

# **New Bedford Public Schools**

[www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org)



## **DISTRICT MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

### **Student & Family Handbook 2023-2024**

## **CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION**

Mr. Andrew O’Leary, Interim Superintendent  
Ms. Darcie Aungst, Interim Deputy Superintendent  
Mr. Barry Rabinovitch, Acting Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations  
Ms. Heather Emsley, Executive Director of Human Capital Services  
Ms. Jennifer Ferland, Chief of Staff  
Mr. Paul Bottome, Executive Director of Special Education  
Ms. Tammy Morgan, Executive Director of Student Services  
Ms. Sonia Walmsley, Executive Director of Educational Access & Pathways

Central Office located at  
**455 County Street**  
**New Bedford, MA 02740**

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Hon. Jonathan F. Mitchell, Chairperson/Ex-Officio  
Mr. Christopher A. Cotter, Vice Chairperson  
Ms. Colleen Dawicki,  
Ms. Melissa Costa  
Mr. Joaquim “Jack” B. Livramento, Jr.  
Mr. Bruce J. Oliveira  
Mr. Ross Grace

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **SCHOOL SUCCESS**

When school staff, families, and community members work together to create a system of supports for children, the result is better educational and developmental outcomes for children. “Family and Community Engagement is a shared responsibility of families, schools, and communities for student learning and achievement; it is continuous from birth to young adulthood; and it occurs across multiple settings where children learn. The six fundamentals of effective Family, School and Community Partnerships are: Welcoming all stakeholders, communicating effectively, supporting the success of children and youth, advocating for each child and youth, sharing power and responsibility, and partnering with the community (Massachusetts Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals, June 2011).”

New Bedford Elementary Schools are working to strengthen relationships with families and the community toward a shared goal of student academic success. As a part of this effort, the school district has established a multilingual *Family Welcome Center* in the Paul Rodrigues Administration Building, 455 County Street, room 105 (508-997-4511 x3424).

### **What Families Can Do to Help Children Succeed in School**

1. Make certain all of your family’s contact information is correct and up-to-date. When an emergency happens, it is important that the school be able to contact you immediately, and, if you are not available, another responsible adult in your child’s life.
2. Remind your child of the importance of regular attendance and always being on time. Ask your child:
  - a. Have you been in school every day?
  - b. Have you been on time every day?
  - c. Have you turned in all your homework? Was it complete and on time?
3. Communicate with your child’s school/teachers
4. Visit your child’s school often. Schools have many scheduled events including:
  - a. Student performances
  - b. Sporting events
  - c. Family-teacher conferences
  - d. Other scheduled meetings
5. Read to and with your child, every day, in the language you know best. Families should read to their children, every evening before bed, until the children ask to read to themselves. Even then, adults can continue to read aloud to children, taking turns and allowing the child/children to read some parts aloud. If for any reason you are unable to read to your child, contact your public library for information about books on tape and other programs on computers (available at the library) that you can share with your child.

6. Talk to your child, every day, in the language you speak best.

Provide quiet time in a space with good lighting for your child to do homework and to read. Watch the clock or set the kitchen timer (see time and activity suggestions below). If your child finishes early, have **her/him read a book—keep one handy. If she/he needs more time, allow this. Generally, though, telling your child that there is no TV, radio, telephone or computer time until the timer goes off is a good way to help your child be responsible for her/his learning.**

- a. If your child is in kindergarten or younger, sit with her/him and read and write together.
- b. If your child is in 1st—3rd grade, set the timer for about a half hour for your child to do homework, read and write every day. Sit with your child and ask questions about what she/he is doing or reading, but make certain your child does the work—she or he needs to learn some independence.
- c. If your child is in 4th—5th grade, set the timer for about 45 minutes.

## Questions for Families to Ask Children

*Ask two of the following questions (choose different ones each day) of your child, after every school day (afternoons) and before every school day (mornings). If your child is unable to answer a question fully, (for example, if your child says “we are not reading anything in school”), then tell your child you are concerned and will need to talk with teachers. Often, children will then respond with an answer. If they persist in saying they are not reading (or doing math, or science, etc.) and they respond they are not learning these subjects over a period of time (at least a week), then it is time to call the school and ask to meet with your child’s teacher/ teachers. Depending on the situation and your child’s age, you may wish to ask the teachers to meet together with your child. Consider posting the questions on your refrigerator door.*

- 1. What did you learn in school today? What do you think you will learn in school tomorrow?
- 2. What homework do you have?
- 3. What is something you enjoyed in school? What is something that was difficult for you to do in school today?
- 4. What did you read in school today?
- 5. What are you learning about in math? What are you learning about in science?
- 6. What are you learning about in history?
- 7. Did you ask any questions in school today? What questions did you ask? (If your child says she/he did not ask a question, help your child practice a question to ask the next school day. You might want to work with your child to choose a teacher or principal to ask their question.)
- 8. How do you think you are doing in school?
  - a. Have you talked to your teachers?
  - b. Have you asked for extra help (after-school, tutoring, other)?

## **What Can Parents Do?**

1. Let your child know how important you believe education is!
2. Make sure your child is at school on time!
3. Expect your child to graduate!
4. Help your child to set short-term and long-term goals and determine where they are headed in life.
5. Get connected with your children's school and talk with their teachers and counselors.

## **Homework Policy**

The responsibility of the school district to educate the student is carried out by the teachers through effective classroom instruction and the careful delegation of independent study. It is important for the student to be taught the concepts related to the content area and how to study in school before he/she is given assignments to complete at home. There is, therefore, a progressive increase in the amount of homework expected of students from the elementary grades through high school.

Purposeful homework benefits students. Homework should be an extension of the class lesson, be clearly understood by students, be well planned and meaningful.

Homework can be evaluated in multiple ways through review, classroom or small group discussion, and/or direct assessment. Completion of homework will count towards students' cumulative grade for the content area.

The immediate purpose of a specific homework assignment may be to:

1. Strengthen basic skills
2. Extend classroom learning
3. Stimulate and further interests
4. Reinforce independent study skills
5. Develop initiative, responsibility, self-direction and reflection
6. Stimulate use of leisure time that increases understanding and love of learning
7. Acquaint parents with the content and concepts studied in school

Homework assignments shall be planned in accordance with the following principles:

1. If homework is to have value, its purpose and relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student.
2. Students should understand not only what to do, but also how to do it.
3. Homework should grow from classroom discussions, problems, projects, and concerns.

4. The student's age, need for play time, and out-of-school responsibilities must be considered when deciding upon length of any assignment. The student must bear responsibility for managing his/her time in a way that homework can be completed and submitted on time.
5. Assignments should make use of a variety of skills and prior knowledge.
6. Every homework assignment must be properly corrected and/or evaluated in keeping with the purpose of the assignment. To the extent possible, such corrections/evaluations shall be shared with the students involved in a timely fashion.
7. When a student's grade or learning expectation are being adversely affected by poor homework performance or non-completion of assignments, the teacher shall communicate orally, or in writing, in a timely fashion with parents/guardians concerning the problem.
8. All homework assigned will be reflected in the child's cumulative grade or learning expectation at the end of the term.

