfect, my child might gain access to an inappropriate site. I agree that I will not hold the PPS responsible for any access by my child of any inappropriate materials acquired on the Internet.

By signing below, I give my child permission to work on the Internet and to use e-mail in school for educational purposes. I understand that if I do not sign this agreement, my child will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENTS MUST SIGN THE STATEMENT BELOW REGARDING INTERNET USE:**

I understand and agree to adhere to the behaviors outlined in the Pittsfield Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy in Section VII of this Policy Handbook. I understand that any violation of this policy may result in the loss of Internet and e-mail privileges and/or disciplinary action and/or prosecution under federal or state law. If I reach an inappropriate website, I will report it to a teacher or librarian.

I understand that if I do not sign this agreement, I will not be permitted to use the Internet and e-mail in school.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Important Medical Information

A “Student Health and Emergency Information” form is included elsewhere in this mailing. Please complete that form and submit it to your child’s school health office.

PLEASE REVIEW, SIGN BOTH SIDES, AND RETURN FORM TO THE SCHOOL BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2011

## ACUERDO ENTRE PADRES Y ESTUDIANTES

Por favor lea con mucho cuidado ambos lados de esta página, complete toda la información, firme donde se solicite (ambos lados), y envíelo a la escuela el/o antes del 30 de septiembre. Su firma indica después de cada sección que está de acuerdo con toda la sección. Si usted no está de acuerdo con alguna parte específica del acuerdo, por favor táchela.

Nombre del Padre/tutor (Por favor imprima): \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del Estudiante (Por favor imprima): \_\_\_\_\_

Escuela: \_\_\_\_\_ Grado: \_\_\_\_\_ Aula principal: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Hemos recibido una copia del **Manual de Normas de las escuelas públicas de Pittsfield para padres y estudiantes**.
2. Entendemos que el manual de normas contiene información importante sobre promoción y graduación, Anti-bullying, asistencia escolar, el Código de Conducta y disciplina de los estudiantes, uso aceptable de Internet, la no-discriminación, archivos de estudiantes, transporte de estudiantes, el cuidado y devolución textos y libros de la biblioteca, otras reglas y normas.
3. Entendemos que las reglas y códigos de conducta identificadas aquí y en cada manual de cada escuela, han sido revisados por cada comité escolar, y aprobado por cada comité escolar y los estudiante quienes las infrinjan puede que pierdan ciertos privilegios o estarán sujetos a acciones disciplinarias.
4. Estamos de acuerdo en trabajar con el personal de la escuela para asegurar que el estudiante ya mencionado asista a la escuela todos los días (excepto por ausencias excusadas) y haga las tareas.
5. Hemos leído el resumen del Código de Disciplina en la Sección VII y entiendo que cada escuela tiene reglas-internas adicionales, las cuales serán distribuidas al comienzo del año escolar. Hemos discutido la disciplina de estudiantes y el debido procesamiento de las reglas - internas de la escuela. Estamos de acuerdo en trabajar con el personal de la escuela para asegurar que el estudiante mencionado siga el Código de disciplina y las reglas - internas de la escuela.
6. Entendemos que videos y/o audio grabación de utilizan en los buses.

**Firma de padre/tutor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Firma del estudiante:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

Como padre/tutor del niño arriba mencionado reconozco que una norma del comité escolar permite la divulgación de cierta información sin el consentimiento de los padres (ver Sec. XI.C. abajo), incluyendo, como lo requiere la ley federal, a los reclutadores militares. Reconozco además que una norma del comité permite la publicación de trabajos del estudiante, la publicación de fotografías del estudiante, y otro tipo de publicaciones que implique imagen y nombre del niño. (Ver Sección XI.H. abajo). Por la presente notifico a las escuelas Públicas de Pittsfield que por el año escolar 2011-2012 NIEGO el PERMISO de REVELAR la siguiente información de mi niño (**Indique la información que Niega el permiso para revelar**):

\_\_\_ Directorio de información para reclutadores militares,

\_\_\_ Directorio de información para cualquier otra fuente.

\_\_\_ Publicación de una foto identificable de mi niño en la página Web de la escuela.

\_\_\_ Publicación de una foto identificable de mi niño en periódicos o en programas de emisión.

Normas aceptables para el uso de la red, incluyendo Internet

Dentro de las normas de las Escuelas públicas de Pittsfield establece que el personal y estudiantes usarán toda tecnología para así acceder a redes, (computadores) incluyendo la Internet y correo electrónico (e-mail) de una manera responsable, ética y legal. El incumplimiento de este resultará en la pérdida de privilegios de uso de la red para el usuario, en acciones disciplinarias bajo el Código de disciplina, o acción judicial bajo la ley federal o estatal.

He leído y entendido la Normas del uso aceptable de Internet en la sección VII de este manual de Normas de las Escuelas Públicas de Pittsfield. Entiendo que el uso de Internet y e-mail en la escuela es un privilegio, no un derecho, es estrictamente diseñado para propósitos educacionales.

También entiendo que la EPP está tomando medidas para restringir el acceso a cualquier material que estime inapropiado; pero debido a que ningún sistema de filtros es perfecto, mi niño puede que logre el acceso a un sitio inapropiado. Estoy de acuerdo que no responsabilizaré a las EPP por cualquier acceso obtenido por mi niño a materiales inapropiados de la Internet.

Al firmar abajo, le doy permiso a mi niño para trabajar en la Internet y usar e-mail en la escuela con propósitos educacionales. Entiendo que si no firmo este acuerdo, no se le permitirá a mi niño el uso de Internet ni de e-mail en la escuela.

Firma del padre: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOS ESTUDIANTES DEBEN FIRMAR LA DECLARACIÓN ABAJO SOBRE EL USO DE INTERNET:**

Entiendo y acepto a adherirme a los comportamientos definidos en el Uso aceptable de las normas en la sección VII de este manual de normas de las Escuelas Publicas de Pittsfield. Entiendo que cualquier violación a estas normas puede resultar en la pérdida de los privilegios de Internet y e-mail y/o en acciones disciplinarias y/o acción judicial bajo la ley federal o estatal. Si accedo a un sitio Web inapropiado, lo informare a un maestro o a la bibliotecaria.

Entiendo que si no firmo este acuerdo, no se me permitirá el uso de Internet ni e-mail dentro de la escuela.

Firma del estudiante: \_\_\_\_\_ Fecha: \_\_\_\_\_

Importante informacion Medica

Una forma de "Informacion de Salud y Emergencia del Estudiante" esta incluida en este correo. Por favor complete la forma y entregela a la oficina de salud en la escuela de su hijo.

POR FAVOR REVISE, FIRME AMBOS LADOS Y ENVIE EL DOCUMENTO  
A LA ESCUELA el 30 de septiembre 2011.

# **I. Equal Education Opportunities**

## Non-Discrimination Policies

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts and federal law, the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) prohibits discrimination in school admissions, participation in courses of study and extra-curricular activities, the hiring and employment of staff, and access to school facilities and activities based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition.

*Conforme a las disposiciones de Massachusetts y a la ley Federal, las Escuelas Públicas de Pittsfield (PPS) prohíben que se discrimine para la admisión a la escuela, participación en cursos de estudios, actividades extracurriculares, ofrecimiento de empleo a candidatos y contratación de personal, acceso a los servicios y actividades de la escuela; por motivo de raza, color, sexo, religión, nacionalidad, país de origen, orientación sexual o incapacidad.*

### **A. RACIAL OR ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION/HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

This regulation prohibits the discrimination or harassment of students, including treating students differently, using insulting language or actions that create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment, or refusing to let a student participate in an activity because of his/her race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or handicapping condition.

### **B. POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST STUDENTS**

Pittsfield Public Schools policy states that sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated on school grounds, at school-sponsored events or activities, or while traveling to and from school or school-sponsored events or activities. The policy includes a definition and descriptions of sexual harassment and the procedure for filing a complaint.

### **C. POLICY ON SEXUAL ASSAULT**

This extension of the sexual harassment policy states that sexual assault will not be tolerated whether committed by staff, students, or third parties; and retaliation against a person who reports such assault or cooperates in an investigation also will not be tolerated. This policy also sets forth procedures for students to report a sexual assault.

### **D. POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF STUDENTS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

This policy addresses the School District's efforts to ensure equity and to protect all students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students, from violence, harassment and discrimination.

### **E. NON-DISCRIMINATION AGAINST STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The PPS is committed to a policy of non-discrimination against qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law (M.G.L. 151B). Qualified students with a disability may not be excluded from, or denied the benefits of, or denied access to any program or activity based solely on their disability.

## F. HAZING LAW POLICY

This policy addresses hazing (a crime), which is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization that willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. It includes a discussion of a person's legal obligation to report to law enforcement authorities if he or she knows that someone is a hazing victim or is at the scene of such a crime.

## G. ANTI-BULLYING/PEER HARASSMENT

Bullying and/or peer harassment is not acceptable conduct in the Pittsfield Public Schools and is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying and/or peer harassment shall be subject to disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion in accordance with the student handbook. A student's bullying and/or peer harassment behavior may also be addressed through other behavioral interventions. For more information about Anti-Bullying/Peer Harassment policies, see Section VII. I., on page 26.

## H. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCES OF DISCRIMINATION

This policy addresses how to file complaints regarding alleged discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability.

The Pittsfield Public Schools has adopted procedures to assist any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for a prohibited reason, and to rectify any instances of such discrimination. Any student, or any parent or guardian, who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for any reason stated above should make her/his complaint, either formally or informally, to the school building principal or to the district's designated coordinator for compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, IDEA, and M.G.L 151B. Any person who believes that she/he has been discriminated against for any reason stated above in a matter of hiring or employment, or in having access to school facilities or activities, should make her/his complaint, either formally or informally, to the district's designated coordinator for compliance with the requirements of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, and IDEA.

The Pittsfield Public Schools' designated coordinators for all such matters are:

	<b>Problem Area</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Title VI	Discrimination by race, color, national origin	Barbara Malkas	499-9510
Title VII	Discrimination by employers on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin	Jennifer Boulais	499-9505
Title IX	Discrimination in educational programs or athletics, on the basis of gender	Ann Marie Carpenter	499-9515
Section 504	Discrimination against individuals with disabilities	Ann Marie Carpenter	499-9515
ADA-	Guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.	Stephanie Case	499-9515
IDEA	Guarantees early intervention, special education, and related services to children with disabilities from birth to the age of 21.	Stephanie Case	499-9515
Ch. 151 B	Discrimination by MA employers on the basis of race, color, national origin	Jennifer Boulais	499-9505

## **H. PROCEDIMIENTOS PARA QUEJAS DE ESTUDIANTES POR DISCRIMINACIÓN.**

*Este reglamento trata sobre como presentar una queja concerniente por cargos de discriminación por raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, religión, edad, orientación sexual e incapacidad.*

*Las Escuelas Públicas de Pittsfield han adoptado procedimientos para ayudar a una persona que crea que ell ella a sido discriminado por razones prohibidas, y para corregir cualquier instancia de discriminación. Cualquier estudiante, padre o tutor que crea que el/ella han sido discriminados por cualquier razón antes indicada, debería presentar una queja, ya sea formal o informalmente al director de la escuela o al coordinador del distrito designado para el cumplimiento de las regulaciones de Título VI, Título VII, Título IX, Sección 504, ADA, IDEA, y MG. 151B. Cualquier persona que crea que el/ella ha sido discriminada por cualquier razón antes indicada en materia de contrato o empleo, o al tener acceso a la escuela o las actividades de las escuela, deberían presentar sus quejas ya sea formal o informalmente al coordinador del distrito designado para el cumplimiento de las regulaciones de Título VI, Título VII, Título IX, Sección 504, ADA, y IDEA.*

*Los coordinadores designados del distrito para estos asuntos son:*

	<b>Área del Problema</b>	<b>Ñame</b>	<b>teléfono</b>
<i>Title VI</i>	<i>Discriminación por raza, color, origen nacional</i>	<i>Barbara Malkas</i>	<i>499-9510</i>
<i>Title VII</i>	<i>Discriminación por empleadores basado en la raza, color, religión, sexo, u origen nacional</i>	<i>Jennifer Boulais</i>	<i>499-9505</i>
<i>Title IX</i>	<i>Discriminación en programas educacionales o deportes basado en el género</i>	<i>Ann Marie Carpenter</i>	<i>499-9515</i>
<i>Sección 504</i>	<i>Discriminación contra individuos con discapacidades</i>	<i>Ann Marie Carpenter</i>	<i>499-9515</i>
<i>ADA</i>	<i>Garantiza igualdad de oportunidades a individuos con discapacidades, facilidades públicas, empleo, transporte, servicios locales y estatales y telecomunicaciones.</i>	<i>Stephanie Case</i>	<i>499-9515</i>
<i>IDEA</i>	<i>Garantiza intervención temprana, educación especial, y servicios relacionados para niños con discapacidades desde el nacimiento hasta los 21 años de edad.</i>	<i>Stephanie Case</i>	<i>499-9515</i>
<i>Ch. 151 B</i>	<i>Discriminación por empleados MA basados en la raza, color, origen nacional.</i>	<i>Jennifer Boulais</i>	<i>499-9505</i>

### **Rights of Students with Disabilities**

Federal law guarantees every student the right to a free and appropriate public education regardless of handicap or disability. State regulations (603 CMR 28.00) further guarantee the right to an education in the “least restrictive environment,” in typical settings with students without disabilities.

