Mill River Unified Union School District Core Values & Beliefs

Our Foundational Beliefs

 فِي All students feel respected, cared for, and loved.(112,482),(367,538)

(112,482),(367,538) All learners have voice and choice in their pursuit of personal growth.

(112,482),(367,538) Educators feel valued, respected and supported.

(112,482),(367,538) Students and educators have ongoing, rigorous opportunities to learn.

(112,482),(367,538) Students, educators and families work together to build positive relationships.

(112,482),(367,538) Educators believe in and model learning as a lifelong process.

(112,482),(367,538) Students know why they are learning.

(112,482),(367,538) Educators communicate with families before, during, and after challenges and successes.

(112,482),(367,538) Students know what they are expected to learn.

(112,482),(367,538) The entire community benefits from the strengths of its students, educators & schools.

Mill River Schools • millriverschools.org
Clarendon Elementary School • Mill River Union High School • Shrewsbury Mountain School
Tinmouth Elementary School • Wallingford Elementary School
Please feel free to contact the school if you have any questions and please note the following:

"Please note that this handbook may require editing and modification due to circumstances or need for clarification that may arise. When edits are made within the course of a school year, those edits will be noted by date on the electronic version posted on the school website. An email to parent and employee email lists will be sent indicating that the handbook has been revised and the location of the revision. Revisions will be noted within the text of the handbook and listed on a page at the end of the handbook labeled 'Handbook Revisions'. These revisions will remain noted for two (2) school years."

Daniel Betts  
Principal
**Classroom Educators**
- Pre-K 3: Stacie Frulla
- Pre-K: Tiffany Martin
- Kindergarten: Shannon Merritt
- Grade 1: Mallory Chilton
- Grade 2: Katie Sisco
- Grade 3: Wojtek Wierzbicki
- Grade 4: Rachel Patch
- Grade 5: Todd Gilman
- Grade 6: Barb Nauton

**Specials Educators**
- Sue Striglia: Health
- Tammie Engelhart: Art
- Anne Aas: Tech/Lib
- Edward Cedar: Music
- Aaron Klosheim: Phys. Ed.
- Deb Gragen: Spanish

**Special Education**
- Molly Turco: 4th-6th
- Emily Dunn-Davenport: K-3rd
- Makayla Stone: Speech/Language

**District Interventionist**
- Mary Ellen Kafarski
- Becky Stockton
- Kathleen Harrington
- Mary Beth Monahan
- Joan Lattuca

- Debra Gardner-Baasch, District Intervention/MTSS Coordinator

**Custodian**
- Rodney Stork: Maintenance
- Gene Reinhart: Maintenance
- Kayla Pease: Maintenance

**Food Service** (Aladin)
- Karen Ponton: Director
- Kim Sharp: Assistant

**Bus Driver**
- TBD- Wallingford South (White)
- Bart Lowden - Wallingford East (Red)

**Paraprofessionals**
- Tammy Durgin: general
- Joanne Miele: general
- Jane Campbell: general
- Rachelle Patton: Pre-K
- Jordan Beaudry: Pre-K
- Kassidy Humphrey: Pre-K
- Marina Smakhtina: special education

**Dress Code**
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SCHOOL INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Access and Security (NO GUESTS DURING COVID)
Following MRUUSD board policy G15, access to the school building is restricted and governed by school staff and district leadership. A scanner is installed on main entrances for staff access. Please make sure when entering the building, the door is pulled shut behind you. Security measures, including surveillance cameras, may be in use in public areas of school property and on our buses. Use of these cameras is governed by the expectations outlined in policy G15.

After School Program
The Wallingford Elementary Afterschool Program takes place at the school from 3:00 – 5:15. The program provides a number of opportunities for our students that include healthy snacks, academic support, and enrichment activities such as cooking, indoor and outdoor games, gardening, sewing, and arts and crafts. There is a fee for the program, although some scholarship assistance is available. Registration forms for Afterschool Program sessions will be sent home with students on a regular basis.

After School Rules and Procedures
Children who stay after school for activities should be picked up promptly following the activity. If there are extenuating circumstances or parents are going to be late they should call school to make arrangements with the leader of the activity. After school arrangements should be made before children come to school. Students are not allowed to call from school to make playdate arrangements. This must be done prior to the start of the school day.

All children must leave the school and school grounds at the end of the day unless they are involved in a supervised activity or on the playground under the supervision of a parent. Children may return after 3:45 to use the community playground. However, they may not come into the building. Children who use the school grounds for play are reminded that the same expectations apply after school as during the school day: play safely; respect other people, playground equipment and all school property; use appropriate language and clean up after themselves.

Arrival on School Grounds
Breakfast and Outdoor Supervised Morning Recess begins at 7:40 am. When students arrive they should either go directly to the playground for recess or to the multi-purpose room for breakfast. Once done with breakfast, they should go outside for morning recess.

We provide a morning ASP program which begins at 6:45 am and runs until 7:40. **No students should be on school property until 7:40,** unless they are enrolled in the morning care program. For information about this service, please contact Cheryl Maniery at cmaniery@millriverschools.org for forms to register.

Asbestos and Lead Control Plan
Plans for asbestos and lead control at WES are filed at the central office with the Facilities Manager.

Attendance
Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21
MRUUSD expects that all enrolled students, regardless of age, attend school for the full number of days that school is in session, in accordance with Vermont law. Student achievement is directly related to consistent school attendance. Developing good habits regarding attendance and punctuality will prepare students for meeting career and job expectations and allow them to attain the skills and knowledge necessary to be lifelong learners and productive citizens. MRUUSD schools will keep accurate records of student attendance to comply with the law and to ensure the safety of the student each day.

We request the parents to call (446-2141) OR email estgermain@millriverschools.org the school by 8:00 A.M. if they know their child will not be in attendance. If there is no answer, please leave a message. In order to ensure our students’ safety and gain information regarding possible communicable diseases, the school calls the homes of students who have been marked absent by their teachers if we have not heard from the parent.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

Class attendance and participation are critical elements of the educational process and may be taken into account in assessing academic achievement. School personnel shall notify parents and take all steps required by local authorities for excessive absences.