Average Time:

K (45 minutes)  
1-3 (150 minutes)  
4-5 (175 minutes)  
6-8 (300 minutes)  
9-12 (600 minutes)

## **SECTION 1: SCHOOL HOURS, SCHEDULE, ATTENDANCE**

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:**

#### **GOMES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS (GRADES PreK - 5) 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

#### **HAYDEN-MCFADDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS (GRADES PreK - 5) 7:45AM – 3:30 PM

#### **PARKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS (GRADES PreK - 5) 7:45 AM – 2:30 PM

#### **PULASKI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS (GRADES K - 5) 8:45 AM - 3:00 PM

### **ALL OTHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:**

STUDENTS (GRADES K - 5) 8:15 AM - 2:30 PM

#### **KEITH MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS

7:50 AM - 2:35 PM (1<sup>st</sup> dismissal)  
- 2:45 PM (2<sup>nd</sup> dismissal)  
- 3:15 PM (final dismissal)

#### **NORMANDIN MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS

7:50 AM – 2:30 PM (1<sup>st</sup> dismissal)  
- 2:45 PM (2<sup>nd</sup> dismissal)  
- 3:15 PM (final dismissal)

#### **ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS

7:50 AM - 2:30 PM (1<sup>st</sup> dismissal)  
2:45 PM (second dismissal)  
3:15 PM (final dismissal)

#### **NEW BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS

7:28 AM - 2:40 PM (1<sup>st</sup> dismissal)  
- 3:00 PM (after school dismissal one)  
- 3:30 PM (after school dismissal two)

#### **TRINITY DAY ACADEMY:**

STUDENTS

7:30 AM – 2:09 PM

#### **WHALING CITY JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL:**

STUDENTS

7:30 AM – 2:09 PM

#### **PARENTING TEENS PROGRAM:**

STUDENTS

8:00 AM – 2:00 PM



## **Inclement Weather**

When an “EARLY DISMISSAL” schedule is announced, the following release times will apply:

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

11:30 AM Students (except Parker & Pulaski School)  
12:00 PM Students at Pulaski School  
12:15 Students at Parker School

### **MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

10:50 Normandin & Roosevelt Students  
10:55 AM Keith Students

### **HIGH SCHOOLS**

10:35 AM New Bedford High Students  
10:10 AM Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School  
10:10 AM Trinity Day Academy  
10:10 AM Parenting Teens Program

Information about “Cancellations”, “Early Dismissal” will be posted/broadcasted at the following: New

Bedford Public School web site: [www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org):

Local Cable channel 9

Standard times website: [www.southcoasttoday.com](http://www.southcoasttoday.com) Channel

4 WBZ-TV/1030 AM

Channel 5 WCVB-TV

Channel 7 WHDH-TV

Channel 12 WPRI-TV

Radio Station WRKO-AM

Radio Station WBSM

Channel 6 WLNE

Channel 10 WJAR

FOX 25 WFXT

Radio Station WSAR

Radio Station FUN 107

NBPS tries to make these decisions as early as possible to accommodate our working families.

## **Open House**

Once each year, typically in the fall, an open house is held for any parents/guardians who wish to visit the school. However, parents and guardians should feel free to make appointments for teacher conferences when the need arises. It is usually best to make arrangements through the student’s guidance counselor.

## **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are issued in the middle of each marking period to all students. These progress reports must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the homeroom teacher. (At each New Bedford Middle School, additional reports may be issued at a point when a student’s grades decline.)

## **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued four (4) times a year or approximately every ten weeks. A student receives the report card at the end of each marking period. The report card must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the student's homeroom teacher. Students and parents that have questions/concerns regarding report cards will have the opportunity to request a meeting with the students' teachers. The meeting will include a parent or guardian, the student, classroom teacher(s), counselor and the assistant principal (where appropriate).

## **Every Day Counts**

### **Tips for Families**

- ♦ Get your child to school **every day, on time**, with completed homework
- ♦ **Unexcused absences**, including bad weather or car trouble, will count as absences on your child's record
- ♦ Extended vacations, long weekends and frequent appointments during school will cause your child to **fall behind** in school
- ♦ Being in school every day **raises your child's chances** to do better in class, on tests, and receive better grades
- ♦ Follow the school guidelines for **reporting Excused absences** right away
- ♦ Allow your child to stay home **ONLY** when he/she has a contagious illness or is too sick to attend school
- ♦ Help with homework, or **talk to your child about his/her school work** or class experience every day
- ♦ Help your child stay healthy—**exercising, eating a balanced diet, and getting plenty of sleep** to be mentally and physically ready for school
- ♦ Communicate regularly with your child's school

## **Attendance Philosophy & Policy**

Learning and achievement are the highest priorities in the New Bedford Public Schools. Attendance is a major factor that influences student learning. Students cannot learn if they are absent. Regular school attendance can be achieved through a partnership between students, parents and the school.

Student attendance is the number one factor affecting the overall achievement of students. Teaching students, the discipline that they need in order to survive in the 21st century work place is one of our main jobs, and we must help students understand the consequences of poor attendance throughout their educational career. In fact, good attendance is the number one issue that employers identify as making a good employee.

**This attendance policy is designed to foster a culture of learning at New Bedford Public Schools.**

This policy:

- Establishes firm expectations that on-time school and class attendance are important in sustaining the learning environment and in meeting individual learning needs.

- Provides significant flexibility and opportunities to accommodate legitimate absence or lateness with a minimum of administrative procedure.
- Assures timely flow of information from parents to school, and from school to parents about attendance at school and in class so that both can work to improve a situation before a student's education suffers.
- Clearly defines the responsibilities of students, educators, and parents regarding absences, tardiness and dismissals.
- Employs a tiered model of supportive interventions which focus on the needs of the "whole child", a productive partnership between home and school, and the utilization of juvenile court as a last resort effort to ensure students and parents adhere to state attendance laws.

## **Massachusetts General Laws Related to Attendance**

Pursuant to state law, it is the duty of parents/guardians to ensure that students attend school regularly. Students with unexcused absences in excess of what is permitted under state law may be referred to the Supervisor of Attendance. The school administration will also notify parents of student absences in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, s. 1B. M.G.L. c. 76, § 2 defines truancy as unexcused absences totaling more than seven (7) full days or fourteen (14) half days in a six (6) month period, and M.G.L. c. 119, § 21 defines habitual truancy as willful failure to attend school for more than eight (8) full days in a quarter. In addition, a tardy or dismissal could be considered a ½ day absence by the state.

## **The Role of the Attendance Officer**

The New Bedford Public Schools employs Attendance Officers at the elementary, middle and high school levels. These staff has the responsibility to monitor and investigate school-wide attendance trends as well as individual student attendance. Attendance officers frequently communicate with parents/guardians through written notification, phone calls, and home visits. They also work closely with teachers and administration to develop plans and intervene if a student develops a pattern of chronic attendance. Following supports and interventions provided by the New Bedford Public Schools, if a student continues to fail to attend school regularly or a parent/guardian fails to send their child to school, it is the Attendance Officer's responsibility to protect the rights of the child and file a complaint with the juvenile court system. If at any time an Attendance Officer (mandated reporter) believes a child to be in danger they must file a 51A complaint with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

## **Definitions**

### **EXCUSED ABSENCE:**

While the school recognizes "legitimate" reasons for an interruption in a student's education, the casual "day off" will not be recognized as an excused absence. The following list of circumstances, all of which require official written verification or documentation, would constitute an excusable absence/tardy:

- Medical appointments/illness verified in writing by a professional health care provider or the school nurse
- Death of a family member
- Observance of a major religious holiday
- School related absence (i.e., dismissals for field trips, suspensions, ASA, sports events, etc.)
- Legal obligations
- Verified post high school visitation
- Absence approved by the Headmaster

If a student is absent for one of the above reasons, he/she will provide their homeroom teacher with the appropriate documentation.

