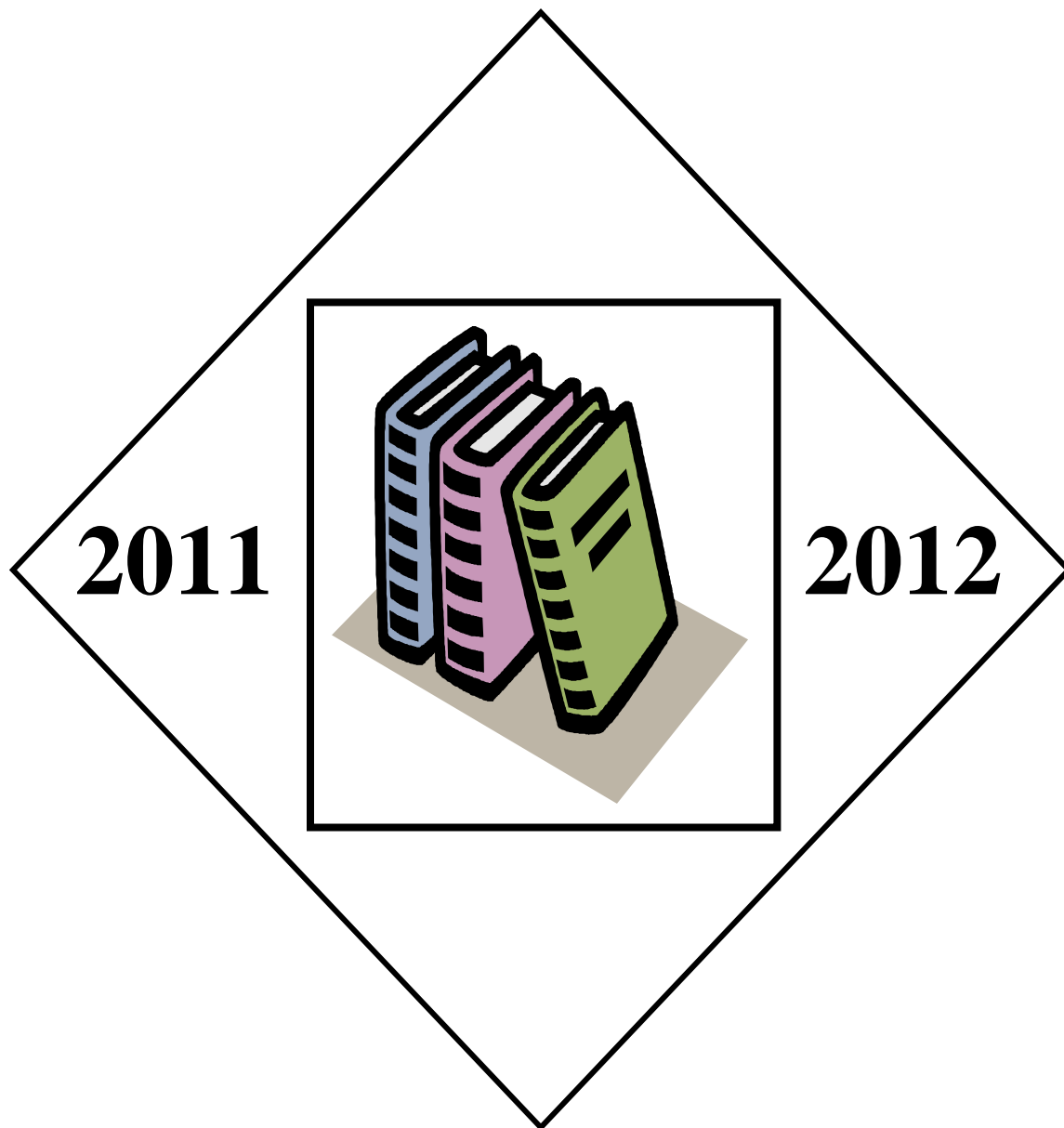


# **Amherst Regional Middle School**



## **Student and Family HANDBOOK**

<b>C-10</b> 8X Math  Stevens	<b>C-11</b> 8X English  Isler	<b>C-12</b> ELL  Ortiz	<b>C-13</b> Essential Skills  O'Donovan	<b>C-14</b> AIMS  Olson	<b>C-15</b> 7A English  L-R	<b>C-16</b> 7A Math  Hanson	<b>C-17</b> 7A Soc. Stud.  Venditti	<b>C-18</b> 7C Math  Rana
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**DARK BLUE HALLWAY**

<b>C-9</b> 8X Resource  Herbert	<b>C-12A</b> Latin  Smith Mathews	<b>C-13A</b>  AIMS ESP	<b>C-14A</b> Resource  Stampa	<b>C-15A</b> 7B Resource  Gardner	<b>C-17A</b> 7A Resource  Hunter	<b>C-19</b> 7C Soc. Stud.  Burke
<b>C-8</b> 8X Soc. Stud.  Malone	<b>C-2M</b> Computer  Fanning	<b>C-3M</b> Computer Writing Lab	S T A I R S	<b>C-4M</b> Spanish  Piccozzi	<b>C-5M</b> Resource  Zelaya	<b>C-20</b> 7C English  Sullivan-Flynn

Girls Restrnt	Lyons
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<b>C-7</b> 8Y English/SS  Clifford
--

<b>C-6</b> 8Y Soc. Stud.  McSweeney
---

<b>C-5</b> 8Y English  Eck
--

<b>C-4</b> 8Y Math  Z-A
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<b>C-1M</b> Guidance Counselor Sadiq
--

<b>C-7A</b>
-------------

<b>C-6A</b>  Tippett
----------------------------

<b>C-5A</b> QLC  Rosati
----------------------------------

<b>C-4A</b> 8Y Resource  Reyes
--

<b>C-1L</b> Dean of Students  Johnson
---

<b>C-6M</b> Speech/Language Wilson
--

<b>C-21A</b> Resource  Shellenberger
---

<b>C-3L</b> Copying Room
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<b>C-4L</b> Singley Vela
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Staff Room
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<b>C-22A</b> World Language Language Lab
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Girls' Bathroom
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<b>C-26A</b> Resource Westover
--------------------------------------

<b>C-20A</b> Consultant	Boys Restrnt
----------------------------	-----------------

<b>C-21</b>  Spanish  Lopez
---

<b>C-22</b> 7B Math  Oliver
---

<b>C-23</b> 7B Soc. Stud.  Jensen
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<b>C-24</b> 7B English  Alschuler
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**Library**  
Riedel  
Covelli

**LIGHT BLUE HALLWAY**

<b>C-3</b> 8Y Science  Dolci	<b>C-2</b> 8Y Math/Science  Newman	<b>C-1</b> 8X Science  Welborn	S T A I R S	<b>C-28</b> French  Dorrie Coby	S T A I R S	<b>C-27</b> 7B Science  Ferro	<b>C-26</b> 7C Science  Price	<b>C-25</b> 7A Science  Keppler
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AMHERST - PELHAM *Regional* SCHOOL DISTRICT  
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS

Amherst Regional Middle School  
170 Chestnut Street  
Amherst, Massachusetts 01002  
(413) 362-1800 FAX (413) 549-9812 [www.arps.org/ms](http://www.arps.org/ms)

Michael Hayes, Principal  
Betsy Dinger, Assistant Principal

**--WELCOME --  
TO A  
NEW YEAR AT ARMS**

September 6, 2011

Dear Families of Amherst Regional Middle School,

Welcome to the 2011-12 school year. We look forward to a school year ahead that engages, educates and inspires your child as they begin or continue through the middle school years.

Middle School is a critical part of a child's development. These are the years when children experience the second most brain development in their life (the first two years of life being the time of the most growth). In addition to academic growth, middle schoolers go through tremendous social, emotional, and physical. We find that most middle schoolers use this time to try to exert their independence by pushing the adults in their lives away. While this is appropriate, we also know that middle schoolers are not ready for the independence they crave. It is for this reason that we emphasize family/school involvement and communication. It is through the family/school partnership that children have the best chance to maximize their academic and personal growth.

We have structured ARMS in an attempt to use the best of adolescent research, community priorities, and our expertise with this age group. In this handbook, you will find the middle school handbook in the front and the district handbook in the back. Although we have to include an abundance of legal information, we have also tried to include lots of general information about our structures, policies, and ways to contact us. We hope you will take the time to read carefully through the handbook and discuss with your child items you think will be particularly relevant to them.

This handbook is one small way to get to know ARMS. We hope to also see you at Team Breakfasts, Open House, Principal Coffees, FSP (Family/School Partnership) events, and the many student performances and showcases throughout the year.

As you will always here from us.... Please contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or thoughts you want to share. To a great year!

Sincerely,

Mike Hayes  
Principal

Betsy Dinger  
Assistant Principal

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## Section I **Foundations of ARMS**

Amherst Regional Middle School will maximize the academic growth of every child. To achieve this outcome, we must also attend to the unique cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs of young adolescents.

By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, ARMS students will meet or exceed the standards from the Massachusetts Frameworks or an Individual Education Plan. Students will:

- use the content and skills they have learned to ask and answer meaningful questions.
- work collaboratively with peers and adults.
- use critical thinking skills to gather and analyze information, pose questions, synthesize data and ideas, and explore real world problems.
- communicate ideas in written, visual, and oral form.
- make healthy physical, academic, and interpersonal choices.
- reflect on their processes and learning styles in order to assess their academic progress.
- believe in their ability to learn.

**To accomplish these student outcomes, we are committed to a school in which:**

- Staff creates a climate of high expectations for each student's success.
- Staff clearly communicates to students, parents/guardians, and each other the knowledge, skills, and understandings that students are expected to acquire.
- Staff monitor student learning on a timely basis. When students experience difficulty, the staff has structures in place to ensure they receive additional support for learning. There is a specific plan to enrich and extend the learning of students who have achieved the required standards.
- All programs and structures provide open and equal access to each student.
- Each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to connect with an adult to support the student's academic, personal, and social development.
- The leadership system allows for substantive involvement in decision making by students, staff, family members, and the community.
- Student data is routinely analyzed and reported to the staff and parent/guardians to foster collective responsibility for continual school improvement.
- All staff members continually grow in their professional expertise. There are structures to support their ongoing, job-embedded learning and continuous improvement both individually and collaboratively.
- School-wide structures facilitate a safe, positive school climate.

**Section II**  
**Administration**

Principal	Michael Hayes	362-1847
Assistant Principal	Betsy Dinger	362-1850

**Student Support Services**

Dean of Students	Darrell Johnson	362-1849
Guidance Counselors	Denise Boyd, 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	362-1838
	Talib Sadiq, 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	362-1840
School Psychologist	Denise Green	362-1977
Nurse	Dani Faytell	362-1974
Student Adjustment Counselor	Sue Tippett	362-1946
Therapeutic Teacher/Counselor	Paul Lyons	362-1955
Quiet Learning Center (QLC)	Kim Rosati	362-1845
Educational Team Leader (ETL)	Doreen Reid	362-1848
Special Education Office	Erika Grundstrom	362-1843

**Main Office Personnel**

Administrative Assistant	Judi DellaMarco	362-1847
Receptionist/Secretary	Jane Fitzgerald	362-1846
Receptionist/Attendance	Sue Battistoni	362-1850
Main Office		362-1800
Attendance Line (to report your child's absence)		362-1984
School Cancellation Line		362-1898

**ARMS website: [www.arps.org/ms](http://www.arps.org/ms)**

## SECTION III **Calendar**

### **School Year**

The 2011-2012 academic year starts Tuesday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. On the first day of school 7<sup>th</sup> graders and new 8<sup>th</sup> graders come at 7:30am. Returning 8<sup>th</sup> graders come to school two hours later. This allows new students to attend orientation in the building before classes begin. The earliest last day of school is Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. Every snow day pushes back the end of the school year. On the next page is the **District Calendar** which contains all dates when the schools are officially closed.

### **School Times**

Students are allowed go to their lockers and classrooms at 7:30 am. Advisory starts at 7:45 am. Students are considered tardy for school if they are not in their advisory room by that time. School ends at 2:20 pm. On Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays teachers stay after school and after school programs occur. There is a late bus that takes students home on those days at 4:00 pm.

### **Late Start Thursdays**

Once a month (except in June) students come to school later and teachers work with their colleagues to plan common assessments. On those days school starts at 9:55 am. Buses pick up students 2 hours and 10 minutes later than standard scheduled time. Below are the late start dates for 2011-2012:

September 15	December 15	March 8
October 13	January 12	April 12
November 10	February 9	May 10

### **Report Cards**

Below are the approximate dates when the trimesters end and when you can expect to receive report cards. Report cards are handed to students to bring home at the end of the day.

#### Marks close

Term 1 – Thursday, December 1  
Term 2 – Thursday, March 15  
Term 3 – Last Day of School

#### Report cards distributed

Friday, December 16  
Friday, March 30  
Monday, July 2 (mailed home)

**Note: These dates may have to be adjusted due to snow days during the school year.**

## **SECTION IV**

### **Academics**

Academics are the core of what Amherst Regional Middle School does every day. All structures and supports that are in place are to enhance the learning environment and help students realize their academic potential.

#### **Course Descriptions**

A complete set of course descriptions for required and elective courses are in the ARMS Program of Studies. All students receive a Program of Studies during registration. It can also be found on the school website [www.arps.org/ms](http://www.arps.org/ms).

#### **Course Expectations**

All teachers distribute course expectations the first week of school. Course expectations provide important information about grading, homework, course materials and other expectations. Families should review course expectations together to have a common understanding of what each class will be like.

#### **Honor Roll**

The ARMS Academic Honor Roll is published three times a year after each marking period. Students whose report cards reflect grades no lower than B- for the marking period are eligible. Students with "incompletes" are not eligible for the honor roll until all missed work is turned in and the "incomplete" is changed to a grade.

#### **Textbooks**

Teachers who require textbooks or other books will issue them to each student. Students are responsible for books loaned to them. If a student does not return a book or it is damaged, they must pay for the book.

#### **Materials**

All materials required for each class will be explained by your child's teachers during the first days of school. A detailed supply/material list will be sent home with students.

#### **Teams**

Research shows that it is age appropriate for middle school students to be grouped into teams. Teams provide a transition between the single core teacher model in the elementary schools and the department based teachers in the high school. Team teachers meet every day to discuss individual student progress and cross-curricular opportunities. Students are grouped on teams based on individual needs. Input is given by teachers and families. For incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders we make sure that students are grouped so that they will know at least a few students on their team.

#### **Advisories**

All students are assigned to an advisory to start the day (7:45-8:05am). Advisories contain 10-12 students and are grouped by team. Advisors are expected to get to know each student individually and support their academic progress. Each team has a weekly schedule for advisory activities.

## **SECTION V**

### **Communication & Family Involvement**

When students begin middle school, they are reaching the "turning point" between childhood and the independence that comes with being a young adult. At this time, the partnership between school and family is critically important. Amherst Regional Middle School is committed to working with families to build a bridge that will help students be successful. No matter or question is too small. Please contact the staff listed below.

## Contact Information for Parent Concerns

Concern	Contact Person
Student's performance/behavior in a particular course	Teacher
General questions about curriculum for a course	<a href="#">Curriculum Leader</a> (see table below)
Student's overall performance	<a href="#">Guidance Counselor</a>
Personal concerns affecting performance	<a href="#">Guidance Counselor</a>
If you have contacted a teacher or counselor and you feel your concern has not been adequately resolved	The administrator who supervises the particular department ( <a href="#">see table below</a> )
If you have spoken to the Assistant Principal and you feel your concern has not been adequately resolved	<a href="#">The Middle School Principal</a>
If you feel that your concern still has not been resolved adequately at the building level	<a href="#">Superintendent of Schools</a>
School Records	<a href="#">The Registrar</a>

## ARMS Curriculum Leaders

Department	Curriculum Leader	Voice Mail	Email	Administrative Supervisor
<b>Exploratories</b>	Tara Farley	362-1968	<a href="mailto:farleyt@arps.org">farleyt@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes
<b>English</b>	Michael Lawrence-Riddell	362-1915	<a href="mailto:lawrence-riddellm@arps.org">lawrence-riddellm@arps.org</a>	Betsy Dinger
<b>English Language Education</b>	Wilma Ortiz	362-1912	<a href="mailto:ortizw@arps.org">ortizw@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes
<b>Mathematics</b>	Steve Zakon-Anderson Jonathan Newman	362-1904 362-1902	<a href="mailto:zakon-anderson@arps.org">zakon-anderson@arps.org</a> <a href="mailto:newmanj@arps.org">newmanj@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes
<b>Physical Education</b>	Kathy Carey CJ Holt	362-1957 362-1958	<a href="mailto:careyk@arps.org">careyk@arps.org</a> <a href="mailto:holtcj@arps.org">holtcj@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes
<b>Science</b>	Kristin Dolcimascolo	362-1903	<a href="mailto:dolcimascolok@arps.org">dolcimascolok@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes
<b>Social Studies</b>	Michael Malone	362-1908	<a href="mailto:malonem@arps.org">malonem@arps.org</a>	Betsy Dinger
<b>Special Education</b>	Blanca Zelaya	362-1934	<a href="mailto:zelayab@arps.org">zelayab@arps.org</a>	Betsy Dinger
<b>World Languages</b>	Sean Smith	362-1972	<a href="mailto:smiths1@arps.org">smiths1@arps.org</a>	Michael Hayes

### Student Emergency Information

It is critical for ARMS to contact parents/guardians in the event that a situation occurs which involves your child. During the first few days of school, your child will bring home an Emergency Contact card. Please complete it accurately and return it to the Main Office. Please notify the Main Office (362-1800) when there are changes in your family's home, work phone numbers, home and email address.

### Cancellation of School

School cancellation for severe weather or other emergencies will be announced via the following media:

WRNX/WTTT – Amherst	1430 AM
WHMP – Northampton	1400 AM or 99.3 FM
WHAI – Greenfield	1240 AM or 98.3 FM

WHYN – Springfield	93.1 FM
WMAS – Springfield	94.7 FM
WPVQ – Greenfield	93.9 FM
Channel 22 – Springfield	Channel 40 – Springfield
Superintendent’s Hotline	362-1898 (24 hours)
Sports Cancellation Line	362-1798
District Website	<a href="http://www.arps.org">www.arps.org</a>

### **Morning Announcements**

Morning announcements are read each day during advisory and posted on the ARMS website [www.arps.org/ms](http://www.arps.org/ms). They inform students of club meetings, athletic and social events or general information. Copies are available in the Main Office.

### **Student Assignment Book**

Assignment books are provided to each student on the first day of school. Teachers expect students to use the assignment book to record assignments, keep track of due dates and record the details of team events. We encourage parents/guardians to look at the assignment book on a regular basis. If lost, the cost is \$2.00 to replace it and can be purchased in the Main Office.

### **Parent Portal**

All teachers use the online grading system which allows you and your child to check assignment grades and overall grades at any point. Teachers update their online grades weekly. Sign-up information is available in the Main Office.

### **Academic Check-ins**

Teams post Academic Check-ins weekly. These include topics and assignments for the four core subjects. Academic check-ins are reviewed in advisory and posted on the ARMS website.

### **Cell Phones & Electronic Devices**

Students are **not permitted** to use cell phones/ electronic devices during the school day (7:30-2:20pm). If a parent/guardian must contact a child during the school day, please call the Main Office (362-1800).

### **School Newsletter**

The ARMS newsletter is published monthly and mailed on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. The August newsletter is mailed to all homes and includes instructions for arranging to receive future newsletters via snail or electronic mail. We encourage all families to subscribe electronically to alleviate postage costs. Please email Ms. DellaMarco ([dellamarcoj@arps.org](mailto:dellamarcoj@arps.org)) to activate electronic newsletters and include your name and your child’s name in the email. The ARMS website also has information about signing up for the school newsletter.