In order to be considered in attendance, a student must be present in the school for the school day or at a place other than the school with the approval of the appropriate school official for the purpose of attendance or a school activity that has been officially authorized under the school administration. Such activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, or any similar approved activity.

The responsibility for school attendance will be that of the home. Parents and students are expected to cooperate with teachers and administrators to ensure regular attendance. To achieve an efficient and workable program regarding student attendance, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. Once a student arrives on the school campus, the student becomes the responsibility of the school. The student may not leave campus unless lawfully signed out by a parent/guardian.

2. The classroom teacher and the office will keep daily records of attendance, check-ins and check-outs.

3. Students who are absent ten consecutive days without notifying the school will be dropped from the roster. Students between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) will be considered truant and the appointed truant officer will act in accordance with all relevant sections of Vermont Statute, Title 16, Chapter 25. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student who has been absent five (5), seven (7), or ten (10) days (lawful or unlawful) in a semester (half of a year) will be notified by mail of the absences and reminded of attendance procedures.

LAWFUL ABSENCES (EXCUSED)
1. Illness or Injury: An absence is lawful when the absence results from illness or injury that prevents the student from being physically able to attend school.

2. Quarantine: An absence is lawful when isolation of the student is ordered by a qualified medical professional.

3. Death in the Immediate Family: An absence is lawful when it results from the death of a member of the immediate family of the student. For the purpose of this regulation, the immediate family of a student includes, but is not necessarily limited to, grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters.

4. Medical or Dental Appointments: An absence is lawful when it results from a medical or dental appointment/procedure.

5. Court or Administrative Proceedings: An absence is lawful when it results from the attendance of a student at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.

6. Religious Observation: An absence may be considered lawful if the tenets of a religion to which a student or his/her parent adhere require or suggest observance of a religious event. The approval of such absences is within the discretion of the local board of education, but approval should be granted unless the religious observance or the cumulative effect of the religious observances is such duration as to interfere with the education of the student.

7. Educational Opportunity: Students must seek prior approval and provide school officials with educational objectives.
   a. College/University Visits: Students must submit official documentation from the college/university for absence to be coded as an “Educational Opportunity.”
   b. A “REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FORM” is available in the main office. This form must be submitted to the principal ten (10) days prior to the absence, along with official documentation.

8. Deployment Activity: is the period one month prior to the service member’s departure from their home station on military orders through six months after their return to their home station.

***Note: Administration reserves the right to require documentation for any of the above lawful absences at any time.***

**UNLAWFUL ABSENCES (UNEXCUSED):**

1. A student’s willful absence from school with or without the knowledge of the parent.

2. A student’s absence from school for any reason other than those listed under “Lawful Absences.”

Parents who refuse to comply with the health regulations of a community, such as compulsory vaccination, thereby causing a student to be excluded from school, or parents who permit a student to stay home or to be employed in any way contrary to the Child Welfare Law,
shall be responsible for the nonattendance of the student.

**Attending Performances**
During the course of the year there are many opportunities for our students to perform before an audience. These performances take place both during the day and evening hours. If your child is not in school, on the day of a performance, he/she will not be allowed to perform that night.

Students may not attend an evening performance unless accompanied by an adult. Children brought to a day or evening performance must be under the supervision of an adult at all times. Children and adults in the audience are expected to be courteous and attentive. Hours of planning and practice precede any performance.

Parents and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend any and all school meetings or scheduled performances.

**Band**
The WES Instrumental Program is offered to any interested student in grades 4, 5, and 6. Each student participates in a weekly lesson as they strive to become proficient and are then invited to participate in the band. Third and fourth grade students are participating in class band this school year.

**Bicycles at School**
Any parent who wishes their child to ride a bicycle to school must assume the responsibility for the child and the bike. During dismissal, bikers will be dismissed after the buses have been loaded and it will be assumed they have your permission to cross Rt. 140 or 7 on their own. When a student arrives on school grounds, they are asked to walk their bicycle on the sidewalk to the bike stand. The child will not be allowed to ride the bike during the school day. Children **must** wear bicycle safety helmets while bicycling on the school grounds. If they forget their helmet, they will have to walk their bike in the walker line and be crossed by the guards on duty.

Skateboards and rollerblades may not be used at school during the school day. If children bring skateboards or rollerblades to school they must be stored as directed by his/her teacher until the end of the day.

Please impress upon your youngster the safety rules he/she should follow while riding his/her bike or skateboard to and from school.

**Bus Transportation**
Children are granted the privilege of riding the school buses to and from school. In order to maintain an efficient and safe means of transportation, children must follow the bus behavioral expectations. Children whose conduct does not follow expectations or jeopardizes the safety of others may lose transportation privileges after the pupil and parents have been notified. The following are guidelines for participating in bus transportation:

**Prior to bus arrival:**
1. Be on time at the designated stop. **BUS TIMES MAY VARY! PLEASE ALLOW 10 MINUTES either way for buses to arrive at stops.**
2. Stay off the road while waiting for the bus.
3. Good conduct will be expected of all students while waiting for the bus to arrive.
4. Students must wait until the bus comes to a full stop before attempting to board the
bus.

5. Enter and exit the bus in an appropriate manner.

**Parent Pick-up and Drop-off**

If you bring your child to school by car, please drop him/her off in front of the school so that he/she can walk to the building on the sidewalk. **PLEASE DON’T PARK IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL IN DROP OFF ZONE.**

If you pick your child up by car, please do so at 3:00 p.m. For the children’s safety, all children are required to await their rides directly in front of the building. Please do not encourage your child to run through the parking lot to meet a vehicle. Children not picked up by 3:00 may be taken to ASP and you will be responsible for any fees.

If students are being picked up off of the school grounds, they must follow the procedure for walkers and cross with the help of the crossing guard at the end of the sidewalk.