- Every Pittsfield public school offers Resource/Learning Center services. These programs provide specialized instruction for eligible students in the area of documented disability.
- The PPS also offer services in a substantially separate setting for students with developmental delays, intellectual impairments, autism, and behavioral disorders. These programs provide specialized instruction in a structured and predictable learning environment.

If you believe that your child is having difficulty making progress in a regular classroom due to a suspected disability, you have the right to seek through the school principal or the district’s Office of Special Education an evaluation of your child to determine if she or he does have a disability and is eligible for special education services. For more information contact your child’s principal or the Office of Special Education at 499-9515.

## **Rights under Section 504**

A student with a disability recognized under the federal statute known as Section 504 (29 USC §794[a]) is entitled to accommodation of that disability to the extent that it interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from any educational or other program of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Section 504 also prohibits discrimination against any student based on such a disability. A student whose disability is recognized under special education law, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA: see USC §1401[3]) is entitled to educational programs and assignments that are designed to develop her/his educational potential (M.G.L. c. 71B §1). Section 504 accommodation plans and special education individualized education programs (IEPs) must be developed in accordance with procedures set out in federal and Massachusetts law and regulations. Ann Marie Carpenter is responsible for assuring compliance with Section 504. She can be reached at 413-499-9515 or [acarpenter@pittsfield.net](mailto:acarpenter@pittsfield.net).

For a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Education Special Education *Parents' Rights Brochure* and the *Section 504 Handbook*, available in many languages, visit [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/parents) on the Web.

## **II. Procedures for Enrolling Students in School**

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) requires the following information from parents/guardians interested in enrolling their children in any of our schools:

- Proof of residency – a current lease, mortgage receipt, tax bill, or utility bill
- Age verification – student's birth certificate, birth abstract, or passport
- Record of immunization (See Section V – Massachusetts State Law requires certain immunizations and a physical exam done within the last year before a student can enroll in this state.)
- A copy of any previous student records or a Transfer Slip for proper grade placement

During the school year, students register at their designated schools. Call the school in advance for an appointment. For times, location, and dates of summer registration, please check the district website ([www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net)) or local papers, or contact the Deputy Superintendent's office (Room 104, 269 First Street, Pittsfield; 413-499-9510).

Registration forms will be supplied by each school but are also available through the district website at [www.pittsfield.net/index.php/about/registration](http://www.pittsfield.net/index.php/about/registration).

*Las Escuelas Públicas del Pittsfield (PPS) requerirán a padres o los guardianes interesaron a matricular a su niño en cualquiera de nuestras escuelas para tener la información siguiente:*

- *La prueba de residencia-un arrendamiento actual, recibo de hipoteca, tasa cuenta*
- *Age el comprobación certificado de nacimiento, el nacimiento abstracto, el pasaporte*
- *Record De la Ley del Estado de inmunización Massachusetts requiere ciertas inmunizaciones antes un estudiante puede matricularse en este estado y un examen físico hecho dentro del último año.*
- *A La copia de registros previos de estudiante o Tropiezo de Transferencia es necesaria para la colocación apropiada del grado.*
- *El PPS publica en los tiempos de periódico local, las ubicaciones y las fechas para la matrícula de estudiantes durante los meses del verano.*
- *Al Otros tiempos, los estudiantes pueden registrar en su escuela designada. Llame la escuela en el avance por cualquier cita.*

### III. English Language Learner (ELL) Support

A student whose home language is not English, as shown on the district home language survey, is administered an English language proficiency assessment. If deemed necessary based on the assessment results, the student is placed in an appropriate ELL program. At the elementary and middle school levels, students receive pullout English language development instruction in addition to sheltered instruction in the classroom. At the high school level, families have the option to place their student at our ELL center school program, housed at Pittsfield High School. This program addresses the needs of beginning level high school ELL students, offering intensive English language development support led by a licensed ELL teacher in addition to targeted content area support led by a bilingual ELL tutor.

Parents have the option to request a waiver to attend mainstream classes without ELL support/sheltered instruction. Information regarding this process can be obtained by contacting the ELL Coordinator at 413-499-6304.

Students are eligible to exit the ELL program once state and local assessments indicate that a transitional level of English proficiency has been achieved. Upon exiting, students are monitored for two years to ensure appropriate transition into the mainstream classroom setting. Should the student demonstrate a need for English language support, s/he may be accepted back into the ELL program.

For information regarding the ELL program, entrance and exiting procedures, and the rights of families of English Language Learner students, please call the ELL Coordinator at 413-499-6304.

*A un estudiante cuya lengua materna no es inglés, como se muestra en la encuesta del distrito sobre la lengua materna, se le hace una evaluación del nivel de inglés, basado en los resultados de la evaluación, el estudiante es ubicado en el programa de ELL. En los niveles escolares básicos y medio, los estudiantes reciben desarrollo del lenguaje de inglés fuera de la clase además de la instrucción de inmersión dentro de la clase. En el nivel secundario, las familias tienen la opción de ubicar al estudiante dentro de nuestro programa central de ELL, Ubicado en Pittsfield High School. Este programa responde a las necesidades de niveles básicos de estudiantes de ELL de secundaria, ofreciéndoles apoyo en el desarrollo de la lengua inglesa liderado por un tutor de ELL bilingüe licenciado.*

*Los padres tienen la opción de solicitar eximir al estudiante para asistir a clases regulares sin el apoyo/instrucción de inmersión de ELL. Información sobre este proceso puede ser obtenida contactándose con el coordinador de ELL al 413-499-6304.*

*Los estudiantes pueden reunir los requisitos para salir del programa de ELL una vez que las evaluaciones estatales y locales indiquen que se ha logrado un dominio del nivel de inglés. Una vez fuera, los estudiantes son monitoreados por dos años para asegurar una transición apropiada al entorno de la clase principal.*

*Si el estudiante demuestra una necesidad de apoyo en el idioma de inglés, puede que el/ella sean re-admitidos en el programa de ELL.*

*Información acerca del procedimiento de ingreso o salida del programa de ELL, y sobre los derechos de las familias de estudiantes del idioma inglés, por favor llame al coordinador de ELL al 413-499-6304.*

## **IV. Student Attendance (See Pittsfield Public Schools Policy STU-6 and your student's school handbook.)**

Regular school attendance is essential to the total education of the student. It is the belief of the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) system that one of the most significant factors affecting school success is regular attendance. Time in class is essential to the growth and development of each student and time lost will limit the opportunity for uniform instructional interaction and support. Parents are ultimately responsible to ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis.

By improving attendance and encouraging punctuality, Pittsfield Public Schools hopes to achieve the following:

- Improve scholastic performance by facilitating makeup of excessive missed work.
- Create and maintain a positive school culture.
- Place responsibility for attendance and punctuality on the students and their parents.
- Develop habits in students that are beneficial skills for both post-secondary educational experiences and future employment.

Teachers are expected to cooperate with and assist students who miss class work, quizzes, or examinations due to absences. While the fact that an unexcused absence is not in itself justification for automatic grade reduction, it is to be expected that such absences will adversely affect student performance due to missed quizzes, examinations, assignments, and participation in class activities. It is therefore appropriate for teachers to establish marking procedures which will include grades for daily activities, which, when not made up, will be reflected in the teacher's grade book.

At the elementary and middle school levels, excessive unexcused absences will result in truancy interventions described under regulations. These include, but are not limited to, parent conferences, referral to the truancy/attendance officers, and referral to the courts. At the high school level, while truancy interventions will be executed in the case of excessive unexcused absences, students also risk losing course credit when they exceed threshold levels of absenteeism.

A school's daily attendance rate is now a mandatory requirement under the federal No Child Left Behind requirements. Schools failing to meet an attendance rate of 92% or higher will result in automatic failure in meeting required Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) indicators.

All regulations can be found in PPS Policy STU-6 and in each school handbook.

### **A. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students must bring in a note or have a parent/guardian contact the school for each day, or part of day, that they are absent. This note or contact must include the date absent and the reason for the absence. Such absences are classified as either excused or unexcused.

Absence for any of the following reasons will be classified as excused provided that the school receives verification from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days of the student's return from absence:

1. Illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school. A health care provider, the school nurse, or the parent must verify the illness or injury. Note: tutoring will be available to any student who is ill for 9 consecutive days and presents medical documentation (a physician's note)
2. Bereavement for a member of the immediate family, (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin); other bereavement if approved by the Principal or designee
3. Specified religious holidays (STU-17)

4. Required court appearances
5. Medical or psychological tests during the school day. The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health care provider) that the tests could not be scheduled after school
6. Other functions, activities, or extraordinary situations approved by the school principal

The school office will maintain records for all students delineating excused and unexcused absence from school or class.

## **B. TARDINESS**

Tardiness to class not only limits the amount of time that an individual student can be engaged and on task but also is disruptive to the class as a whole. In order to encourage student promptness to class, school staff will continually research best practices and adjust guidelines accordingly.

For high school students, being late for class may result in detention. In the elementary schools, tardiness may result in the calling of a parent meeting.

## **C. ATTENDANCE OFFICER**

The Pittsfield Public Schools' Attendance Coordinator William Heaphy (499-9521) will make house and school visits regarding excessive absence, excessive tardiness, and truancy and will investigate and make recommendations in all school cases in juvenile court and in all cases of school offenders and truants. The attendance officer is empowered to pick up truant students in the community and bring them to school. Parents will be contacted and informed about follow-up and/or disciplinary action.

## **D. DISMISSALS**

Parents/guardians should make all efforts to schedule professional appointments after school hours. In cases that students must be dismissed, parents must provide a note indicating the time of dismissal as well as the reason for the early dismissal. This note must be presented to the classroom teacher or personnel in the main office. The school nurse will also assess student illness/injury within the school day and will coordinate dismissal with the parent.

All regulations can be found in PPS Policy STU-6 and in each school handbook.

## **E. PARENTS' LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ENSURING STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE (M.G.L. c. 76 §2)**

Parents or legal guardians are required to see that their children attend school regularly. Failure to do so may result in the Attendance Officer, the TIPS officer, or school personnel filing a 51A petition for a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) with the Department of Social Services or seeking juvenile court fines pursuant to M.G.L. 76 §2 or criminal charges pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 §63.

## **F. WITHDRAWALS AND TRANSFERS**

Parents/guardians must notify the school's office or principal concerning the transfer of their child to a school in another school district. Parents/guardians must obtain a Massachusetts transfer slip from the sending school and sign a record release form at the receiving school.

## **G. HOMELESS STUDENTS**

Consistent with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, homeless students are defined as those who lack a regular, fixed nighttime residence including supervised temporary accommodations (see definition, Policy STU-14). Students have the right to stay in their school of origin for the entire time they are homeless, even if they move to a different school district. Students who move

into permanent housing during the school year can still finish the year in the same school. They may also choose to enroll in a school within the new zone, town or city where they live temporarily. Transportation will be provided unless your new address is within the walking distance of your child's school. For help, call the Deputy Superintendent's office at 499-9510.

## **V. Student Safety, Health, Immunizations, and Wellness Policy**

### **A. THE SCHOOL NURSE**

Every school has a school nurse. If you need to speak to the school nurse, call the main number of your child's school.

School nurses:

- Evaluate and manage the health needs of all students in their schools.
- Identify and manage students with special health needs.
- Work with other school-based groups to provide safe and healthy environments.
- Administer medications as prescribed by a doctor.
- Help families get health insurance and find a health center.
- Manage the control of communicable diseases.
- Provide first aid and emergency care which may include notifying emergency medical services as needed.
- After professional nursing assessment for illness or injury, may recommend referrals to child's parent and primary physician.
- Document all health interventions.
- Manage all student health records.
- Provide the following grade-appropriate health screenings: measure heights and weights for BMI (Body Mass Index), check for possible scoliosis, support follow-up communication with parent/guardian regarding school-based vision and hearing screening, once done by school district vision/hearing technician.
- Teach "Epi-pen" skills to school staff.
- Teach "Medication Delegation Training for Field Trips" to school staff.

You can help the school nurse care for your child by:

- Letting the nurse know if your child has any chronic or acute illnesses
- Communicating with the nurse directly if medication or health needs change (written physician's document)
- Updating your child's emergency form so the school can always reach you

### **B. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

According to state regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00), students must be on an immunization schedule before they enter school. The Pittsfield Public Schools require that students have immunizations that are up to date for school entry at the time they enter school. Records will be given to the school nurse for verification and record-keeping purposes.