### **Family/School Partnership**

The Family School Partnership (FSP) is ARMS’ parent/guardian organization and was organized for the purpose of building community among middle school students, families, teachers, and administrators. FSP goals include facilitating education and discussion forums helpful to families with middle school students; engaging in fund-raising efforts to support middle school programs and enlisting family volunteers to support middle school goals. Please sign up for the monthly newsletter on-line at [armsfsp@yahoo.com](mailto:armsfsp@yahoo.com).

### **Open Houses, Principal’s Coffees & Team Breakfasts**

The ARMS staff encourages all families to become involved in the school community. All are welcomed to participate and become involved in family events. Please see the website and newsletter for dates.

### **Student Visitors**

Occasionally, friends of students from other schools come to ARMS for a day visit. Please follow these procedures:

- Check with the Main Office to make sure the day you have in mind is okay.
- You will be given a form that must be signed by all your teachers and the principal.
- Return the completed form to Main Office before the actual day of the visit.
- Bring your guest to the Main Office to obtain a visitor's pass.
- Your guest may not participate in PE if you have PE class that day.
- Your guest must follow all school rules. If we have disciplinary issues with a visitor, they will be asked to leave the school.

## **SECTION VI** **Attendance**

There is a direct correlation between attendance and academic achievement. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's punctual and daily attendance. It is very important for students to be in school every day.

### **Attendance**

- Parents/guardians must report all absences on the day(s) of the absence by calling 362-1984 before the official start of school (7:40 am).
- Principals excuse absences based on illness/quarantine, religious observance, court appearance and major family emergency (accident, illness, death). If a student is absent for reasons other than these, absences will not be excused and will be recorded as "unexcused".

### **Tardiness**

Students must report to the Main Office upon arrival to school and provide a note signed by a parent/guardian explaining the reason a student is late. Tardies are not excused unless they are one of the reasons listed above. Three unexcused tardies is counted as an unexcused absence.

### **Early Dismissal Absence**

ARMS strongly encourages a parent/guardian to make every effort to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments, etc. during the school day. If a student must leave school before the end of the school day please provide a signed note from a parent/guardian and bring it to the Main Office before advisory. A parent/guardian must sign-out a student in the Main Office.

### **Absences Due to Illness**

- A parent/guardian must notify the school the day of an absence. The number to call to report an absence is 362-1984.
- If parent/guardians do not notify the school, the absence is considered unexcused.

### **Planned Extended (Vacation) Absences**

Extended absences result in loss of valuable instructional time, so we discourage families from keeping students out of school while it is in session. Please know that family trips should not be planned during non-vacation school days and that they will not be excused. To avoid unexcused absences, students need to be withdrawn and a home-education plan needs to be filed with Central Office.

### **Make-up Work**

Teachers and students will coordinate and create a schedule for submitting missing assignments due to illness, excused absence or suspension.

### **Attendance Issues**

According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, Section 1, all children between the age of 6 and 16 must regularly attend school. When a student has a pattern of absences, ARMS is required to take the following actions:

- On the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) unexcused absence, a counselor will speak with the parent(s)/guardian(s) (in person or via phone call) about the absences.
- On the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence, the school will send an attendance letter home, which will review the district's attendance policies/guidelines. This letter will serve as a warning that the school will refer the family to the Northwestern District Attorney's office of Truancy Prevention if absences continue.
- The Amherst Regional School District has entered a partnership with the Northwestern District Attorney's Office and their program entitled **School Is Where It's At (SIWIA)**. We will notify the District Attorney when excessive absences occur, and the District Attorney will communicate directly with the student's family.
- On the eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence, parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive a warning letter along with a packet of information from the District Attorney's Office explaining the SIWIA program. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be required to meet (at the Amherst Regional Middle School) with ARMS Administration, SIWIA personnel, and the Assistant District Attorney assigned to Juvenile Court. Open lines of communication between families, the school and outside resources will be established. At that time, truancy policy, legal consequences of truancy, and resources available will be explained, and parents will have an opportunity to ask questions.

## **SECTION VII** **Health Services**

The nurses in the Health Office support student and staff health and well-being throughout the day including monitoring individuals who are ill, administering pre-approved medication, keeping accurate medical records and conducting health screenings.

### **Student Emergency Card**

The Health Office **must** have an **accurate** and **current** emergency contact card. Contact the Health Office (362-1974) immediately if home, work numbers, home or email addresses change.

## **Medication**

All physician-prescribed or over-the-counter medication must be brought to the Health Office. Nurses will administer all medication to students. Students are not allowed to carry any medication with them during the school day. This includes asthma inhalers. The Health Office must have on file a letter from a physician stating a student may receive medication during the school day.

## **Health Screenings**

Vision & hearing screenings are typically done at the elementary schools and the high school. If there is a concern about a student's hearing or vision the nurse can conduct a screening. The parent/guardian of students who need further evaluation will be notified.

## **Postural Screenings & Height/Weight Screenings**

Height and weight screenings are done in conjunction with a postural screening. Students in 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are screened for scoliosis and other postural abnormalities.

## **SECTION VIII** **Transportation**

Bus transportation is provided **only** for students who live **1.5 miles or further** from ARMS. Students who live closer than 1.5 miles must walk or make other arrangements for transportation to school.

### **Bus Safety**

- Be at your bus stop 10 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up time.
- Use caution around roadways and when crossing the street.
- Remain a safe distance from an approaching bus until it has come to a complete stop.
- **Always follow the bus driver's directions.**
- Remain seated. Do not change seats while the bus is moving.
- Do not eat food while on the bus.
- Keep the bus aisle clear.
- Do not throw anything on the bus or out of the bus window.
- Do not extend head, hands and arms out of the bus window.
- Remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop before attempting to exit the bus.
- Leave the bus safely without pushing other students.
- **Remember:** If you need to cross the street, **always walk in front of the bus.**

### **Permission to Ride an Alternate Bus**

If you are taking a different bus at dismissal you must bring a note from your parents/guardians and submit it to the Main Office first thing in the morning. A bus pass will be issued from the Main Office to present to the bus driver. Bus drivers will require the bus pass when admitting new riders.

### **Bicycles**

Students may ride their bikes to school. Please park and lock bikes in the rack near the side door in the South parking lot. Please do not ride bikes on school grounds or sidewalks.

### **Skateboards**

If a student wishes to ride a skateboard to school, a “Skateboard Use Contract” must be read and signed. Students will receive a small sticker for the bottom of their skateboard signed by the assistant principal or Dean of Students

### **Roller Skates/Rollerblades/Heelies**

These items are not allowed at ARMS.

### **Parent/Guardian Transportation**

If you choose to transport your child to/from school, please use the side or South parking lot. Please use care and watch for students and staff crossing when approaching the school at arrival and dismissal.

### **Late Buses**

Late buses transport students’ home **Monday, Tuesday and Thursday** to Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury. There are **no** late buses on **Wednesday or Friday**. Late buses leave ARMS at **4:00 pm**.

- Students must have a pass to ride a late bus.
- Students may not leave school grounds and then return to school at 4:00pm expecting to take a late bus.
- Please call the Main Office (362-1800) with questions.

### **Routes for Late Buses**

**Amherst/South:** Covers every home south of Route 9 **INCLUDES** Stanley Street and Colonial Village.

**Amherst/North:** Covers every home north of Route 9.

**Pelham:** Covers all students living in Pelham.

**Leverett:** Covers students living in Leverett **INCLUDING** Lakeview Drive.

**Shutesbury:** Covers students living in Shutesbury **EXCEPT** Lakeview Drive.

## **SECTION IX** **Student Safety**

Amherst Regional Middle School has a comprehensive Safety Plan. Emergency procedures are reviewed with students throughout the year. Each room has displayed a well-marked fire exit plan map and evacuation plans. Staff are trained to respond to certain levels of safety concerns.

**The single-most most important part of an emergency procedure is for students to listen to teacher/staff and follow directives.**

## **SECTION X** **Food Services**

ARMS Food Services offers many nutritious menu options. These are posted outside the kitchen. Students may choose to purchase a lunch or bring a lunch from home **OR** purchase a snack/beverage to go with your lunch from home. Parents/guardians may choose to send money to school to be put into a student’s lunch account which is accessed with the student ID. Every student, regardless of whether he/she is eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch provides a school ID when purchasing lunch.

### **Breakfast & Lunch**

Breakfast is available every day from 7:30-7:40am. Breakfast costs \$1.00 or 30 cents for Reduced Lunch students. Lunch costs \$2.50 or 40 cents for Reduced Lunch students. Lunch occurs during a 30-minute period with your team.

### **Free or Reduced Lunch Forms**

During the first few days of school, Free or Reduced Lunch forms are distributed to all students. The federal Free or Reduced Lunch program assists students whose families are considered “income-eligible.” For a variety of reasons students are reluctant to bring the forms home or return the completed forms. If your family is eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch, parents/guardians should ask students for the forms, complete them and follow up with the Main Office to insure that they have been processed.

### **Lunchroom Behavior**

To ensure a pleasant dining experience for all ARMS students and staff please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Sit at the tables. Do not sit on tables or ventilation units against the wall.
- Do not throw food.
- If you spill something, clean it up or ask for assistance.
- Please be sure to clean up after you eat, return trays, empty trash into garbage cans, and recycle milk cartons, cans and plastic containers.
- Remain in the lunchroom until you are dismissed.
- Obtain a pass from an adult if you need to go to the bathroom or run an errand.
- Do not leave the lunchroom with food or open containers.
- Use respectful conversation voices. Do not yell at someone across the lunchroom.
- During nice weather you may eat at the tables in the courtyard. Lunchroom behaviors apply in the courtyard.

## **SECTION XI** **Student Life & Activities**

We are committed to providing opportunities for students to engage in activities which nurture their intellectual, social and physical development. To this end, we offer a variety of student resources, athletics and after school clubs. More information about our after school clubs and athletic programs will be distributed during the first few weeks of school. Any student staying at the middle school after 2:20pm must be under the direct supervision of an adult in the building.

An informational Club Fair is held in late September in the cafeteria during lunch.

### **After School Clubs**

From year to year, different clubs are offered. Here is a list of some recent ARMS clubs: Art Club, Drama Club, Jazz Band, Rock ‘n’ Roll Club, The Writing Circle, Student Book Club, Math Counts, Engineering Club, Girls By Design, STEM RAYS, Russian Club, Latin Club, ELL Homework Club, ARMS Diabetes Support Group, ARMS Yearbook, Best Buddies and Girls Eye View.

## **Athletics**

A sports physical examination is required prior to try-outs for competitive sports. The examination must be completed annually. The form must be completed by the student's physician or the school physician. Students and parents must contact the school health office to make arrangements or to seek further information. Some of these programs are interscholastic programs, meaning that our students compete with students from other schools. Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations must be followed for these programs.

No student who has been absent from school on the day of an activity will be eligible to participate in that activity. A student is considered absent if he/she does not check in at the office by 8:05 a.m. and remain in school for the rest of the day.

## **Interscholastic Sports Teams**

Fall Program: Boys & Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Volleyball

Winter Program: Boys Wrestling, Girls Wrestling

Spring Program: Softball, Boys & Girls Track, Boys & Girls Ultimate Frisbee

Please contact Athletic Director Karen Keough-Huff (362-1747) with questions about the athletic program at ARMS.

## **Technology**

ARMS has three computer labs, a computer in each classroom and many in the Library. All computers are networked and have Internet capability. Computers are available throughout the day for writing assignments, research assignments and other teacher assignments that use technology. Computers are available after school with adult supervision.

## **Library**

ARMS has a wonderful collection of books and other resources in the Library which is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. Students are encouraged to utilize the Library and its contents in a respectful and meaningful way. Please become familiar with library rules and procedures. Be quiet and respectful of others while working in the Library. If you need assistance, please ask one of the librarians.

## **Student ID Cards**

All students have their picture taken on Picture Day in September. All students receive a photo ID card which should be carried on them at all times during the school day.

## **No Contact Policy**

It is easy for non-violent situations to become out of control, violent or result in serious injury to students or staff. We take the safety of all our students and staff seriously. The following behaviors may result in suspension: intentional pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, wrestling in the hallway, classroom or other areas, "horseplay" and "play fighting". Additionally, inappropriate displays of public affection are unacceptable. This includes but is not limited to: kissing, prolonged hugs, holding hands or any other contact inappropriate for the school setting.

## **Dress Code**

Student's clothing choices can have implications which impact their social and academic life at ARMS. Students should have the ability to express themselves through their clothing options but clothing needs to be appropriate and cannot negatively impact or interfere with the learning

environment. If clothing is considered inappropriate an administrator will call home for a change of clothing. Please call an administrator or the Dean of Students with questions.

- Wear shoes at all times (slippers or Heelies are not permitted).
- No hats, caps or bandanas
- Coats should not be worn while in the building. The only exception to this rule occurs when classrooms are very cold.
- Do not wear any clothing that contains obscenities, fighting words, weapons, incitement or defamation.
- Do not wear clothing advertising alcohol, drugs or tobacco.
- Do not wear clothing that is sexually suggestive.
- Do not wear an undershirt as a shirt.
- Pull up your pants to ensure your underwear is not showing.
- No short crop tops, tube tops or halter tops revealing stomach or midriff.
- Do not wear revealing tops and shorts which are distracting to the learning environment.
- Cami tops or spaghetti strap tops must cover you (and your underwear) sufficiently.

### **Lockers**

All students will be assigned a locker for use throughout the year. Students may decorate the inside of lockers with appropriate pictures that can be easily removed at the end of the year. Please do not write on locker or put anything on the outside of lockers.

School administrators or the Dean of Students may inspect and search lockers at any time with or without reasonable suspicion a school rule or policy has been or is being violated.

### **Physical Education Lockers**

Gym lockers are not assigned. Students may use a personal combination lock for the gym locker but it must be removed after each PE class. Locks are available for purchase at the school store. Students may ask the PE teacher to secure valuables such as watches, jewelry or MP3s at the beginning of class.

### **Lost and Found**

To avoid lost items, please clearly label all jackets, sweatshirts, back packs, lunch bags, instrument cases, gym clothing, etc. A lost and found bin is located in the lunchroom. Small and more valuable items (glasses, keys, jewelry, etc.) are kept in the Main Office. In addition, the PE teachers keep a lost and found in the gym area. Periodically, announcements are made encouraging students to check the lost and found areas. Remaining items will be donated to a local charity. Feel free to stop in and check the lost and found if your child is missing any items.

**Remember:** Theft does occur! Do not leave anything of personal value in an unlocked gym locker or lying around in the locker rooms. We will not be responsible for the damage, loss or theft of personal articles.

### **Items Delivered to School**

If a family member must bring an item such as a musical instrument, lunch or homework to school, please deliver the item to the Main Office. The Main Office will contact students when the item arrives.

## SECTION XII Code of Conduct

Every one of us has the RESPONSIBILITY of making our school a safe respectful learning environment. Every one of us has the RIGHT to feel that he/she “belongs” and feels safe and respected in our school community. We are committed to maintaining a climate of decency and respect in our school, a climate in which ALL students/adults are free from violence, bullying and harassment of any kind. It is the right of every student and adult to feel physically and emotionally safe in our school. There is Zero-Tolerance for bullying and/ or harassment here at ARMS. Let us know if you are having a problem and we will work with you to resolve the situation.

We depend on families to do their part to make our school a positive learning environment.

This section of the handbook will help families understand the high standards of behavior ARMS sets for students and what is expected if a student is unable to reach these standards. We believe that each student can reach these standards and we believe that in order to have a safe and respectful school community it is critical that students do so.

Some of the language in the following section of this handbook will sound very formal and very legal. It is. ARMS administration wants families to understand that the standards set for students are actually standards that appear in the laws of both the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the laws of the United States. Please take time to go over this section carefully, both with school advisors and at home so that all information and expectations are clearly understood.

Any student who chooses to violate the law while in school or on school property will face the consequences of Amherst Regional Middle School and will be referred to the Amherst Police Department for potential legal action.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

- Students may not possess alcohol, drugs or other intoxicants.
- All pills or other forms of prescription and non-prescription drugs are **banned**. Discipline will result if a student is found in possession of pills or prescription or non-prescription medication. If a student needs to take a medication, that should be held by the nurse as outlined in the last bullet in this section.
- Any substance used as an intoxicant is **banned**.
- All medicines and drugs prescribed by a physician must be used under the supervision of the school nurse.

### **Drug Paraphernalia**

Possession of pipes, tools or other paraphernalia considered to be related to marijuana or other drug use is **prohibited** and may result in disciplinary consequences.

### **Weapons**

All weapons including but not limited to knives, including penknives, box cutter and Exacto knives, or any kind of guns are banned from school. Please note that weapons also include devices which can be used as a weapon, including but not limited to screw driver, scissors, compass, ruler, laser pointer and similar objects.

## **Fire Safety Rules**

- Students may not be in possession of a lighter or matches.
- Students may not ignite matches, lighters or other flaming devices.
- Students may not ignite any material except under supervised, experimental conditions.
- Setting fire to any material or property will be considered a criminal act—arson.
- Students may not ignite or possess any incendiary device, firecracker, sparkler, etc.
- Setting off a fire alarm will be considered a criminal act as well as a violation of school rules.
- Fireworks, smoke bombs and similar incendiary devices are banned from school.

## **Bomb Threats**

**Bomb threats, making and/or being involved in the making of a bomb threat and/or other imminent threat to the safety of the school community are taken very seriously. Engaging in such behavior may result in the following:**

- External suspension for a minimum of 10 school days
- Restitution for emergency services
- Referral to the Amherst Police Department
- Possible expulsion from school

## **Property Damage**

It is against the law to deface or damage public school property or the property of others.

## **Malicious Physical Abuse or Assault**

- Any student, who physically harms, attempts to harm or assaults another person, and for whom normal school disciplinary action is not effective, may be subject to a complaint filed by school officials with District Court.
- Any student who clearly assaults another may be subject to a complaint filed with District Court.
- Any intentional act which results in the serious abuse or injury of another may be considered an assault or assault and battery and treated accordingly.
- Any student who physically assaults a school employee or volunteer staff member (tutor, monitor, helper, etc.) may be in accordance with state law, expelled from school.
- There is a “no contact” rule at ARMS. It states that any intentional pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, horseplay and play fighting is subject to suspension.

## **Theft**

Theft is against the law and will be treated according to the seriousness of the act. It is also a violation of the school rules.

## **Bullying**

It is a troubling fact that bullying, especially cyber-bullying, are part of our students’ lives. Please be assured that the teachers, staff and administration at ARMS take bullying very seriously and deal promptly with any reported incidents. Administration actively works with guidance and adjustment counselors and liaison to the Amherst Police Department to investigate occurrences, empower the victims, and discipline and educate the bullies. Additionally, ARMS has implemented the Second Step curriculum which will be taught by the school guidance counselors to all of students. The curriculum allows students to meet in small groups and connect and interact in a positive way with their teacher and fellow classmates around multiple aspects of social interaction, including but not limited to bullying.

It is developmentally typical for middle school students to be very reluctant to speak with adults about bullying, whether they have been a victim, bystander, or bully. If you feel like your student is being impacted by bullying, please discuss it with your student and encourage them to come forward to an adult at school. It does not have to be an administrator or the Dean of Students. It can be any staff member your student feels comfortable talking with. If they refuse to talk with an adult at school, please contact us directly so that we can begin the appropriate steps. The entire Amherst Regional Middle School community is committed to eliminating bullying in our school.

It is also very important for parents and guardians to review the definitions of bullying on the following page in order to understand what bullying is according to the State of Massachusetts. Most students experience some level of social distress in the form of teasing, gossip, exclusion from groups etc. These experiences can be traumatic for students, but do not always mean that a student is being bullied. The most important word in the definition is “repeated”. This means that a single incidence of teasing or exclusion is not considered bullying, but multiple incidences of this could be. The ARMS community is committed to dealing with these single incidences knowing that they can lead to bullying down the road.

In the District pages of the handbook, you will find the District Anti-Bullying Policy. You will also find the potential consequences for bullying on page 43 of the handbook.