\* Students are responsible for make-up work associated with ALL excused absences.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: When in school, students are expected to attend all classes unless excused by an administrator or the nurse.

- If a student is in school, fails to attend a class, and does not have such an excuse, the absence from class is unexcused.
- If a student arrives to class beyond the halfway point without a valid excuse and corresponding pass, the tardy will be considered an unexcused absence for that class.
- If a parent fails to provide written documentation indicating a valid reason for an absence, the school will classify the absence as unexcused (please refer to the list of excusable absences above).

TARDINESS:

If a student is not present in his/her classroom/homeroom at the bell, the student will be marked tardy; a student attending less than half a school day is considered absent. A written excuse (as described earlier) is required.

Please Note: Being tardy to school or class may result in the assignment of appropriate disciplinary actions by the housemaster, which may include, parental contact, Detentions, In-School Suspension, and Saturday Alternative to Suspension days. Failure to comply may result in further disciplinary actions.

DISMISSAL:

A student wishing to be dismissed during a session must present a signed note from the parent or guardian to the Housemaster. It must include the student's full name, reason, date and time for dismissal, and a telephone number where the Housemaster can reach the parent or guardian for verification and approval.

SUSPENSION:

Students who are absent due to out-of-school suspension will be marked absent and will be expected to make up missed assignments, homework and tests.

TRUANCY:

Truancy is defined as being absent from school without the permission of a parent or guardian. Any student who is found to be truant may be required to return to school accompanied by a parent or guardian. Please Note: A parent's note cannot excuse truancy if the absence does not meet the criteria of an excused absence.

CHRONIC ABSENCE:

Missing 10% (18 days) or more of a school year.

## **Documentation Requirements**

Written documentation is required from a parent or guardian for any and all absences, tardiness and dismissals.

The note must list the date(s) of absence(s); the student's full name and it must clearly state the reason

for the absence. Recommended documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- Doctors' or Dentists' notes
- Court/legal documentation for the legal obligation of the student (not family and friends)
- College or verified post high school visit documentation, etc.
- The student will submit the documentation indicating the reasons for his/her absence to the homeroom teacher. All notes will be verified and kept on file.
- The document must include the date absent, the reason for the absence, a working phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached and the parent or guardian's signature.
- A copy of an obituary or verification of religious affiliation may be requested by the Housemaster or Attendance Officer.
- Should a school official become aware that written documentation for any absence(s) has been fabricated, the absence(s) will not qualify as "approved" and will not be allowable for the Buy Back option.

Please Note: The New Bedford Public Schools' district policy does not recognize family vacations as an excused absence.

### **Attendance Requirements & Procedures**

Students will not receive full credit for a course (regardless of the grade received) when a student exceeds the following:

- 5 unexcused absences in a class that meets daily in a semester
- 2.5 unexcused absences in a class that meets on alternating days in a semester
- 10 unexcused absences in a full year course

This in turn may place the student in jeopardy of attaining the required Units and/or Courses necessary for graduation.

### **Parent/Student Notification**

- The New Bedford Public Schools automated call system will inform the primary contact number when a student is absent or tardy.

Please Note: It is the responsibility of the students' parent/guardian to provide an updated valid working phone number to the school at all times.

- Parents, guardians and age of majority students will be notified that a student is in danger of not receiving full credit through issuance of a warning notice.

### **Dropout Prevention**

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

timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

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

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

## **SECTION 2: Student Conduct**

### **STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY**

#### **I. Objectives**

The disciplinary policies included in this student code of conduct meet the intent of the Massachusetts General Laws (c. 71, § 37H) that requires each school to adopt a set of rules and regulations designed to maintain order and mutual respect and maximize the potential use of the students and the school. The statute requires that the rules pertaining to the conduct of students be set out in the Handbook. New Bedford High School's primary concern is that students who wish to learn can do so in an environment conducive to learning and that both prescriptive and disciplinary means be employed to deter those who would disrupt such an environment.

The conduct which is expressly listed in this Handbook and the listing of possible discipline which may be imposed for that conduct is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive but is intended to be illustrative. New Bedford Public Schools reserves the right to impose discipline for any conduct which is unlawful or illegal, which is inappropriate in the school setting, which poses any threat of danger or harm to another, or which is disruptive to the educational environment. New Bedford Public Schools also reserves the right to impose a level of discipline which is appropriate to the conduct involved based on all of the facts and circumstances.

#### **II. Applicability**

These policies and their provisions shall be applicable during regularly scheduled school hours on school grounds as well as such other times and places, including, but not limited to: school sponsored events; field trips; and athletic and club activities where appropriate school personnel have jurisdiction over students. This includes any activities in which students participate as individuals or as groups that have in any way been facilitated by school personnel or where students may be identified as representing New Bedford Public Schools. Jurisdiction also includes at or around school buses, school bus stops and during bus loading and unloading procedures. In some instances, a student may be disciplined for out of school conduct. All of the provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct* apply in any and all applicable situations, even if those situations are not explicitly cited in a section of the code.

#### **III. Educational Service Plan**

The following educational services are available to students suspended or expelled from a New Bedford Middle School:

#### **Individual suspension days beyond 9 days:**

1. Academic work provided to the parent prior to the day of suspension without late penalty as long as delivered the day returned or other arrangements pre-established by teacher. Guidance Counselor notified.



2. Access to tutoring services: Students offered this option are expected to attend tutoring sessions offered virtually or at a public site identified by the school district. The tutoring will be provided by qualified personnel or contracted providers. The academic work will be consistent with the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students. Students' tutoring schedule will be set by appointment and prepared weekly.
3. Access to online education: Students offered this option will be enrolled in an online platform. Work hours are flexible, but students are expected to access online instruction by logging in at least 5 days per week for a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour per subject. Daily attendance is imperative in order to ensure success in the virtual program. The academic work will be consistent with the academic standards and curriculum frameworks.

**Suspension days 2-5 (consecutive) beyond 9 days:** Academic work provided to the parent prior to the day of suspension without late penalty if delivered the day returned or other arrangements pre-established by teacher.

**Suspension days 6-10 (consecutive) beyond 9 days:** Academic work provided to the parent. Additionally, 30 minutes of tutoring time per suspension day. The formula of time allotted does not mean 30 minutes each day of suspension but rather a collection of time to be designed by the principal to apply.

The implementation of such services is at the discretion of the building principal. There is not an appeal process of educational opportunities or the ability on the behalf of the parent/guardian to suggest other opportunities of what is presented by the school principal or designee.

#### **IV. Offenses Covered by G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2**

##### **a. Possession/Distribution of Controlled Substances**

If school administrators have a reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of a controlled substance, a student and their personal belongings may be subject to a search. The search can include the student's clothing, locker, personal belongings and automobile, if the vehicle is parked on school premises. A search can include scanning students with a portable "wand" style metal detector and screening by the nurse to determine if a student is under the influence.