The following immunizations need to be in place by the first day of school:

REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 12*	
Hepatitis B	3 doses
DtaP/DTP/DT/Td	5 doses (1 Td booster gr. 7-11)
Polio	4 doses
Hib	(3 or 4 doses for pre-school)
MMR	2 doses for measles; 1 for mumps; 1 for rubella
Varicella (Chickenpox)	2 doses for kindergarten entry
*Immunization requirements vary by grade.	
Please contact the nurse at your child’s school if you have questions.	

Parents/guardians must submit a doctor’s record stating that their child has been immunized against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, German measles (rubella), mumps and hepatitis B. Varicella (chickenpox) immunization is required if the child has not had chickenpox.

The record must include the day, month and year when the immunizations were given. In addition, we strongly recommend that each child have a Tuberculosis Risk Assessment. Parents are responsible for keeping immunizations current and providing the school nurse with written documentation from the child’s physician when their child has received additional immunizations. All school nurses review immunization records regularly. Students whose immunizations are not up to date may be excluded from school.

**Special Situations.** Except in an emergency or epidemic, a student may start school if a parent or guardian presents a written statement (1) from a physician stating that the child has not been immunized for medical reasons, (2) that the child has not been immunized due to his or her religious beliefs, or (3) homeless children. A student must have a current physical exam from a physician prior to entry into the school system.

**B. REQUICITOS SOBRE LAS VACUNAS**

*De acuerdo con las regulaciones del estado (102 CMR 7.09 y 105 CMR 220.00), Los estudiantes deben estar al día o tener citas para las vacunas antes de entrar a la escuela. Las Escuelas Públicas de Pittsfield requieren que las vacunas estén al día antes de comenzar la escuela. Se le entregaran archivos a la enfermera con el propósito de mantener una carpeta de verificación y guardar los expedientes.*

*Debe tener las siguientes vacunas para el primer día de la escuela:*

VACUNAS EXIGIDAS PARA REGISTRARSE DE KINDERGARTEN – GRADO 12*	
Hepatitis B	3 dosis
DtaP/DTP/DT/Td	5 dosis (1 Td refuerzo gr. 7-11)
Polio	4 dosis
Hib	(3 o 4 dosis para pre-escolares)
MMR	2 dosis para sarampión; 1 por paperas; 1 para rubéola
Varicela (Chickenpox)	2 dosis (o documentación de la enfermedad); 2 dosis de 13 años+ y si es la 1ra dosis de la vacuna de varicela
* Los requisitos de inmunización varían por curso.	
Por favor contacte a la enfermera si tiene alguna pregunta.	

*Padres/tutores deben entregar un documento que diga que su niño ha sido vacunado contra la difteria, tos ferina, tétano, poliomielitis, sarampión, rubéola, paperas y hepatitis B, varicela, esta vacuna es necesaria si el niño no tuvo varicela.*

*El documento debe tener el día mes y año de cuando se pusieron las vacunas. Además recomendamos insistentemente que el niño tenga una evaluación de riesgo sobre la tuberculosis. Los padres son responsables por tener las vacunas al día y de otorgar a la enfermera un documento escrito del doctor de su niño cuando reciba vacunas adicionales. La enfermera revisa los archivos de inmunizaciones regularmente, los niños que no tengan las vacunas al día pueden ser excluidos de la escuela.*

**Situaciones especiales.** *Excepto en una emergencia un estudiante puede comenzar la escuela si un padre o tutor presenta una declaración por escrita (1) de un doctor afirmando que el niño no ha sido vacunado por razones médicas (2) que el niño no ha sido vacunado debido a sus creencias religiosas, o (3) el niño es indigente.*

### **C. PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

While parents have final responsibility for their child's health, the school is responsible for the safety and well being of students while they are in school. Under state law, students new to the school system must present results of a comprehensive physical examination within six months of enrollment and at intervals of either three or four years thereafter. During the first weeks of school, the school nurse will request results of a recent physical examination. An updated vaccination record and physician's documentation of the date of the child had a lead test must accompany the physical exam. If your child has any booster shots during the summer, be sure to send the nurse an updated health record. **Students also must have a record of a complete physical exam, done within the last 12 months, on file with the school nurse in order to participate in high school athletics.** [Keep in mind that many health providers need at least two weeks to copy records, and all athletic physicals must be recorded on the MIAA-provided template.] Please provide a physical exam record to the school at the beginning of kindergarten and first, fourth, seventh, and ninth grades. If your child has a physical exam during the school year, please provide the school nurse with a copy of the updated record.

Other circumstances that may require a physical exam are:

- Frequent absences due to unexplained illness
- Known physical defects that require repeated appraisal
- Nurse-teacher conference based on student's not making expected progress in school or signs of illness noted by the teacher or nurse
- Request of student under 16 and over 14 years of age for employment certificate
- Preparation for participation in competitive athletics

### **D. MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL**

School nurses oversee the administration of medications. In most cases, the school nurse will be the person administering the medication. However, there are three specific circumstances when someone other than a nurse may give a student medication:

- When the student is on a field trip, the nurse may delegate and train another school staff member to administer the medication(s).
- Students who are at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions may be administered emergency medication by school personnel. The nurse is responsible for training and supervising all individuals involved in giving medication.
- Some students may administer their own medication, such as an asthma inhaler. To allow this, the parent must contact the school nurse to arrange a Self-Medication Plan. Written consent for a student's self-administration must be obtained from both physician and parent/guardian.

In order to administer prescription medications, the nurse must have a doctor's order and signed parent's permission. Nonprescription ("over the counter") medications such as *Tylenol*, *Tums*, and *Benadryl* can be given by a School Nurse who already possesses written authorization by the School Physician, but the Nurse will still require written permission from the parent or guardian. Ask the nurse in your child's school for the permission form. Parents must supply their child's medication, which must be in the original pharmacy container. If the physician has changed a medication type or dose, the school nurse must have a new physician's order and signed parent's permission.

#### **E. MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If a student is sick or injured at school, the school will make every effort to reach the parent or the emergency contact person named on the student's emergency contact file in the office. The principal and school nurse will decide what action to take. Most illnesses and injuries that occur during the school day are minor and can be treated by the nurse. If the student's condition is very serious, the school nurse, principal, or other member of the school staff will call for an ambulance. A school employee may accompany the student at the hospital until the parent/guardian arrives. **It is crucial that parents/guardians keep the schools informed of current family contact information. Notify your child's school of changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information as they occur.**

#### **F. ACCIDENTS**

Accidents of any nature should be reported to the nurse and the Main Office. The adult who witnessed the accident will fill out the Student Accident Report. All accident reports are to be sent to the Director of Bus Operations with copies to the Deputy Superintendent's Office and the City Solicitor's Office.

#### **G. TUTORING FOR HEALTH REASONS**

If health issues affect a student's ability to attend school and the student is hospitalized or homebound for a period in excess of nine consecutive days, the parent or guardian must contact the child's principal or guidance counselor. Certified medical reasons for tutoring, documented by a medical physician's statement, must then be submitted to the principal. The principal or counselor will notify the coordinator of tutors to identify a tutor, arrange an agreement, and process the tutor's time sheets. When the student returns to school, the school nurse is to be given a physician's note stating whether the student is to return to full or restricted activity.

#### **H. INSURANCE FOR STUDENTS**

There will be a school insurance policy available for all students. This will be announced the first week of school. Information concerning athletic insurance should be obtained from coaches. The City of Pittsfield does *not* carry insurance to cover any property losses during school or any personal injuries. It should also be noted that the school insurance covers only costs not assumed by family medical insurance or if the student has no medical insurance.

#### **I. MANDATED REPORTER STATUS OF SCHOOL EMPLOYEES (M.G.L. c. 119 §51A)**

If school staff suspect that a student is abused or neglected, they are required by law (Chapter 51A) to report it to the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). All reports are strictly confidential. The DCF maintains a 24-hour hotline for reporting staff or parental concerns: 1-800-292-5022.

#### **J. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

Under Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 71 § 37G) and School Committee policy, school personnel may not punish a student by striking, pushing, or any other use of physical force. School staff may use *reasonable*

physical force to restrain a student, but *only* if (1) non-physical intervention would be ineffective or has been ineffective and/or (2) they believe the student's actions may result in physical injury to the student or other people. Any school employee who uses unreasonable force may be subject to discipline.

#### **K. RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS AND STAFF RESTRAINT TRAINING**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has specific regulations concerning the use of physical restraint of students in public schools (603 C.M.R. 46.00). These regulations apply to all students whether in regular education or special education. Pursuant to the regulations, Pittsfield Public Schools personnel will use physical restraint with two goals in mind, and only after other less intrusive methods have been attempted or considered:

- To protect a student or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm
- To prevent or minimize any harm to the student when a restraint is deemed necessary

In accordance with state and federal law, nothing in the regulations precludes school personnel from implementing physical restraint contained in an agreed-upon Behavior Intervention Plan. A Behavior Intervention Plan is the result of a Functional Behavior Assessment and may be found in an Individual Educational Program, Section 504/Accommodation Plan, or on its own. A Behavioral Intervention Plan requires informed written consent by the student's parent/legal guardian.

All Pittsfield Public Schools personnel shall receive appropriate notification regarding this policy at the start of the school year. Additionally the principal shall identify staff members as school-wide resources in the use of physical restraint on students. Except as set forth below, only school personnel who have received appropriate training as required by Massachusetts regulations may administer physical restraint on students.

Nothing in the regulations precludes a teacher or other staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, or other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

All staff that are involved in physical intervention must complete required written documentation and submit it to the Deputy Superintendent's Office.

#### **L. SEX EDUCATION**

The Pittsfield Public Schools recognizes the right of a parent or guardian to exempt their child from any curriculum that involves primarily human sex education or human sexuality issues. Schools are required to notify parents about any classes that will be held related to human sexual education or sexual issues. To exempt a child from such classes, a parent/guardian should simply write a letter to his or her child's principal. For more information about sex education in the PPS, please contact Linda Avalor, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education, at 431-499-9523 or [lavallo@pittsfield.net](mailto:lavallo@pittsfield.net).

#### **M. DENTAL**

Our schools already provide health screenings for vision/hearing, BMI (Body Mass Index), and scoliosis for students. To further enhance our student health program, we now offer professional Dental Education Preventive and Restorative Services.

Elementary school nurses do a fluoride swish program every year. To compliment this, "The Pittsfield Partners for School Dental Care", will be sending home consent forms to provide your child with the opportunity to have the following services provided during school:

- Education in Oral Hygiene
- Dental Exam and Diagnosis
- Dental Cleaning

- Fluoride Treatments
- Dental Sealants
- Dental X-rays
- Fillings and Restorative Dentistry
- Recall Visits (Continuous Care)

Massachusetts licensed dentists and hygienists who have up to 30 years experience in school dentistry provide these services. The Pittsfield Partners for School Dental Care team is comprised of the Berkshire Medical Center Dental Residency Program, Berkshire Medical Center Operation Better Start, Commonwealth Mobile Oral Health Services, LLC, Tufts University School of Medicine, and Pittsfield Public Schools.

**All students in kindergarten through grade 5 are eligible for participation in the Dental Education Preventive and Restorative Services program regardless of health insurance.**

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lori Doppman, Coordinator  
Tufts Oral Health Project  
(413) 727-8234

Lorie Harrington RN, BSN  
BMC Dental Sealant Coordinator  
(413) 445-9303

Joan Roy RN, BSN  
Pittsfield School Nurse Leader  
*jroy@pittsfield.net*  
413-499-9535 x 2111

**N. HEAD INJURY AND CONCUSSION REPORTING**

Pittsfield Public Schools follows the current Massachusetts Law 105CMR 201.000 Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities. According to the regulations, all injuries such as concussion or traumatic brain injury must be reported to the current coach, athletic trainer, or school nurse. All players must abide by the current guidelines in that a player cannot return to any athletic event until a medical professional, such as a neurologist or the primary care physician, has cleared him or her in writing.

**Pittsfield Public Schools Wellness Policy**

The following is a brief summary of the policy components that present the most questions. For more information or greater detail, please refer to the complete Wellness Policy (STU-79).

There are limitations on food and beverages sold individually prior to the school day and during the instructional day. “Food and beverages sold ‘individually,’” means food and beverages sold outside of the reimbursable school meal program. These foods and beverages will meet the nutrition and portion size standards set forth in the policy and include the following sources: vending machines, cafeteria a la carte, school stores, fundraising activities during the school day, or programs for students after the school day.

The school district will follow standards (Massachusetts a la Carte Food and Beverage Standards to Promote a Healthier School Environment) as well as Pittsfield Board of Health and the Pittsfield Public Schools’ Severe and Life-Threatening Allergies policies to address all foods and beverages sold/provided to students, including those available outside of school meal programs on school grounds and/or at school-sponsored events.