Listed below are some potential behaviors that students can exhibit when they are the victims of bullying. **Please note** that many of these behaviors are also commonplace for many middle school students who are not the victims of bullying.

- be frightened of walking to and from school
- change their usual route
- not want to go on the school bus
- beg you to drive them to school
- be unwilling to go to school
- feel ill in the mornings
- begin truant
- begin doing poorly in their school work
- come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed
- come home starving or lost lunch money
- become withdrawn, or lack confidence
- become distressed and anxious, stop eating
- attempt or threaten suicide
- cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares
- have their possessions go missing
- ask for money or start stealing
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to talk about what's wrong
- have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- begin to bully other children, siblings
- become aggressive and unreasonable
- give improbable excuses for any of the above

### **Definitions from the Massachusetts Anti-Bullying Legislation**

**Bullying** is 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:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;

- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; Or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

Cyberbullying shall also include:

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

**Retaliation** is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment by a current student or former student under the age of 21 directed against a person in response to an action that person has taken or knowledge that the person has.

### **Prohibition of Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation**

Acts of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation are prohibited: on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and at a location, activity, function or program that is *not* school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, *if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on their rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.* Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### **Regulations on Hazing**

**Chapter 269, sects. 17-19** of the acts of 1985 specifies that “**it is a crime**” to participate in or organize hazing, or for any person at the scene of such crime to fail to report the incident. 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. (See detailed pages in the District Policies and Procedures section).

### **Sexual Harassment**

**Definition applicable to students:** Sexual harassment is a form of student misconduct, which undermines the integrity of the educational mission of the Amherst School Department. All

students must be allowed to learn in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment refers to behavior which is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale and which, therefore, interferes with individual learning. (See pages in the District rules and policy section).

**Reporting:**

- Talk to a teacher, an administrator or a counselor as soon as possible.
- All persons shall report knowledge of actual or reasonable suspected sexual harassment to Mr. Hayes, Ms. Dinger, or Mr. Johnson.

**Tobacco Possession/Use**

**M.G.L. c.71, sect. 2A**

An Act prohibiting the Use of Tobacco in the Public Schools of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Section 2A states: “It shall be unlawful for any student, enrolled in either primary or secondary public school in the Commonwealth, to use tobacco products of any type on school grounds during normal school hours.

**Note: Students may not use or be in possession of any tobacco products at any time on ARMS grounds.**

**SECTION XIII**  
**Computer Acceptable Use Policy**

**See also District rules and policy**

**ALL USERS - Students, staff and faculty SHALL NOT:**

- Use the network to access and/or transmit material in violation of any U.S. or Commonwealth law, including copyrighted material.
- Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic material; advocate illegal acts; contain ethnic slurs, or racial epithets; or discriminates on the basis of gender, national origin, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, handicap or age.
- Degrade, damage or disrupt equipment or system performance.
- Gain unauthorized access to network resources.
- Permit or authorize any other person to use their name or login password.
- Use an account of any person or vandalize another user’s data.
- Waste electronic storage space by saving unnecessary files or programs.
- Download, install, load or use programs without written permission of the technology administrator.
- Use the Internet for personal commercial purposes or for political lobbying.
- Use inappropriate, offensive, foul or abusive language.
- Harass or annoy any other party with obscene, libelous, threatening or anonymous messages, objectionable information, images or languages.
- Forward chain letters.
- Forward e-mail messages of broad interest – including virus alerts and jokes – to the entire school community.
- Knowingly make use of pirated software or violate software licensing agreements.

- Engage in the practice of “hacking” or knowingly engage in any other illegal activity with using the network
- Intimidate, threaten or verbally abuse others.

**Students, staff and faculty must:**

- Use the Internet and other electronic resources only for legitimate educational purposes.
- Respect commonly accepted practices of Internet etiquette including, but not limited to, use of appropriate language.
- Be aware of potential security risks at all times and take all reasonable steps to minimize risks, at minimum, logging off the network when a computer is unattended and reporting all unauthorized use of one’s account to a technology administrator.
- Avoid bulk e-mailing.
- Forward all e-mails of broad interest, such as virus alerts, to a technology administrator for appropriate distribution to the entire school community.
- Treat all computer areas and equipment with care and respect.

**Students please note:**

- You may access the Internet only with adult supervision.
- You must notify a teacher or technology administrator if you come across any inappropriate content.
- Do not use the Internet to give out personal information (such as home address, telephone number, or picture) about themselves or others.
- Student use of electronic resources is restricted to teacher-approved projects and research.

**E-mail**

School and district resources for electronic communication shall be used for educational purposes. Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail may occur when such use does not generate a direct cost for the district, but such messages will be treated no differently from other messages on the network.

**Prohibited electronic communications include but are not limited to:**

- Use of electronic communications to send copies of documents in violation of copyright laws.
- Use of electronic communication system to send messages access to which are restricted by laws and regulations.
- Use of electronic communication to intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct school/district business.
- Constructing electronic communications so they appear to be from someone else.
- Obtaining access to the files or communications of others for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity, with no substantial school/district business purpose.

**Web Page Policies**

**General Guidelines for students, teachers & classroom sites**

- **Posting** – All web pages produced by faculty or staff that reference or depict the school/district are assumed to be school- or district-owned educational resources, created for the sole purpose of education, and shall be posted on a school-maintained web site, with the exception of school-authorized sites whose purpose is to simplify the process by

which a page/site is posted. All students web site/pages must be approved by authorized school personnel for posting prior to being posted.

- **Disclaimers** – If your home page is housed on a school/district server, you must include the following disclaimer: *“The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District is not responsible for any content which is not hosted on our servers.”*

Any school-related web page produced by staff but not housed on the school web site must be posted to an authorized site and must include the following disclaimer: *“The content of this site/page express the views of the author(s) only and do not necessarily express the views of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District.”*

The school/district is not responsible for content on school-related web sites not housed on our site or on another authorized site.

- **Student Pictures and Work** – Use of student photos on any web page is to be at the discretion of individual schools and districts. In all cases, however, a signed release form must be on record at the school before a student’s photo can be placed on a web page, and only first names will be used with either pictures or school work.
- **Content** – Do not advertise, endorse or link to any product or organization whose primary function is not to disseminate educational content (e.g., commercial enterprises or political groups). Certain fundraising information and links may be allowed, such as “shopforschool.com” or “marketday.com” and certain exceptions may be made for commercial entities who have significantly contributed to the school community (e.g., Verizon or Microsoft). These company links are allowed at the discretion of appropriate school administrators; please see school- and district-specific provisions at the end of this document for more information. In all cases, exceptions may be made when links to commercial or political groups are provided for legitimate educational purposes — for instance, links to the sites of political parties for civics courses, or links to commercial entities for media literacy courses.
- **Proof your content and use a spell checker before posting.** As an educational institution with a potentially broad audience, it is incumbent upon us to have grammatically correct content. Viewers often have high expectations and we must maintain a high level of accountability to our community.
- **Copyright Issues** – Make certain that your use of copyrighted material conforms to the “fair use” test (<http://www.benedict.com/basic/fairuse/fairtest.htm>) and that all copyrighted material on your site is appropriately credited.

## **SECTION XIV**

### **Disciplinary Terms Used at ARMS**

All parents/guardians and students should familiarize themselves with terms used in this section.

#### **Quiet Learning Center (QLC)**

A learning environment for students sent to the Main Office .Consequences of behavior may result in students serving one of the following in the QLC:

- **Lunch detention(s)** - Students will eat lunch in the QLC rather than the lunchroom.
- **Administrative After School Detention(s)** from 2:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.
- **In-school suspension** in which case students will not attend regular classes but will spend the day in the QLC where regular class work will be completed.

### **Teacher Detention**

Teachers may assign an after school detention and students must report to teacher after school on the specified day. In addition, teachers may assign a lunch detention and students must report to the designated classroom to serve your lunch detention. Parents/guardians will be informed of all detentions. If an assigned teacher detention is ignored, students may be referred to the QLC and thus serve the teacher detention and an administrative detention.

### **In School Suspension**

A student is excluded from attending regular team classes and participating in team activities. An in school suspension is held during the regular school day in the QLC. Students must complete assigned school work while serving in-school suspension and will receive appropriate credit.

### **Out of School Suspension**

ARMS administrators are responsible for assigning suspensions. Students are sent home from school and required to stay home for the specified period of time. A parent/guardian must accompany students for a re-entry conference.

### **Police Action**

ARMS administration may call the police if a student is extremely disruptive or has seriously broken the law. The police will not interview a student without a parent/guardian present. If a student's behavior is unsafe parent/guardian will be asked to intervene.

### **Expulsion from School**

**State law** provides the principal with the authority to recommend the expulsion of any student from school under the conditions stated below:

- Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C, including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- Any student, who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other staff on school premises or at a school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (1) or (2) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student

may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

- After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (1) or (2).
- Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the superintendent of the sending school shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the student's expulsion.
- In addition, under a different statute, a student may be expelled if he/she is convicted of, or admits to sufficient facts for a finding of, a felony, or if the court determines the student to be delinquent by reason of a felony. The felony need not be related to school or take place on school property.

**SECTION XV**  
**Disciplinary Infractions & Consequences**

**THE RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS**

In any disciplinary situation, a student should expect the following procedural protections:

- to be informed of the allegations against him or her
- to be given the opportunity to present his or her version of the incident
- to be given the opportunity to confirm or deny the allegations
- to be informed of the evidence/rationale for any disciplinary consequences.

In situations involving infractions which may result in the imposition of suspension from school for two to ten days, a student should expect the following additional procedures:

- attempted notification to the parent/guardian as soon as possible and preferably within the first hour of the incident investigation
- to be offered the opportunity to request the presence of a school-based adult advocate during the investigation
- notification of parent/guardian regarding any disciplinary consequences
- the right to appeal suspensions of five to ten days to the building principal.

In situations involving infractions which may result in the imposition of long-term suspension from school for more than ten days or expulsion, a student should expect the following additional procedures:

- written notification of allegations sent to student and parent/guardian
- adequate time to prepare for a hearing, including presenting evidence and witnesses on his or her behalf and securing the assistance of counsel
- the right to appeal disciplinary decisions to the district superintendent.

See District section of handbook for procedures for students with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans

Please note the following information: While the sections below include a certain number of days for a suspension, the administration reserves the right, in its discretion, to impose discipline in excess of the number of days stated in certain cases. Further, the reference to days, below, refers to school days.

**1a. Tobacco possession, (including but not limited to chewing tobacco, snuff, etc.) use or distribution; smoking inside the school building or on school property**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-2 day suspendible offense  
Subsequent offenses: 3-4 day suspendible offense

**1b. Possession of alcoholic beverages**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 3-5 day suspendible offense; referral to the student assistance/adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: 6-10 day suspendible offense; referral to the student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

### **1c. Being under the influence of alcohol**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 3-5 day suspendible offense, referral to the student assistance/adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: 6-10 day suspendible offense, referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department. All students suspected of being under the influence of alcohol will be referred to the school nurse. Upon the nurse's assessment and recommendation, student(s) may be transported directly to a hospital/health care facility or may remain in the nurse's office until released to parent/guardian.

### **1d. Possession of marijuana**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-7 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 8-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

### **1e. Being under the influence of marijuana**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-day suspendible offense and referral to the student assistance/adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: 10-day suspendible offense, referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department. All students suspected of being under the influence of marijuana will be referred to the school nurse. Upon the nurse's assessment and recommendation, student(s) may be transported directly to a hospital/health care facility or may remain in the nurse's office until released to parent/guardian.

### **1f. Possession of other illegal substances, including but not limited to hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin, or prescription medication not used as prescribed; includes the misuse, possession or distribution of over the counter medications**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-7 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to

student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 8-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

**1g. Being under the influence of other illegal substances, including but not limited to hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin or prescription medication not used as prescribed**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-day suspendible offense; referral to the student assistance/adjustment counselor

Subsequent offenses: 10-day suspendible offense; referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department. All students suspected of being under the influence of illegal substances will be referred to the school nurse. Upon the nurse's assessment and recommendation, student(s) may be transported directly to a hospital/health care facility or may remain in the nurse's office until released to parent/guardian.

**1h. Sale of illegal substances, including but not limited to marijuana, hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin or prescription medication not used as prescribed**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-7 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 8-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

**1i. Possession of illegal substances, including but not limited to marijuana, hallucinogens, cocaine, heroin or prescription medication not used as prescribed, with intent to sell**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 8-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: Long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to student assistance/adjustment counselor and the Amherst Police Department

**1j. Possession of paraphernalia related to the use of a controlled substance (including but not limited to alcohol, cocaine, heroine, or marijuana)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense, confiscation of materials, referral to counseling and Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 2-3 day suspendible offense, confiscation of materials, referral to counseling and Amherst Police Department

## **2. Fighting and disorderly conduct**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-4 day suspendible offense, possible referral to mediation and Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 5-7 day suspendible offense, referral to mediation and Amherst Police Department

### **3a. Threat of physical attack, disorderly conduct, or intimidation**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **3b. Threat of physical attack involving a weapon**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 2-4 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

Subsequent offenses: 5-7 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **3c. Bullying**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **3d. Disorderly conduct or intimidation towards school staff**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **4. Physical attack (battery)**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: Long-term suspension or expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department.
- On a staff member: 10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **5. Sexual Harassment**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **6. Sexual Assault**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: Long-term suspension or expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **7. Theft/possession of stolen property**

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: 2-4 day suspendible offense, restitution for property, possible referral to the Amherst Police Department
- Subsequent offenses: 5-7 day suspendible offense, restitution for property, referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **8. Threat of robbery**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, possible referral to the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **9. Robbery using force**

1<sup>st</sup>/subsequent offenses: Long-term suspension, possible expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **10. Vandalism/Destruction of property**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-4 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage, possible referral to the Amherst Police Department and the Amherst Fire Department  
Subsequent offenses: 5-7 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage, referral to the Amherst Police Department and the Amherst Fire Department

### **11. Arson resulting in the destruction of school property**

1<sup>st</sup>/subsequent offenses: Long-term suspension, restitution for property damage, possible expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **14 a-d. Possession of a weapon including but not limited to a gun (this includes paintball guns, pellet guns, starter pistols, air soft guns etc.), a knife, or an instrument that can be used as a weapon or is intended to be used as a weapon or is used as a weapon (screwdrivers, ice picks, brass knuckles, laser pointers, etc.)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 3-7 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 8-10 day suspendible offense, possible long-term suspension or expulsion per MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

### **17a. Harassment and/or the use of derogatory or offensive language referring to race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual orientation**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-3 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 4-5 day suspendible offense, referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

### **18a. Participation in or encouragement of hazing activities (see p. 34 of this handbook and the District section of handbook for a detailed explanation of hazing)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-5 day suspendible offense, possible referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 6-10 day suspendible offense and exclusion from participation or membership in any school organization or team for up to one calendar year, and referral to counseling and the Amherst Police Department

**18d. Use of profanity**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense

**18f. Use of profanity towards a teacher**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense  
Subsequent offenses: 1-3 day suspendible offense

**18g. Rude, disrespectful behavior (including, but not limited to lying to school staff)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense

**18e. Possession of pornographic or obscene materials**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense, materials turned over to the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 2-3 suspendible offense, materials turned over to the Amherst Police Department

**18z. Male or Female entering or present in restricted areas including opposite gender restrooms or gym locker rooms, staff bathrooms, custodian closets etc.**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention; possible referral to student adjustment counselor  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense

**19a-b. Academic honesty infractions including plagiarism, cheating, attempts to cheat and falsification of materials (see p.22 for the academic honesty policy)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention, Zero/no credit for assignment, teacher and dean communication with parents/guardian.  
Subsequent offenses: 1-2 day suspendible offense, zero/no credit for assignment, parent/guardian - administrator conference, loss of eligibility for honor roll for the year.

**19c. Forgery of notes including but not limited to absence/dismissal notes, school related documents such as comment/appraisal form, etc.**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention and parent/guardian contact  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense; possible referral to student assistant/adjustment counselor.

**20a. Unexcused absence from class/cutting**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention and parent/guardian notification  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense; possible referral to student assistant/adjustment counselor.

Please see further information on the attendance policy on page 14 and School is Where It's At on page 15.

**20c-d. Tardy to class**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Lunch detention  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Administrative detention, parents contacted  
Subsequent offenses: 2 Administrative detentions, parents contacted

**20d. Tardy to school (Unexcused)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention, parents meeting; possible referral to student adjustment counselor  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense: Administrative detention every time student is late; parents contacted; possible referral to SIWIA.

**20e. Leaving campus/Out of bounds**

Amherst Regional Middle School is a closed campus. All students are expected to remain inside of the school building or under direct supervision for the duration of the school day. We will notify Amherst Police Department when a student(s) leaves campus.

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense

**20f. Failure to serve teacher detention**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention and parent/guardian contact  
Subsequent offenses: 2 administrative detentions per infraction

**20g. Failure to serve administrative detention**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 2 administrative detentions  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense

**20h. Clothing cut from Physical Education Class**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention and parent/guardian contact  
Subsequent offenses: 2 administrative detentions per infraction

**21a. Insubordination or failure to comply with a staff/faculty request to follow instructions**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention  
Subsequent offenses: 1-2 day suspendible offense

**21b-c. Leaving class without permission and misuse of a hall pass**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention  
Subsequent offenses: 1-2 day suspendible offense

**22a. False fire alarm or alarm to any Emergency Services**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 2-4 day suspendible offense, restitution for emergency services, referral to the Amherst Police Department; restitution to Emergency Services for cost of the response  
Subsequent offenses: 5-7 day suspendible offense, restitution for emergency services, referral to the Amherst Police Department

**22c. Bomb threats, making and/or being involved in the making of a bomb threat and/or other threats to the safety of the school community**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 5-10 day suspendible offense, restitution for emergency services, and referral to the Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: Long term-suspension, restitution for emergency services, possible expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

**22e. Possession and/or use of fire works, smoke bombs and any other incendiary device**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 3-5 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage and emergency services, and referral to Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 6-10 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage and emergency services, possible expulsion, and referral to the Amherst Police Department

**22f. Possession of lighters or matches**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention, confiscation of materials, and parent/guardian contacted  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense, confiscation of materials, and parent/guardian contacted

**23a-b. Inappropriate language or disruptive personal attire**

Students are expected to dress in a manner consistent with the academic and social goals of our school. Articles of clothing which are distracting or disruptive to the educational process are not acceptable. Any staff member who feels that a student's attire does not meet these standards may send the student to the office for a conference. Please see page 29 for further information about dress code.

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Parent/guardian contact; students must change their clothes  
Subsequent offenses: 1-day suspendible offense

**23c. Use of cell phones/ electronic devices (including text messaging, game systems and other functions) in the school building, use of portable music players and or other electronic devices during the school day.**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Confiscation of electronic device to be returned only to student's parent/guardian  
Subsequent offenses: Administrative detention, confiscation of electronic device to be returned only to student's parent/guardian

**23d. Disruptive behavior including but not limited to play-fighting, tripping, throwing food or other objects, and the use of water guns and water balloons; inclusive of cafeteria food fights and leaving lunch trash behind on cafeteria tables**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention, restitution for property damage  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense  
Subsequent offenses: 1-3 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage

**23e. Violation of the No Contact Policy (see page 29)**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Administrative detention, restitution for property damage  
2<sup>nd</sup> offense: 1-day suspendible offense  
Subsequent offenses: 1-3 day suspendible offense, restitution for property damage

**24. Note: any violation of the Acceptable Use Policy (see District section of handbook) may result in temporary loss or termination of computer use privileges *as well as* application of other relevant disciplinary consequences.**

**24a. Use of computer technology for games, chat, music and other programs not specifically assigned by a teacher**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 2 weeks; possible referral to student adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 4 weeks

**24b. Using someone else's account or allowing someone else to use your account**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 2 weeks  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 4 weeks

**24c. Changing the configuration of any workstation, installing games or other programs**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 4 weeks  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 8 weeks

**24d. Possession of or installation of programs which can be potentially harmful to the computer or individuals' accounts**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 6 weeks; possible referral to the student adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 12 weeks

**24e. Physical damage to computers**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 6 weeks  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 12 weeks

**24f. Use of technology to produce inappropriate, derogatory or harassing material**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: Loss of computer privileges for 6 weeks; possible referral to the school adjustment counselor  
Subsequent offenses: Loss of computer privileges for 12 weeks

**26. Indecent Exposure**

1<sup>st</sup> offense: 3-5 day suspendible offense, parent contacted, referral to school adjustment counselor and possible referral to Amherst Police Department  
Subsequent offenses: 6-10 day suspendible offense, parent contacted, referral to school adjustment counselor and possible referral to Amherst Police Department.