Parents are always welcome at WES. However, we ask that you do not interrupt classes at the end of the day by standing outside of classrooms, sending siblings to classrooms, or blocking the hallways for students returning from specials classes. Please wait patiently in the entryway off the multipurpose room.

“The State law makes it illegal to pass a stopped school bus when its lights are flashing, even in the parking lot. Infractions will be reported.”

**Cars and Parking**

Please, be mindful of children at all times when driving through the parking area, especially at the end of the day when arriving to pick up children. Cars must not block walkways and driveways. Unattended vehicles may not be left running. All cars must heed school bus warning lights. Educators are asked to leave the spaces directly across from the main entrance empty so visitors can park.

**Chorus**

The WES Chorus is open to any interested student in grades 5 and 6. The Chorus meets once a week. Preparations throughout the school year include rehearsals for at least three concerts including a holiday concert, the district-wide Music in Our Schools event and a spring concert. Masks are required while singing indoors.

**Communication-Home/School**

Teachers and parents are encouraged to maintain regular communication during the school year. Individual teachers communicate with parents in a variety of ways, such as: email, phone calls, conferences, newsletters, and special event announcements.

Parents are asked to communicate with teachers about any changes in home circumstances that may affect a child’s performance or behavior, such as: health concerns, death in the family, an extended illness, a separation or divorce, or the loss of a pet.

If, during the course of a school year, you have any concerns regarding your child, you are requested to follow the procedures listed below. We hope this method of handling problems expedites matters.
● See the teacher. Make an appointment and discuss your concerns as soon as they arise.
● See the Principal. If the situation has not been resolved to your satisfaction by the discussion with the teacher, make an appointment to meet with the Principal.
● See the Superintendent should your concern require further discussion.

**Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:45</td>
<td>Before School Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40</td>
<td>Breakfast begins &amp; Outdoor Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>School Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:45</td>
<td>Math instruction-whole school (some exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mornings</td>
<td>Specials for prek and level 5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-12:00</td>
<td>English Language Arts instruction-whole school (some exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>PreK/Kinder lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>3-6 Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20</td>
<td>K-2 Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>3-6 Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50</td>
<td>Project based learning and specials(K-4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>Dismissal Begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-5:15</td>
<td>ASP-Afterschool Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dismissal begins at 2:50**

1. Walkers and Pre-K students (and their siblings) are dismissed. Walkers are dismissed under supervision with the expectation of walking down the sidewalk and crossing under the direction of the staff person.
2. Parent pick-up car riders are dismissed.

Parent pick-ups, when students are released for “Parent Pick-Up” they go to the designated area outside the front doors and wait with the supervising teachers. Students must wait until the car picking them up is lined up on the front curb and once the car stops, the teacher will direct the student to load. For safety reasons, parents are asked to avoid walking through the pick-up areas.
3. ASP and Bus rider students are dismissed.

If you wish to meet with a teacher, please park in the parking lot. DO NOT park your car in the Parent Pick-Up area or leave your car running or unattended. Please do not block the driveway entrance or the exit.

**Changes From Routine**

Children who usually ride a bus and will not be riding the bus that day, or children who usually walk and will ride a bus, MUST have a note from the parent or guardian stating the change, **any change. WE DON’T TAKE THE WORD OF A STUDENT.** A change must be put in writing and signed by the parent. This prevents confusion on the part of both the children and the school. If the school has not received a note or telephone call (from the parent/guardian) for a change, the school will have the child dismissed as usual (i.e., walking or regular bus).

**Dress**

School clothing should be functional, safe and conducive to a learning environment. Students and parents are expected to exercise good judgment in their selection of clothing that is appropriate for school. For our older and developing students (4th-6th), wearing short shorts or thin strapped tops are inappropriate for an elementary school. Shorts/skirts/dresses should cover half of a student’s thigh, and
Dress Code

number are responsible for their own expenses. Financially.

Students follow classes in their trip. Field Trips (NO FIELD TRIPS DURING COVID REGULATIONS)

In the schools. Parents of field trips. During Physical Education class, children should wear sneakers. Since they spend part of the day playing outdoors, children should have clothing appropriate for the weather, including snow pants, rain coats, boots, jackets, hats, and gloves.

Clothing with messages that promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco or sex may not be worn in school. Revealing clothing is not allowed.

Educational Support Team (EST)

Our school maintains an active Educational Support Team that meets on a monthly basis with the purpose of seeking new ways to address specific challenges that individual students may be facing in school. The process involves drawing upon the experience and expertise of a variety of professionals in our school. Together we look at a child’s strengths, discuss concerns, explore strategies, consider available resources and develop a plan to better meet the student’s educational needs. In addition to a child’s classroom teacher, the team is generally composed of a teacher, Intervention Team Leader, Special Education staff, the School Counselor, Principal and parents.

Emergency Drills

Our school conducts drills for the purpose of order and safety in the event of an emergency. It is required we practice both drills in September, then once a month on an alternating basis.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are held each month. The first drill is instructional and is announced to the staff and students. The students are outside for a minimal amount of time. We will not hold a fire drill during extreme weather. Children who exhibit high anxiety when we hold a fire drill are notified in advance. Children are expected to exit in an orderly manner with a minimum of noise.

EMERGENCY/LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Emergency and Lockdown Drills are practiced and will be followed in the event of an emergency in which it might be safer to remain in the school building.

Field Trips (NO FIELD TRIPS DURING COVID REGULATIONS)

Field Trips provide excellent opportunities for teachers to expand and enrich the learning opportunities of their students. Parents will be informed of field trips by their child’s teacher and by an announcement in The Paw Print. Parents will sign a field trip permission at the beginning of the school year and will be informed as field trips are organized for each classroom. All students will ride on the bus to the field trip site. Students may ride with their family members on the way home from a field trip and it may include other children if their parents send in a note indicating the plan and permission. Occasionally classes take trips to places requiring a fee. No student will be excluded based on ability to contribute financially. Students are responsible for their behavior and expected to follow the Wildcat Way. Inappropriate behavior may jeopardize future field trips for the child. Chaperones above the required number are responsible for their own expenses.
Food Service Programs (BREAKFAST SERVED IN CLASSROOMS DURING COVID REGULATIONS)
WES has breakfast and lunch programs. Breakfast is served before school begins, starting at 7:40 am. Students eating breakfast at school come to the cafeteria directly upon arrival. Students may also receive breakfast foods during the morning snack in the classroom. Breakfast is not served at school on days when there is a delayed opening.