Any student found on school premises, on a school bus or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games and field trips, distributing or in possession of a controlled substance, as defined in M.G.L. Chapter Ninety-Four C, including, but not limited to marijuana, cocaine and heroin, will be suspended for a minimum of ten (10) days. Parents will be contacted, and the police department will be provided with a complete report and confiscated substances. Student athletes who violate the chemical health policy will also be subject to the MIAA rules.

Any student found to have possessed or distributed a controlled substance as defined above while on school premises, on a school bus or at school-sponsored or school-related events may **also** be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal under M.G.L., c. 71, § 37H. The student shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for an expulsion hearing. Students should note that their unauthorized possession or distribution of prescription medication may result in suspension and/or expulsion as prescription medication is considered to be a controlled substance.

##### **b. Assault of Educational Staff**

A student who commits an assault of a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, will be suspended for a minimum of ten (10) days or may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal. Students should note that the definition of "assault" may include not only harmful or offensive contact, but also threatening such contact. Parents will be contacted, and the police department will be provided with a complete report of the assault. A parent/guardian/student re-entry meeting to school is mandatory if the student is suspended, rather than expelled.

### **c. Possession of Dangerous Weapon**

Possession of any kind of dangerous weapon or object, including but not limited to a gun or knife, which has the potential for causing bodily harm is strictly forbidden in the school building, on school grounds, on school buses or at any school-sponsored activity. If a student is observed in possession of any type of weapon, simulated weapon or dangerous object, these items will be confiscated and immediate parental and police notification will follow. A student in possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, will be suspended for a minimum of ten (10) school days and may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal. A parent/guardian/student re-entry meeting to school is required if the student is suspended.

### **d. Felony Charge/Felony Conviction**

A student who is the subject of an issued felony charge or an issued felony delinquency complaint will be suspended for a minimum of ten (10) school days 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. A student who is convicted of a felony or who is adjudicated of/admits guilt in court with respect to such felony or felony delinquency is subject to expulsion 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.

## **V. Offenses Covered by G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4**

For all of the offenses listed below for which suspension/expulsion is stated as a consequence, the following rules apply to such suspensions/expulsions. The decision-maker, whether a Principal/designee or the Superintendent on appeal, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents. Alternative remedies may include but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

The sole exceptions to the foregoing requirements are: (1) where specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive; or (2) where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.



## Disciplinary Action for Level 1 Offenses

The offenses listed below are subject to a minimum penalty of verbal reprimand to a maximum penalty of an assignment to the Saturday Alternative to Suspension Program based upon both the evidence presented and the severity of the offenses.

Type of Offense	Common Examples	Range of Consequences
Level 1 – Actions that interfere in the learning process in and around the school, or that show disrespect for the health, welfare and/or property of others.	<input type="checkbox"/> Dress Code Violation <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Priority Period <input type="checkbox"/> Class Cuts – Truancy <input type="checkbox"/> Class Disruptions <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway Violations <input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect/Defiance <input type="checkbox"/> Present in unauthorized area <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing Objects <input type="checkbox"/> Roughhousing <input type="checkbox"/> Use of rude, obscene, or improper language/gesture <input type="checkbox"/> Tardiness <input type="checkbox"/> Failure to return signed school forms <input type="checkbox"/> Proven Dishonesty	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Reprimand <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian Conference/Call <input type="checkbox"/> Detention <input type="checkbox"/> Extended Detention <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative School Assignment/In-School Suspension <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Alternative to Suspension

## **Disciplinary Action for Level 2 Offenses**

The offenses listed below are subject to a minimum penalty of a detention to a maximum penalty of an out-of-school suspension based upon both the evidence presented and the severity of the offenses. Smoking offenses can be referred to the school nurse for cessation education.

Type of Offense	Common Examples	Common Consequences
Level 2 – More serious actions that show insolence or refusal to follow directions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated Level 1 Offenses</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cut Detention</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> ID Violation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Possession/use of unauthorized electronic device</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Leaving the building without permission</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse of a Staff Member</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria Disturbance</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate behavior in school or at a school event</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Excessive Tardiness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Proven Dishonesty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Detention</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Extended Detention</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative School Assignment/In-School Suspension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Alternative to Suspension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Removal from School Events</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Youth Court</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Out of School Suspension</li></ul>

## **Disciplinary Action for Level 3 Offenses**

The offenses listed below are subject to a minimum penalty of Alternative School Assignment to a maximum penalty of an out-of-school suspension based upon both the evidence presented and the severity of the offenses. Smoking offenses can be referred to the school nurse for cessation education.

Type of Offense	Common Examples	Common Consequences
Level 3 – Openly defiant and insubordinate behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated Level 1 &amp; 2 Offenses</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal Abuse/Profanity</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Physical violence/fighting</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Language/activity</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Smoking/ Possession/use of tobacco products</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Harassment/Discrimination</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Defacing/Destroying Personal or School Property</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Chronic Absence</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Possession/distribution/use of alcoholic beverages</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Willful , inappropriate and/or repeated misbehavior</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Allowing unauthorized access to the building</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Proven Dishonesty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Alternative School Assignment/In-School Suspension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Alternative to Suspension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Removal from School Events/School privileges</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Youth Court</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Out of School Suspension</li></ul>

## **Disciplinary Action for Level 4 Offenses**

The offenses listed below are subject to a minimum penalty of an Out-of-School Suspension of an appropriate length in light of the specific facts.

Type of Offense	Common Examples	Common Consequences
Level 4 – Gross misconduct and/or actions that severely impact the health, safety, and welfare of other individuals in the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Repeated School Violator</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Stealing by threat or use of force.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Profanity/Civil Rights Violation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Serious Physical Assault</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Threatening/Displaying Physical Abuse</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism/Theft of School Property</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Hazing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> False Fire Alarms or Bomb Threats</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Performing acts of arson</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Possession/Distribution of Drugs / Weapons and/or explosive materials</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assault on Staff</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Proven Dishonesty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Out of School Suspension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to the Headmaster with Recommendation of Expulsion</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to police w/ be made for violations of state law.</li></ul>

## **DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short-term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

(1) The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.

(2) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/ her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the students receiving services pursuant to an IEP shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion. Under Section 504, students are not entitled to services if the team determines the conduct is not a manifestation of the student's disability.

(3) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP or 504 Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.

(4) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to, a new placement or unless the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

(5) If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

## **STUDENT SEARCHES**

A student's person, personal possessions, and student locker may be searched whenever school administrators have reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of illegal, prohibited, or contraband items/materials. Any and all illegal, prohibited, or contraband materials discovered as a result of such a search will be confiscated. Students found in possession of such items or materials will be subject to discipline and/or criminal prosecution.

## **GANG ACTIVITY**

In order to help ensure safe and violence free schools, gangs and gang activities are prohibited at all NBPS Elementary Schools according to the following:

A. Definition: For purposes of policy, a "gang" is any group of three or more individuals who displays or communicates membership in that group and whose purpose or activities include the commission of illegal acts or the violation of the disciplinary rules of each NBPS Elementary, Middle and High School. School sponsored clubs, groups, organizations, and/or athletic teams shall not be considered "gangs" for purposes of this policy.