**27.** The District reserves the right to discipline for conduct not mentioned in the above list of offenses, when such conduct disrupts or interferes with the educational program or which infringes on/interferes with the health and safety of any member of the school community. This includes student conduct on field trips, after school clubs or other school related activities on or off school grounds.

# Amherst Public Schools Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools Pelham Public Schools

## School Handbook District Pages

*“The Committees’ policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, and the general public with whom it does business. The Amherst Public Schools, the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools, and the Pelham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political party, veteran status, marital status and disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment by its programs and activities.”*

**Disclaimer:** *This handbook is not an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of District rules and policies put forth by the School Committees of Amherst Public Schools, Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools, and Pelham Public Schools.*

If you need documents translated into Spanish, Korean, Chinese, or other, please contact Mildred Martinez at (413) 362-1871.

Si usted necesita traducción de documentos, favor comunicarse con Mildred Martinez, al (413) 362-1871.

한국어로 번역된 서류가 필요하시면 Mildred Martinez (413-362-1871)에게 연락하여 주십시오.

如需要翻译这份文件, 请联络 Mildred Martinez (413)362-1871

**Se voce precisa de algum documento a ser traduzido, por favor entre em contato com Mildred Martinez (413) 362-1871.**

# THE AMHERST, PELHAM & AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Serving Amherst, Pelham and the Amherst-Pelham Region*

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Office of the Superintendent  
170 Chestnut Street  
Amherst, MA 01002

(413) 362-1823  
(413) 549-9811 fax

August 19, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committees and the administrators, faculty and staff of the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Districts, I welcome you to a new school year. I am pleased to have the opportunity to work with your children and am confident they will have an exciting, challenging and rewarding educational experience in the coming months.

The “District Section” you are now about to read presents information regarding legally mandated regulations. To ensure safe and positive school learning environments, these guidelines, rules and regulations are established for all campus, bus and other settings where students are present. These are the expectations that are pertinent to everyday activities during a school year.

Some of the information in these district pages refers to situations that are rare in schools. Although we prefer to set expectations in a positive tone, more often than not, the information that follows is technical in nature and language. It is your right to be informed and our responsibility to make you aware of these policies and procedures. Please note that while some are more applicable to situations that might arise with older students, we feel obligated to inform all families of all children regardless of age.

If you have any questions about this information or any questions that cannot be best answered at your child’s school, please call 362-1810 where your call can be directed to the person who can respond to your need. You can also find general information on our district website at [www.arps.org](http://www.arps.org).

Sincerely,

Maria Geryk  
Superintendent

**Amherst, Amherst-Pelham Regional and Pelham Public Schools**  
**District Handbook Pages**  
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## **Admission**

All children of school age who reside in Amherst, Pelham or one of the regional towns on a full-time basis with a parent/legal guardian or an adult who has assumed legal responsibility for the student, will be entitled to attend the public schools in Amherst, in Pelham, or in the Regional District respectively. In addition, certain children who do not reside in a town within the school district, but who are admitted under School Committee policies relating to non-resident students or by specific action of the School Committee, may also attend the public schools.

In the Amherst and Pelham School Districts, advance registration for prospective kindergarten students will take place each spring. All children who reach the age of five years on or before September 1st of the current school year are eligible for kindergarten in September. Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age acceptable to the principal and proof of immunizations as required by the state and the School Committee. Proof of residency and legal guardianship are required for enrollment. Additionally, proof may be requested by the district at any time questions arise regarding the residency or guardianship of an enrolled student.

Children transferring into the school District from other school systems will be referred for grade placement to the school principal. If the grade level classification of the child is doubtful, the principal shall confer with the Superintendent or designee before making permanent assignment. Except in extraordinary circumstances, students will not be assigned to a higher grade until they have spent a full year in their present grade in this school District or other school systems.

## **Residency for School Attendance in Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst Regional Public Schools**

Under Massachusetts Law a child may attend the schools of the town in which s/he resides. To attend public school in Amherst, in Pelham, or in the Regional District, a student must reside permanently in Amherst, in Pelham, or in one of the Regional towns respectively and must reside with at least one parent or legal guardian who has physical custody. Typically, the residence of a child under 18 is the residence of the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) who has/have physical custody of the child. "Residence" is the place where a person dwells currently, with an intention to remain, and is in the town that is the core of his/her domestic, social, and civil life.

The School District may require a variety of documentation to establish proof of residency and custody. Investigations may be made by school officials to assure that a student maintains a bona fide permanent residence in the town. Parents/guardians are under a continuing obligation to inform the School District of any and all changes to a student's residential status.

Students over 18 and living apart from parents/guardians in one of the Region's towns are entitled to attend school as residents. Children who are illegal immigrants and residing full-time in the school District are entitled to attend school as residents. Students who are placed in a residence in town by a public agency are entitled to attend school as residents. This residency policy does not apply to homeless students.

Any student who is determined to be a non-resident while enrolled in a school in any of the districts will be dismissed for non-residency. The dismissal may be appealed to the Superintendent, and the student may be allowed to remain in school pending the outcome of the appeal.

## **Kindergarten Screening**

Each child who enters kindergarten will be given a "screening" in fulfillment of the requirements of the 603 CMR 28.03(1)(d), that governs special education and related services in public schools, and public or private day and residential schools. In addition, this screening will assist in assessing the child and plan appropriately for his or her needs. The screening provides us information about a child's strengths and needs. The results of this screening and other observations will be shared with parents/guardians during the Fall

## **Attendance Expectations**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for academic success in school. When a student is absent from class or school, the continuity of the instructional process is disrupted, and the benefits of classroom instruction are lost. Following is a list of important information for students and parents/guardians:

- All students will attend school everyday, on time.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's daily and timely attendance.
- Parents/guardians will not keep students from school while it is in session.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for reporting their child's absence on the same day, before the official opening of school. In case of an emergency that prevents this from happening, parents/guardians must send a note explaining the absence with the student when s/he returns to school.
- Reporting an absence is not the same as excusing it. The Superintendent or his/her designee (usually the building principal) is the only person that can legally excuse an absence.
- The only "excusable" reasons to keep a child/youth from attending school are: students' illness, religious observance, court obligation and/or a major family emergency (accident, serious illness/quarantine, death). Please check in with your school if you have any questions. HS students are allowed to have three college visits. Please check with the guidance office for details.
- Students must present a note upon their return to school after three consecutive days.
- Tardiness will not be excused. Three tardies will equal an unexcused absence.
- After fourteen (14) cumulative or consecutive days of being out sick, students may be eligible for home or hospital tutoring.
- There are several weeks in the school calendar designated for vacation/holiday time out of school. Families are advised to plan all trips and visits during these weeks.
- Parents/guardians will be held responsible for failure to send their children to school and/or not bringing them to school on time.
- The schools have partnered with the Northwest District Attorney's Office to implement the School is Where It's At (SIWIA) program to provide a continuum of services and support to families, children and schools when issues of attendance arise.

## **Breakfast and Lunch**

Both breakfast and lunch are served every school day. The school serves a hot lunch every day. There is usually a soup and sandwich option. Children may bring a lunch from home and buy milk at school.

Many families may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Information and applications are sent home at the beginning of the school year, and the application is available on the district website at [www.arps.org/food-services](http://www.arps.org/food-services). Please fill out the application completely and accurately.

Children who received free or reduced price meals last year will continue to receive them through September of the next school year, but new applications must be filed by the end of that month. New applicants must pay full price until their applications are approved, usually within one or two days.

Payment for meals is on a daily basis. If your child should forget his/her lunch money or lose it, he/she will be allowed to charge lunch on an occasional basis. We ask that such debts be repaid the next day. Prepayment for lunches/breakfast is also an option, either by sending money in to the school or with your child, or making use of our on-line option known as MyKids.com. Please contact your school Cafeteria Manager for more information.

## **Meal Prices for 2011/2012 School Year**

### **Breakfast (*per day*)**

Middle School & High School	\$1.00
Elementary Schools	\$ .50
Reduced Price (All schools)	\$ .30

### **Lunch (*per day*)—All Schools**

Full Price	\$2.50
Reduced Price	\$ .40
Adult Price	\$3.25

**Milk – All Schools**                      \$ .40

## **Bus Service and Rules**

Bus service is provided to children who live further than 1.5 miles from their school. Safety concerns for students who live closer than 1.5 miles will be assessed on an individual basis to determine if bus service is necessary. Bus stops and schedules are published in the local newspapers just before school opens.

### **Loss of Riding Privileges**

Respectful and safe behavior, both at the bus stops and on the bus, is essential. Any problems will be brought to the attention of parents/guardians, and students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time. Any such suspensions will be initiated by school principals or assistant principals. Suspension of riding privileges for a specific period of time is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any single infraction. Parents/Guardians are asked to review the following bus rules with their children:

### **Bus Rules:**

#### **Waiting for the bus**

1. Be on time, but do not arrive at the bus stop more than ten minutes before the time the bus usually arrives.
2. Do not allow younger children who are not yet attending school to accompany you to the bus stop.
3. Observe all safety precautions while waiting for your bus.
  - a. Do not play in the road.
  - b. If possible, avoid crossing streets.
  - c. If you must cross a street, do so only if you are sure no moving vehicles are approaching from either direction.
  - d. Do not push, pull or chase any other students.
  - e. Avoid trespassing on private property or being noisy while waiting for the bus.
  - f. As the bus approaches, line up at least six feet off the road. Do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door. Again, don't push others in the line.

#### **Loading on the Bus**

1. Get on your bus quickly and be seated at once.
2. Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.

#### **Riding on the Bus**

1. Do not eat food while you are on the bus.

2. Do not throw anything while you are on the bus.
3. Do not extend your arms or any other parts of your body out of the window.
4. Do not change seats at any time.
5. Avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract the driver and lead to a serious accident.
6. Keep your bus clean and sanitary.
7. Be courteous to other students.
8. Listen carefully and obey any instructions from the driver.

### **Unloading from the Bus**

1. Do not leave your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
2. Obey any instructions from the driver.
3. Leave the bus quickly but courteously without pushing any other students.
4. If you must cross a street as you leave the school bus, always wait for the driver to signal you to cross and be sure to walk in front of the bus (never in the back).
5. If you walk too close to the front of the bus, the driver will not be able to see you and a serious accident could occur. Always walk at a distance of at least 12 feet from the front of the bus.
6. Be sure to observe all safety precautions as you travel from the bus stop to your home.

### **Kindergarten Student Transportation**

**For safety reasons, a parent/guardian, or another pre-designated person, must be physically present when a Kindergarten student gets on and off the bus.** If no one is at the kindergarten student's stop when students are transported home, he or she will be brought back to the school until the parent/guardian can pick him/her up. All kindergarteners will wear an I.D. or badge (provided by the school) for the school year. The parent/guardian will be responsible for clipping the badge on the outer clothing of the child in the morning, and the teacher will be responsible for clipping the badge on the outer clothing of the student in the afternoon. All kindergarteners will be seated in the first three rows of the school bus.

### **Changes in Going Home Routine—Bus Passes**

Parents/Guardians are asked to limit plans that will require their child/children to ride a different school bus than usual. However, when it is absolutely necessary for a child to take a different bus, all students are required to use the Bus Pass system for their safety. This system ensures that the school knows where all students are being transported.

In order to obtain a Bus Pass, students must submit an authorized note from their parent or legal guardian to their school office. The note must include the address at which the student will be temporarily picked up or dropped off. The school office will issue a Bus Pass to the student who must then present it to the driver. Children will not be permitted to board a different bus or get off the bus anywhere other than their usual designated stop without a Bus Pass.

**Please plan ahead if changes will be required in a students' usual transportation home. Do not make alternative transportation arrangements by phoning the school on the day of the change except in cases of emergency.**

### **Crossing Guards**

A crossing guard is on duty before and after school to help students across designated streets. If a crossing guard is not on duty or at a cross walk, the student should use standard crossing protocol.

### **PVTA Buses**

The Districts strongly recommend against children riding the PVTA buses to and from school. PVTA buses are not required to stop traffic when discharging children.

### **Bicycle Safety Rules:**

1. Always wear a properly fitted bicycle helmet to protect your head—every time you ride.
2. Use a bicycle that is the appropriate size for you, not one that is too big.
3. Before you ride, make sure you don't have any loose clothing, drawstrings, or shoelaces; they can get caught in your chain and make you fall.
4. Have an adult check the air in your tires and that your brakes are working before you ride.
5. Wear bright clothes so others can see you at all times of the day.
6. Stay alert at all times; never listen to music when riding. Pay attention and watch for cars, people, and other bicyclists around you.
7. Don't bicycle at night. If you must ride, make sure your bike has reflectors and lights and wear retro-reflective materials on your ankles, wrists, back and helmet.
8. Before you enter any street or intersection, check for traffic by looking left-right-left to make sure no cars or trucks are there.
9. Learn and follow the rules of the road.

### **Rules of the Road**

1. When riding in the road, always ride on the right hand side (same direction as traffic).
2. Obey traffic laws, including all the traffic signs and signals.
3. Ride predictably—ride in a straight line, don't weave in and out of traffic.
4. When riding on a sidewalk show respect for the people walking on the sidewalk. Let them know you are coming and always pass them on the left.
5. Look for debris on your route like trash, stones, or toys that could cause you to fall off your bicycle.

### **Walking & Crossing Streets Safely:**

1. If a ball or toy goes into the street, ask a grownup to get it for you.
2. ALWAYS stop at the curb. Do not run into the street.
3. If there is a crosswalk, you should always use it and always cross streets only at the corners.
4. Look all ways (left, right, and left again) before you enter or cross a path, sidewalk, street or driveway. Keep looking as you cross.
5. Make eye contact with each driver before you pass in front of him or her.
6. Never cross a street from between parked cars.
7. Always use the sidewalk when walking to school. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the side of the road against traffic.

### **Communication**

In late September or early October there will be evening Open Houses in each of the schools to share information about the general nature of your child's classroom program and to answer questions you may have about the school.

At the elementary schools, two (2) early release days will be scheduled annually during the months of October/November, in order to facilitate the scheduling of parent teacher conferences. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the discretion of the parent and the teacher. In addition, report cards are sent home in January and June.

Middle School and High School students receive progress reports at the middle of each trimester and report cards at the end of each trimester.

Newsletters containing lists of important dates, and other news and information about the school are sent out regularly. Materials are generally sent home on Fridays. Materials about activities which are not school sponsored must have prior approval from the Superintendent's Office. School related information requires approval by the Principal.

# **Computer Use Guidelines/Acceptable Network Use Policy**

## **I. Introduction**

This document is a joint effort of the Franklin and Hampshire County public schools, adopted by the school Superintendents and technology coordinators/administrators for the purpose of guiding appropriate use of technology in education. The electronic resources at the public schools in Franklin and Hampshire County are provided by and in consonance with their mission to:

- Improve education for all students through access to unique resources and partnerships;
- Improve learning and teaching through research, teacher training, collaboration and distribution of successful education practices, methods and materials.

In addition, we seek to ensure a healthy and appropriate use of technology resources by making provisions for:

- Prevention of access by users to inappropriate matter on the Internet;
- The safety and security of users when using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Prevention of unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities;
- Prevention of unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- The design of measures to restrict minors’ access to harmful materials; and
- Prevention of any and all inappropriate or illegal use.

Our electronic resources—including, but not limited to, computers and Internet access—allow users access to local, national, and international sources of information and collaboration vital to intellectual inquiry and democracy, and are intended solely for educational purposes. Every user has the responsibility to respect the rights of every other user in our school communities and on the Internet. Users are required to conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, in accordance with both school and district policies, rules, regulations and guidelines and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States.

The potential exists, outside the school/district network, for users to access inappropriate material. A user may intentionally or innocently access material inconsistent with our educational purpose and policies. While violations of school/district policy are cause for concern, we maintain the educational advantages of using the technology outweigh the disadvantages. It is the burden of parents and guardians to establish standards of use of electronic media consistent with school/district policy and to ensure that users comply with established policy. We respect each family's decision whether their child should or should not have access to the Internet. Parents should notify the school in writing if they do not want the student to use the Internet. The use of electronic resources is at the discretion of the schools/districts according to their individual electronic policy.

The following explains our common policies for acceptable use of the schools’ and districts’ technology. Policies specific to individual schools and districts are at the end of this document. Use of computer networks and the Internet are revocable privileges dependent upon compliance with school/district policy and these procedures. A user’s failure to comply with policy shall result in limited network/Internet access, suspension of access, and/or other disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion.

## **II. General Provisions**

The Greater Hampshire and Franklin County schools have established certain protocols to ensure the safety of our school communities, the security of computer networks, and compliance with applicable law. All users should be aware of the following provisions:

### **A. Network and Internet monitoring**

Most schools and/or their vendors have software and systems in place that monitor and record all Internet usage. Most security systems are capable of recording each web site visit, chat, newsgroup, e-mail message, and file transfer into and out of our internal networks for each user. We reserve the right to intermittently monitor Internet traffic and other usage of electronic resources, for instance, by tracking destination URLs of individual users. Users should have no expectation of privacy when browsing the web, sending or receiving e-mail, or using other electronic resources.

### **B. Filtering**

In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), passed by the U.S. Legislature in January 2001 (Public Law 106-554), our schools shall employ filtering software to block access to inappropriate content on all computers with Internet access. Our schools and districts certify that a policy of Internet safety and technology protection measures shall be enforced. Users are restricted from accessing visual depictions of subject matter that are obscene, pornographic, child pornographic or harmful to minors. In compliance with CIPA, our schools and districts shall, in furtherance of this set of Acceptable Use Procedures regarding Internet safety, monitor the online activities of users.

Users should be aware that filtering software will not block ALL inappropriate web sites. Users shall report all inappropriate sites not blocked by filters to a technology administrator for appropriate action. Filtering software may be temporarily disabled for users 18 and over by a technology administrator for educational research purposes.

Our schools and districts cannot be held responsible for misuse of material downloaded from any online service, or for inappropriate or sexually explicit material being obtained through the network.

## **III. User-specific Provisions**

### **A. All Users**

**Students, administrators, staff and faculty shall not:**

1. Use the network to access and/or transmit material in violation of any U.S. or Commonwealth law, including copyrighted material.
2. Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic; advocates illegal acts; contains ethnic slurs or racial epithets; or discriminates on the basis of gender, national origin, sexual orientation, race, color, ancestry, religion, handicap or age.
3. Degrade, damage or disrupt equipment or system/network performance (for example excessive bandwidth use that disrupts the network for other users).
4. Gain unauthorized access to network resources.
5. Permit or authorize any other person to use their name or login password.
6. Use an account of any other person or vandalize another user's data.
7. Waste electronic storage space by saving unnecessary files or programs.
8. Download, install, load or use programs without written permission of the technology coordinator/administrator.
9. Use school resources for personal commercial purposes or for political lobbying.
10. Use inappropriate, offensive, foul or abusive language.
11. Harass or annoy any other party with obscene, libelous, threatening or anonymous messages, objectionable information, images or language.
12. Forward chain letters.