All students remain at school for lunch. They may bring lunch and purchase milk or juice or they may purchase a school lunch.

We have four, thirty minute recess periods and four, twenty minute lunch periods, split preK, kindergarten through second grade, third and fourth grade and fifth through sixth grade. Students are required to remain in the lunchroom for their full lunch period. Parents are welcome to join us at lunch any time. If you know you are coming for lunch please give the office a call.

Soda and candy are not permitted to be brought to school from home. During the day some classes take a snack-break. Students are expected to bring a healthy snack.

A comprehensive Food Services program is available to ensure that every child has a nutritious breakfast and lunch every day. All meals are prepared in our kitchen by the food service staff and the following is the MRUUSD food service’s procedures.

Student Accounts
The Food Service program uses a computer point of sale system to track student account transactions which allows users to make online payments, view purchase history, and receive low balance notification for a low transaction fee. Student accounts must maintain a positive balance.

Free and Reduced Price School Meals Policy
Parents should review the income eligibility guidelines to see if the student qualifies for free or reduced meal benefits. Applications are available in the information packet sent home at the beginning of the school year or parents may contact the school office. Applications are also available online at: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_nutrition/school_nutrition.html

Parents can apply or reapply for free and reduced meal benefits at any time during the school year when there is a change in family income. Families that qualify for 3SquareVt benefits or an Earned Income tax credit are eligible for free and reduced school meal benefits. Free and reduced price school meals information is strictly confidential.

The income eligibility guidelines are listed on the Free and Reduced Lunch application. This application will be sent home in the first day of school packet. You may request an additional application at any time during the year by contacting the school.

Payment Plans and Pricing
We recommend using the online system to deposit funds or send a check payable to the school lunch program directly to the cafeteria the first of the week. Please mark your student’s name and or account number clearly.

Who Should Apply

Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21
Dress Code
It is encouraged that all families fill out this application, even if you are unsure if you qualify or even if you do and wish to still pay for your child’s food service. The reason is that the higher a schools F&R rate, the more federal grants we receive. All grants use the F&R rate to determine funding and these grants help us to bring financial benefits to our programs. They fund activities like coaches to support our teachers, school initiatives to improve instruction and interventionists to support small group targeted instruction. Please consider applying.

### Meal Prices (FREE LUNCH UNTIL JUNE 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Breakfast</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
<td>$3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Breakfast</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced Breakfast</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We serve breakfast/snack from 7:40-8:00 and during the classroom’s morning snack time.

Aladin, the food service provider, is excited to be a part of our community. They provide fun healthy choices for our students. They purchase local as much as possible and would value any opportunities you may have to enhance our program. Please visit your school’s website for monthly menus and other food service related information. Aladin believes in choice, we all have different likes and dislikes. Your child will be choosing from a variety of daily options:

- **Chefs Choice** - Main menu item for the day, featuring many of our favorite meals from Momma’s kitchen to kitchens around our diverse country and world.
- **Little Italy** - Assortment of Fresh Dough Pizza
- **Hala Peno** - Build your own Taco Salad, Burrito, Tacos, or Nacho Grande.
- **Deli** - Freshly made subs, wraps and sandwiches to include vegetarian options and all of our favorite toppings.
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable bars** - Assorted meats and cheese will be available to build a fresh Chef Salad, Chicken Caesar or Garden & Cheese.
- **Fresh Made Smoothies** - Made with Fresh Fruit and Yogurt pair it with Granola for a fully reimbursable breakfast or lunch meal.
- **Breakfast at your schools will include**: Assorted Cereals, Fresh Pastries, Yogurt and Fruit Parfaits, Smoothies, Egg and other Breakfast Specialties.

### Snack Beverage Procedure

All students participating in school snack programs **must** pay for milk or juice regardless of income eligibility. Milk is included in the price of all school meals. Students with free or reduced meal benefits are reminded that milk is only included with a complete meal otherwise a la carte prices apply.

### Choice & Variety

The Food Service program offers these lunch choices daily. Assorted fresh fruit and a choice of assorted milk (skim, 2%, or low fat chocolate) are included with every meal. To support a healthy school environment we offer homemade, healthy desserts two to three times a week.

### Breakfast Program

Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21

Dress Code
The school breakfast program is open to everyone. Breakfast is one of the most important meals of the day. Studies have shown that eating breakfast can reduce stomach aches, improve alertness, and overall help students be better learners.

Field Trips
The Food Service program loves to make bag lunches for any occasion. Please place your order through the classroom teacher 3 days prior to the trip. The price is the same price as for lunch. The bag lunch contains a healthy sandwich, fresh fruit/vegetables, granola bar, baked potato chips, milk or juice. Free and reduced lunch prices apply to bag lunches for those who qualify.

Promotions
The Food Service program provides promotional and entertaining events throughout the year such as holiday meals, barbecues, and more. We encourage parents and other family members to join their children for these fun filled occasions. All promotions are to encourage healthy eating. The promotions are advertised on the menu with the details posted in the cafeteria.

Nutrition
The Food Service program is actively involved with the Department of Education School Nutrition Programs, School Nutrition Association, New England Dairy Council, and many other organizations to bring healthy, attractive, delicious meals to your school. We incorporate low fat, low sodium cooking techniques and our bread products are supplemented with whole wheat flour to add fiber to our baked offerings.