B. Prohibitions: In any area under the control of the school district, or at any activity supervised by school personnel employed by the district, no student shall:

1. Wear, possess, use, distribute, display, or sell any clothing, jewelry, emblem, badge, symbol, sign, or other item that evidences or reflects membership in, or affiliation with, any gang.
2. Engage in any act, either verbal or nonverbal, including gestures or handshakes and demonstrations of membership in or affiliation with any gang.
3. Engage in any act that furthers the interests of any gang or gang activity, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Soliciting membership in, or affiliation with, any gang.
  - b. Soliciting any person to pay for "protection" or threatening any person, explicitly or implicitly, with any other illegal or prohibited act.
  - c. Painting, writing, tattooing, or otherwise inscribing gang-related graffiti, messages, symbols, or signs (or graffiti, messages, symbols or signs that are not gang-related, but that a reasonable person would believe to be gang-related due to similarity in shape, size, color, or form), on school property or personal property.
  - d. Engaging in violence, extortion, or any other illegal act or violation of school policy.
  - e. Soliciting any person to engage in physical violence against any other person.

C. Violations: Students who violate this policy shall be subject to an out of school suspension and/or expulsion, in addition to applicable criminal and civil penalties.

## **TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS**

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

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

## **ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED**

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. The School Committee prohibits the use or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school property or at any school function.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **CELLULAR PHONES/ ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

New Bedford Public Schools promotes the use of Technology as an effective environment for learning. However, given the degree to which unregulated use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices may interfere with teaching and learning, the following protocols apply:

1. Cell phones and personal electronic devices must be turned off and not visible during the school day in all academic areas including, but not limited to: hallways and classrooms, the gymnasium, the auditorium, athletic fields and all bathrooms. Students are prohibited from texting, using social media applications, or charging their cell phone/electronic device during the school day. If a student needs to contact a parent/guardian during the school day, the student must do so through

the office. Cell phones may be used once students leave the building at the end of their school day.

2. Electronic devices necessary for a specific educational purpose and/or individual student need may be used in class with the approval of the supervising teacher/staff member.

**Consequences:**

FIRST OFFENSE: Students will pick up their phone/device after school

SECOND OFFENSE: Parent/Guardian must pick up the phone/device

THIRD & SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES: Meeting with the Parent/Guardian and student will occur.

New Bedford Public Schools is not responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices under any circumstances.

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

New Bedford Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying. As required by [Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 section 370](#), the New Bedford School Committee [policy IICFB – Bullying Prevention](#) and the district's [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#) detail the district's commitment to prevention and intervention. Additional resources may also be found on the [Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy page](#) on the district's website. Bullying/Cyber-bullying will be punished by a suspension of appropriate length in light of the specific facts.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PREVENTION**

New Bedford Public Schools will not allow any student to be a target of harassment or discrimination. This applies throughout the school building, at lunch, in the courtyard and hallways, on the athletic fields, at all school sponsored events and on school buses.

Harassment can include any form of behavior that interferes with another person's sense of safety, dignity, or productivity in the school environment. Harassment based on sex (including pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions), race\*, color, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, homelessness, or any other characteristic protected by law is prohibited. This harassment policy also covers incidents of sexual violence, including sexual assault. The investigating officer will investigate allegations of sexual assault in a prompt and thorough manner, consistent with the procedures set forth in School Committee Policy [ACAB - Sexual Harassment](#). The investigating officer(s) will consider appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the reporting student during the investigation. These measures will not limit the rights of the reporting student or put restrictions on their access to normal school participation.

If a student feels they have been a target of harassment, they should speak with their guidance counselor, an Assistant Principal, Title IX Coordinator, or other trusted staff member for assistance reporting the matter. All harassment complaints will be investigated in a prompt and thorough manner. Once the investigation is complete, student(s) found to have violated this harassment policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Harassment incidents may result in a wide range of consequences, including but not limited to, a conference with parents/guardians/guardians, detentions, suspension, expulsion and/or referral to the New Bedford Police Department, depending on the nature of the harassment. A parent/guardian/student re-entry meeting to school is mandatory if a student is involved in the harassment of another student(s).



The contact information for the District's Title IX Coordinator is as follows:

Tammy Morgan, Executive Director of Student Services  
455 County Street New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-997-4511 ext. 14470  
[tmorgan@newbedfordschools.org](mailto:tmorgan@newbedfordschools.org)

## **a. Hate Crime**

Any activity which meets the Massachusetts General Laws definition of a "hate crime," will result in disciplinary action and be referred to the proper authorities. Massachusetts General Laws define "hate crime" as any criminal act coupled with overt actions motivated by bigotry and bias including, but not limited to, a threatened, attempted or completed overt act motivated, at least in part by racial, religious, ethnic, handicap, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation prejudice or which otherwise deprives another person of his constitutional rights by threats, intimidation or coercion or which seeks to interfere with or disrupt a person's exercise of constitutional rights through harassment or intimidation. A parent/guardian/student re-entry meeting to school is mandatory if a student commits a hate crime against another student(s).

## **b. Hazing**

New Bedford Public Schools does not tolerate hazing. Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization or sports team which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Examples of conduct that qualify as hazing include, but are not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

It does not matter that the student or person who is subjected to the conduct has consented. This prohibition of hazing applies wherever and whenever the conduct occurs and whether or not it occurs on school grounds, during school hours, at school-sponsored events, or on school transportation. Under this policy, a child is considered to be a student if they are currently enrolled or are registered to enroll in New Bedford Public Schools.

Any student who believes that they have been the victim of hazing should promptly report the incident to the Principal, an Assistant Principal, a teacher, his or her guidance counselor, or the school nurse. Any student who organizes or participates in hazing will be subject to discipline, which can include a suspension of any length or expulsion, as deemed appropriate by school officials. In addition, any such student who witnesses, or is a bystander during, hazing of another student has an obligation to report the incident promptly to the Principal or an Assistant Principal. If the incident occurs at a time when school is not in session, the student must report the incident promptly after school resumes. Failure to report an incident of hazing of another student may result in discipline, which can include a suspension of up to ninety (90) school days, as deemed appropriate by school officials.

New Bedford Public Schools also will not tolerate retaliation or intimidation of any kind against a student who truthfully reports an incident and will not tolerate threats against a student which are intended to prevent the student from making a report. Retaliation, intimidation or threats will result in discipline, which can include a suspension of any length or expulsion, as deemed appropriate by school officials. In all cases of discipline, the student will receive due process as required by law.

Students are reminded that hazing is a crime under Massachusetts law and will be reported to law enforcement authorities. Students are also reminded that a student who is aware of an incident of hazing of another student may have an obligation to report the incident to law enforcement authorities and that the failure to do so may

itself be a crime.

## **USE OF VIDEO RECORDING FOR SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY PURPOSES**

New Bedford Public Schools uses video-taping/audio recording to monitor those entering the building, the exterior of some buildings, to monitor classrooms and hallways in secondary schools, and to monitor behavior on some buses.

### **Cheating Policy**

If a teacher has determined that a student has cheated/plagiarized on any test, class work or homework assignment, he/she will assign a zero and contact the parent and/or guardian. The consequence may be applied to any other student who has participated in the cheating by providing answers or allowing his work to be copied.