13. Forward e-mail messages of broad interest—including virus alerts and jokes—to the entire school community (see number 5 below in the section "Students, staff and faculty must").
14. Knowingly make use of pirated software or violate software licensing agreements.
15. Engage in the practice of “hacking” or knowingly engage in any other illegal activity using the network.
16. Engage in any conduct which constitutes cyber-bullying as defined by the Districts’ Anti-Bullying Policy.
17. Engage in any other inappropriate use of the system.

**Students, staff and faculty must:**

1. Use the Internet and other electronic resources only for legitimate educational purposes.
2. Respect commonly accepted practices of Internet etiquette including, but not limited to, use of appropriate language.
3. Be aware of potential security risks at all times and take all reasonable steps to minimize risks by, at minimum, logging off the network when a computer is unattended and reporting all unauthorized use of one’s account to a technology administrator.
4. Avoid bulk e-mailing.
5. Forward all e-mails of broad interest, such as virus alerts, to a technology administrator for appropriate distribution to the entire school community.
6. Treat all computer areas and equipment with the utmost care and respect.
7. Abide by this procedure and specific school policy.

**B. Students**

Students may access the Internet only with adult supervision, and must notify a teacher or technology instructor immediately if they come across inappropriate content. In addition, students may not use the Internet to give out personal information (such as a home address, telephone number, or picture) about themselves or other students. Student use of electronic resources is restricted to teacher-approved projects and research.

**IV. Electronic Communication**

School and District resources for electronic communication shall be used for educational purposes. Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail may occur when such use does not generate a direct cost for the District, but such messages will be treated no differently from other messages on the network. Prohibited electronic communications include, but are not limited to:

1. Use of electronic communications to send copies of documents in violation of copyright laws.
2. Use of electronic communication systems to send messages, access to which are restricted by laws and regulations.
3. Use of electronic communications to intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct school/district business.
4. Constructing electronic communications to appear to be from someone else.
5. Obtaining access to the files or communications of others for the purpose of satisfying idle curiosity, with no substantial school/district business purpose.
6. Users will conform to the rules of e-mail archiving and document retention according to document retention policy under Massachusetts General Laws.
7. Any other communication in violation of this policy or the specific school policy.

**V. Software**

All technology purchases, software and hardware, must be approved by the Director of Information Systems. All software purchases must be made according to the procedures outlined in the document, *Instructional Software Purchase Procedures*, available from the Information Systems Department.

**A. Supported Software**

Software which the District has standardized will be given priority in terms of installation, troubleshooting and training. A list of standardized and supported software, and other software owned by the District, will be updated from time to time and made available for viewing at a location designated by the Superintendent, principal, or technology administrator or his/her designated agent.

**B. Other Software**

Installation, troubleshooting and training for all other software used by faculty, staff and students will be supported as time permits. Software to be used in the curriculum or in a lab environment must be purchased in “lab packs” of sufficient quantities to account for the greatest number of simultaneous users or as site licenses, and must be owned by the school/District. Single copies of software are considered evaluation copies and will not be supported, installed on multiple computers, or made available from the network to multiple computers.

**C. Unsupported Data, Media and Software**

Software which makes the computers and network harder to maintain and support and which offers little or no benefit over comparable software will not be supported. Do not install software, including downloaded freeware or shareware, on any computer. The technology coordinator/administrator reserves the right to uninstall unsupported media or reimage any computer as necessary. No personal data or files are to be stored on the local hard drive of any computer. Please store data and files in your home directory.

**VI. Data Storage and Backup:**

The technology coordinator/administrator has the right to reimage any computer as necessary. No personal data or files should be stored on the local machine. The school/District makes every effort to run regular backups on data and e-mail hosted on its systems and networks; however, it cannot guarantee that in the event of data loss or catastrophic failure all information will be recovered.

**VII. Hardware:**

**A. Use of equipment other than that owned by the school/district:**

1. The school/District does not support equipment brought in from the outside by any user.
2. The technology coordinator/administrator has the right to confiscate any outside equipment that interferes with operation of the system/network.
3. The school/District is not responsible for damage to or loss of equipment brought in from the outside.
4. Permission to set up any outside equipment on school premises must be given in advance by the technology coordinator/administrator or his/her designated agent.
5. Permission must be granted for use of electronic devices not owned or provided by the school/district.

**B. Wiring of network devices:**

Any wiring of computers and peripherals must be done in accordance with local and state building codes. The connectivity requests should be made through the IT department. The IT department is solely responsible for this process.

**VIII. Web Pages:**

**A. General guidelines for student, teacher & classroom sites**

1. **Posting**—All web pages produced by faculty or staff that reference or depict the school/District are assumed to be school- or district-owned educational resources, created for the sole purpose of education, and shall be posted on a school-maintained web site, with the exception of school-authorized sites whose purpose is to simplify the process by which a page/site is posted. All student web sites/pages must be approved by authorized school personnel for posting prior to being posted.
2. **Disclaimers**—If a user’s home page is housed on a school/district server, but has links to sites/pages which are *not* housed on a school/district server, the user must include the following disclaimer: *"The Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Districts are not responsible for any content which is not hosted on our servers"* Any school-related web page produced by staff but not housed on the school web site must be posted to an authorized site and must include the following disclaimer: *"The contents of this site/page express the views of the author(s) only and do not necessarily express the views of Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Districts."* The school/District is not responsible for content on school-related web sites not housed on our site or on another authorized site.
3. **Student pictures and work**—A student photo will be posted only when there is no signed parent form on file documenting that the posting is prohibited.
4. **Content**—Do not advertise, endorse or link to any product or organization whose primary function is not to disseminate educational content (e.g., commercial enterprises or political groups). Certain fundraising information and links may be allowed, such as “shopforschool.com” or “marketday.com” and certain exceptions may be made for commercial entities who have significantly contributed to the school community (e.g., Verizon or Microsoft). These company links are allowed at the discretion of appropriate school administrators; please see school- and District-specific provisions at the end of this document for more information.

In all cases, exceptions may be made when links to commercial or political groups are provided for legitimate educational purposes—for instance, links to the sites of political parties for civics courses, or links to commercial entities for media literacy courses.

Proofread your content and use a spell checker before posting. As an educational institution with a potentially broad audience, it is incumbent upon us to have grammatically correct content. Viewers often have high expectations and we must maintain a high level of accountability to our community.

5. **Copyright issues**—Make certain that copyrighted material conforms to the “fair use” test (<http://www.benedict.com/basic/fairuse/fairtest.htm>) and that all copyrighted material on your site is appropriately credited.

## **Controversial Issues in School**

Controversial issues are topics that may be publicly sensitive and about which there are varied levels of opposing views, biases, emotions and/or conflict. American academic tradition stresses the free exchange of ideas as a basic element of curriculum development, instruction, and discussion. Studying controversial issues in school is important in preparing students to participate intelligently and responsibly in a democratic and pluralistic society.

An important goal of public education is to help students develop the capacity to participate respectfully, critically and positively in the discussion and analysis of controversial issues. Studying controversial issues provides opportunities to develop a student’s ability to think clearly and critically, to reason logically, to differentiate between opinion and intelligent analysis, and to respectfully examine different points of view with an open mind. All staff and students have a right to express their opinions and a right to a respectful hearing. While teachers and other staff may have personal views on controversial issues, they do not have a right to use the school setting as a forum to promote their personal views. Educators need to be constantly mindful that their views may influence students and that they have an obligation to model objectivity and to encourage their students to think for themselves.

The approach to writing about controversial issues and to discussion of controversial issues in the classroom will be objective and scholarly and will be done in a spirit of critical inquiry rather than advocacy. Teachers will ensure that reasoned arguments on an issue are presented in classroom discussions. Teachers will strive to balance major views and to assure that as many sides of the issues as possible are presented in a fair and impartial manner, with no position presented as the only one acceptable. Political issues will be presented in a non-partisan manner. Controversial issues that arise incidentally during instruction should be used by the teacher to promote critical inquiry and to teach thinking skills. In all instances, teachers will encourage students to develop an ability to meet issues without prejudice and to withhold judgments while facts are collected and evaluated.

Teachers must obtain permission from the principal to invite visitors for classroom and/or school-wide presentations. Whenever outside persons are invited to speak on controversial issues, care will be taken to assure that a reasonable range of opinions on the issue are presented in an equitable manner and that they are consistent with the academic standards of the school. Teachers will offer students and parents who might be offended by a presentation because of their religious or personal beliefs the opportunity not to participate in a presentation. Student-initiated forums are subject to the same standards for approach to discussion, consistency with the academic standards of the school, and use of visitors for presentations.

## **Discipline, Conduct, and Suspension Policies**

The Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, and the Pelham Public Schools have adopted a District philosophy statement that provides the foundation upon which individual schools have created their own codes of conduct. If a student's disability interferes with his/her capacity to meet the regular disciplinary code, modifications to the disciplinary code will be stated in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

### **Conduct of Students**

#### **Corporal Punishment**

In accordance with State law:

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

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as preventing a teacher or other employee or agent of the school committees from using reasonable force as is necessary in the following situations: to protect himself or herself from assault by a student, to protect other students and staff members from violent aggressive acts of students, or to prevent a student from harming himself or herself.

The Superintendent will issue regulations regarding staff training in the proper uses and limitations on the use of physical restraint.

### **Suspension Policy**

Breaches of standards of behavior may result in suspension from school in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws/regulations and court decisions. The principal of each school will implement specific procedures for imposing suspensions, conferring with parents, and readmitting and counseling suspended students.

A suspension may be imposed for behavior which includes, but is not limited to, when a student's behavior creates a threat to his/her own or other's safety such as fighting, committing an assault on another, stealing, vandalism, possession/sale/attempted sale of weapons, explosives or prohibited materials, possession/sale/attempted sale of alcohol, controlled substances or prescription medication prescribed for

someone other than the student, making false alarms or bomb threats, lewd or threatening behavior or language. In cases of repeated violations of other disciplinary rules, suspension may be imposed after other attempts have been made to resolve the problem. Additionally, suspensions may also be imposed for the violation of rules set forth in student handbooks.

In cases involving possession of weapons, possession of controlled substances or assault upon a staff member, a student may be subject to immediate expulsion.

Prior to a suspension being imposed, the student facing a possible suspension will be provided due process which includes a notice and explanation of the suspension the right to representation, an opportunity to present facts and arguments to support his/her side of the story. Whenever possible, parents or guardians will be notified by telephone prior to the suspension. Suspended students will not be in school, on the school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities or athletic events unless expressly permitted by the principal.

Before the above steps to impose a suspension have been completed, the principal or his/her designee may remove the student from the school grounds with an immediate suspension if the continued presence of the student presents a danger to himself/herself or to other students or to staff, or disrupts the educational process.

The District also follows MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H and 37H 1/2 in appropriate cases. These sections are outlined below.

**Chapter 71: Section 37H Policies relative to conduct of teachers or students; student handbooks**

Section 37H. The Superintendent of every school district shall publish the District's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the District.

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

In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

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

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events,

including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon<sup>1</sup>, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, paraprofessional, or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion, in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said 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 expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

#### **Chapter 71: Section 37H 1/2 Felony complaint or conviction of student; suspension; expulsion; right to appeal**

Section 37H1/2. Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension.

The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within

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<sup>1</sup> A dangerous weapon shall include, but not be limited to, any gun, projectile, any device capable of propelling a projectile, ammunition, knife (including pen knives and box cutters), fireworks, lighters, brass knuckles, as well as any other implement which is capable of inflicting bodily injury and which is used to do so or is in the possession of the student so that it can be so used. Examples of the latter include, but are not limited to, ice picks, nail files, screw drivers, bracelets, scissors, pens/pencils.

three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent, in writing, of his/her request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent shall render a decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

## **Discipline Policy for Students with Disabilities as identified by a team under the IDEA/M.G.L. c. 71B or Section 504**

### **Students identified as having special needs**

1. All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in the handbook.

Chapter 71B of the Mass. General Laws requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by a TEAM to have special needs and whose individualized program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

- a. Students with Special Needs may be suspended for up to ten (10) consecutive days, and may also be suspended in excess of ten (10) cumulative days, as fully outlined under M.G.L.c. 71B, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Such suspensions may be carried out without any further or additional process.
  - b. Suspensions or exclusions in excess of ten (10) consecutive days or ten (10) cumulative days may also occur, provided that the conduct for which the student is being disciplined is not a manifestation of his/her disability, and the District provides educational services which will allow the student to access the general curriculum and to make progress toward his/her goals.
2. The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B allow school personnel to move a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, if that student is in

possession of a dangerous weapon at school or a school function or on school property, is in possession of or uses a controlled substance or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or on school property, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including him/herself. The appropriate interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP TEAM.

3. The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B also allow school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move children with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.
4. When a special needs student is to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days or more than ten (10) cumulative days in a school year, such that a substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, the IEP TEAM will meet to conduct a manifestation determination. Relevant members of the TEAM meet for the manifestation determination, and they answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:
  1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's IEP? And
  2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

5. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook.

The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan.

6. The principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education Office of the suspendible offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

### **Students identified as having a disability and provided with a Section 504 plan**

Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in this handbook. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student's 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

- Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's 504 Plan?
- Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the

review.

### **Interrogations and Searches**

School administrators have the responsibility for maintaining a safe school environment so that students and staff may focus on learning. School administrators have the authority to conduct searches of students, student belongings, student lockers, and student automobiles, if parked on campus consistent with established law. Searches will follow procedures and guidelines and will be in accordance with the parameters established by law.

### **Physical Restraint Policy**

Maintaining a school environment that is conducive to student learning requires that the environment be orderly and safe. Physical restraint of a student may sometimes be necessary to protect the student or other individuals. Physical restraint is the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement. Students in the District are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint will be used with extreme caution and only in emergency situations, after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

The two goals of the physical restraint policy are:

1. To administer physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm, and
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

The School District's emphasis is on prevention and de-escalation, which reduces the risk of injury to both students and program staff. The emphasis is always on the care, safety, and welfare of the students and the primary technique used is verbal de-escalation.

Physical restraint may only be used when non-physical interventions would not be effective, and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.

The administrator in charge of Special Education or his/her designee will provide all staff with guidelines and procedural information regarding physical restraint. The only school personnel who should physically restrain students are those who have been trained through an approved Restraint Training Program. The only physical restraint techniques to be used are those taught by the approved Restraint Training Program.

Each building will provide its staff with a list of the school's personnel who have been trained through the Restraint Training Program. Whenever possible, these trained staff members will be called upon to administer physical restraint in situations where a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm to self and/or others.

However, nothing in 603 CMR 46.00 precludes any teacher or employee from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. In addition, nothing in these regulations should interfere with or prohibit law enforcement, judicial authorities or mandated reporter responsibilities.

The District will adhere to all laws and state regulations governing physical restraint.

### **Search and Seizure**

Lockers, lab tables, desks and other equipment and facilities provided for students' use by the District are the property of the District and are subject to search at any time for any reason. When appropriate, the police and the use of trained animals may be used to conduct such a search.

A student's person, personal belongings and automobile/bicycle/other form of transportation is subject to search when a staff member has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of anything

which is a violation of the criminal law or of the disciplinary policies of the District, or the student is in possession of anything which is evidence of such criminal or disciplinary violation.

A search of a student's person may include the use of a breathalyzer or a urinalysis drug screen when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance. The refusal of a student to participate in the breathalyzer test or urinalysis drug screen may lead to a disciplinary penalty equal to the offense of which the student is suspected.

Any item may be seized during the course of a search.

### **Interrogations by Police**

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

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school principal or his/her designee will be present. The student's parent or guardian will be immediately notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the principal will request that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, be observed by the law enforcement officials.

### **Police Relations**

It may be necessary to summon police assistance in cases of extreme disruption, uncontrolled or dangerous behavior or for violations of law.

This document states the intent of the Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools and the Amherst Police Department to engage in cooperative efforts aimed at the elimination of drugs and alcohol from the schools. Such cooperation will ensure a more comprehensive community response to the social and physical hazards of drug use and drug trafficking by students while under the authority of school personnel.

The parties to the memorandum of understanding hereby agree to the conditions and procedures entered below.

- 1.0 All school staff members are under obligation to report any and all incidents of the use or possession of any drugs by students.
- 1.1 School personnel are not protected under the confidentiality statutes of the Commonwealth, and if called on to testify in court, they would be obligated to reveal any information relating to drugs even if voluntarily confided to them by the students.
- 1.2 Each and every such incident, suspected incident, or suspected pattern of use, possession or trafficking in drugs is to be reported immediately to the appropriate building principal, other administrator or designee.
- 1.3 Any student who is suspect of, observed as, or has admitted to being under the influence of a drug must be immediately escorted to the office of the building principal or the office must be notified immediately of the incident.
- 1.4 Incidents, as described, in items 1.0 – 1.3 are considered violations of school rules and possibly of the law if they occur in the school building, on school grounds, at school sponsored events, at activities or events which may be conducted off school grounds, on school buses, and at or around school bus stops, during loading and unloading procedures.
- 2.0 The principal of each school building shall be the party to whom all such incidents are reported and who will coordinate all procedures in these matters. In the absence of the principal, another administrator or designee shall perform this function.

- 2.1 Upon a report to the principal of an incident, an investigation will be conducted. Parents will be informed expeditiously. Disciplinary hearings will take place when appropriate, and will be conducted by the principal, another administrator or designee.
- 3.0 To be under the influence of drugs, but not in possession of drugs is a violation of school rules, but it is not a violation of law. Students in violation of school rules regarding drugs will be appropriately disciplined and parents notified, but police will not be ordinarily summoned. Police may be summoned in cases of disorderly or dangerous conduct.
- 3.1 Students found to be in possession of drugs, on their person, or in locations specifically associated with students (school corridor lockers, gymnasium lockers, personal clothing or other locations or items) will be considered to be in violation of the law. In such cases, parents will be notified immediately and the police will be summoned. The case will be turned over to the Amherst Police Department. Contraband (illicit drugs and paraphernalia usually associated with drug use) will be turned over to the police department as well.
- 3.2 Where appropriate, the Police Department will pursue criminal action against any student found to be in possession of drugs.
- 4.0 The Amherst Police Department's Officer in Charge of Operations will coordinate the department's actions in cases of a student found to be in possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia. The Officer in Charge of Operations will coordinate record-keeping functions and police department/school system educational efforts with the principals of the schools.
- 4.1 The school system will report to the police department all incidents of students found to be under the influence of drugs. The names of such students may be, at the discretion of the principal, submitted to the police department after notification of parents. Such incident reports will be maintained by the Amherst Police Department as well as by the school system. A standard form for the purpose of reporting will be developed jointly by the police department and the school system.
- 4.2 The police department's Officer in Charge of Operation and the school principals will form a liaison/coordinating committee. This committee will meet regularly during the school year for the purpose of reviewing procedures contained herein and for the purpose of monitoring local conditions regarding drug use and trafficking.
- 4.3 The liaison/coordination committee shall meet with and report to the Chief of the Amherst Police Department and the Superintendent of Schools annually (in March) for the purpose of reviewing the goals and effectiveness of the procedures contained herein.
- 4.4 The procedures contained in this memorandum should be consistent with the codes for student conduct established in each school building.

#### **Chapter 76: Section 16 Children excluded from school; remedies**

**Section 16.** Any pupil who has attained age eighteen, or the parent, guardian or custodian of a pupil who has not attained said age of eighteen, who has been refused admission to or excluded from the public schools or from the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public schools shall on application be furnished by the School Committee with a written statement of the reasons therefore, and thereafter, if the refusal to admit or exclusion was unlawful, such pupil may recover from the town or, in the case of such refusal or exclusion by a regional school district from the district, in tort and may examine any member of the School Committee or any other officer of the town or regional school district upon interrogatories. (This provision, as well as Section 17, below, is only applicable when the offense is one for which the principal does not have the authority to expel the student.)

#### **Chapter 76: Section 17 Hearing prerequisite to exclusion**

**Section 17.** 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.

### **English Language Learners**

In accordance with Federal law, State law, and the Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance, the Amherst Regional School District will provide an instructional program for all identified English language learners (ELL) in grades kindergarten through 12 that is designed specifically to assist them in learning English and in learning subject matter content.