Dishing Up Local
We proudly support Farm to School activities which connect K-12 schools with local farms. Farm to School objectives include: improving student nutrition, providing agricultural, health and education opportunities and supporting local and regional farmers. WES directs its purchasing efforts to include locally grown produce & locally made products in our menu production. Please contact us if you would like to participate in a local farm to school initiative. Annually, we apply for a fresh fruit and vegetable grant which provides a variety of fruits and vegetables to all students during their morning snack program. It is a great program which exposes students to new food choices. We have been fortunate to receive this grant for the last four years.

Purpose - The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistent procedures for the Mill River Unified Union School District to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

General Statement of Procedure –
A. The Mill River Unified Union School District recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.
B. It is the procedure of Mill River Unified Union School District to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.
C. Payments to student accounts are made by sending a check or cash to the school, or by online payments to student accounts at schools where available.
D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households by mail prior to the first day of school or are sent home with students on the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at http://millriverschools.org. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.

1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student’s eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.

2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.

3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a lunch each day at no charge.

4) A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée, are not allowed to be charged.

Meal Charge Procedure –
A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals:
   • Students in all grades (Pre K – 12) will be allowed to charge up to 10 dollars.
   • Students in elementary school will always be provided a meal.
   • An alternate meal which meets the meal pattern requirements will be offered to elementary students with a negative account balance.
   • All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.

B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal, regardless of unpaid student accounts.

C. A student eligible for paid meals who has ‘cash in hand’ at the time of meal service will be provided a meal, regardless of unpaid student accounts. The ‘cash in hand’ will not be applied to past due accounts.

D. Students with an overdrawn account of an amount greater than $10.00 (ten dollars) are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

Account Status Notifications –
A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The Mill River Unified Union School District will notify each household of account balances by:
   • Giving students a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.
   • Families may also check their account balances online via myschoolbucks.com (where available).
B. The family will be notified regarding the student account balance by:
   • Monthly notices that will be sent to parents whose children have a negative account balance.
   • A second request for payment will be sent if the household has not responded to the first request.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt –
When the student balance is -$10.00 (negative ten dollars), the following collection activities will be followed:
   • The Food Service staff will contact the household to request payment.
   • The Food Service staff will contact the building principal if no payment is received.
   • The building principal will contact the household to discuss the requirement of the family to provide meals for the student.
   • A certified letter will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid by specified date.
   • All funds owed to the food service program will be paid in full by the last day of school.
   • Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district’s policy.

Fundraising
Many organizations raise funds to support school activities. The school very much appreciates this support but please be reminded that all fundraising activities conducted on behalf of a school initiative must be approved by the principal.

Grade Book
All teachers use an online grade book through Power School and the grades are based on grade level performance indicators. Power School software is being implemented to support the monitoring of student growth. This is a powerful tool and eventually families will be able to go on anytime to see how their child(ren) is doing in acquiring mastery on certain proficiencies.

Grouping/Class Placement
If enrollment numbers dictate having multiple classrooms within a particular grade level or as we move towards having Pods of students, students will be placed in classrooms with both the academic and social needs of the child taken into consideration. Parent requests are also considered. Any placement request should be in writing and include the reason(s) for the request. However, the final decision with grouping and placement rests with the staff and Principal.

Decisions for grouping are based on the following criteria:
   • Type of program needed for a given student and which teacher on a given level would provide a program for those needs.
   • Personality of the student is matched to the personality of the teacher needed for growth.
   • Classification of pupils — independent, semi-independent, and needing a great deal of teacher direction.
   • Balance between boys and girls in the room.
   • Balance between discipline problems in a room.
   • Separation of those who should not be together.

Home School Compact
In the cooperative interest of ensuring a positive partnership between our schools and homes, we have developed the Home-School Compact. This will be included in the beginning of the year packet sent
home with students. Please review the document with your child(ren), sign and return the document to the school office as soon as possible.

**Homework**

Homework can be a positive experience that connects home and school and can involve parents in the education of their children. Students may receive homework each evening based on the following MRUUSD guidelines:

- Homework is given in order for learners to practice, reinforce, and extend what they already know.
- Students should be able to complete all assignments independently.
- Because homework is intended to practice, reinforce and extend thinking and learning, your child’s assignment may be different from other students in the same classroom.
- Homework may not be assigned every night.
- Home work will not be graded.

A general rule of thumb on the amount of time your child might spend on homework is listed below:

- Kindergarten – 5-10 minutes a night
- 1st Grade - 10 minutes a night
- 2nd Grade - 20 minutes a night
- 3rd Grade - 30 minutes a night
- 4th Grade - 40 minutes a night
- 5th Grade - 50 minutes a night
- 6th Grade - 60 minutes a night

Children have reading homework every night. They may have other assignments – projects, maps, math practice, writing, etc. - as well. If no homework has been assigned on a given night, students should spend the designated amount of time reading material of their own choosing or literature from the classroom. For younger students, the time can be spent either reading alone or being read to by an adult.

**Our goals are:**

- To instill in each child a sense of responsibility.
- To increase student achievement in academic areas.
- To initiate a schoolwide policy to support reading instruction.
- To provide students an opportunity to select materials of their own choosing and follow their interests.
- To involve parents more in their child’s education.

Individual grades/teachers will establish their own homework routines. In order for this activity to be successful, we need parents’ support and assistance. It would be helpful if a specific time and place could be established for the homework to take place. Also, since students work at different rates, please notify your child’s teacher if he/she is taking longer than the allotted time to complete assignments.

**Kindergarten Registration**

Registration and Orientation for children entering kindergarten is held each year in the spring. Children must be 5 years old on or before August 31st of their entrance year. Registration dates are announced in the Paw Print and in the local media sources.

**Leaving School During the Day**
Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled after school hours, whenever possible. If your child must be excused from school before the regular session is over, please write a note to his/her teacher stating the reason for and time of dismissal. Parents, upon entering the school to pick up a child, are requested to go directly to the office. Classes will be notified and the child(ren) will meet the parents outside the office. This will prevent possible interruptions in the classroom.