Suggestions for healthy snack and meal options and school lunch menus and prices are available at [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net) (Family and Community).

## General Rules

### A. ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS (No vending machines)

- Foods and beverages sold individually: should be limited to only low fat and non-fat milk, fruits and vegetables (non-fried)
- Foods must be 30% or less of total calories from fat
- Foods must be 10% or less of total calories from saturated fat
- Nuts and seeds are allowed due to nutritional content but may have no more than three grams of added fat per 1.75 oz.

### B. HIGH SCHOOLS

Individual foods sold rules are the same as above. However, the Superintendent shall determine applicability to high schools.

#### High Schools Beverages for Sale

Allowed	Not Allowed
Water	Diet drinks
Seltzer water without added sweetener	Soft drinks
Vegetable juices and fruit juices containing at least 50% fruit juice that do not contain added caloric sweeteners	Iced tea with added caloric sweeteners
Low fat and fat free milk (flavored or unflavored)	Fruit drinks with less than 50% real fruit juice

#### Other Nutritional Issues

During the school day fundraising activities will not involve selling food to students unless food meets the standards set for foods sold individually based on above list.

No food or beverages should be used as rewards or withheld as a punishment.

School day celebrations that include food should be limited to one party per class per month.

The school district has available lists of acceptable non-food rewards, celebrations, and fundraising activities as well as a list of foods that meet the Wellness Policy standards.

#### Physical Activity

Elementary schools offer 20 minutes of recess everyday.

Middle and high schools offer physical education for all students, after-school intramural programs, and/or physical activity clubs, which include students with special healthcare needs.

General rule: physical activity shall not be taken away as a form of discipline.

For more information about The Wellness Policy, please contact Linda Avalor, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education at 431-499-9523 or [lavallo@pittsfield.net](mailto:lavallo@pittsfield.net).

## Severe and Life-threatening Allergies Policy

The Pittsfield Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy school environment for all students. Allergies can be a significant health problem or even life threatening for some students.

We recognize that it is not possible to eliminate all possible exposures. The purpose of these guidelines is to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students in the Pittsfield Public Schools,

provide all students, through necessary accommodations where required, the opportunity to participate fully in all school programs and activities, and to educate the school community about severe or life-threatening allergies. The focus of this district-wide allergy policy is prevention, education, awareness, communication and emergency response.

Successful allergy management is a partnership among the parent/guardian(s), the student, the prescribing physician and the school system. The student's physician must be involved in the diagnosis and treatment plan that the school will follow for students with allergy intolerance while in the school or at any school-sponsored event. The plan must be reviewed annually and revised as needed. No student will be excluded from school activities based solely on his/her allergies.

***Adequate plans and staff who are knowledgeable regarding preventive measures and well prepared to handle severe allergic reactions can save the life of a child. For the student who is allergic total avoidance of the substance to which the student is allergic is the only means to prevent severe and life-threatening allergy reactions.***

For each student with a diagnosis of a severe or life-threatening allergic condition will have an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) developed and implemented at the school preferably prior to the entry to school. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify their child's school of their child's allergies at the beginning of each school year.

Schools should ensure that all staff entrusted with the care of students receive basic education concerning severe and life-threatening allergies, and have training in the prevention and management of allergic conditions including basic anaphylaxis epi-pen education every six months.

The district, through the IHCP and any other educational plan, will foster the development of the student's knowledge and proactive care for their health through the age appropriate self-management of allergies and their reactions.

Many students with severe allergies have experienced a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction and are more acutely aware of their own mortality than other students their own age. Therefore, physical safety and emotional well being of children with severe and life-threatening allergies must be taken into consideration when planning or organizing any school activity or lesson. All school staff responsible for children with severe and life-threatening allergies must establish predictable routines and maintain communication with caregivers regarding changes in the allergic student's schedule, which increase the risk to exposure to allergens.

A student that expresses concern or elects to not participate in an educational activity where there is a potential risk for increased exposure to an allergen should not be penalized. A safe alternative option should be provided without grading penalty.

For more information on the implementation of the severe and life-threatening allergy policy please contact Barbara Malkas, Deputy Superintendent, at 431-499-9510 or [bmalkas@pittsfield.net](mailto:bmalkas@pittsfield.net), or Joan Roy, School Nurse Leader at 413-442-0929 or [jroy@pittsfield.net](mailto:jroy@pittsfield.net).

## **VI. Student Transportation**

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) view conduct on the school bus as an extension of classroom behavior. In order to promote the health and safety of each student, the following are the accepted norms:

- Students should wait in an orderly manner at their designated bus stops.
- Students should board and exit the buses in an orderly manner at the direction of the driver.
- All students must obey the rules of safety. They should remain seated with voices controlled, in order to enable the driver to fulfill his/her responsibilities.
- For the safety of all, windows are to be opened or closed only by the driver except in an emergency.
- Only authorized students will be allowed to ride the bus to and from school.

- In order to promote the safe transportation of students, video and/or audio may be used to monitor students' behavior on buses.

#### **A. GENERAL RULES FOR AVAILABILITY**

Students are eligible for transportation to and from school if they live more than:

- 1/2 mile from their elementary school for kindergarten
- 1.5 miles from their elementary school for grades 1-5
- 1.5 miles from their middle school (grades 6-8)
- 2 miles from their high school (grades 9-12)

When parents/guardians register their child for school, they will be told if their child is eligible for transportation. If the child is eligible, they will receive a notice in the mail with the bus stop location, time of pick-up and drop-off, and bus number.

#### **B. DECISIONS FOR MAKING BUS STOPS**

The School Department receives many inquiries and requests relative to bus stops. During the last school year, there were over 100 requests to make new bus stops. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, road conditions, and a number of other factors, there cannot be a positive response to every request. Each request is reviewed by at least one person before decisions are made.

The first consideration is to determine whether the student is eligible for transportation per the Pittsfield School Committee Policy number SRV-29, Student Transportation Services. The policy states that kindergarten students who reside in excess of one-half mile from school, elementary and middle school students who reside in excess of one and one-half miles from school, and high school students who reside more than two miles from school shall be eligible for transportation services. In addition, transportation will be provided in situations where walking routes are determined to be hazardous. Bus stops for all students may be up to one mile from their residence, according to MGL Ch. 71, §68.

The determinations for the distances are measured from the property line of the residence over regularly traveled ways to the designated bus stop or the property line of the school. While the parent/guardian is responsible for the safety of the student between the residence and the designated bus stop, every attempt is made to designate locations for bus stops which are as safe as possible under local conditions, and as considerate as possible of the continuous and smooth flow of traffic. (Stopping too frequently presents hazards to other vehicles on the road.)

After determining eligibility for transportation, the student's residence is checked to see whether or not there is a current stop within the parameters set by the policy. If there is a stop within the parameters, the student is added to that stop. If there is not a stop in that location, it is determined whether there are any other students eligible. If so, a stop is created that is beneficial for all students. A number of other factors are reviewed in making decisions about where to locate bus stops, including, but not limited to:

- Age of the student(s)
- Whether there are sidewalks in the area
- Whether we can centralize a stop on a corner rather than send a bus down a side street
- Whether, if a bus must go down a side street, the bus can turn around
- Whether we can centralize a stop if it affects multiple students

Unfortunately, it is impossible to accommodate every request based on the current number of stops per bus and the timing of the bus routes. Some routes have fewer stops but longer runs (miles) and some buses have more frequent stops with shorter routes. Because the entire network has to operate within the time constraints set by the School Committee (based on the opening and closing times for each school), not every request can be accommodated. The school bus industry estimates that each stop can add 3-5

minutes to a route (it varies based on the speed of the bus before it starts to brake for the stop, the number and age of the students loading, whether students are crossing the street, and other factors).

In trying to provide the best possible service to all students, however, not every house or every side street can have a bus stop, as doing so would affect the time that students arrive at school.

### **C. TICKET TRANSPORTATION**

Students living closer to their respective school than outlined above, may be eligible to purchase a seat on a bus servicing that school on a space available basis. Contact the Transportation Office for a *Ticket Transportation Application* and fee information: 499-9525.

### **D. SUSPENSION OR LOSS OF TRANSPORTATION RIGHTS**

The following acts may result in denial of the privilege to ride the bus:

- Profanity on school buses
- Fighting or other aggressive physical behavior
- Smoking on school buses
- Lewd or lascivious conduct
- Unnecessary distraction of the driver
- Destruction of any bus property [restitution will be the parents' or guardians' financial responsibility]
- Violation of rules for safety on school buses
- Any act which interferes with the safe and orderly transportation of students
- Possession of weapons or drugs

In all cases, the principal or designee must inform the parent before keeping the student off the bus.

The student is expected to come to school on the days when he or she is not allowed on the bus **unless** the student has also been suspended from school.

Specific details regarding transportation can be found in the regulations and policy Student Conduct on Buses (STU-31). These expectations of student conduct are also outlined in the following section of this handbook.

## **VII. Code of Student Conduct**

High School Parents: Please see individual high school handbooks, which outline the Code of Student Conduct in more detail.

### **Co- and Extra-Curricular Activities:**

#### **SCHOOL PRIVILEGES ARE DEPENDENT UPON STUDENT CONDUCT.**

Students have the opportunity to participate in many special school functions and activities, such as field trips, celebrations, performances, class days, athletic events, dances and graduation ceremonies, among others. Participation in such activities is a privilege to be earned – not a “right.” By violating school rules or the Code of Conduct, or by engaging in illegal or illicit activities outside of school, a student may lose these privileges. The principal or designee has the authority to limit or deny a student’s participation in such special functions and activities.

The rules noted in this Handbook are for the protection of personal rights. They are based on normal courtesy and respect for others and include social as well as academic responsibilities. These rules are not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive enough to include all of the possible situations, behaviors, and consequences of behaviors that violate policy, procedure, or state or federal law.

## GENERAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS:

### **Social Responsibilities**

A student's social responsibilities include good citizenship. In school, good citizenship is based upon respect and consideration for the rights of others. All students in the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) are expected to conduct themselves in such a way that the rights and privileges of others are upheld. Students are active participants in creating a safe, positive school climate to enhance their learning as well as the learning of others. Students are expected to know and follow the school-wide expectations as defined at each school. Good citizenship includes a student's responsibility to:

- Respect authority.
- Understand and adhere to school rules.
- Be fully responsible for his/her own actions and for the consequences of those actions.
- Respect the rights and beliefs of others.
- Respect and obey the federal, state and local laws.
- Respect the property of others, both private and public.

### **Academic Responsibilities**

A student's academic responsibilities are based upon study and hard work. In order to participate successfully in academic programs, students must:

- Be on time for school.
- Attend school every day.
- Be prepared for class.
- Listen and participate in class.
- Do homework every night.
- Study for tests.

### **In the Classroom**

Students are expected to observe classroom rules established by the teacher to maintain a good, orderly learning environment and to protect the rights of all students to an equal opportunity to participate.

### **Cafeteria**

The cafeteria, besides being a lunchroom, is also a place where good human relations can be developed. Here each student is expected to practice the general rules of good manners.

- Food must not be taken outside the cafeteria.
- Remain seated while eating.
- Do not take or touch the lunches of others.
- While eating lunch, speak in normal conversational tones.
- Do not throw or play with food.
- Clean your eating area before leaving the cafeteria.
- Students may congregate in the cafeteria and other designated areas.
- Follow specific rules for peanut-free and allergy-free tables and cleanup procedures.
- Avoid sharing or trading food or utensils.

Due to capacity limitation, students at Pittsfield High School, with written parent/guardian permission, may leave the campus to purchase lunch. Inappropriate behavior off the school grounds or failure to return within prescribed time limits will result in revocation of this privilege. Parents can contact the school office (499-9535) if they want to limit their child's off-campus privilege.

*All other areas are unauthorized and are off limits.*

Failure to abide by the general cafeteria rules could result in loss of cafeteria privileges.

### **Motor Vehicles or Other Vehicles on School Property**

Parents and others are welcome to visit our schools but should park in designated areas only. It is illegal for anyone to operate any type of recreational motorized vehicle on school fields or walking paths. Violators will be reported to the police. [Use of motorized wheelchairs and/or carts for the disabled are permitted.]

#### Pittsfield High School

There is no parking for students at Pittsfield High School. Students parking on campus or at the Appleton Avenue parking lot will have their cars towed and will be fined.

#### Taconic High School Vehicle Registration

Student parking is a privilege and subject to approval. Students must register any and all motor vehicles brought to school in the Attendance Office.

#### Taconic High School Parking and Driving

Taconic students are allowed to park in designated student parking areas only. Students are not to park in teacher or public parking areas. Parking privileges can be rescinded for individual students in cases where those privileges are abused.