The Amherst Regional School District will identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents/guardians, teachers and other persons. Identified students will be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

## **Health**

### **A. Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco Free School**

Alcohol and drug use is prohibited on school grounds/property (including buses) or at school related activities at all times. Use of tobacco is prohibited on school grounds/property (including buses) or at school-related activities at all times. Use of tobacco is not permitted in vehicles that are parked on school grounds.

### **B. Appropriate Clothing**

Please send student(s) to school with clothing appropriate for varied weather conditions (especially warm clothing for winter weather). Students should have proper footwear for indoor use, gym and outside activities.

### **C. Dental Health**

Families are encouraged to have their students visit a dentist regularly and follow his or her recommendations for a preventative dental health program.

### **D. Emergency Information**

At the beginning of the year, Emergency Information Forms are distributed to each child. **It is extremely important that the information on the form be filled in accurately, kept up-to-date and signed by parent or guardian.** There must be a way of reaching alternate persons to notify in cases of emergency if the parent/guardian cannot be reached. Please be sure that the person(s) you name is willing and able to serve in this capacity. Please use a local person.

### **E. Head Lice**

When head lice or nits are found, the student should be treated at home. Head lice are very contagious and quickly spread unless treated. A student's head should be checked regularly, especially if an itchy scalp is noted. Eggs are commonly found in the hair around the ears, the back of the neck and at the crown of the head. All family members and close contacts should be examined and treated as needed. The nurse will provide the necessary information needed to deal successfully with this problem. The student is advised to report to the Health Room before returning to class.

### **F. Height and Weight**

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 57 and CMR 200.500 mandates that students in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 be measured for height and weight annually in our Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening Program. We will be sending an informational packet including BMI status to families with students in those grades.

### **G. Immunization Requirements**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health sets entry into school immunization requirements. This information is available at the schools and from a health care provider. **EVIDENCE OF THE REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS MUST BE PRESENTED BEFORE ENTERING THE AMHERST, AMHERST-PELHAM REGIONAL, OR THE PELHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS.** If a parent/guardian is claiming a medical or religious exemption from this requirement, an exemption request must be made in writing. All medical exemptions must be supported by a health care provider. Sufficient information must be provided for both exemptions, so that the administration may make a judgment as to the validity of the claimed exemption. Any student with medical or religious exemptions may be subject to exclusion from school if there is an outbreak of a specific disease. State Health Regulations require that all students entering preschool or kindergarten present evidence of having been screened for lead poisoning.

#### **H. Medication Policy**

The administration of medication to students by the school health staff should take place only if the student's health would be jeopardized without it. No initial dose will be given in school. A signed and dated consent form by the parent/guardian and prescribing health care provider authorizing the administration of the medicine during school hours must be presented to the Health Room staff. Prescription medication must be in the original pharmacy container, labeled with the student's name, the health care provider's name, the name of the medicine, the dose, the time of day and the dates to be administered. Non-prescription medication must be presented in the original container. All medicines must be kept in the Health Room, except for inhalers, EPI Pens, and diabetic supplies which may be carried by the student. These particular medications also require written permission from the parent/guardian, health care provider and nurse at the school which will be kept on file in the Health Room. It is the student's responsibility to come to the Health Room at the prescribed time. Medication must be hand delivered by an adult to the nurse in order for that medicine to be dispensed to a student. **The District does not keep stock supplies of medication, except for emergency situations. Please see the nurse at school for consent and order forms along with clarification of these policies.**

#### **I. Physical Examination Requirements**

A report of complete physical examination including an up-to-date record of immunizations is required for each child prior to entrance into school. Physical examinations performed within six months of the opening of school will meet this requirement. In Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst-Pelham Public Schools examinations are required before beginning kindergarten and fourth, seventh and tenth grade. A student transferring from another school system should be examined just as any other student just entering one of the Districts. The physical examination must be conducted by a licensed medical doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Documentation of the examination should be submitted to the health room prior to entering school. Also, the documentation should include the date the exam was conducted, a statement regarding a general assessment of health, unusual findings or chronic health problems, treatments or medication administrations to be carried out in school, and any limitations to usual school activities.

#### **J. Sickness and Accidents**

If a student is sick or has a serious accident in school, the school will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s). It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to take the student home and arrange for needed medical attention. The school will administer first aid only. Parents/guardians are asked to pick up their children in the Health Room. It is sometimes difficult to assess how a child looks or feels in the morning, and many children will go to school well but develop an illness during the day. For the child's sake, as well as for the sake of others, please keep a student home if he/she is not well. Examples of illnesses which should keep the child at home include:

- conjunctivitis (pink eye) may return after treatment has started

- fever (over 100 degrees orally) as a symptom.
- significant headache or stomachache
- diarrhea or vomiting within the past 24 hours
- impetigo (may return to school after treatment has started)
- earache, runny nose, cough and/or sore throat (if these symptoms interfere with a student's participation at school).

**K. Postural Screening**

Postural (scoliosis) screening, also known as screening for spinal curvature is conducted yearly for students in grades 5-9. Parents/guardians of students who are found to need further evaluation by their own health care provider will be notified.

**L. Pregnant Students**

Pregnant students will be encouraged to continue to attend school. Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible, that return to school after delivery is encouraged, and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided. In accordance with Federal law and the Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance, a student who is pregnant in the Amherst, Pelham, and the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District is permitted to remain in regular classes and participate in extracurricular activities throughout her pregnancy. After giving birth, a student is permitted to return to the academic program in which she was enrolled and is permitted to participate in extracurricular programs. The District does not require that a pregnant student obtain certification from a physician that she is physically and emotionally able to continue in school unless certification is required for all students with other physical or emotional conditions requiring the attention of a physician.

**M. Staff**

The School Health Services team is comprised of a School Physician, a Nurse Leader, Certified School Nurses, Registered Nurses, and Licensed Practical Nurses. The School Physician is available on a scheduled basis as an advisor for the overall school health program, for consultation, and preventative health programs. A nurse is on duty during regular school hours to meet the needs of children and staff.

**N. Vision and Hearing Tests**

Screenings are conducted with students each year in the school for students in grades K-6, 10, and upon request. Parents/guardians of students who are found to need further evaluation by their own health care provider will be notified.

**Homelessness**

As part of the No Child Left Behind legislation, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized. The purpose of this Act is to ensure educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

1. Homeless students must be provided with access to the same free, appropriate public education that is provided to other children and youth.
2. Homeless students have the right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing;
3. Students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they get permanent housing;
4. Students who chose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them. McKinney-Vento is a Federal law, the requirements of which override the immunization laws of Massachusetts. If a homeless child arrives lacking immunizations or medical records, the parent/guardian will be referred to the

district's Liaison, who has the responsibility to obtain relevant academic records, immunizations or medical records and to ensure that homeless students are attending school while the records are obtained; and

5. If a homeless student arrives without records, the school district's designated Homeless Education Liaison must assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records.

McKinney-Vento permits homeless students to remain in their school of origin, despite their residential instability, and to receive transportation services that will help provide educational stability. Transportation is to be arranged as follows:

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

McKinney-Vento also requires that school districts ensure that homeless children and youth are able to participate in Federal, State or local food programs.

The determination for eligibility for free meal benefits is flexible, allowing benefits to be made available to homeless students as soon as possible.

1. To expedite delivery of meal benefits, the District will accept documentation that students are homeless from the Liaison or homeless shelter director.
2. In lieu of normal documentation substantiating free meal eligibility, schools may simply have the child's name, effective date, and signature of the Liaison or homeless shelter liaison. (If, at some point, the child is no longer homeless, the household must be provided with an application for free/reduced price meals.)
3. A child or family may temporarily reside with another household and still be considered homeless under the definitions of homeless. In this case, the household size and income of the host family are not taken into consideration in determining the free meal eligibility for the children.

If a host family applies for free and reduced price meals for their own children, the host family may include the homeless family as household members if the host family provides financial support to the homeless individuals. Any income received by the homeless family must also be included.

## **Homework**

The School Committee believes that homework is an important part of the educational process and that it is valid if it has the following objectives: to reinforce, enrich, and extend classroom instruction; to provide essential practice in developing skills; to promote growth of individual responsibility and self-direction in learning; and to help students develop good study habits and time management skills.

Homework is a learning activity which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. When assigning and evaluating homework, teachers cannot assume that the student will have adult support outside of school for successful completion of an assignment. Homework will not be assigned for disciplinary purposes.

School handbooks will publish specific homework guidelines that are consistent with the goals of the instructional program (Policy IA), this policy and other relevant School Committee policies.

## **Home Education of Students**

The District recognizes the right of parents/guardians to provide home education to their child/children. This right is not absolute, but subject to reasonable regulation by the District. Parents/guardians must submit a written home education proposal to the Superintendent or his/her designee, who, under Chapter 76, Section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws shall approve or disapprove it. Such approval must be obtained in advance of its implementation.

In evaluating each proposed home education proposal, the Superintendent or his/her designee, will consider the following factors:

1. The competency of the teachers. Though certification is not required, the presence or absence of the requirements that would lead to certification may be considered.
2. The teaching of subjects required by state law, Chapter 71, Sections 1, 2 and 3, or regulation; the manner in which they are taught so as to impart comparable knowledge as given in the local schools.
3. The number of hours and days devoted to teaching to meet the minimum requirements of the state.
4. The adequacy of the texts, materials, methods and programs being used.
5. The availability of periodic tests and measurement of the child's educational growth.

Parents/guardians have the right to a hearing before the Superintendent in the event that the home education proposal is disapproved, so as to allow them an opportunity to explain their plan and answer questions about it. They may be represented by counsel and shall be provided reasonable notice of the time and place of such a hearing.

If a plan is approved, there will be a periodic evaluation of the child's progress under guidelines and standards set by the Superintendent to measure whether adequate educational progress has been made.

### **Participation of Home-Educated Students in Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities**

The opportunity to participate in interscholastic sports and/or other extracurricular activities should be considered a privilege rather than a right. The Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools encourage students with approved home education plans to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities at the Middle School and High School, provided they meet the same eligibility requirements as enrolled students.

Specifically, to participate in extracurricular activities and/or athletics, a home-educated student:

- must have a home education plan that has been approved by the Superintendent prior to the beginning of the school year.
- must reside in the Region and must be living with his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in the family residence.
- must meet all eligibility requirements of MIAA including, but not limited to, rules governing transfers and academic eligibility beyond grade eight to participate in interscholastic athletics.
- must meet all eligibility requirements of the school, including attendance and academic requirements for participation in extracurricular activities and athletics
- must pay required fees for participation in athletics and, if applicable, for extracurricular activities.
- must pass the District's physical examination annually, or have a family doctor perform such an examination, and must secure and present evidence of their own insurance coverage for participation in athletics.

Two aspects of a student's home education program have been identified as being important measures of academic eligibility. These are, attendance/daily completion of course work and acceptable academic performance. Students must complete their normal academic work on the day of a scheduled practice or game; and students must complete satisfactory work in all subject areas in order to participate in

extracurricular and/or athletic activities. Parents/guardians of home education students are expected to monitor these requirements.

### **Attendance**

On days when there is either a game scheduled or a practice to be held, the head coach of an athletic team will review that day's Home Education plan which must be signed by the parent/guardian, thereby certifying the student's completion of that day's academic work. Participants in other extracurricular activities must present their signed daily Home Education plan to the club's advisor.

### **Academic Performance**

On a trimester basis, no later than three (3) school days following the close of grades at the high school and middle school, the parent or guardian responsible for the home education program must submit to the Superintendent a progress report on work completed that quarter, including representative work samples and/or any other methods used for evaluating academic performance in English, mathematics, science and social studies. The Superintendent or Curriculum Director, with consultation from department heads, will determine whether or not the work completed that quarter satisfies the school's grade level standards.

Failure of a home-educated student to adhere to requirements for participation in extra-curricular activities, or failure of a parent/guardian who has assumed responsibility for a home education program to properly monitor their child's adherence to eligibility requirements, shall lead to the loss of the privilege to participate.

### **Inclement Weather**

If the weather is inclement in the morning, please refer to the following to learn whether school will be cancelled or delayed: Radio: WHYN (93.1 FM), WHMP (1400 AM, 99.3 FM) and (1430 AM); TV: (WWLP) Channel 22 and ABC40, carry cancellation or delay in opening announcements beginning at about 6:30 A.M. The Amherst school system also has a telephone **News Line** which will carry announcements of school closings and/or delays due to poor weather conditions. Call the **News Line** at **362-1898** beginning at 6:30 A.M. **Please do not call the schools.**

### **Safety and Well-Being**

The School District and the School Committee seek to create an environment that achieves equity for all students and ensures that each student is a successful learner, is fully respected, and learns to respect others. By building on strengths and overcoming impediments, the schools can ensure the academic engagement and school membership of every student from the moment she/he enrolls to the moment she/he walks across the stage at graduation.

Respect, fairness, consistency, responsibility, and appropriate social skills are essential components of our schools. Every effort, both formal and informal, that supports these values and social skills will promote a positive learning environment, increase a climate of acceptance, and improve the quality of relationships among and between students and adults.

Mechanisms and procedures must be in place in every school and in every classroom not only to ensure the physical, social, and emotional safety of students, but also to provide the supports and advocacy necessary for students. The need for safety, well-being, support, and advocacy applies to the general student body, to victims, and to alleged offenders. All members of the school community need clear expectations, reasonable limits, and established structures and procedures to ensure safety and to protect the rights of all.

All members of the school community must be aware of school rules. Non-compliance with any of these rules will lead to appropriate consequences.

The School Committee expects prevention and responsiveness on all issues of safety and well-being to be high priorities in the District and schools. Every student will report to an adult concerns about his/her safety and well-being or concerns about the safety and well-being of others. All adults in the school community will be trained in their responsibilities as First Responder to student reports, and every school will have clearly identified and trained Second Responders providing support for First Responders. All reports from students or adults regarding issues of safety and well-being will be handled objectively.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to develop guidelines for the implementation of this policy and to publish these district guidelines in the appropriate handbooks. Building principals may establish specific protocols related to these district guidelines.

## **School Visitation and Classroom Observation**

### **Visitor Admission and Protocols**

To best maintain the safety of students, the following protocol will be used to monitor who enters the buildings during the school day. While implementing this process is consistent with the districts' focus on student safety, the community should be assured that parents/guardians, community members, and volunteers are welcome in the schools, and the districts recognize that partnership is critically important to meeting the needs of students.

- a. All visitors will enter the school building through the front door.
- b. Access will be granted to the school via the front door after utilizing the door access bell.
- c. Access will be granted by school office personnel, the building principal or other authorized persons after visual identification is made and the visitor's purpose for requesting access to the school is accepted.
- d. All school doors shall remain locked during the regular school day except at arrival and dismissal time when certain designated doors will be open.
- e. All visitors will be directed to the school main office where they will sign a visitor log and obtain a School Department Visitor Badge.
- f. Visitors who fail to report to the main office to sign-in or obtain a visitor badge will be reported to the building principal or other authorized person for investigation.

Elementary School Parents/guardians are invited to eat lunch with your child. Call the Main Office ahead of time so that a lunch may be ordered for you. (Adult price for 2011-2012 is \$3.25)

### **Observation Guidelines and Procedures**

Pursuant to Mass. General Laws Chapter 71B Section 3, Amherst, Pelham, Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools accommodate written requests by parents/guardians to observe a student's current or proposed education program and/or services. The following guidelines apply to the scheduling and conducting of these observations.

1. A parent's/guardian's request to observe a student's educational program, a proposed placement and/or services must be made in writing at least one (1) week in advance (with a copy provided to the designated Central Office Administrator) to the building principal. The written request should identify the particular student, the observer, and the nature of the observation to be conducted.
2. The building principal (or designee) will contact the parent/guardian and/or visitor for an initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the written request to avoid undue delay.
3. If the parent/guardian of the student is requesting that a third party (e.g. independent evaluator or educational consultant) conduct the observation, the parent/guardian must provide the School District

with written permission for the third party to conduct the observation and, if requested, to review school records.

4. The building principal (or designee) will work with staff and the observer to set up the details of the observation including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom. The School District will permit access to programs that is sufficient in duration to accomplish the purpose of the visit. The duration and extent of the observation will be determined on an individual basis but typically occur within one (1) and two (2) hour blocks. The start and end time of the observation will be agreed upon in advance.
5. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
6. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom including interacting with students and teaching staff during instruction. If his/her presence becomes disruptive or distracting, the observer will be informed that the observation may be terminated earlier than anticipated. This notice is particularly important since the presence of parents/guardians or others may influence the performance of the specified student and those of others.
7. The parent/guardian will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. Observers are not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his/her contractual job duties.
8. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff will be mindful of removing materials which may be part of a student's record from plain view.
9. A school administrator (or designee) will escort the parent /guardian or the third party during the entire observation.
10. The School District may designate certain periods of the year, such as during MCAS testing, field trips, the first or last few of days of the school year, as times when observations may not be scheduled.
11. The School District may condition observation of any of its programs when necessary to protect: a.) the safety of the children in the program; b.) the integrity of the program; and c.) the disclosure of any confidential or personally identifiable information about the children in the program while the program is being observed.
12. The building principal (or designee) may exercise discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of an emergency or a disruption that impacts on the physical or emotional well-being of the students in the school or the program being observed.
13. Observers will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement providing that, in the event that they obtain personally identifiable or confidential information during the course of an observation, the observer will not disclose it except when the information is relative to the specific student being observed, in which case it will be used consistently with the parent's authority and direction.

### **Social Skills**

These are the K-12 Social Skills Guidelines. It is important for students to:

- accept responsibility for their own actions;
- express appropriately their own ideas and feelings;

- accept and respect others' ideas and feelings;
- recognize the effect of their behavior on others;
- demonstrate perseverance in working to accomplish goals;
- recognize and respect individual differences;
- demonstrate physical self control (i.e. physical activity appropriate to time, place and setting);
- demonstrate verbal self control (i.e. speaking appropriate to time, place, and setting); and
- care for and respect materials, possessions and facilities.

Parents/guardians are expected to assist the District in supporting these goals.

## Students with Disabilities

### Special Education

Special education services are provided to students with disabilities who require specially designed instruction and/or related services in order to make educational progress and access the general curriculum. Special education is provided by the District at no cost to parents. A parent/guardian/teacher, as well as other individuals like the student's physician, may refer the student for a special education evaluation at any time. An evaluation shall be completed upon written consent of the parent/guardian and shall be conducted in accordance with state and federal law. A complete copy of the Parent/guardian's Procedural Safeguards may be obtained from the principal's office or from the Student Services office.

### Section 504

Some students with disabilities may be entitled to services and other accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. To qualify as a disabled individual under Section 504, a student must: 1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; 2) have a record of such impairment, or 3) be regarded as having such impairment. In the case of qualification under #1, the determination of such qualification shall be made by a team of persons knowledgeable about the disability and/or the student. A parent/guardian/teacher, as well as other individuals like the student's physician, may refer the student for an evaluation under Section 504. A complete copy of the **Parent's/Guardian's Procedural Rights under Section 504** may be obtained from the principal's office or from the Student Services Office, located in the superintendent's office in the Amherst Regional Middle School building.