Library
The library is a resource for teachers, students, staff and parents. The library collection includes materials in a variety of formats about a variety of subjects. Students are welcome to check out books during regular school hours.

Students in prek-2nd visit the library at least once a week and 3rd-6th have access everyday to choose a new book for their independent reading time. The technology/library teacher works with each grade to plan integrated units that support classroom work, encourage technology and research skills, and support a love of reading. The technology/library teacher also works in collaboration with teachers to support units being taught in the classroom, especially when there are opportunities for technology integration. She also will work with all grades on goal setting, personalized learning and student involved/engaged conferences.

Parents are welcome to visit the library at any time. Stop by to see what we are doing, to volunteer in the library or to browse our collection. Also please don’t forget to visit our book fair when you come to your parent teacher conference.

Lost and Found
Please label all children’s clothing and boots, especially outerwear. The “lost and found” box is located near the main office in the large box. Please, check it often. At the halfway point and at the end of the year, all found items that are not claimed will be taken to the local family center.

Mill River Schools website
Our school maintains a website that contains a wide range of information about our school, school events and activities, announcements, and a current copy of our monthly newsletter, The Paw Print. All staff members are required to maintain a web page that contains program information. Our website also includes many connecting links that may be of interest to teachers, parents and students. The WES Homepage can be found at: www.millriverschools.org and then clicking on the Wallingford Elementary School link. Families can also visit our Facebook page.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
The PTO is the parent-teacher organization at our school. All parents are encouraged to join and participate. Its purpose is to provide help to staff and children in any way needed, and to help our school with needs that are not covered in the district budget. In addition, the PTO sponsors useful parent information materials and presentations. These services to our school community are provided on a volunteer basis and give the parents an opportunity to actively participate in the execution of these programs and raising funds to sponsor them.

The following is a guide to the kinds of activities that our PTO volunteers provide:

- Cultural Enrichment: programs provide students with cultural experiences in conjunction with classroom activities.
- Purchasing of needed equipment or supplies.
● Parent/Community Informational Program: the PTO’s goal is to make the parent community and non-school community aware of the school’s programs and activities.
● Hospitality: many parents provide refreshments at school functions.
● Staff Recognition Day: the PTO parents host a special gathering as a thank you to the staff.
● Social Programs: PTO arranges evenings where staff and parents can come together to have a good time.
● Book Fair: A paperback book fair is held twice a year.
● Various fundraisers: Bake sales, food sales, etc. provide funds for various school uses.
● Vision: Help focus and set the vision for next steps for the school.

Please contact our PTO President or Principal Helen Richards-Peelle to get involved!

**Parties and Invitations**

Birthday “treats” are permitted but must be planned in advance with the classroom teacher. Children should not bring party invitations to school for distribution. Disappointments occur when some students discover they have not received an invitation. We do not give out phone numbers and addresses and do not have a student directory. A teacher may ask you and if you agree, your child or family will be added to a class list which is then shared with all other families.

**Personalized Learning Plans (PLP)**

All Students in MRUUSD who are in grades 5th & 6th will create personalized learning plans under the guidance of their teachers. The PLP is a powerful tool which supports the student to improve in a focused area, a couple of goals at a time. The 3rd/4th grade teachers at WES began this work last year and will continue to work on what PLPs will look like for students in these grades. Students in K-2nd will begin the process of developing a PLP which is developmentally appropriate to their level.

**Personal Possessions**

Radios, DVD & CD players, electronic games and all toys and electronic devices, with the exception of cell phones are not permitted in school. Cell phones may not be taken out during the day. Cell phones must be kept in a student’s backpack and used for emergency or teacher directed purposes only. These items are distracting and disruptive to the learning environment and tempting to others. Toiletries and cosmetics, such as deodorant, hairspray and makeup should not be brought to school unless they are needed for a specific school project or activity. Items containing caution labels and/or toxic substances are not permitted. Such items, if brought to school, will be taken and held by school staff until a parent comes to collect the item. The school is not responsible for personal items children bring from home.

**Playground**

Parents should be aware that there is no supervision on the playground after school. Students must leave school grounds after dismissal unless supervised by an adult. They may return to the playground on their own after 3:45. However, children should know that in case of emergencies, such as if they are hurt or threatened, they may come into the building for help. They may not come into the building for drinks, casual use of the phone, or the bathroom.

The playground is open to the community during non-school hours. Children who are not WES students may use the playground during school hours only if supervised by a parent.

Children and adults using the playground are asked to respect all property and to use the various facilities for their intended purposes. Language and actions should be responsible and respectful. Trash should be picked up and thrown away. The school grounds are closed after dark.
**Pre-K Education (updated 8/1/19)**

Students who turn Age 3 on or before September 1st are eligible for Universal Public Pre-K education. Each of our elementary schools operates a public Pre-K program that is open to students of members of their respective towns or other towns outside the school district by prior approval. Act 166 is the state legislation that allows students from other towns/districts to attend Pre-K within our school district, and it also allows our students to access Pre-K outside of our own district. Transportation is not offered as part of our current preschool programming. Each elementary school employs its own preschool teachers to provide universal preschool education as well as a part-time EEE (Early Essential Educator) to provide special education services to eligible preschool students. Currently, we use Creative Curriculum as the core instructional offering in each school. Annually, the school district conducts developmental screenings for preschool-age students in accordance with Child Find. EEE services are coordinated in collaboration with regional service providers and referral agencies.

WES Pre-K offers an early education program for children ages 3 to 5. This program offers opportunities for socialization in mixed age groups as well as with peers. Both choice play time and structured activities are offered. Large and small motor development is enhanced through play, projects and music. Outdoor play (weather permitting), snack time, reading, and music time are all part of the daily schedule. This keeps the group moving throughout the day, engaged and learning. Pre-K students are encouraged to gain independence by learning self-help skills and doing things for themselves. Teachers talk with parents about their child’s interests, strengths and any areas of concern. Each child is considered at their individual developmental level. This program includes a developmentally appropriate classroom experience designed to help them succeed in the years to come. Field trips and special events are also planned around themed units.