#### Proper Use of Bicycles, Skateboards, Rollerblades, Scooters

Students should secure their bicycles in racks where provided. We encourage students to wear bicycle helmets. State law requires anyone aged 12 or under to wear a bicycle helmet. Use of skateboards, rollerblades, or scooters is not permitted on school walkways, patios, or stairs. There is also no provision for storage and safekeeping of this equipment in school.

### **Textbooks and Library Books**

Our schools supply students with the textbooks and other materials they need for school. Textbooks and library books are owned by the Pittsfield Public Schools, and students are expected to return them in good condition. All textbooks that are taken home by students should be covered. Textbooks and library books can be very expensive, some costing more than \$85.00 each. If a book is lost or damaged, the student or parent must pay for a replacement.

### **Out-of-Classroom Behavior in Authorized Areas**

During the school day students are to be in assigned classes. Between classes, students are to restrict themselves to corridors, stairwells and locker areas. Students are not to exit the building between classes and are not to be in unauthorized areas.

#### **Corridors**

Students are not to loiter, congregate, make undue noise, or be involved in running or rough play in the corridors at any time. Violations could result in detention or short-term suspension.

#### **Labs, Shops, and Gym**

Students are to observe safety requirements in areas where possible hazards exist because of the kind of equipment and materials used. Students will follow the established rules, including the wearing of safety goggles, SPECIFIC UNIFORMS/CLOTHING, and other protective items that are prescribed. Failure to observe safety requirements could lead to denial of activity participation.

## **Assemblies**

Students are to follow entrance and exit procedures and not disturb others. Students may leave the assembly only with proper authorization.

## **Fire and Safety Drills**

Fire and safety drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and leaves the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. Students must remain with their designated school staff during any emergency school evacuation.

## **Acceptable Use Policy for Computers, Networks, and other Electronic Devices**

The Pittsfield Public Schools have invested in computer technology, network infrastructure, and Internet access to enhance the learning opportunities for all students and staff, to improve communications, and to enhance administrative efficiency. The school district is the owner of the computer technology and will establish the regulations for policy determining the use of that technology.

The Pittsfield Public Schools district offers Internet access for students and staff. The district's Internet system has been established for specific educational purposes to include classroom activities, career development, and limited high quality, self-discovery activities. The system has not been established as a free public access forum. Further, the system may not be used for commercial purposes or political lobbying. The district has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material users access and post and the training users need to have before they are allowed to use the system. The district also has the right to enforce all rules set forth in district regulations and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Students and staff should have no expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files that are sent and received on the district/school computer network or stored in his/her directory. The district or school network's system manager, or other authorized school employees, may, at any time, review the subject, content, and appropriateness of electronic communications or other computer files, reporting any violations of regulations to appropriate school administrators. The use of the school district's computer technology is a privilege and may be revoked at any time, as violations warrant. All students and staff are required to sign an Acceptable Use Contract and agree to the conditions within the policy before using any district computer or accessing the network.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

### **A. HARASSMENT/ DISCRIMINATION**

The Pittsfield Public Schools is committed to maintaining a work and educational environment free from all forms of harassing conduct. We expect all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect, dignity, courtesy, and fair treatment for all individuals in the school community. Each member of the school community has a responsibility to ensure that harassment does not occur.

Harassment on the basis of race, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability is illegal and will not be tolerated. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment should feel free to discuss the matter with a trusted adult (teacher, counselor, nurse, principal, or other adult). All reports of harassment will be investigated promptly and in as impartial and confidential a manner as possible to ensure prompt and appropriate action.

## **B. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment and/or sexual discrimination in schools is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior from an individual or individuals which interferes with a student's right to get an education or to participate in school activities. It may result from words or conduct that offend, stigmatize or demean a student on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, gestures with sexual overtones, spreading sexual gossip, unwanted sexual or suggestive gestures, looks, verbal comments or jokes, touching, pinching and grabbing body parts, sexual notes or pictures and any unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature. In order to protect the rights of all parties it is important that the victim make clear to the harasser(s) that the behavior is bothering him or her. This can be done with the help of a trusted adult. Students need to know that they do not have to accept any type of sexual harassment and/or sexual discrimination and can protect themselves by being aware of, and understanding, the sexual harassment policy. Students should report any incidents of sexual harassment to their principal or designee who will conduct an immediate investigation.

Sexual harassment is illegal under federal and Massachusetts statutes, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The Pittsfield Public Schools will not tolerate sexual harassment, and all sexual harassment accusations will be taken seriously. Retaliation against any person filing a complaint is forbidden.

## **C. ASSAULT**

### **Fighting**

Assault/assault and battery by fighting or by means of a weapon on school premises, at school-sponsored or school-related events, including field trips, athletic games, and traveling to and from school are prohibited. [M.G.L. c. 265, §15A & §15B, and c. 71 § 37H]

### **Sexually Inappropriate Behavior**

Sexual conduct whether consensual or coerced between students is prohibited. Exhibitionism, lewd, wanton, or lascivious behavior, disorderly conduct and distracting and inappropriate sexual contact between students or coercing another to do something sexual are prohibited. Students should report any incidents of inappropriate sexual behavior or of sexual harassment to their principal or designee who will conduct an immediate investigation. Depending on its severity, such an offense may result in long-term suspension/expulsion. Some forms of sexual harassment may be crimes requiring referral to law enforcement agencies. [M.G.L. c. 272, §16 and §53]

### **Assault of Staff Member**

Assault or assault and battery upon a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, paraprofessional or other school staff member or visitor on school premises, at school-sponsored or school-related events, including field trips and athletic games, and going to and from school are prohibited. [M.G.L. c. 265, §13A and §13D, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H] Such an offense may result in long-term suspension or expulsion and may also constitute a crime requiring referral to law enforcement agencies.

### **Felony in the Community**

Pursuant to M.G.L., c. 71, §37H 1/2, a student charged with a felony or the subject of a felony delinquency complaint may be suspended, or a student convicted, adjudicated, or admitting guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency may be expelled, provided that the principal, after a hearing, concludes that the student's continued presence poses a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

#### **D. THEFT OR VANDALISM**

Theft or vandalism to school property or the property of other students or staff in a school setting, whether during or after school hours or at any school activity such as athletic events, dances, field trips, etc. is prohibited. Restitution by the offender is required. If the offense is judged particularly severe, a long-term suspension/expulsion and referral to law enforcement agencies may be recommended. [M.G.L. c. 226, §30, 98, 100, 127A, etc.]

#### **E. EXTORTION OR OTHER THREAT**

Intentional acts threatening the health and safety of self or others [e.g. fights, false fire alarms, tampering with fire alarms, false 911 calls, bomb threats, extortion, engaging in seriously unhealthy acts, etc.] on school premises, at school-sponsored or school-related events, including field trips, dances, athletic events and going to and from school are prohibited. Depending on severity, such an offense may result in short or long-term suspension and may also constitute a crime requiring referral to law enforcement agencies.

#### **F. WEAPONS USE OR POSSESSION**

Possession of a weapon or any ammunition in school, en route to and from school, or at school functions is prohibited. A student found to be in possession of a weapon while under school jurisdiction is subject to disciplinary as well as legal action. [M.G.L., c. 71 § 37H, 20 U.S.C., §7151 and §921 of Title 18] Weapons shall include but not be limited to guns, knives, switchblades, box cutters, and explosive devices. However, the use of any instrument as a weapon whether or not designed as such is also prohibited.

A pupil duly found to be responsible for his/her actions and in whole or in part for the presence or use of a weapon at a Pittsfield Public School, on school property, or at a Pittsfield Public School function, shall be subject to expulsion proceedings as well as possible legal action. The principal will also notify law enforcement officials of the incident.

#### **G. DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE OR POSSESSION**

For the purposes of this handbook, the term drug includes a controlled drug, a look-alike drug, prescription medicines, volatile substances, and alcoholic beverages. Any student who uses, possesses, distributes, sells, or otherwise furnishes alcoholic beverages, drugs, or drug paraphernalia in any of the following circumstances: while on school property, on a school-provided transportation vehicle, at a designated school transportation stop, at a school-sponsored activity which is not on school property, or any activity under the jurisdiction of the school department, shall be referred to the appropriate school administrator for disciplinary action. Such an offense can range from short-term suspension to expulsion. Violations may also constitute a criminal act. All cases where drugs or suspected materials are seized will be reported to law enforcement authorities.

The school system and the Brien Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse shall provide alcohol and drug abuse prevention education for students in grades 6 through 12. The school system will extend to students and their families the opportunity to utilize community-based substance abuse treatment programs or counseling services.

#### **H. TOBACCO USE OR POSSESSION**

Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited in public schools, and the use of tobacco products on school grounds violates Massachusetts law. This prohibition includes students, staff and visitors. It shall be in effect in all school buildings, grounds, bus operations, all school vehicles and private vehicles on school grounds. This policy shall also pertain to all school-sponsored activities that occur either on or off school property. Violations may involve in-school or out-of-school suspension.

## **I. BULLYING**

According to M.G. L. c. 71 Section 370, *The Anti-Bullying Law*, which became effective on May 3, 2010, each school district, commonwealth charter school, and non-public school is required to develop a bullying prevention and intervention policy and plan.

Anti-bullying in the Pittsfield Public Schools is embedded within broader school-wide approaches that promote a positive, pro-social culture for all students and staff, particularly the District School-wide Positive Behavior Support initiative, the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program, and the implementation of school violence prevention curricula, Second Step and Steps to Respect.

### **Bullying Prohibited**

Bullying, including cyber-bullying, and retaliation are not acceptable conduct and are prohibited within the Pittsfield Public Schools. Pittsfield Public School leadership and other staff will endeavor to maintain learning and working environments free of bullying. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information is prohibited. Any student who engages in conduct that constitutes bullying or retaliation shall be subject to a range of disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension or expulsion.

This prohibition is in effect in the following locations:

- In the school building and on school grounds
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- At a bus stop, on the school bus, or in other school-sanctioned transportation such as another vehicle owned, leased, or used by the school district
- At a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether it takes place on or off school grounds
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased, or used by the school district or school
- At any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

Bullying: The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; that places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; that creates a hostile environment at school for the target or infringes on the rights of the target at school; or that materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyberbullying. (Definition based on M.G.L. c.71, 370)

Cyberbullying: Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. (Definition based on M.G.L. c.71, 370)

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

Target: A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is directed.

Hostile Environment: 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 the student's education

### **Reporting by Students, Parents or 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. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor **solely** on the basis of an anonymous report. Anonymous reports can be made by email to [bullying@pittsfield.net](mailto:bullying@pittsfield.net) or through a link in the "Family and Community" portion of the district website. Reports filed in this fashion will go to a dedicated email account that will be regularly reviewed. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report or may report orally. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the principal or designee. A student who knowingly makes a false allegation of bullying or retaliation shall also be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Notification of Bullying Requirements**

#### 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 determination 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.

#### 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 privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

#### 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.

### **Responses to Bullying**

#### Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills-building

Upon the principal or designee's determination that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school will 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 or designee may consider include:

- Offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the Olweus curriculum
- Providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students in consultation with guidance and/or school adjustment counselors and other appropriate school personnel
- Implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals
- Meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home
- Developing individual behavioral plans to include a focus on specific social skill development
- Making a referral for counseling or other mental health services for targets, aggressors, and family members.

### Taking Disciplinary Action

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 District's and School's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal "Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act" (IDEA) and state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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 that of others as well.

Supportive services will be offered to the target. These services may include safety planning, school adjustment counselor services, and a mental health referral.

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.

The full text of the Pittsfield Public Schools Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Plan is available at [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net). Questions regarding the district plan for the prevention of bullying can be directed to Ann Marie Carpenter at 413-499-9515 or [acarpenter@pittsfield.net](mailto:acarpenter@pittsfield.net).

## **J. HAZING**

M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19 specifies that hazing 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 conducts shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of 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 the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this section.

Individuals found guilty of organizing or participating in the crime of hazing shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$1000, or by imprisonment of not more than one hundred days or both. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500. Added by [st. 1985, c. 536].

In accordance with these provisions, the following procedures shall apply in all public secondary schools in the city of Pittsfield:

- Every applicant for and participant in each co-curricular and extracurricular activity under the jurisdiction of a secondary school, as well as the chief advisor or head coach of said activity, shall be provided a copy of the regulations concerning hazing violations form.
- All recipients of this form will sign and forward it to the building principal for use in preparing the annual report for the Department of Education.
- It shall be the responsibility of the building principal to report any and all cases of M.G.L. c. 269, §17-19 violations to the Department of Education and to appropriate law enforcement officials.

#### **K. GRAFFITI AND TAGGING**

Graffiti, the malicious or wanton painting, marking, scratching or etching of school or personal property of another, and tagging, the spraying or applying paint or placing a sticker upon objects on school or personal property of another is strictly forbidden by Massachusetts law. Students who engage in these behaviors will be referred to law enforcement authorities and be expected to make full restitution for damages.