### Process for Filing a Section 504 Complaint

The best solutions to parent/guardian concerns occur at the school level. Therefore, the first step in resolving a complaint involves the parent/guardian working with the building principal or designee to reach a joint resolution of the issue. Should the issue not be resolved and the parent/guardian desires to file a 504 complaint, the following steps can be taken:

- Parent/guardian completes and submits a **Section 504 Complaint Form** to principal or school designee. The form can be obtained in the Main Office of your child's school.
- Principal or designee reviews complaint and attempts to facilitate resolution of the concern. If the concern is not resolved at the school level the parent can forward a copy of the complaint to the administrator in charge of Section 504 for the district.
- The administrator in charge of Section 504 for the district will review the concern and decide whether to reopen mediation or issue a written decision.
- Should the parent/guardian not be satisfied with the decision made at the district level, the superintendent or designee reviews the decision to determine if all district policy, Section 504 guidelines and procedures were followed. Adjustments to the decision will be made if needed.
- If the concern is not resolved, parents have the option of filing a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision made by the superintendent, the parent/guardian may file a request for a due process hearing before an impartial hearing officer. Such a request should be filed no later than ten (10) school days after the date of the superintendent's decision. The impartial hearing officer shall not be an employee of the district and will be an attorney or educator knowledgeable about Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The hearing officer will provide the complaining party and the district with the opportunity to present oral and written information as to the nature of the complaint. The complainant and the district may be represented by counsel of their choosing and at their own expense. The hearing officer will render a decision no later than thirty (30) days after the conclusion of the hearing.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is the federal agency responsible for enforcing Section 504 compliance. While it is highly recommended that all parties begin resolution of issues as described above, parents and guardians always have the right to initiate a complaint with OCR or to involve OCR at any time during the complaint process.

Office for Civil Rights  
United States Department of Education  
33 Arch Street - Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02110

Telephone: (617) 289-0111  
Fax: (617) 289-0150  
TDD: (617) 223-9695  
Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

### **Special Education Observation Guidelines and Procedures**

Pursuant to Mass. General Laws Chapter 71B Section 3, Amherst, Pelham, Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools accommodate written requests by parents/guardians to observe a student's current or proposed special education program and/or services. The following guidelines apply to the scheduling and conducting of these observations:

14. A parent's/guardian's request to observe a student's special education program or a proposed placement must be made in writing at least one (1) week in advance with a copy provided to the Director of Special Education and the building principal. The written request should identify the particular student, the observer, and the nature of the observation to be conducted.
15. The building principal (or designee) will contact the parent/guardian for an initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the written request to avoid undue delay.
16. If the parent/guardian of the student is requesting that a third party (e.g. independent evaluator or educational consultant) conduct the observation, the parent/guardian must provide the School District with written permission for the third party to conduct the observation and, if requested, to review school records.
17. The building principal (or designee) will work with staff and the observer to set up the details of the observation including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom. The School District will permit access to programs that is sufficient in duration to accomplish the purpose of the visit. The duration and extent of the observation will be determined on an individual basis but typically occur within one (1) and two (2) hour blocks. The start and end time of the observation will be agreed upon in advance.
18. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
19. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom including interacting with students and teaching staff during instruction. If his/her presence becomes disruptive or distracting, the observer will be informed that the observation may be terminated earlier than anticipated. This notice is particularly important since the presence of parents or others may influence the performance of the specified student and those of others.
20. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his/her contractual job duties.

21. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff will be mindful of removing materials which may be part of a student's record from plain view.
22. A school administrator (or designee) will escort the parent or the third party during the entire observation.
23. The School District may designate certain periods of the year, such as during MCAS testing, field trips, the first or last few of days of the school year, as times when observations may not be scheduled.
24. The School District may condition observation of any of its programs when necessary to protect: a.) the safety of the children in the program; b.) the integrity of the program; and c.) the disclosure of any confidential or personally identifiable information about the children in the program while the program is being observed.
25. The building principal (or designee) may exercise discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of an emergency or a disruption that impacts on the physical or emotional well-being of the students in the school or the program being observed.
26. Observers will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement providing that, in the event that they obtain personally identifiable or confidential information during the course of an observation, the observer will not disclose it except when the information is relative to the specific student being observed, in which case it will be used consistently with the parent's authority and direction.

Please refer to the Observation Law and DESE Special Education Advisory for technical reference at the following links: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/09\\_2.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/09_2.html)  
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080363.htm>

### **Video/Audio Taping of TEAM and Meetings**

Tape recording<sup>1</sup> of TEAM meetings is not permitted unless tape recording of a TEAM meeting is the only reasonable accommodation for a documented disability or the limited English proficiency of any participant in the TEAM meeting where the documented disability or limited English proficiency prevents that participant from fully understanding or participating in the team process without the use of tape recording. This would apply to the parent/guardian/educational surrogate, student<sup>2</sup> a person invited to the team meeting, like a consultant or evaluator, as well as service providers, attorneys for the District or parent/guardian/educational surrogate/student, or advocates for the parent/guardian/educational surrogate/student. The person requesting the accommodation must contact the TEAM chairperson at least two (2) school days prior to the TEAM meeting to request the accommodation: Documentation related to the claimed need for an accommodation must be provided at that time.

Documentation of a disability or the limited English proficiency (if not obvious) should identify the impairment and how the impairment affects the parent/guardian/educational surrogate/adult student in an environment like a TEAM meeting. Further documentation or oral written information may be requested by the District, if the initial documentation is insufficient for the District to make a determination. Once adequate documentation is received, as determined by the District, the District will engage in the interactive process.

As a result of the request and the interactive process, the District may choose to provide a different accommodation. If the District determines that:

1. That the impairment is not a disability, or there is no limited English proficiency, or
2. Taping is not permitted and a different accommodation will be provided,

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<sup>1</sup> This procedure applies to both audio and video-taping of TEAM meetings, as well as Section 504 meetings.

<sup>2</sup> In certain cases, this would also apply to an advocate/attorney representing a parent/guardian/educational surrogate/adult student.

then the person requesting the accommodation of taping the TEAM meeting will be provided a copy of the District's Section 504 statement of procedural rights and/or complaint procedure and civil rights complaint procedure which the person may utilize in order to challenge the determination that taping is not permitted.

## **Student Records**

### **Student Records—This Policy is issued pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, sects. 34A, 34D, 34E and 34H, 603 CMR sect. 23.00 et seq and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)**

#### **General Provisions**

The student record contains all information and materials concerning a student regardless of where they are located, except for the information and materials specifically exempted by 603CMR 23.04, personal files of school employees.

The eligible student, upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering ninth grade, whichever comes first, or the parent subject to the provisions of 603 CMR 23.07(5), shall have access to the student record as soon as practicable within ten days after the initial request. There is an exception to these type of requests in cases involving non-custodial parents and these requests are governed by 603CMR 23.07 (5) (a) as amended by the Massachusetts Board of Education. If the student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, subject to the following. The parent/guardian may continue to exercise these rights unless expressly limited by such student. Such student may limit the rights and provisions of 603CMR 23.00, which extends to his/her parents/guardian, except the right to inspect the student record, by making such request in writing to the school principal or Superintendent of schools who shall honor such request and retain a copy of it in the student record. Pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, Section 34E, the parent/guardian may inspect the student record regardless of the student's age. Notwithstanding 603CMR 23.01 (1) and 23.01 (2), nothing shall be construed to mean that a school committee cannot extend the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00 to students under the age of 14 or to students who have not yet entered the ninth grade.

The review of student records should be in the presence of a counselor or his designee for interpretive information and to advise. This will apply to all materials inserted in the record. Besides specific court requests from a probation officer, court orders, a subpoena where health or safety requires the disclosure or upon transfer to another school district, and other exceptions provided under the Student Record Regulations (603CMR 23.07 (4)), only academic and attendance information should be released to requesting parents/guardians.

Most important, the school/district will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of a court order to comply before the records are released.

The student's record is available to school contracted personnel who work directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity without permission from the student and/or his/her parents. This includes administrators, teachers, counselors, administrative office staff and clerical personnel, and the Evaluation Team, which evaluates a student. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the school committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.

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

to: authorized school personnel under 603 CMR 23.02 (9) (a), who inspect the record, administrative office staff and clerical personnel under 603 CMR 23.02 (9) (b), who add information to or obtain access to the student record, or school nurses who inspect the student health record.

An eligible student or parent/guardian shall have the right to request in writing the deletion or amendment of any information into the record by an Evaluation Team, which is governed by 603 CMR 23.08 (a) and (b).

### **Access to Student Records by Parents without Physical Custody**

The District/school requests that divorced parents submit a copy of their custody agreement or order so that it is on file with their child's or children's respective school or schools. However, a non-custodial parent, a parent without physical custody, is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the parent has been denied visitation, or
3. the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

The school/district shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (5) (a). In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of such request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5) (a).

The school must delete the electronic and postal address and telephone number of the student and custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school. Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c.71, Section 34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

### **Amending the Student Record**

1. The eligible student or parent has the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant written material to student record.
2. The eligible student or parent has the right to request in writing deletion or amendment of any information contained in the student's record, except for information which was inserted into that record by an Evaluation TEAM. Such information inserted by an Evaluation TEAM shall not be subject to such a request until after the acceptance of the Evaluation Team Educational Plan, or, if the Evaluation Team Education Plan is rejected, after the completion of the special education appeal process. Any deletion or amendment shall be made in accordance with the procedure described below:
  - (a) If such student or parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the student record, either the student or parent shall present the objection in writing and/or have the right to have a conference with the principal or his/ her designee to make the objections known.

- (b) The principal or his/her designee shall within one week after the conference or receipt of the objection, if no conference was requested, render to such student or parent a decision in writing, stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the parent, the principal or his/her designee shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

### **Appeals**

1. In the event that any decision of a principal or his/her designee regarding any of the provisions contained in 603 CMR 23.00 is not satisfactory in whole or in part to the eligible student or parent, they shall have the right of appeal to the Superintendent of schools. Request for such appeal shall be in writing to the Superintendent of schools.
2. The Superintendent of schools or his/her designee shall within two (2) weeks after being notified of such appeal (longer should the appellant request a delay) review the issues presented and render a written decision to the appellant, stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in favor of the appellant, Superintendent of schools or his/her designee shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.
3. In the event that the decision of the Superintendent of schools or his/her designee is not satisfactory to the appellant in whole or in part, the appellant shall have the right of appeal to the school committee. Requests for such appeal shall be in writing to the chairperson of the School Committee.
4. The School Committee shall within four (4) weeks after being notified of such appeal (longer should the appellant request a delay) conduct a fair hearing to decide the issues presented by the appellant.

### **Destruction of Records**

1. The student's transcript shall be maintained by the school department and may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.
2. During the time a student is enrolled in a school, this principal or his/her designee shall periodically review and destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record provided the eligible student and his/her parent are notified in writing and are given opportunity to receive the information or a copy of it prior to its destruction. A copy of such notice shall be placed in the temporary record.
3. The temporary record of any student on or after the effective date of 603 CMR 23.00 shall be destroyed no later than seven years after that student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parents of the approximate date of destruction of the record and their right to receive information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. Such notice shall be in addition to the routine information letter required by 603 CMR 23.10.
4. In accordance with M.G.L. c71, Section 87, the score of any group intelligence test administered to a student enrolled in a public school shall be removed from the record of said student at the end of the school year in which such a test was so administered

### **Directory Information Notice**

The Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, and Pelham Public Schools has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations at 603 CMR 23.00.

The following information regarding students is considered directory information: 1) name, 2) address, 3) telephone number, 4) date and place of birth, 5) major field of study, 6) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, 7) weight and height of members of athletic teams, 8) dates of attendance, 9) degrees, honors and awards received, and 10) post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in the discretion of the school system, without the

consent of a parent of a student or an eligible student. Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent or student, or as otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CMR 23.00. You are hereby notified that pursuant to this notification, the school system will provide requested directory information to military recruiters unless the parent or eligible student specifically directs otherwise, as required by the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

Any parent or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file written notification to this effect with the principal on or before the 15th day of each September. In the event that a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither a parent of a student or eligible student objects to the release of the directory information designated.

### **Complaint Process**

A parent/guardian/eligible student has the right to file a complaint with the US Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
US Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

### **Notice of Transfer to Other Schools**

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(g), notice is hereby given to parents and eligible students that the Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, and Pelham Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent or eligible student.

### **Records of Transferring Students**

When a student transfers from one of the Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, or Pelham schools to another school, the student's cumulative record should also be transferred to the new school. A parent or guardian may come to the school, sign for the record, and take it to the new school. Alternatively the District will mail the record to the new school. Regulations no longer require parental consent for records to be forwarded once a student transfers.

### **Sharing Student Lists**

The District schools sometimes share lists which include student names, addresses, phone numbers, birthdates and names of parents/guardians with members of the school community. These lists facilitate social events and PGOs organize events. Parent/guardians have the right to request that this information about a child or family not be released. A parent/guardian must notify the school within ten days of receiving notice of the right to not have such information released, if personal information is not be included on such lists.

### **Volunteering in the Amherst Public Schools**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools provide a rich array of volunteer opportunities which address the educational needs of all students and support educational programming and school community needs. Fortifying school success for all students fosters language, literacy, social and initiative skills. Community members, college students and parents/guardians are encouraged to become volunteers to support learning and to facilitate positive community involvement, partnership and collaboration.

There are many volunteer opportunities in our schools throughout the year. Examples include academic tutoring, classroom/office/clerical/library support, afterschool clubs and programs, computer lab, athletic coaching, field trip chaperones, graduation ceremonies, music and dramatic productions and Parent/Guardian Organizations. For more information, please contact Kimberly Stender, Volunteer Coordinator, at 413-362-1825 or [stenderk@arps.org](mailto:stenderk@arps.org).

# Letters of Assurance

## *Public Notice*

### **Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, & Pelham Public Schools**

The following public notice shall be distributed annually to parents/guardians, students, staff members, and the general public in compliance with various Federal and State laws and regulations.

Maria Geryk  
Superintendent of Schools

### **Chapter 76: Section 5—General Laws of the Commonwealth**

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

The Amherst Regional School District, the Amherst Public Schools, and the Pelham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political party, and disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment by its programs and activities.

### **Chapter 269: Section 17—Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined**

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### **Chapter 269: Section 18—Failure to report hazing**

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

### **Chapter 269: Section 19—Issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report**

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with

this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

### **Procedures**

In accordance with these provisions, the following procedures concerning Chapter 269 shall apply in schools of Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, and Pelham Public Schools.

Every applicant for and participant in each co-curricular and extra-curricular 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 Chapter 269.

All recipients of this form will sign the form acknowledging receipt of Chapter 269 and these forms shall be forwarded to the building principal for use in preparing an annual report to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

It shall be the responsibility of the building principal to report any and all cases of Chapter 269 violations to an appropriate law enforcement official and notify the Superintendent of the same.

Violations of Chapter 269 shall be considered serious infractions punishable in accordance with the Student Handbook and will include notification to parent and may include suspension or other measures as deemed appropriate by the administration.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy for the Amherst-Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools**

Consistent with M.G.L. c. 71, sect. 37O and 603 CMR sect. 49.00, the Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional school Districts have developed this anti-bullying policy. The districts submitted a plan which was approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This plan was distributed to all staff and is available at [www.arps.org](http://www.arps.org). Any and all acts of bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation based upon the reporting of bullying to the school administration are prohibited in the Districts.

**Bullying** is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at another individual(s) (hereinafter target) that

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damages the target's property,
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm or damage to his/her property,
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target,
- infringes on the rights of the target at school or
- substantially and materially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological (in person or via an electronic device)
2. Threats of any kind, stated or implied (in person or via an electronic device)
3. Assaults, whether verbal, physical, psychological, or emotional
4. Attacks on student property
5. Demeaning names or phrases directed at an individual student
6. Touching another individual in a demeaning manner

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

Cyber-bullying also includes:

1. the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
2. the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions listed in (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying; and
3. the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions listed in (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

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

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop and/or implement a bullying prevention plan consistent with the requirements of the M.G.L. c. 71, sect. 37O, 603 CMR sect. 49.00 and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's guidelines. This comprehensive plan will be submitted to Department of Secondary education by December 31, 2010.

The principal, in consultation with the school council and school faculty, will develop a bullying prevention plan, once the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education finalizes its regulations under M.G.L. c. 71, sect. 37O and its model bullying prevention plan. The school-based bullying prevention plan shall be consistent with the District's district-wide plan.

The School District shall provide professional development to school staff addressing the prevention, identification and remedying of bullying.

The principal of each school (or his/her designee), supported by the central office administration, will make clear to students, families and staff that bullying in the school buildings, school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions held in any location is prohibited, and will not be tolerated.

The principal of each school (or his/her designee), supported by the central office administration, will train all staff in the prevention, identification, intervention and reporting process of bullying incidents, as stated in the District's guidelines.

The principal of each school (or his/her designee), supported by the central office administration, will inform students' parents/guardians of any allegations, reports and/or complaints of bullying incidents, as stated in the District's guidelines.

The principal of each school (or his/her designee), supported by the central office administration, will oversee the implementation of the school districts' empathy/social skills and anti-bullying developmental curriculum in their schools, as stated in the school districts' guidelines.

The Principal of each school (or his/her designee), supported by the central office administration, will inform the parent/guardian of all reported bullying incidents involving his/her child as the target of the bullying or as the perpetrator of the bullying, consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR sect. 23.00 and FERPA and the District's guidelines.

Upon receipt of a complaint, report and/or allegation of bullying, the Principal (or his/her designee) will conduct an initial investigation as soon as practicable, as stated in the districts' guidelines. The timeliness of an investigation will depend upon such factors as the number of individuals involved, the number of witnesses to be interviewed, the availability of witnesses, the school schedule and other factors.

When it is determined by the Principal that bullying has occurred, the principal will:

- act promptly to provide a remedy to the target(s) as well as to take appropriate disciplinary action against the aggressor(s).
- address the school climate, as necessary.
- impose the necessary corrective action.

The Superintendent (or his/her designee) will develop the administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy in the School Districts. It is the responsibility of school principals (or designees) to implement the guidelines and procedures developed for the Districts.

## **Evidenced based Violence Prevention and Social Competency Curriculums**

The principal (or designee) of each school is responsible for enforcing that classroom teachers and service providers follow the outlined curriculum to teach social competency to all students, focus on children's normative beliefs related to bullying and the social-emotional skills for responding to bullying and increasing peer acceptance.

The District has adopted the "Second Step" and "Steps to Respect" programs as the main K-8 curriculum, supported by the Wesleyan "Quit It Program and Non Violent Communication (NVC) frameworks. The high school addresses anti-bullying in the ninth grade summer orientation on the first day of school and in health class.

**Second Step**—Is a research-based social-skills program for children ages 4 to 14 that teaches socio-emotional skills aimed at reducing impulsive and aggressive behavior while increasing social competence. The program builds on cognitive behavioral intervention models integrated with social learning theory, empathy research, and social information-processing theories. The program consists of in-school curricula, parent training, and skill development. "Second Step" teaches children to identify and understand their own and others' emotions, reduce impulsiveness and choose positive goals, and manage their own emotional reactions and decision-making process when emotionally aroused.

**Steps to Respect**—Is a research based bullying prevention program designed to decrease bullying at school and help students build more supportive relationships with each other. The program's dual focus on bullying and friendship is based on research showing that friendship protects children from harmful effects of bullying. Students are taught friendship skills, such as strategies for making and keeping friends, and steps for joining a group activity. "Steps to Respect" also teaches children skills for coping with bullying, including recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviors to refuse the bullying and reporting bullying to adults. Since many children become involved as bystanders to bullying in helpful or harmful ways, "Steps to Respect" emphasizes the responsibility that all members of a school community have to decrease bullying.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

All persons have the right to be free from sexual harassment; therefore, sexual harassment in any form is strictly forbidden in school, on school grounds or at school-related activities.

**DEFINITION:** Sexual harassment is a form of employee/student misconduct which undermines the integrity of the educational mission of the Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, and Pelham Public Schools. All employees/students must be allowed to work/learn in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment refers to behavior which is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale and which therefore interferes with work effectiveness and individual learning.

Sexual harassment in the educational setting is also prohibited by law and is defined as follows with respect to students: "sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services, or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably intervening with an individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment."

**Quid pro quo sexual harassment** occurs when a person in a supervisory position explicitly or implicitly conditions participation in a program or activity or bases a decision concerning another on the other person's

submission to unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, whether or not the other person submits to the conduct. *Quid pro quo* sexual harassment, occurs, for example when a school employee causes a student to believe s(he) must submit to sexual advances to receive a better grade than deserved, or is threatened with a loss of a promised college application recommendation unless the student dates the employee.