The Pre-K teachers have a teaching license endorsed by the State of Vermont. The children in this program may be mixed three to five year old children at different times throughout the day. The program for Pre-K includes a developmentally appropriate classroom experience designed to promote readiness for the years ahead in elementary school. Communication occurs between our teachers and area schools to ensure successful transitions to kindergarten for this age group. Conferences and progress reports are available for parents at least twice a year. The Pre-k program uses a system called Gold to monitor a student’s growth.

**Hours of Operation**

1. The program is offered Monday- Friday from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm for the Pre-K 2 program (mostly 4-5 year olds) and 8:00-12:30 for the Pre-K 1 program (mostly 3 year olds).
2. Childcare is offered from 6:45-8:00 and 12:30 or 3:00 until 5:15 Parents pay $10.00/day unless they qualify for subsidy financial assistance. Please see the Administrative Assistant for an application. The Administrative Assistant will send out biweekly bills with the expectation that the bills are paid promptly.
3. The Pre-K program follows the district school calendar which is included in the handbook and on the district’s website.

**Typical Daily Schedule**

6:45  childcare
8:00 opening routines and morning meeting
8:50 snack
9:10 specials
9:50 whole group learning, small groups
10:20 choice time
11:30 lunch
12:00 recess
12:30 Pre-K 1 students go home or into childcare
3:00 Pre-K 2 students go home or into childcare
5:15 center closes

**Arrival/Departure**

Children must be signed in and out of the preschool classroom by an authorized adult. If a child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent or designee, the Teachers/Director must be notified, in writing, in advance. That person must be prepared to provide a form of photo identification. In the morning, unless the child is in childcare, parents will wait with their child at the side door for the teacher to come and welcome them into school at 8:00.

**Nap/Rest time**

Every child younger than school age and present for five (5) or more hours shall have the opportunity for sleep or rest. Preschool children may sleep/rest with blankets, a pillow, and soft toys. Children will not be required to sleep. Children who do not nap shall be provided space and equipment for quiet play. Children are required to bring a clean crib sheet and blanket from home each week.

**Report Cards / Parent Teacher Conferences**

Each year, certain days in the fall and spring are designated on the school calendar for conferences. Teachers will work with the families to schedule conferences based on their schedules.

The initial conference provides an opportunity for the parent and teacher to become acquainted and to discuss the general educational goals for a youngster. The spring conference provides an opportunity for the teacher to summarize the work and growth of the child during the year and recommend continued study, when necessary. Students in grades 3rd-6th will be involved in student led conferences, where the student develops a personalized learning plan, gathers evidence, reflects on their growth and creates a way to show this to their parents at the conference. Students who go through this process are very engaged in their learning and love showing what they have accomplished to their family members. Students in K-2nd grade are involved in their conference though a goal setting process and the beginning phases of developing a personalized learning plan.

At any time, additional conferences may be scheduled at the requests of both teacher and/or parent.

**WES Conferences**

2021-2022

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Week of October 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Week of March 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conference Preparation for Parents

Below are some questions both teacher and parent may want to ask:

- How does your child feel about school?
- Has your child had any health problems that we should know about (sight, hearing, allergies, diet, etc.)?
- How well does he/she accept responsibility at home?
- How does he/she spend free time?
- Does he/she get along with other children?
- Has he/she any hobbies, special interests or abilities?
- Is your child working up to his/her ability in academic subjects as determined by tests and collective teacher observations?
- What special interests, abilities, and strengths does he/she show in the school program? Is the school providing for these?
- What are my child’s particular areas of weakness? Is the school program providing for these?
- Is my child able to work effectively in a group? Independently?
- How does my child respond to rules? What is his/her attitude toward school?
- Is my child interested in learning? Is he/she inquisitive, asking “why”?

WES Report Card Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trimesters</th>
<th>Grades Close</th>
<th>Report Cards Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>November 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>March 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Last day of school</td>
</tr>
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School Board Meetings & Policies

The Mill River Unified Union School Directors will meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. The first meeting of the month will occur at Mill River Middle/High School and the second meeting will rotate to be at the different schools. The location for each month for this meeting can be found on the website.

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend all meetings. Minutes of the meetings are available for review at the Superintendent’s office, the Town Hall, Wallingford Elementary School and the MRUUSD website.

All School Board Policies are available for public review on the [Mill River Schools](https://www.millriverschools.org) website.

School Books and Materials

Each child is responsible for the careful use of materials provided by the school such as textbooks, classroom books, library books, or calculators. If loss or damage occurs, the cost of replacement will be expected.

School Closings, Delayed Openings, and Early Release

Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21

Dress Code
It is sometimes necessary to cancel school when it is impossible or dangerous for the buses to travel their routes. In the event school sessions are canceled, an announcement will be made through School Messenger. This is an automated phone system that allows us to contact parents by making one phone call. You will be asked to choose a phone preference at the start of the school year. The school closing will also be on the radio and on the television. In the event that school must be canceled sometime during the day, every effort will be made to safely return the students home. It is essential that we have on file current home phone numbers, work numbers for both parents and at least two friends or relations who may be contacted during the school hours. If an early dismissal will cause changes in child care arrangements, please notify us.

If school is cancelled, any extra-curricular activities involving students will also be cancelled.

**EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Once a month, students will have a half day of school so teachers can participate in professional development. I am very excited about the consistent PD our teachers will be receiving with their colleagues in our district. This will make for stronger instructional practices in the classroom. The early release days are on the school calendar. Here is the plan for those who need childcare support during these monthly early release days.

1. Dismissal will be at 11:55; students will have had lunch and the buses will only run at this time to deliver students to their designated spot.
2. Childcare will be offered, free of charge, from 11:55-3:00 for all Kindergarten-6th grade families who find the early release a hardship. Our paraeducators will be running this program. There will not be ASP on these early release days from 3:00 to 5:15.