#### **L. PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **Electronic Devices**

Students shall, upon entering school, secure and not operate a CD player, electronic game, MP3 player, or pager. Students may possess and carry cell phones and portable communications devices (PCD's); however, these units must be turned off during the academic day to ensure that disruptions and interference of the instructional and academic climate of the school do not occur. **Students may not use or operate cell phones or PCD's during the school day.** The school day is defined as the time the student must report to class until dismissal. Additionally, school meetings, activities, events, and trips are defined as extensions of the school day. Students may use their cell phones and PCD's before and/or after school.

Students who violate the policy may face disciplinary actions by the administration. **Cell phones or PCD's that are used during the day will be confiscated;** parents may pick them up after school. The school administration may, in its sole discretion, grant exceptions to cell phone and PCD use based upon critical need and appropriate documentation.

Students should not request to use the office telephones except in cases of urgency. These telephones should be used before school and at lunch.

##### **Laser Pens**

Laser pens/pointers are not allowed in the Pittsfield Public Schools.

### **Lighters or Matches**

Unauthorized use or possession of these items while on school property or while attending a school function is prohibited.

### **Explosives, Incendiary Devices, Arson**

Making a bomb threat by any means, including, but not limited to, verbally, electronically, or in writing is prohibited. Use or possession of a bomb or any other explosive or incendiary device to set a fire, including an object that appears to be a bomb or explosive device, is prohibited. These offenses are judged particularly severely, and a long-term suspension/expulsion and referral to law enforcement agencies will be recommended.

### **Dangerous Substances**

The possession of items intended to endanger the health and safety of other students or of staff members and that impedes the teaching-learning process or disrupts the orderly operation of school activities is prohibited. If the offense is judged particularly severe, a long-term suspension/expulsion and referral to law enforcement agencies may be recommended.

## **M. DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY/INSUBORDINATION**

Lack of respect for school staff and visitors, including but not limited to insubordination, failure to identify oneself to a teacher or administrator, disobedience to a teacher, administrator or staff member, the use of insulting and/or profane language or gestures, the willful disregard of expressed or implied directions by a teacher, administrator or staff member, including, but not limited to, the refusal to follow directions of mandated tests and directions for school activities or the failure to attend mandated programs is prohibited.

## **N. INAPPROPRIATE STUDENT ATTIRE**

Personal appearance is an individual matter. No one, however, has the privilege of disregarding the norms of reasonable dress. Attire that could interfere with the learning process is not allowed. Students will be counseled on an individual basis if their attire is improper. Parents will be contacted if there is a question regarding a student's attire. Clothing must always conform to safety standards of the particular class. The following dress code was drawn up by a committee of parents, teachers, administrators, and students:

- Hooded jackets or sweatshirts with drawstrings cannot be worn on or around play or work equipment.
- Clothing is to be clean and neat without holes or tears.
- The bottom of the top overlaps the top of the bottoms.
- Spandex and Lycra are acceptable only when worn over or under less revealing garments.
- Obscene, vulgar, racist, sexist or other offensive pictures, words, or slogans are prohibited.
- Hemlines of skirts or shorts must fall below fingertips when arms are relaxed at sides.
- Shoes/sandals must be worn at all times.
- Hats (caps, berets, scarves) of a non-religious nature **may not** be worn in the school.
- Undergarments should not be visible.
- Any other dress that distracts, disrupts, intimidates or provokes can be deemed inappropriate by the principal or designee.

Coats/jackets should be kept in student lockers unless conditions warrant otherwise.

## **O. TRESPASSING**

Any student on school grounds without authorization, or while under suspension, may be charged with trespassing and is subject to school suspension and possible criminal action.

## **P. MISCONDUCT ON SCHOOL VEHICLES**

If a student endangers his or her own safety or the safety of others while on a school bus or van, the principal or designee may deny school-provided transportation to the student. Buses are equipped with video cameras and/or audio equipment. The principal or designee may use the video and/or audio tape as evidence of a student's misbehavior. Transportation may be denied. In all cases, the principal or designee must inform the parent before keeping the student off the bus. The student is expected to come to school on the days when he or she is not allowed on the bus **unless** the student has also been suspended from school. Specific details can be found in the regulations and policy STU-31.

## **Q. LEAVING SCHOOL PROPERTY WITHOUT PROPER AUTHORIZATION**

Students may not leave the school grounds during the school day without a written request from their parent or guardian, approved at the discretion of the principal or designee.

## **R. STUDENT PRESENCE IN SCHOOL OR ON GROUNDS AFTER HOURS**

Students may remain in the school building after hours for any organized activity or staff-supervised event. Students may use school grounds for their intended purpose.

## **S. CUTTING CLASSES OR OTHER REQUIRED ACTIVITIES**

When a student does not attend a class or activity to which he or she has been assigned, and does not have a teacher's permission to do so, he or she is seen as cutting class. Such behavior is subject to detention or suspension. Student work missed due to cutting could result in loss of daily credit.

## **T. ORGANIZED YOUTH GROUPS AND GANGS**

Principals shall deal firmly and decisively with incidents reflecting threats to students within the schools, or at school functions as well as en route between home and school that can be attributed to youth groups or gangs. If such incidents are attributable to concerted activities by youth groups or gangs, however organized, they shall be considered most serious violations to our discipline policy subject to the maximum suspension permissible at the building level (9 days) and a recommendation for extension of suspension to the central administration. Law enforcement authorities are also to be notified. Where referrals to the central administration reveal that membership in such a youth group or gang was instrumental in the offense, the violator will be removed from the school setting for greater than nine (9) days. Any student who displays recognizable gang indicators will be referred to the Pittsfield Police Department.

## **U. CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

### **Cheating**

Cheating on tests, copying assignments, or sharing work in any way not directly assigned by the teacher are forms of academic dishonesty. Giving or receiving help on tests, quizzes, projects, lab reports, research papers, and computer assignments unless specifically permitted by the teacher is also a form of cheating.

### **Penalty for Cheating**

Any essay, quiz, lab report, computer assignment or test where cheating is evident in any form will receive a zero. Repeat offenders will be subject to a parent conference and further action if necessary.

### **Plagiarism may include the following:**

- Copying word for word from any outside source without proper acknowledgement, such as use of an entire paper, use of entire sections and paragraphs, and use of a few words and phrases
- Paraphrasing ideas from any outside source without proper acknowledgement
- Submitting in whole or in part a paper written by another student

- Submitting in whole or in part an assignment written for another course
- Allowing one's essay, assignment, or test answers to be copied by another student

### **Penalty for Plagiarism**

It will be presumed that any use of outside sources without proper acknowledgement is with the intent to deceive. It will be presumed that students who allow their work to be plagiarized do so with the intent to deceive. Any essay, assignment or test that shows any evidence of plagiarism in any form will receive a zero. Repeat offenders will be subject to a parent conference and further action, if necessary.

## **V. VIOLATION OF COMPUTER RESOURCES AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

*Please read this document carefully. When the "Parent and Student Agreement" in the front of this handbook is signed by the parent/guardian and child, it becomes a legally binding contract. We must have this permission before we can provide the student with a computer account.*

The Pittsfield Public Schools declares unethical and unacceptable behavior just cause for taking disciplinary action, revoking networking privileges, and/or initiating legal action for any activity through which an individual:

- Uses the network for illegal, inappropriate, or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities (Illegal activities shall be defined as a violation of local, state, and/or federal laws. Inappropriate use shall be defined as a violation of the intended use and/or purpose and goal of the network. Obscene activities shall be defined as a violation of generally accepted social standards for use of a publicly owned and operated communication vehicle.)
- Uses the network for any illegal activity, including violation of copyrights or other contracts violating such matters as institutional or third party copyright, license agreements and other contracts
- Intentionally disrupts network traffic or crashes the network and connected systems
- Degrades or disrupts equipment or system performance
- Uses school district computer resources for commercial or financial gain or fraud
- Steals data, equipment, or intellectual property
- Gains unauthorized access of others' files or vandalizes the data of another user
- Gains or seeks to gain unauthorized access to resources or entities
- Forges electronic mail messages or uses an account owned by another user
- Wastefully uses finite resources
- Invades the privacy of individuals
- Posts anonymous messages
- Possesses any data that might be considered a violation of these rules in paper, magnetic (disk), or any other form
- Violates the district's policies against threatening behavior, violence, bullying, cyber bullying, or peer harassment through electronic means (e.g. text messaging, blogging, social networking, etc.)

### **Consequences of Violations**

Consequences of violations include but are not limited to:

- Suspension of internet access
- Revocation of internet access
- Suspension of network privileges
- Revocation of network privileges
- Suspension of computer access
- Revocation of computer access
- School suspension
- School expulsion

- Financial responsibility for replacing intentionally damaged software or hardware
- Legal action and prosecution by the authorities

### **Remedies and Resources**

If a student is accused of any of the above violations, she/he has all of the rights and privileges that would exist if she/he were accused of school vandalism, fighting and so forth. The network manager or building principal has the right to restrict or terminate network and Internet access at any time for any reason. The network manager further has the right to monitor network activity in any form that she/he sees fit in order to maintain the integrity of the network.

By signing the Acceptable Use Policy form at the front of the handbook, students agree to abide by the restrictions outlined. Furthermore, the Pittsfield Public Schools do not have control of the information on the Internet, although it attempts to provide prudent and available barriers. Other sites accessible via the Internet may contain material that is illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. While the District's intent is to make Internet access available to further its educational goals and objectives, account holders may have the ability to access other materials as well.

The Pittsfield Public Schools believe that the benefits to educators and students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, far exceed any disadvantages of access. But ultimately, the parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their student should follow. To that end, the Pittsfield Public Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for District network access. Any questions should be directed to the district's Network Manager, or the building principal.

Students and their parents/guardians must understand that student access to the District network is being developed to support the school's educational responsibilities and mission. The specific conditions and services being offered will change from time to time. In addition, the District assumes no responsibilities for:

- The content of any advice or information received by a student from a source outside the District, or any costs or charges incurred as a result of seeing or accepting such advice
- Any costs, liability or damages caused by the way the student chooses to use his/her District network access
- Any consequences of service interruptions or changes, even if these disruptions arise from circumstances under the control of the District

Students and staff must understand that their district email privacy is not guaranteed.

By signing the Acceptable Use Policy form at the front of the handbook, the student agrees to the following terms:

- My use of the District computer network will be consistent with the school's primary goals.
- I will not use the District computer network for illegal purposes of any kind.
- I will not use the District network to transmit threatening, obscene, or harassing materials, and the District will not be held responsible if I participate in such activities.
- I will not use the District network to interfere with or disrupt network users, services or equipment. Disruptions include, but are not limited to, distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer worms and viruses, and use of the network to make unauthorized entry to any other machine accessible via the network.
- It is assumed that information and resources accessible via the District network are private to the individuals and organizations that own or hold rights to those resources and information unless specifically stated otherwise by the owners or holders of rights. Therefore, I will not use the District

network to access information or resources unless the owners or holders of rights to those resources or information have given permission for me to do so.

## **VIII. Student Discipline and Due Process Rights**

Discipline, the need to identify constructive limits and controls in order to develop positive behaviors in all students, is an essential ingredient in every student's learning experience. The goal of discipline is to help students develop wise decision-making skills so that they may learn to make responsible choices in their interactions with others. To deal with student discipline issues, certain progressive discipline strategies are used by the teachers and administrators of the Pittsfield Public Schools and may include:

- Counseling that starts at the classroom level between teacher and student and, if not productive, proceeds to the principal, vice principal or dean of students
- Written assignments that are meaningful and of reasonable length and not merely an exercise in penmanship
- Detention after school, to be preceded by parental notification
- In-school suspension where the student is removed from the regular program to complete work assignments under a specialist's direction - if available - at the school
- Assignment to the Juvenile Resource Center where school work is made up with tutorial assistance away from the school environment (available at secondary schools only)
- Suspension from school that may be imposed by the principal, vice principal, or dean of students for 1-9 days for serious misbehavior and that may be extended to 10 or more following a hearing with the superintendent or designee
- Expulsion from school that may be imposed by the principal or by the School Committee

Middle school students and high school students who are subject to short-term suspensions of three days or more up to (not including) ten days must report to the Berkshire County Juvenile Resource Center (JRC), 264 Second Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 on the first day of suspension and daily thereafter until the suspension is served. The JRC will provide students with tutoring and other academic support. Students will not be allowed to return to school until they have satisfied their suspension requirements.

### **DUE PROCESS RIGHTS**

Suspension involves the exclusion of a student from school and/or school-sponsored activities. As administered by the Pittsfield Public Schools, suspension shall include:

- The removal of a student from class
- Removal of the student from the school building if the student's parent or guardian can be contacted
- In-school suspension for the balance of the school day, if the student's parent or guardian cannot be contacted
- Continued exclusion of the student from school, school grounds, or attendance, or participation in school-sponsored activities until the period of suspension has run and the student has been readmitted to school

At the principal's discretion, a student may be assigned to an in-school suspension, if such a program is available.