**Hostile environment sexual harassment** occurs when unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a student, a school employee, or third party on school property or at school-related activities is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the District's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. A victim may also be someone affected by conduct directed toward another individual. Sexual harassment may occur adult to student, student to student, student to adult, adult to adult, male to female, female to male, female to female, and male to male.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- **Verbal forms of sexual harassment:** including repeated unwanted requests for dates, sexual rumors, sexually explicit jokes, howling, whistles, catcalls, soliciting conversation regarding sexual activity and experiences, making unwanted gender-based references to a person's physical characteristics;
- **Nonverbal forms of sexual harassment:** including offensive gestures, following or stalking another, cornering or blocking a person, leering, pressuring for sexual activities;
- **Visual forms of sexual harassment:** including displaying sexually suggestive or sexually provocative photographs, pictures, objects, cartoons, or posters;
- **Unwelcome physical touching:** including grabbing, groping, squeezing, sexual fondling, kissing, brushing against another's body, body hugs, and other unwelcome contact.

**Reporting:** Any student who believes he/she is a victim of sexual harassment should talk to his/her building principal or another adult in a position of authority in the school as soon as possible. Students should avoid trying to solve the problem of sexual harassment alone. All persons shall promptly report knowledge of actual or reasonably suspected sexual harassment to the building principal (or his/her designee.) The principal (or his/her designee) will investigate all complaints and follow through appropriately.

**Consequences:** Staff members found to have engaged in acts of sexual harassment will face one or more of the following consequences: (1) written reprimand and warning, (2) suspension without pay, (3) dismissal, and/or (4) referral to the police.

Students found to have engaged in acts of sexual harassment of another student will face one or more of the following consequences: (1) apology to the victim, (2) parent conference, (3) detention, (4) suspension, (5) expulsion, and/or (6) referral to the police.

**Student consequences will be rendered in an age appropriate manner by the schools in Amherst, Amherst-Pelham and the Pelham Public Schools.**

**Reprisals, threats or intimidation of the victim will be treated as serious offenses, which could result in a permanent separation from the school through expulsion (for student offenders) or dismissal from employment (for adult offenders).**

## **Title IX/CHAPTER 76: Section 5 Regulations**

In accordance with Title IX regulations of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Chapter 76 Section 5 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District re-states its adherence to the following policies:

Title IX states "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal funds." Chapter 76 Section 5 of the General Laws states: "No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin."

The Amherst Regional School District, the Amherst Public Schools and the Pelham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political party, and disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment by its programs and activities.

### **Procedures**

Information on the Grievance Procedures for any of the above regulations is available as is any other information relative to the regulations. For information please contact:

#### **Student Services Office**

**Title IX/Chapter 76 Section 5/Section 504 Compliance**

**Amherst Regional School District**

**170 Chestnut Street**

**Amherst, Massachusetts 01002**

**(413) 362-1871**

### **Complaint Procedures for Allegations of Discrimination**

The Amherst, the Amherst-Pelham, and the Pelham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political party, and disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment by its programs and activities.

Any member of the District community who believes that the District or a member of the District community has violated Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, or national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76 Section 5 (sexual orientation), the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (race, color, sex, national origin), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (disability), the McKinney-Vento Federal Assistance Act of the No Child Left Behind Federal Law (homelessness), or the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age) may file a complaint in accordance with this complaint procedure.<sup>2</sup> A violation may consist of discrimination or harassment because of one's race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age. The school District Policy on "Sexual Harassment of Students" and "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" provide more information about sexual harassment. If discrimination is determined to have occurred, the District will take prompt steps to correct any effects of the discrimination and to prevent further occurrence.

This complaint procedure does not preclude informal resolution or restrict the complainant to file, at any

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<sup>2</sup> For disability-related complaints, please file a grievance in compliance with the Section 504 grievance procedures. That procedure is fully outlined on the District's website.

time, a formal complaint with the State and Federal agencies or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination, including harassment. For more information about the District's efforts to comply with the above laws, or to file a complaint, please contact:

**Student Services Office**

Amherst Regional School District  
170 Chestnut Street  
Amherst, MA 01002  
(413) 362-1871

**District community** includes, but is not limited to, all students, District employees, contractors, unpaid volunteers, and other visitors.

**District employee** includes, but is not limited to, all teachers, support staff, administrators, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, coaches, school board members, and agents of the District.

**Harassment** means verbal or physical conduct based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation or disability, and which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

**The following is not intended as an inclusive list of conduct that may violate this policy.**

**Disability Harassment:**

- Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her disability or perceived disability, including damaging or interfering with use of necessary equipment, imitating manner of movement, using disability-related slurs, or invading personal space to intimidate.

**National Origin Harassment:**

- Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her national origin, ancestry, or ethnic background such as negative comments about surnames, customs, language, accents, immigration status or manner of speaking.

**Racial Harassment:**

- Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her race or color, including racial slurs or insults based on characteristics of a person's race or color, racial graffiti or symbols, hostile acts based on race, nicknames based on racial stereotypes, negative comments about appearance, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

**Religious Harassment:**

- Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct directed at a person based on his/her religion, including derogatory comments about religious beliefs, traditions, practices (includes non-belief), or religious clothing.

**Sexual Orientation Harassment:**

- Unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at a person based on his/her actual or perceived sexual orientation, such as anti-gay slurs or insults, imitating mannerisms, taunting, or invading personal space to intimidate.

**Hate Crime:** A crime motivated by hatred or bias or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because the person is a different race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation from the perpetrator or because the targeted person has a disability. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat or bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another's property.

**Indicators** that a crime may constitute a hate crime include:

- Use of racial, ethnic, religious or anti-gay slurs;
- Use of symbols of hate, such as a swastika or burning cross;
- Similar behavior toward others who are members of the same protected class;
- The perpetrator's protected class is different from the victim's;
- The incident occurs while the victim was promoting a racial, religious, ethnic/national origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation group, such as attending an advocacy group meeting, or participating in a students' gay-straight alliance, or a disability rights demonstration.

### **Retaliation**

No member of the District community may retaliate against any person who reports alleged discrimination or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing related to such discrimination. It is possible to conclude that retaliation has occurred even if no violation is found in regard to the underlying complaint of discrimination.

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment. Retaliation may be redressed through application of the same reporting, investigation, and enforcement procedures as for discrimination. In addition, a person who knowingly makes a false report may be subject to the same action that the District may take against any other individual who has been found to have discriminated. The term "false report" refers only to those made in bad faith and does not include a complaint that could not be corroborated or which did not rise to the level of discrimination.

### **Informal Process**

A complaint may be resolved through a voluntary conversation between the complainant and the party alleged to have discriminated. The conversation will be facilitated by the building administrator. If the building administrator is the party alleged to have discriminated, the Superintendent will appoint the facilitator.

If the complainant or the party alleged to have discriminated is a student under the age of 18, the facilitator will notify the student's parent/guardian if, after initial consultation with the student, it is determined to be in the best interest of the student.

Both the complainant and the party alleged to have discriminated may be accompanied by a person of their choice for support and guidance.

If the complainant and the party alleged to have discriminated feel that a resolution has been achieved, the conversation may remain confidential and no further action will need to be taken.

The facilitator will report the results of the informal resolution, in writing, to a Student Services administrator. If a Student Services administrator is the party alleged to have discriminated, the results will be reported to the Superintendent.

If the complainant, the party alleged to have discriminated, or the District elects not to utilize the informal process, or feels that the informal process is inadequate or has been unsuccessful, the complaint may proceed to the formal process. Any complaint against a District employee must be addressed through the formal process.

### **Formal Process**

**Step 1.** A complainant or his/her designated representative (complainant) must file a written complaint with a Student Services administrator, or with the Superintendent if a Student Services administrator is the subject of the complaint, within 60 days of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory incident. Upon request, a Student Services Administrator or a person designated by the Superintendent will assist the complainant in writing the complaint.

The written complaint must detail the facts and circumstances of the incident. The written complaint will be kept in a centralized and secure location. If a student under the age of 18 is involved, the District will notify his/her parent/guardian immediately, unless, after consultation with the student, notification is determined not to be in the student's best interest.

**Step 2.** A Student Services administrator will investigate the written complaint. If a Student Services administrator is the subject of the complaint, the Superintendent will appoint an impartial investigator to conduct the investigation. All parties will be given full and fair opportunity to present evidence, including witnesses, relevant to the issues raised under the complaint.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the person alleged to have discriminated, and any other individuals who may have knowledge of the alleged incident or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. In determining if alleged conduct constitutes discrimination, the investigator will consider the surrounding circumstances, any relevant documents, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationship between the parties involved, and the context in which the alleged incident occurred. The determination will be based on all of the facts and surrounding circumstances. The District may take immediate steps, at its discretion, to protect the complainant, the person alleged to have discriminated, witnesses, and District employees pending completion of the investigation.

The investigation will be completed and a written report will be made to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) days of a Student Services administrator receipt of the written complaint. The report will indicate if the complaint has been substantiated as factual and if there are violations of District policies, and it will include recommendations for addressing the violations.

If the Superintendent is the subject of the written complaint, the written report will be made to the Superintendent's alternate, who is the Chair of the School Committee.

**Step 3.** Following the investigation, the District will take appropriate action in all cases in which a complaint has been substantiated as factual. Any person who is determined to have discriminated shall be subject to action including, but not limited to, warning, exclusion, suspension, expulsion, transfer, termination, discharge, training, education, or counseling. Action taken will be consistent with the requirements of any applicable collective bargaining agreement, District policy, State and Federal law, and due process protections for students with disabilities. As applicable, the District will provide a report of the investigation to the educator licensure unit of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

**Step 4.** The Superintendent (or a Student Services administrator) will maintain the complaint file in his/her office. He/she will provide a written report to the complainant and the party alleged to have discriminated within five (5) days of receipt of the investigator's recommendation. The report will indicate whether or not (a) the complaint has been substantiated as factual, (b) there was a violation of District policy, and (c) disciplinary action was or will be taken.

### **Appeal Process**

If the complaint is not resolved satisfactorily following Step 3 of the formal procedure, either the complainant or the party alleged to have discriminated may request, in writing, a re-opening of the investigation. The written request shall state the reasons for requesting a reopening and shall be delivered to the Superintendent (or a Student Services administrator) within seven (7) business days of receiving the written decision. The Superintendent (or a Student Services administrator) shall decide whether or not to re-open the investigation and, within ten (10) days of receiving the request to re-open

the investigation, shall provide written notification of the determination to reopen or not to reopen to the complainant and to the party alleged to have discriminated.

If the investigation is re-opened, the Superintendent (or a Student Services administrator) shall require the repetition, as appropriate, of Steps 2, 3, and 4 of the formal procedure. The timeline prescribed by these steps will apply to any re-opening under the appeal process.

If the Superintendent investigated the initial complaint, or if the initial complaint was filed against the Superintendent, a person other than the Superintendent or a Student Services administrator will implement, as appropriate, steps 2, 3, and 4 of the formal procedure.

### **Confidentiality**

The District recognizes that both the complainant and the person alleged to have discriminated have strong interests in maintaining the confidentiality of the complaint and related information. The privacy of all of the parties, including witnesses, will be respected as much as possible, consistent with the District's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with any discovery or disclosure obligations.

### **Alternate Complaint Procedure**

In addition to filing a complaint through the District's complaint procedure, or in place of utilizing the District's complaint procedure, a person may elect to exercise other options, including, but not limited to, filing a complaint with outside agencies or filing a private lawsuit.

### **Outside Agencies**

A complaint by a student, employee or applicant for employment in which the complainant alleges discrimination on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin or disability may be filed with the United States Department of Education, which may be contacted as follows. It may be filed in place of filing a complaint under the District's complaint procedure or in addition to filing a complaint under the District's complaint procedure.

Office for Civil Rights  
United States Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor - Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: (617) 289-0059  
Fax: (617) 289-0150  
TDD: (617) 223-9695  
Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

A complaint alleging disability discrimination against a student under Section 504 may be filed with:

Bureau of Special Education Appeals  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Telephone: (781) 338-6400  
Fax: (781) 338-3398  
Email: [sea@doe.mass.edu](mailto:sea@doe.mass.edu)

An employee or applicant for employment, who is claiming discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, age or ethnic origin may file a complaint with the United States Equal Opportunity Commission, which may be contacted as follows.

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203

Telephone: (617) 565-3200  
Fax: (617) 565-3196  
TTY: (617) 565-3204

In addition, an employee or applicant for employment who is claiming discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, age, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation may file a complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination which may be contacted as follows.

MA Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108

Telephone: (617) 994-6000  
TTY: (617) 994-6196

MA Commission Against Discrimination  
Springfield Office  
436 Dwight Street, Suite 220  
Springfield, MA 01103

Telephone: (413) 739-2145

A complaint may be filed with the Massachusetts Department of Education Program Quality Assurance Services which may be contacted as follows.

MA Department of Education  
Program Quality Assurance Services  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

Telephone: (781) 338-3000/3705

MA Department of Education  
Program Quality Assurance Services  
Western Massachusetts Office  
Springfield State Office Building  
436 Dwight Street Room B40  
Springfield, MA 01103

Telephone: (413) 858-4591

### **Litigation**

The complainant may file a lawsuit under a number of Federal or State statutes, such as Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.. The complainant or his/her parent/ guardian should consult with a private attorney about this option.

### **References:**

Titles VI, VII Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974  
Age Discrimination Act of 1975  
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

# Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional School Districts

## 2011-2012 School Calendar

Aug 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sep 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

Oct 2011						
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30	31					

Nov 2011						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Dec 2011						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Jan 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### August

- 29 -30 New Teachers' Orientation
- 31 Pre-K to Grade 6 Teachers' Curriculum/Professional Development Day

### September

- 1 All Teachers' Curriculum/Professional Development Day
- 2 All Teachers' Orientation
- 5 Labor Day
- 6 First Day of School Grades 1-12 (Kindergarten Orientation September 6-7)
- 8 Kindergarten Students' First Day of School

### October

- 10 Columbus Day (No School)
- 27 Elementary Early Dismissal for Parent Conferences

### November

- 1 Elementary Early Dismissal for Parent Conferences
- 11 Veteran's Day (No School)
- 23 Early Dismissal (All Schools)
- 24 -25 Thanksgiving Recess

### December

- 1 MS/HS Half-Day (HS Exams)
- 2 Regional Teachers' Curriculum/Work Day (No School at MS or HS)
- 26 -January 2 Holiday Recess (School reopens 1/3)

### January

- 2 New Year's Day Legal Holiday (No School)
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (No School)
- 27 Elementary Teachers' Workday (No School Grades Pre-K to 6)

### February

- 20 -24 Winter Recess

### March

- 15 HS/MS Half-Day (HS Exams)
- 16 Regional Teachers' Curriculum/Work Day (No School at MS/HS)

### April

- 6 Good Friday (No School--due to budgetary constraints)
- 16 -20 Spring Recess

### May

- 28 Memorial Day (No School)

### June

- 15 Earliest Possible Last Day of School for Elementary Students
- 18 Earliest Possible Last Day of School for Regional Students
- 22 Last Day of School for Elementary Students (includes 5 make-up days)
- 25 Last Day of School for Regional Students (includes 5 make-up days) Note: The last three days of school are half-days at the HS/MS due to HS exams.

Feb 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

Mar 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Apr 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Jun 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Jul 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

The last day of Trimester 1 is 12/2/11. The last day of Trimester 2 is 3/16/12. This provides 59 days in the first trimester, 63 days in the second trimester and 58 days in the third trimester.

### ***School Building Administrators***

Crocker Farm School	Michael Morris	Principal	362-1657
	Derek Shea	Assistant Principal	362-1657
Fort River School	Monica Colley	Principal	362-1217
	Susan Kennedy-Marx	Assistant Principal	362-1217
Wildwood School	Nick Yaffe	Principal	362-1413
	Linda Gianesin	Assistant Principal	362-1413
Pelham School	Lisa Desjarlais	Principal	253-3595
Middle School	Michael Hayes	Principal	362-1850
	Betsy Dinger	Assistant Principal	362-1850
High School	Mark Jackson	Principal	362-1706
	Diane Chamberlain	Assistant Principal	362-1730
	Miki Gromacki	Assistant Principal	362-1714

### ***Central Office Administration***

Maria Geryk	Superintendent of Schools	362-1810
Ron Bohonowicz	Director of Facilities	362-1853
Jerry Champagne	Director of Information Systems	362-1810
Robert Detweiler	Director of Finance & Operations	362-1815
Beth Graham	Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	362-1828
Marta Guevara	Director of Academic Achievement	362-1871
Kathryn Mazur	Director of Human Resources	362-1808
David Slovin	Student Services Administrator	362-1833
JoAnn Smith	Director of Student Services	362-1834
Rebecca Treitley	Director of Food Services	362-1839
Jeanne White	Student Services Administrator	362-1833

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2011-2012

## REGION

		Term expires				E-Mail		
Fonsh	Kip		2011	45 Long Hill Road	Leverett	01054	<a href="mailto:fonshk@arps.org">fonshk@arps.org</a>	548-9053
Gould	Debbie		2012	33 South Valley Road	Pelham	01002	<a href="mailto:gouldd@arps.org">gouldd@arps.org</a>	253-9162
Hood	Rick	Chair	2013	28 Farmington Road	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:hoodr@arps.org">hoodr@arps.org</a>	320-3611
Luschen	Kristen		2010	10 Sojourner Way	Shutesbury	01072	<a href="mailto:luschenk@arps.org">luschenk@arps.org</a>	256-3303
Rhodes	Irv		2012	173 Pondview Drive	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:rhodesi@arps.org">rhodesi@arps.org</a>	253-7147
Rivkin	Steve		2012	95 Larkspur Drive	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:rivkins@arps.org">rivkins@arps.org</a>	Unlisted
Appy	Katherine		2014	60 Red Gate Lane	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:appyk@arps.org">appyk@arps.org</a>	253-9431
Spence	Rob		2013	16 Bayberry Lane	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:spencer@arps.org">spencer@arps.org</a>	256-4781
Weilerstein	Kathy		2011	43 Boyden Road	Pelham	01002	<a href="mailto:weilersteink@arps.org">weilersteink@arps.org</a>	253-3531

## AMHERST

Hood	Rick		2013	28 Farmington Road	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:hoodr@arps.org">hoodr@arps.org</a>	320-3611
Rhodes	Irv	Chair	2012	173 Pondview Drive	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:rhodesi@arps.org">rhodesi@arps.org</a>	253-7147
Rivkin	Steve		2012	95 Larkspur Drive	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:rivkins@arps.org">rivkins@arps.org</a>	Unlisted
Appy	Katherine		2014	60 Red Gate Lane	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:appyk@arps.org">appyk@arps.org</a>	253-9431
Spence	Rob	Vice-Chair	2013	16 Bayberry Lane	Amherst	01002	<a href="mailto:spencer@arps.org">spencer@arps.org</a>	256-4781

## PELHAM

Gould	Debbie		2012	33 South Valley Road	Pelham	01002	<a href="mailto:gouldd@arps.org">gouldd@arps.org</a>	253-9162
Foley	Annemarie	Vice-Chair	2011	5 Harkness Road	Pelham	01002	<a href="mailto:foleya@arps.org">foleya@arps.org</a>	230-3801
Weilerstein	Kathy	Chair	2011	43 Boyden Road	Pelham	01002	<a href="mailto:weilersteink@arps.org">weilersteink@arps.org</a>	253-3531



### **Acknowledgement of Receipt**

Each parent, guardian or the student him/herself (if over 18 years old) must sign the acknowledgement form below, indicating that he/she has received and read a copy of the handbook. If the signed acknowledgement form is not received by September 15, then the school district will nonetheless presume that the parent, guardian or student him/herself (if over 18 years of age) has received and read the handbook.

Please detach, complete and return to the school office the following form:

I have received and read the 2011/2012 edition of the Amherst Public Schools Handbook.

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Signature of parent/guardian

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Student's name

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Date