### **Care of Personal Property**

Each student is responsible for her/his personal property. Large sums of money, expensive jewelry, and electronic devices should be left at home. If it is necessary for a student to bring a large sum of money or valuable item to school, it is strongly advised that the student take it to the Main Office for safe keeping during the school day. All students are advised to check their valuables with their Physical Education teachers for safe keeping during their gym classes. New Bedford Middle Schools are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

### **Care of School Property**

School property is each student's property. Students should treat such property with the same consideration they would have for their own property. Students should take pride in keeping the corridors and campus clean and throw waste materials into the containers provided for this purpose. Students should not mark desks, lockers, etc. Such equipment is expensive and subject to hard wear through normal daily use. Since the school operates on a limited budget, students can help keep costs down for themselves, their families, and taxpayers.

### **Computer Usage Policy**

All users of computing resources are expected to act in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, while adhering to the regulations for their use as set forth in the New Bedford Public School Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Corridor Pass**

Students are not allowed out of the classroom during class time without a pass from their classroom teacher. Students must be prepared to show their pass to any staff member who may ask for it. Any student in the corridor or any unauthorized area without permission will be subject to serious disciplinary action.

## **Dress - Safety, Security, Appropriate Dress (Dress for Success)**

Students' dress reflects the quality of the school, of your conduct, and of your school work. The expectations for our students are that students shall wear neat, clean and responsible dress. Clothing or accessory that disrupts the normal learning environment will not be permitted. Clarifications of items not acceptable in school include but are not limited to:

### **Safety**

Flip Flops/Sandals  
Studded belts  
Slippers  
Chains  
Sports headbands  
Outer garments (jackets, coats, gloves, hats)

### **Security**

Hooded Garments  
Hats  
Bandanas  
Attire that may be construed to be gang related

### **Inappropriate Dress**

Halters  
Short half shirts (that expose the midriff)  
Tank tops (basketball jerseys)  
Shorts/Skirts (that expose upper thigh)  
Pajamas  
Pants worn below the waist level

A Student in violation of the dress code may call a parent for appropriate clothing or sign out clothing from the nurse/principal office.

When an individual's behavior, actions, and/or attire are detrimental or undermine the learning environment, action will be taken by school authorities to correct the problem. This includes clothing that advocates the use of drugs, alcohol, and/or violence. In the final analysis, the Principal has the right to interpret that which negates a reasonable standard of conduct and appearance, keeping in mind the health and safety of the individual.

## **Section 3: Transportation, Arrival and Dismissal**

### **Universal School Bus & Van Safety Policy**

*In order to promote proper conduct and safety, students should adhere to the following:*

1. Remain seated until the bus comes to a stop. When approaching your stop, do not attempt to walk down the aisle while the bus is still moving. If the bus stops quickly, an injury may occur.
2. When exiting the bus, walk, do not run.
3. Once on the street, walk; do not run, especially in adverse weather conditions.
4. If crossing the street, be sure to look both ways. Cross in front of the extended safety arm while the bus lights are still flashing.
5. Remain seated at all times. Do not climb on the seats or change seats. Do not throw items out of the windows on the bus.
6. Listen to the bus driver and be a good passenger. Refrain from using insulting or profane language. No fighting on the bus. Be respectful of each other.
7. If you have an issue with someone on the bus, report it to the driver and to the teacher or principal when you get to school.

## STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUS

Buses are provided for those students whose health or the distance of their homes from school make this service essential. All students who ride the school buses shall be informed of and expected to comply with the following rules of behavior:

1. Students are to wait for the bus on the sidewalk until the bus comes to a complete stop.
2. Students are to board and leave the bus in a single file.
3. Students are to remain seated until they reach their destinations.
4. Students are not to put any part of their bodies out of bus windows.
5. Students are not to eat on buses. No food is to be carried on buses from the school lunch program.
6. Bus windows will be opened by the driver or his/her aide.
7. No objects are to be thrown on or off buses or extended out of them.
8. Students are not to damage buses in any way.
9. Smoking is not permitted on buses at any time.
10. Students are expected to observe the rules of courteous, considerate behavior on buses at all times.
11. Students must have written parental permission to leave the buses other than at their homes or school stops.
12. Fighting, vulgarity, loud noises and other aggressive behavior is not permitted on buses.
13. Students who refuse to obey promptly the directions of the driver or aide or refuse to obey regulations may forfeit their privilege of riding on buses for a specified period of time.

### DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR VIOLATION OF SCHOOL CONDUCT ON A SCHOOL BUS

The offenses listed above are subject to a minimum penalty of a verbal reprimand to a maximum penalty of an out of school suspension and/or forfeiture of their privilege of riding on buses for a specified period of time based upon both the evidence presented and the severity of the offenses.

### **Bicycles and Skateboards**

Students who ride bicycles to school may secure the bicycle in an area to be designated early in the school year. The student will be expected to follow all bicycle safety rules and is responsible to secure his/her bicycle with a lock. Bicycles must be “walked” on school property and abutting sidewalks.

**No skateboards, roller blades, sneaker skates, or any means of roller or motorized transportation are to be used on school property.**

## **Section 4: Student Life, Health/Safety, and Accommodations**

### **PREGNANT/PARENTING STUDENTS**

Maternal, or parental status shall not affect the rights and privileges of students to receive a public education nor to take part in any extracurricular activity offered by the school.

Pregnant students shall be permitted to continue in school in all instances equal to the participation of their non- pregnant peers. Pregnant students and parenting teens have the option of attending the Parenting Teens Program, which was formed specifically to address their needs and those of their coming newborns. Pregnant students may also continue at their current school. Following the birth/leave, pregnant students can return to the same academic and extracurricular program(s) as prior to birth/leave. New Bedford Public Schools strongly encourages both parents to be active in their new child's life both pre and post birth, barring any legally mandated restrictions.

### **SERVICES AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parents/Guardians or teachers may refer students they are concerned about to the Pupil Services Office. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/ guardian(s). Upon receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a TEAM meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

In some cases, the evaluation Team determines that a student with a disability may require only individual accommodations as opposed to specialized instruction and/or related services. Such students are then referred for an evaluation of their eligibility for an individual accommodation plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

For more information regarding the services available to students with disabilities please contact the school guidance counselor, Principal, or the New Bedford Public Schools' Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services.

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### **Protocols between New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS) And Department of Children and Families (DCF), New Bedford Area Office**

These protocols are intended to provide guidance to school department personnel, and DCF personnel regarding our shared commitment to insuring children in foster care have the same educational successes as the general population. The protocols are driven by the New Bedford Public Schools' three-year strategic plan and several of the Department of Child and Families core values of child-driven and community-based child welfare practice.

Lead Administrators from NBPS and DCF are committed to these protocols and will meet regularly to review progress.

### Initial Contact

1. When a child is placed in foster care the DCF Social Worker will notify the Principal, School Adjustment Counselor (SAC) or Guidance Counselor of the school the child attends.
2. When a child is placed in foster care and needs to change schools DCF Social Worker will request that the school records are forwarded to the new school.
3. DCF Social Worker will insure that when a child is registering in a new school that the Principal/ designated staff receives a copy of court mittimus (proof of custody) and all records if available. If records are not available at the time of enrollment;
  - a. The student will be enrolled regardless of lack of records per McKinney Vento;
  - b. DCF will also request that records held by the transferring school (i.e. birth record, transfer card, academic records, IEP, discipline records etc.) be forwarded to the receiving school as soon as possible.
4. DCF Social Worker and Principal or designated School Staff will coordinate a meeting to include the Foster Parent within 5 days to review the students' needs and challenges for educational success.
5. School Personnel should contact DCF Social Worker with any concerns regarding the child's foster placement. If they are not able to reach the Social Worker a Supervisor, Area Program Manager or Area Director can be contacted.