### **Suspension of up to 10 days**

The procedural rights to which all students in the Pittsfield Public Schools are entitled as part of the "due process" are as follows:

**For the violation of any school rule or regulation that is grounds for suspension, the following shall occur:**

- Any student faced with suspension must be given an informal hearing in the form of a conference between the student and the principal or his or her designee. The student shall be informed of the reason for the conference and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her side of the story. The suspension may be imposed at that time, if deemed warranted, or the student may be notified within a reasonable amount of time thereafter.
- Prior to putting a suspension into effect, the principal or his or her designee shall make a reasonable effort to telephone and inform the student's parent or guardian of the impending suspension. This shall include attempts to contact the parent or guardian at home and at work. Parents may contact the principal or his or her designee for additional information regarding the suspension.
- Within 24 hours of the informal hearing referred to above, the principal or his or her designee shall mail a notice to the parent or guardian of the suspended student and shall send copies of the notice to the Superintendent of Schools or his or her designee. The notice shall contain:
  - a. The reason for the suspension
  - b. Identification of the school rule(s) violated by the student
  - c. A statement of the effective date and duration of the suspension

**Suspensions of 10 Days or More**

A formal hearing will be arranged by the principal or by the high school or middle school vice principal with the Deputy Superintendent of Schools in any instance where a suspension in excess of 10 days is contemplated. At this hearing, the student shall be afforded the following additional procedural rights:

- Written notification of the charge(s) in advance of the hearing in English and the student's primary language
- An opportunity to present a defense
- Representation by counsel at the student's own expense

A written decision will be sent to the parent/guardian of the student stating the basis of any suspension, the effective date and duration of such suspension and the right to appeal the suspension within 10 days to the Superintendent of Schools or his or her designee. This written decision shall become part of the student's record.

**Suspension or Expulsion Under M.G.L. c. 71, §37H**

State law permits principals to expel any student in grades 9-12 who, on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games:

- Is found in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or knife; or of a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C; or, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine and heroin
- Assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff

As required by law a student, whom a principal has determined should be expelled, has rights of notice, hearing, and appeal to the Superintendent of Schools.

No school or school district within Massachusetts is required to admit or provide educational services to a student expelled pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H. If a student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school district expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for the expulsion.

## **Suspension or Expulsion under M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½**

State law permits principals to suspend students charged with a felony or a felony delinquency, or to expel students convicted of or admitting guilt to a felony or a felony delinquency if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

As required by law a student, whom a principal has determined should be expelled, has rights of notice, hearing, and appeal to the superintendent of schools.

## **Expulsion by School Committee**

In addition to expulsions pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H 1/2, a student may be expelled by the School Committee. M.G.L. 76 §17 states that, "A school committee shall not permanently exclude a pupil from the public schools for alleged misconduct without first giving him and his parent or guardian an opportunity to be heard."

An expulsion hearing before the School Committee can be initiated solely upon the recommendation of expulsion by the Superintendent of Schools. Any student whom the Superintendent has recommended be expelled shall receive written notification of the charge(s) in advance of the hearing before the School Committee. The student may be represented by counsel at the hearing and shall have an opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. The School Committee may decide to suspend, rather than expel, the student.

## **JUVENILE RESOURCE CENTER (JRC)**

The Pittsfield Public Schools have an agreement with the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department to operate a program alternative to out-of-school suspension. The program places students suspended for a 3-9 day period in a full-day educational setting where classroom assignments can be completed and tutorial and case management services provided. The JRC also offers long-term tutoring, dropout prevention programming, and court mandated counseling. The Juvenile Resource Center program is operated in the educational suite of the former House of Correction on Second Street. Students assigned to the JRC must arrive with a parent/guardian on the first day for a conference and orientation. Upon successful completion of assignments at the JRC, students receive full credit for assignments and school attendance.

## **DISCIPLINE OF SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, known as Chapter 766, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation TEAM to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individual Educational Program (I.E.P.). The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of special needs students:

- The I.E.P. for every special needs student will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's handicapping conditions require modification. Any modification will be described in the I.E.P.
- The principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendable offense of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.
- When it is known that a special education student is being considered for a long-term suspension, the TEAM will conduct a manifestation determination to ascertain if the relationship between the student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition. This process will consider whether to:
  - a. Design a modified program for the student

- b. Write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any needed modification of the I.E.P. relative to discipline code expectations

In the absence of a modified discipline code (as described above), and a manifestation determination, all suspensions which are less than 10 days (cumulative) in a school year shall be subject to the requirements described in this handbook.

## **STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Students are encouraged to bring their concerns about school issues or incidents to the attention of the professional staff. Students can contact a teacher, the Peer Resource Advisor, the School Adjustment Counselor, a member of the Guidance Department, or the Principal.

# **IX. Student Searches and Personal Privacy**

## **A. SEARCHES TO STUDENT'S PERSON**

In all circumstances of search and seizure in the school the interests of the student will be abridged no more than is necessary to achieve the legitimate end of preserving order in the school. A student search and resulting seizure will be carried out if (a) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, and (b) the search itself is conducted in a manner reasonably related to its objectives and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and nature of the infraction. When possible, the search should be conducted under the direction of the principal or designated administrator with at least one other adult witness, all of the same sex as the alleged offender. Whenever possible, reasonable efforts must be made to inform the student's parents/guardian prior to taking such action. The search should be conducted as discreetly as possible making sure to avoid intrusive searches or random searches. If the search and seizure so warrants, it will be brought to the attention of the appropriate law enforcement authorities and the student's parents will be so informed.

## **B. SEARCHES OF LOCKERS, DESKS, COMPUTERS**

Students may be issued lockers, desks, and computers, or other school equipment or facilities at the opening of school or thereafter. *Students should have no expectation of privacy in their school lockers, desks, computers, etc.* Lockers, desks, and computers are for the use of students but remain the property of the Pittsfield Public Schools. Students are advised that their *lockers, desks, computers, or other school equipment or facilities may be inspected without notice by school administrators* to ensure cleanliness, safety, and adherence to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

## **C. CANINE INSPECTIONS OF SCHOOLS**

At the discretion of the Superintendent of schools and his/her designee, the Pittsfield Police or State Police Canine Unit may be requested to perform an inspection of the school.

## **D. COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**

All cases of actual possession, use, sale and distribution of alcohol, a controlled substance or weapons in school, upon school property, or at school-sponsored events will be reported to the Pittsfield Police Department for appropriate action.

## **X. Student Safety, Building Safety, and Public Accessibility**

### **A. SNOW/EMERGENCY DAY CANCELLATION PROCEDURES**

Extreme weather conditions such as heavy snow, ice, or flooding may result in the cancellation of classes at all schools. A localized emergency such as the loss of heat or a water main break may result in the cancellation of classes at a single school. In either situation, an automated phone and email notification system will be activated to provide families with timely notice. In addition, the superintendent or designee will notify local radio and television stations and post a notice on the education cable access channel by 6:00 a.m. The following stations will be contacted:

WBRK 101.7 FM/1340 AM	Channel 6	Capital News 9
WBEC 105.5 FM/1430 AM	Channel 10	PCTV Channel 17
WUPE/WMNB 100.1 FM/1110 AM	Channel 13	Channel14 (Springfield 22)

School closings will also be posted on the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) website, [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net). **It is crucial that parents/guardians keep the schools informed of current family contact information. Notify your child's school of changes of address, phone numbers, email addresses, and emergency contact information as they occur.**

In circumstances where the emergency situation may improve, there may be a one- or two-hour delay to the starting time set for each level. In the event that an emergency develops during the day while schools are in session, plans will be communicated using the same stations and be supplemented with family or emergency contact phone calls. When necessary, students may remain in school until arrangements for a safe dismissal are arranged.

## ***X. Seguridad de los Estudiantes, Seguridad de los Edificios, y Accesibilidad del Publico***

### **A. PROCEDIMIENTOS PARA LA CANCELACION DE DIAS DE NIEVE/EMERGENCY**

*Las condiciones meteorológicas extremas como fuertes nevadas, hielo, o inundaciones pueden resultar en la cancelación de clases en todas las escuelas. Emergencias locales como la pérdida de calificación o la ruptura de tubería de agua pueden resultar en la cancelación de clases en una escuela. En cada situación una sistema de notificación telefónica automatizada será activada para proporcionar familias con un aviso oportuno. Además, el superintendente o su designado notificara estaciones locales de radio y televisión y publicar un aviso en el canal de cable acceso educativo antes de 6:00 a.m. Los siguiente estaciones serán notificado:*

<i>WBRK 101.7 FM/1340 AM</i>	<i>Canal 6</i>	<i>Capital News 9</i>
<i>WBEC 105.5 FM/1430 AM</i>	<i>Canal 10</i>	<i>PCTV Canal 17</i>
<i>WUPE/WMNB 100.1 FM/1110 AM</i>	<i>Canal 13</i>	<i>Canal 14 (Springfield 22)</i>

*La cancelación de escuela también se publica en la red de las Escuelas Publicas de Pittsfield, [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net)*

*En circunstancias en que la situación de emergencia puede mejorar, puede haber un retraso de uno o dos horas de la hora del comienzo para cada nivel. En el caso que una emergencia se desarrolla durante el día mientras las escuelas están en sesión, planes se comunicarán usando los mismo estaciones y se completara con llamadas a familias y contactos de emergencia. Cuando sea necesario, estudiantes se pueden quedar en las escuelas hasta que arreglos para un despido seguro se pueden organizar.*

## **B. VISITOR PASSES**

The Pittsfield Public Schools extend a warm welcome to parents and others to visit our schools and classrooms. At the same time, we must ensure that our students and staff are safe and that learning is not disrupted. Schools must be aware of who is in the building and why they are there. All visitors must first report to the office, sign-in, and display a visitor's pass/identification provided for use while in the building. "Visitors" include parents and school department employees, as well as others.

## **C. SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS AND C.O.R.I. CHECKS**

Anyone who wishes to volunteer time to work with our students and is likely to have access to students who, at times, may be unsupervised, either on school premises or while participating or assisting in school-sponsored programs or activities, must register with the district for a Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) check before engaging in volunteer activities. The opportunity to volunteer may be denied if the check reports evidence of criminal conduct deemed by the Superintendent or designee to create a credible risk to students, staff, or the public. M.G.L. c. 71, §38R and PER-10A.

In order to initiate a C.O.R.I check, fill out the required paperwork in the Human Resources Office of the School Administration Center (269 First Street, 499-9505), bringing a driver's license or other valid photo ID with you. It can take one to three weeks for the process to be completed. Requested schools are informed of approvals.

## **D. AGREEMENT WITH PITTSFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT**

The Pittsfield Public Schools have an agreement with the Pittsfield Police Department to report all cases of actual possession, use, sale, and distribution of alcohol or a controlled substance in school, upon school property, or at school-sponsored events for appropriate action, after the notification of parents.

## **E. RESOURCE/D.A.R.E. OFFICERS IN SCHOOLS**

The Pittsfield Public Schools in cooperation with the Pittsfield Police Department permit the assignment of an on-duty officer to work on school grounds for the primary purpose of being a resource to students and staff in the maintenance of a positive student environment. Should it become necessary, the resource officer can intercede in a situation in his/her capacity as an officer on-duty.

## **F. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The Pittsfield Public Schools, in cooperation with the Pittsfield Police Department and Pittsfield Fire Department, under the guidelines set by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have created district and school procedures that support response to a range of emergency situations. Procedures include, but are not limited to, responding to a bomb threat, a violent intruder, or the need to evacuate the building. Every school has a designated evacuation site (provided to parents in start-of-school materials) and a designated parent reunification site. Should an evacuation be necessary all students and staff will report to the site and student attendance taken. Safety personnel will advise when it is safe to return to the building or will start a procedure to release students to a parent or guardian who can sign for student release. To the extent possible, announcements will be made through the phone notification system, the district website, local radio stations, and the education cable access channel (PCTV Channel 17 to inform parents about a school-wide emergency and actions that are underway or to be taken. All school sites will facilitate practice emergency drills at the beginning of each school year.

## **G. STATE LAW PROHIBITS SMOKING ON SCHOOL GROUNDS**

Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited by the Pittsfield Public Schools. This prohibition shall be in effect in all school buildings, grounds, bus operations, school vehicles, and private sponsored activities that occur either on or off school property. Violations of the smoking policy by students and staff are subject to disciplinary action.