### Ongoing Communication

1. As part of the joint effort of the NBPS and DCF to enhance the well-being of students in foster care, DCF and School Personnel should contact each other regarding any major changes in the student's life that might impact on education such as change in placements, case closing, disciplinary issues etc.
2. NBPS and DCF are in agreement that all students requiring Special Education Services should be maintained in the least restrictive setting based on their educational needs and that DCF will participate in the IEP process.
3. Designees of the NBPS Special Education Department and DCF will maintain monthly ongoing communication regarding shared students.

### Data Collection

1. NBPS and DCF are committed to gathering clear and accurate data concerning academic achievement of students in foster care to insure planning for academic success.
2. DCF will insure that educational data is regularly loaded into the electronic system (Family Net) in a manner that will allow DESE interface to track educational outcomes.
3. NBPS and DCF will each designate lead data collection staff to devise and integrate a district wide tracking system for students in foster care. This system will allow tracking from entry to discharge as well as monitor educational outcomes for this group of students.



## NURSES' OFFICE

Middle School Nurses are registered nurses that are licensed by the Department of Education and are valued members of the educational team. They offer unique opportunities for students to learn healthy behaviors and receive easily accessible health services within a school setting. They are specially trained in health promotion and assessment, respond skillfully to the ever-changing health care needs of today's students, and are knowledgeable in the most appropriate treatment and referral procedures. All new students entering a New Bedford Middle School must see the school nurse for an evaluation of their health and immunization status.

Students who are injured or become ill during school hours must consult with the nurse on duty. A student who is feeling ill should report to the nurse's office with the consent of the classroom teacher. Excluding emergencies, no student is allowed to visit the nurse's office without a pass from a teacher.

Dismissals for illnesses may only be issued by a school nurse. A telephone call to the parents or guardians will be made when dismissals are necessary. On returning to school from a dismissal for illness or injury, students must report first to the Nurses' Office before returning to class. The nurse will supply the student with a return slip to class.

Please keep your child home from school if he/she has had a fever within the past 24 hours, if your child is vomiting, or has diarrhea, or has a contagious illness such as strep throat, flu or chicken pox ...

Any student that has a change in health status (surgery, crutches, wheel chair ...) must first report to the nurse's office. Exclusion notes for gym are to be brought to the Nurses' Office so that accommodations can be made.

In case of an accident, no matter how minor, the student should report that accident to the teacher immediately and then report to the nurse's office. In the case of severe accidents or acute illness, emergency care will be given and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified.

### **Medication Policy**

State regulations governing the administration of prescription medication in school ensure the health and safety of children needing medication during the school day. These regulations require that the following forms be on file in your child's health record before any medication (including over the counter medication) be given in school. These forms can be obtained by your child's health care provider or school nurse.

- 1. Signed medication order.** A written medication order form must be completed by your child's licensed physician, nurse practitioner, dentist, etc. and returned to the school nurse. Medication orders must be renewed when there is a change and at the beginning of each academic year.
- 2. Parental Consent.** A signed consent by the parent or legal guardian to give the medication. Medications must be delivered to the school nurse in a pharmacy or manufacturer-labeled container by a parent **or a responsible adult** designated by the parent. No more than a thirty-day supply should be delivered to the school nurse along with a note stating the amount of medication sent in to the school. No **over the counter medication** will be given in school without the required, signed medication forms. Students should not be in possession of any over the counter medications while in school.

## **Required Physical Exams, Screenings, and Immunizations**

All 1st, 4th, 7th, 10th graders and new entries are required to have a health examination on file in the nurse's office. State law and regulations require that public schools have on file the report from a physical examination of each child upon entrance or transfer into the school system and every 3 or 4 years thereafter. This examination should be done by your child's primary care provider and a copy provided to the school nurse.

School nurses follow the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's requirement for screening of children for growth, dental, postural, hearing and vision issues. Please notify your child's school nurse if you do not want your child to participate in the screening process.

All students are required to have an immunization record on file in the nurse's office. Immunizations must be up-to-date for each child according to Massachusetts's immunization guidelines. Please be aware that any student who does not fully comply with and produce documentation of state immunization requirements will be excluded from school. As required by law, appropriate authorities will be notified if a student is excluded and remains in non-compliance after the exclusion date.

During the first week of school, you will be given information regarding various insurance plans. If you need assistance obtaining health insurance, please contact the school nurse.

## **Section 5: School Organization, Procedures and Family Engagement**

### **Translation and Interpretation**

New Bedford Public Schools is committed to providing families the information they require to understand their children's schooling in a language and/or form the family best understands. Families will receive all general information provided by the district in English and their home language. For meetings, families will be provided an oral interpretation in a language they understand. For written communication, families will be provided a written translation in their home language. Families will never be asked to sign a document in a language they do not understand. For those families who do not possess literacy skills or a written home language, information will be communicated orally, in full, prior to their signing any document.

Under state and federal law, New Bedford Public Schools will make every effort to provide students and families with access to important documents relevant to their children's education.

### **Extra-curricular Activities**

Participation in extra-curricular activities and school functions is a privilege. All school rules and regulations apply to all extra-curricular clubs, events and activities.

Students are reminded that while attending any school function, event or activity, proper manners, respect and safe and considerate behavior are required. Improper attitude and/or behavior could result in being kept after school or not being allowed to attend school functions in the future. Students must attend school the day of the function, event or activity. The principal/designee may restrict or suspend a student's privileges to ensure the safety, order and discipline at school. School activities may include, but not be limited to:



Band	School newspaper	Yearbook Committee	Art Club
Chorus	Student Council	Yearbook Signing Party	Computer
Club Field Trips	Intramural Sports	Honor Society	Dances
Science Club	Writing Club	Cooking Club	Yoga Club
Chess Club		Clean-Up Green-Up Club	Book Club
Morning Walk/Fitness Club		Student Appreciation Day/Evening	

## **Field Trips**

New Bedford Public Schools recognizes that field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students. A field trip is defined as any school-sponsored activity carried on during the regular school day or as an extension of the regular school day. The field trip is to be an integral part of the education program, directly related to the total school program and/or curriculum. Field trips will be approved at the discretion of the Program Coordinators, the Principal and the Superintendent of Schools. All overnight and out of state field trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition, contests or workshop presentations, must have advance approval of the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee. A student can be denied participation in school-sponsored field trips if they have outstanding textbooks, class supplies, athletic uniforms or equipment, library books or other school-issued materials. **A student is eligible to participate in school-sponsored field trips only if the students and her/his parent/guardian have completed, signed and returned the applicable forms.**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which will reflect pride and respect for New Bedford Public Schools. All discipline policies apply when students are in attendance on a school-sponsored field trip. If a student is suspended from school, they may not participate.

## **Fire Drills/Emergencies**

Passing during fire drills will be done quickly and silently according to directions given in each classroom. Any student misbehaving or causing a disruption during a fire drill or evacuation will be subject to serious disciplinary consequences to include but not be limited to alternative silent lunch assignment, Office Detention/Saturday School, parental conference, suspension, police notification and/or filing charges of disruption of a school assembly. Remember: *Be safe, Considerate and Do the Right Thing!*

## **Homeroom**

Attendance will be taken during homeroom in the morning. All students will remain in the homeroom unless excused by the homeroom teacher. All students will remain seated during this time and plan for their day ahead.

## **Library**

The library has a variety of books and resources to enrich your classroom work as well as encourage reading just for fun. They must be kept in good condition and returned when due. Reference books do not leave the library.

- Students must pay for or replace lost or damaged books.
- Students coming to the library must have a pass.
- Students should remember that the library is a place for project work and study. *Good behavior and consideration for others are important.*
- Any student abusing the library privilege will be assigned the appropriate consequence.
- Book bags, coats, etc. are not allowed in the library.
- A computer area is located in the library; guidelines for student use are posted.

## **Lockers**

All students will be issued a locker. Lockers are the property of the school system and may be inspected by the school administration when reasonable information necessitates their action.

- Students must use the lockers that have been assigned to them.
- Lockers are not to be shared with other students.
- The school assumes no responsibility for the loss of any items.
- Lockers will be kept neat, clean & organized. No pictures or posters will be attached to the locker inside or outside.
- Hats, coats and jackets must be kept in the lockers for the school day.
- Report to lockers quietly and at designated times only.
- Lockers must shut completely with no objects sticking out.
- Designated times are:
  - o Before school or after school
  - o As their team teacher allows
  - o At the end of the school day
- Students are to retrieve appropriate materials and return to class promptly.
- Lost locks – A replacement lock may be obtained in the students' administrative office at a cost of 5.00.

## **Lost and Found**

Any articles found by students are to be taken to the student's House Office immediately. Students who lose an article should first check with homeroom and subject related teachers and then the office.

## **Mandatory Academic Support Sessions**

In an effort to ensure the success of all students, academic teams may require students to attend "Mandatory Academic Support Sessions". These sessions will be held after school during the eighth period. *Teachers may require students to remain until 3:15 pm (parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified).*

**Mandatory Academic Support Sessions will take priority over all other school programs, activities.**

Any student who does not attend an assigned Mandatory Academic Support Session will be subject to more serious disciplinary consequences i.e. Office Detention/Academic Detention /Saturday School, parent-student conference, suspension, etc.

## **Retention/Promotion Policy**

The school principal will have the authority to make final grade placement for any/all students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The school principal, in consultation with the high school principal, will make grade placement/assignment for any grade 8 student who has completed a full year in grade 8 and may not have met the academic standards and/or attendance requirements for promotion.

## **Promotion/Retention Criteria in Grades 6, 7, 8**

At the conclusion of each school year, the academic achievement and status of each student will be reviewed by the principal/administration, subject to the following conditions:

1. All students are expected to meet high expectations and high academic standards in all subject areas offered at the middle school.
2. All students must meet the high academic standards and pass all content areas (Mathematics, ELA, Science, Social Studies) in order to be promoted to the next grade .

3. Any student who has not met grade level standards may be assigned to a mandatory extended school year/summer program\* by the principal.
4. Any student who has not met the New Bedford Public Schools attendance requirement will be assigned by the principal to a mandatory extended school year/summer program.

\*It is the purpose of the extended school year/summer program to assist students to complete their academic work and to complete their efforts to meet the grade level standards in subjects in which they have not yet attained the academic standard and learned the material. Any student assigned by the principal to attend the extended school year/summer program must attend each day and complete the program successfully. At the conclusion of the extended school year/ summer program, the principal will again review the student's academic status and a grade placement/assignment for the subsequent school year will be finalized. Upon review of all student academic performance data i.e. grades, academic projects/portfolio, attendance, extended school year information, etc., the principal will make the final determination whether the student has met the academic standard in all subject area(s).

## **STUDENT RECORD REGULATIONS AND THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PRIVACY ACT**

With a few exceptions, information in a student's record will not be released to a third party without the written consent of the eligible student and/or a parent/guardian having physical custody of a student under 18 years of age. These exceptions are set forth in the federal statute "[FERPA](#)", 20 U.S.C., § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99, and in the Massachusetts regulations, [603 CMR 23.00](#).

## **NON-SCHOOL LITERATURE POLICY**

Distributing non-school literature during school hours on or in school property is prohibited. This approved material may be passed out in a place and at a time designated by the Principal. Prior to distribution, a copy thereof must be furnished to the Principal indicating the time and place of distribution. Persons or organizations from outside the school will not be granted permission to sell or distribute material on campus without authorization from the School Committee.

This material must not be obscene, libelous, pervasively indecent or vulgar, or advertise any product or service not permitted by law to minors and/or adults. Further it should not present a clear and present likelihood that it will cause a disruption of the proper and orderly operation and discipline of the school or school activities.

## **Building Notes**

*Help us keep the building and grounds clean.* For the safety of all students, please report any broken or damaged fixtures or equipment to your teachers. In order to promote and maintain a safe and positive school atmosphere, students are to immediately report any dangerous situation to staff and the administration, i.e.: weapons, strangers, threats, etc.

## **Cafeteria**

Breakfast and lunch are available to students.

Students must maintain a calm atmosphere in the cafeteria during lunch and observe the following rules:

- Students are to enter the cafeteria and take a seat as assigned.
- Lunch lines will be single file and orderly, no cutting.

- Proper manners, respect and courtesy are expected and required. *Do the Right Thing!*
- Each student is responsible for cleaning his/her own place at the tables and returning all utensils, trays, dishes and paper trash to the designated areas. *Be Considerate!*
- Each student must remain seated in the cafeteria until dismissed by the school official in the cafeteria.
- Students are not expected to run, yell, fight or throw anything in the cafeteria.
- **Students are not allowed to chew gum in the school which includes the cafeteria.**
- Any student disrupting the cafeteria during the lunch period(s) will be subject to serious disciplinary action to include but not be limited to assigned seating, alternative lunch assignment, office detention/Saturday school, parent conference, suspension, police notification, and/or filing charges of disruption of a school.

### **Elevators**

Elevators are located in the office and the cafeteria areas. Only individuals providing medical documentation and unable to use the stairs will be assigned an elevator pass. No one is to use the elevator without prior permission. Short-term permission to use the elevator can be granted for medical reasons by the school nurse. Any unauthorized use of the elevator will result in serious disciplinary consequences.

### **Visitors**

All visitors must report to the main office for a visitor pass. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to school. Parents/guardians are always welcome, but must first report to the office. All visitors must record their visit into the school administrative office log and wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

Communication is vital to students' success. In order to best serve the needs of all students, school personnel will be available for **parent conferences by appointment.**

### **Volunteers**

Parents are welcome to volunteer. Volunteers are utilized as chaperones, in the School Store and in the administrative offices. All volunteers must have a Criminal Offender Record Information check (C.O.R.I.) prior to becoming a volunteer, which takes three-four weeks to process.

**Please sign and return this page only.**

**I have received and read the New Bedford Public Schools Student and Family Handbook and agree to conform to its rules and regulations.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Homeroom Teacher Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date