## **XI. Student Records and Privacy**

### **A. BASIC RIGHTS**

Pursuant to the requirements of federal law, notice is hereby provided to all students attending the Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS), and to all persons in parental relation to such students, that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232-g, provides such persons with certain rights. The parent or guardian of each student who has not yet attained her/his eighteenth birthday, and every student who has attained her/his eighteenth birthday, is hereby notified that:

- She/he has the right to inspect and review the student's educational records.
- The Pittsfield Public Schools limits the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in students' educational records except (a) by prior consent of the student's parent or guardian, (b) as directory information or information pertaining to honors, awards, achievements, or participation in school- or class-related activities, and (c) under certain limited circumstances permitted by FERPA or by Massachusetts regulation.
- She/he may request that records be amended to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.
- She/he may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education alleging failure by the Pittsfield Public Schools to comply with FERPA and its regulations.
- She/he may obtain copies of the Pittsfield Public Schools' policy on student records from:

The Director of Human Resources  
269 First Street Room 111  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Telephone 413-499-9505  
FAX 413-448-8886

## ***XI. Registros del Estudiante y Privacidad***

### **A. DERECHOS BASICOS**

*De conformidad con los requisitos de la ley federal, un aviso se dispone a todos los estudiantes en las Escuelas Publicas de Pittsfield y a todas las personas con relaciones paternal a tal estudiante, que el Derechos Educativos de la Familia y la Ley de Privacidad (DEFLP), proporciona tal personas con cierto derechos. El padre o tutor legal de cada estudiante que no ha llegado a su cumpleaños de 18, y cada estudiante que tiene 18 anos, es notificado que:*

- *El/Ella tiene el derecho a inspeccionar y revisar el registro educativos del estudiante*
- *Las Escuelas Publicas de Pittfield limita la revelación de información de identificación personal contenido en el registro educativo del estudiante excepto (a) por consentimiento el padre/tutor legal del estudiante, (b) como información del directorio o información relativas a honores, premios, logros, o participación en escuela o actividades en la clase, y (c) bajo ciertas circunstancias limitadas permitido por la DEFLP o por las regulaciones de Massachussets.*

- *El/Ella puede solicitar que registros se modifican para asegura que no son inexacto, engañoso, o en violación de la privacidad del estudiante o otros derechos.*
- *El/Ella puede presentar una queja el Departamento de Educación del Estados Unidos basado en la falta de las Escuelas Publicas de Pittsfield en cumplir con DEFLP y sus regulaciones.*
- *El/Ella puede obtener copias de las normas de registros de estudiantes de las Escuelas Publicas de Pittsfield de:*

*Director de Recursos Humanos  
269 First Street Room 111  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Teléfono 413-499-9505  
FAX 413-448-8886*

## **B. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Except for those authorized by federal or state law, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

## **C. DIRECTORY INFORMATION**

### **What May Be Reported About Students**

The Pittsfield School Committee establishes that, in conformity with federal and Massachusetts law governing the privacy of student information, school district administrators or others acting under the authorization of the Superintendent of Schools may, without the prior written consent of a student's parent or guardian, release directory information on any student attending the Pittsfield Public Schools. As used herein, "directory information" shall mean personally identifiable information about a student that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory information shall include the following personally identifiable student information: (1) name, (2) address, (3) telephone listing, if published, (4) photograph, (5) date and place of birth, (6) dates of attendance, (7) grade level, (8) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (9) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (10) honors and awards received, and (11) the most recent educational agency or institution attended.

### **Military Recruiters**

Under the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* and the *National Defense Authorization Act* (2002) local education agencies (LEAs) are required to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they provide to postsecondary institutions and prospective employers, and to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the names, addresses, and telephone listings of high school juniors and seniors for the purposes of recruiting and informing young people about scholarship opportunities. These two laws include provisions for parents to "opt out" of allowing schools to provide information about their children to military recruiters. Helpful guidance on this issue from the U.S. Department of Education can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/hottopics/ht-10-09-02a.html>

### **Parental Advisement to Withhold Release of Directory Information:**

A parent or guardian who does not wish directory information on her/his child to be released pursuant to either or both of the above, may prevent release of that information by completing and submitting the Parent and Student Agreement/Acuerdo Entre Padres y Estudiantes (pages 3 and 5 of this document) or by making that request in writing directly to the school principal.

## **D. RIGHTS OF 18-YEAR OLD STUDENTS**

Any student eighteen (18) years of age or older may exercise these student record rights alone.

## **E. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

Massachusetts regulations (603 C.M.R. 23.06) require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, guidance information, health records and some testing results be destroyed five (5) years after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before the temporary record information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified, and have an opportunity to receive a copy of the information before its destruction.

## **F. ACCESS OF NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS TO STUDENT INFORMATION**

Massachusetts regulations (603 C.M.R. 23.07[5]) make a non-custodial parent eligible to obtain access to her/his student's records *unless* the school or district have been given documentation that (1) the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or the custodial parent, (2) the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or (3) the non-custodial parent's access to the student or the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

## **G. PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION**

Schools are required by law to notify parents about any classes that will be held on human sexual education or sexual issues. The notice must tell the parent how he or she can review the content and materials of the classes. While parents do not have to give permission for their children to take sex education classes, parents do have the right to exempt their children from such classes. To do this, simply write a letter to your child's principal saying you do not want your child to participate in sexual education classes. For more information about sex education in the PPS, please contact Linda Avalle, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education, at 431-499-9523 or [lavalle@pittsfield.net](mailto:lavalle@pittsfield.net).

## **H. MEDIA APPEARANCES**

The Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) may display student work or record classroom or school events via video, photographs, electronic media, and print for display to other students, school staff, parents in the school community, and others. The PPS may also permit the media to cover such events and use a child's name or image in association with the coverage. Parents/guardians must indicate on the Parent and Student Agreement if they do not want this information displayed or released.

# **XII. Promotion and Graduation Policies**

Students must fulfill several requirements to be promoted to the next grade. All students must:

- Earn passing grades in certain courses
- Maintain good attendance

## **PASSING GRADES IN COURSES**

Teachers base the grades they give students on several factors, including:

- Scores on classroom tests and quizzes
- Completion of required products, for example, a book report or science project
- Participation in class discussion and activities
- Performance on homework assignments
- Preparedness for class.

Homework is considered an important adjunct to classroom instruction. Regular homework assignments not only reinforce course content introduced by the classroom teacher but also provide opportunity for students to develop the ability to function independently. The frequency and complexity of homework assignments is expected to increase with grade level and with program level in the high school. However, it is expected that homework assignments will be a component of the student's education program commencing with grade 1.

Where students have more than one teacher as in team-taught or departmentalized organizations, provisions are to be made to coordinate individual teacher homework assignments so as to preclude excessive demands upon individual students.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to take an active interest in their students' academic progress and to feel free to communicate questions and concerns to teachers as needed. All teachers' emails are listed on their school websites' faculty directory pages; school websites can be found through the district site, [www.pittsfield.net](http://www.pittsfield.net).

In addition, all parents and guardians of middle and high school students can keep up with their children's grades and attendance through the PowerSchool website, [powerschool.pittsfield.net/parents](http://powerschool.pittsfield.net/parents). In September, all parents/guardians of secondary school students will receive a user id and password, which they can then use to enter the site and set up their own private password to view their student's progress. Teachers are required to post student grades electronically no later than ten (10) school days after the due date for the assignment or date of quiz, test, or examination; or by the due dates of progress reports or report cards, whichever is earlier. It should be understood that long-term, major projects and presentations may not be posted on-line within ten (10) school days but will be posted by the dates of progress reports or report cards if they are to be counted in the final average. In the event that the electronic grading system of the Pittsfield Public Schools is inoperable, the timelines referenced above will be extended. Parents/guardians are asked to respect the timelines referenced above and to direct any specific questions to their child's teacher and/or principal.

## **A. ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

### POLICY

Where movement to the next grade is concerned, the following shall apply:

Retention at a grade level will be an acceptable course of action when it has been determined by the principal that passing to the next grade level would be detrimental to the educational progress of a student. In such cases, an educational plan will be developed for the student by the principal in collaboration with the teachers who will be delivering the instructional program in the next year. The educational plan cannot be a simple repetition of the entire grade but will address the specific needs of the retained student. Students moving to the next grade level who have demonstrated academic deficiencies will be scheduled appropriately to address their development needs.

### REGULATIONS

The following regulations shall apply to situations wherein students at the elementary and middle school levels are performing significantly below their chronological peers and normal expectations for their grade:

1. Non-promotion is not a viable option in the following situations:
  - **At the kindergarten level**  
It is not reasonable to require a student to repeat this grade since kindergarten attendance is not required.
  - **In any situation where the student had been previously retained**

It is unreasonable to impose non-promotion a second time if it was ineffective the first time. Doing so would make the child two years older than his or her classmates.

2. The best protection against the disadvantages of non-promotion is early intervention. As soon during the school year as it becomes apparent that a student is having significant difficulty the teacher is to initiate with the principal a conference of building-level resources and the student's parent to develop a remediation plan for implementation during the remainder of that school year.
3. In recognition of the fact that retention is usually ineffective and often detrimental, when the school year is drawing to a close and a student is still performing significantly below grade expectations, the initial consideration should be what will be necessary in order for this child to be successful at the next grade level rather than whether the student should be non-promoted.
4. There are other means of providing additional time for the underperforming child to catch up than non-promotion. Summer school, learning academies, and extended day programs are options. In some cases, participation in summer programs may be required to advance to the next grade level.
5. No student is to be retained in the absence of a specific individualized learning plan for the following year that is designed to enable the child to catch up. In other words, separation from ones chronological peers is expected to be a temporary situation.
6. When a student advances from one level to the next without having met all of the academic standards normally expected at the previous level, documentation of his/her performance level is to be specified to the receiving school.
7. Student achievement data including local and statewide assessments may be used in order to determine appropriate placement in academic courses.

## **B. HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Policy**

All high school students are to acquire an equal number of credits as a requirement for graduation, regardless of the certification program in which they are enrolled. The number of credits required for graduation shall be adjusted periodically, subject to School Committee approval, so as to reflect program and course requirements as well as scheduling arrangements. When courses differ substantially in their levels of academic challenge, differential weighting for computing grade point average shall be used as a means of assessing more fairly the academic achievement of students. All students shall be required to fulfill specific certificate program and course requirements for graduation as approved by the School Committee or mandated by state law.

Except for state mandated graduation requirements and beginning with the class of 2000, the principal shall have authority to waive requirements for graduation in the senior year subject to review by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee. The principal in consultation with the Superintendent or his/her designee may modify graduation and/or certification requirements based on recommendations of Special Education teams or under other exceptional circumstances.

### **Regulations**

#### *Credit Requirements*

All courses will receive one (1) credit per period per semester. Students must acquire a minimum of 244 credits as a requirement for graduation. All students are to be scheduled for a minimum of 64 credits per year.

## Course Requirements

Students must pass the following courses as a requirement for high school graduation:

	Arts & Science	Technical Two-year	Technical Three-year	Business	Work Based Learning
English	4	4	4	4	4
History/Social Studies	3	3	3	3	2
Mathematics	3	3	3	3	4
Science	3	3	3	3	2
Foreign Language	2	0	0	0	0
Physical Education	4	4	4	4	4
Human Development	2	2	2	2	2

Students must meet the state Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) requirements plus all of the local district program-of-study requirements, which include mathematics, English language arts (ELA), and science, in order to receive a High School Diploma. A student failing to pass one or more MCAS or the requirements but successfully meeting all local district program-of-study requirements will receive a Certificate of Completion. Such a student may receive additional remedial help from a variety of sources and may re-take the MCAS test(s) not passed. Upon successfully meeting the MCAS requirement, a student is entitled to a standard High School Diploma.

## Education Proficiency Plans (EPP)

The purpose of the Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) is to increase the likelihood that graduates of high schools in Massachusetts have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and today's workforce. The plan is intended to help assist MA students by providing sufficient knowledgeable in mathematics and English language arts to matriculate at higher education institutions (remediation free) and be prepared for post secondary careers. The Massachusetts Department of Education requires an EPP be developed for each student who has not demonstrated proficiency in either English language arts or mathematics based on the performance level attained on the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS.

Educational Proficiency Plans for each required content area (ELA and Math) shall include, at a minimum:

- A review of a student's strengths and weaknesses in the content area.
- The courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12 that will move the student toward proficiency on the grade 10 curriculum framework standards as well as on grade 11 and 12 standards in English language arts or grade 11 and 12 grade span standards or Algebra II standards in mathematics.
- A description of the assessments the school will administer on at least an annual basis to determine whether the student is making progress toward proficiency, or has become proficient on the grade 10 standards. These assessments must include MCAS tests or other tests identified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for this purpose.

A student achieving a scaled score 240 or higher on an MCAS test or a score determined by the Department of Education on another approved test will be deemed to have achieved proficiency in the subject area and to have fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan in that subject.

For students who have not achieved this score threshold, the principal or head of school (or his or her designee) will determine whether the student has fulfilled the Educational Proficiency Plan.