**DELAYED OPENINGS**

Delayed openings postpone school by two hours which makes the school start time 10:00 a.m. Students may not be on school grounds before 9:45 a.m.

**School Counselor**

The School Counselor is available to provide guidance and counseling services to all students, through direct services, such as: individual counseling, small group sessions, and class interaction around specific issues, as well as consultation with staff and parents. School staff, parents and/or students may request services at any time during the school year.

The School Counselor will also take the lead on Harassment, Hazing and Bullying concerns.(see section on HHB) Anyone who suspects a concern in one of these categories should communicate with a WES staff and they will follow the MRUUSD procedure to address the concern.

The School Counselor will also be involved with any issues around child abuse or neglect. Any school personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected is to report or cause a report to be made to the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families or his/her designee. The law (H.117) carries forward protection against liability for libel or slander. If you have any concerns of abuse or neglect, take your responsibilities as a mandated reporter very seriously. Training will be provided for staff at the start of the school year.

**School Entry Age Policy**

It shall be the policy of Mill River Unified Union School District that students entering elementary school must comply with the following age requirements:
1. For admission into Kindergarten, a youngster must have attained the age of five (5) on or before August 31st of the year of entrance.

2. For admission into Grade 1, a youngster must have attained the age of six (6) years on or before August 31st of the year of entrance. Children who have not attained the age of six (6) by August 31st may be admitted to Grade 1 if they have successfully completed a state-recognized kindergarten program. The youngster MUST also meet the kindergarten exit standards.

Title 16, Sec. 1121 of the General Laws of Vermont requires school attendance for students between the ages of six and sixteen.

School Health
School nursing is a specialized service, which contributes to the process of education. The school nurse, as a member of the professional team, provides needed health services and acts as an advocate for the health rights of all children in school.

Various health services are provided as part of the school nurse’s duties. Periodic vision and hearing testing are done across grade levels. If you would like to opt out of a hearing test for your child, please contact the school nurse. Height, weight and blood pressure are done at least yearly. School districts and primary care providers will attempt to avoid duplicating services provided by the other and will share information as practicable and allowable by law.

The school nurse is a resource person. Please feel free to contact her at school. In addition if you are seeking state resources, this link will be very helpful.

HEALTH ISSUES
Children who wake up complaining of sore throats, earaches or have a fever usually benefit from spending the day in bed. It also keeps contagious diseases from spreading. If a child is too ill to go out at recess time, he/she is too ill to be in school and benefit from it.

Sometimes children do get sick during school hours and it may be necessary to send the child home. It is imperative that we have a way of contacting someone in this event. An up-to-date emergency card should be on file.

Please advise the school office when you are going away and advise us what to do if your child becomes ill or injured while you are gone. We have “loco parentis” forms at school.

Whenever a child must receive medication at school, written permission from the parent must be provided. It is important to know the name of the medication, dosage and the doctor who prescribed it. Medication should be sent in the original container. For prescribed medications, written orders from a physician detailing the name of the drug and the time interval medication is to be taken is required.

Concussions and other Head Injuries
Under 16 V.S.A. § 1431 the principal or headmaster of each public and approved independent school shall ensure that statewide concussion and other head injury guidelines are provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete’s parents or guardians;

- Each youth athlete and a parent or guardian shall annually sign a form acknowledging receipt of the concussion and other head injury guidelines
● There are training requirements for all coaches and referees of a contest on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or other head injury.

For further details on the concussion guidelines, please use this link:

Life-Threatening Allergies and Life-Threatening Chronic Illnesses
16 V.S.A. §563(29) requires school boards to assign an employee to annually inform the parents of students with life-threatening allergies and life-threatening chronic illnesses of the applicable provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and other applicable federal and/or state statutes and federal and/or state regulations. This would include notice of the provisions of 16 V.S.A. §1387 that permits students with life-threatening allergies or asthma to possess and self-administer emergency medication at school in accordance with a plan of action authorized and developed under the requirements of this statute.

Exclusion From Physical Activity
If a child is well enough to come to school, he or she is expected to participate in physical education and recess unless there is a special problem. Any such problems must be discussed with the teacher, the school nurse or the principal. A note from a doctor should accompany any request for alteration of activity.

School News
The Paw Print is our monthly email newsletter sent each Friday by Erin St.Germain (Administrative Secretary). This email includes calendar items, special events and other school news. A paper copy can be requested from the front office.

Parents are asked to check with their child on a daily basis regarding communications from school and to remind their child of the importance of bringing written communications home in a timely manner.

Schoolwide Responsive Discipline Plan
Wallingford Elementary School is committed to using the Responsive Classroom approach. A partnership between families and the staff at Wallingford School is one of the most important ingredients in providing your child with a quality education. The nurturing of our greatest resource, our young people, is our mutual responsibility and this will be accomplished through a strong partnership with the MRRUSD core values and beliefs as the base. To this end, we at Wallingford School are committed to excellence in academics and to providing an exciting, enriched, supportive and joyful atmosphere for our children.

Responsive School Discipline
The following is our tiered approach to responsive discipline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Who’s responsible</th>
<th>tracking</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Expectations</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>In class system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reminding, redirecting, reinforcing</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>In class system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a break</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>In class system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21
Dress Code 23
Buddy Teacher or private space | Teacher | In class system  
| Communicates with parent |

“Out of Class” time out-1st time  
Office Referral | Teacher/principal | Schoolwide system  
| Communicates with parent |

“Out of Class” time out-After 1st one  
Office Referral | Principal | Schoolwide system  
| Communicates with parent |

**Teaching Expectation**

We believe the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum and that all adults want what is best for the children. We realize the importance of meeting students where they are developmentally and what is appropriate for a 5 year old may not be for a 10, 11, or 12 year old. We look forward to working with colleagues and parents as partners and are sharing our expectations so that we can work as a team to support all children. The following school-wide expectations-The Wildcat Way- have been in place now for eight years and have served the school well with being able to use consistent language throughout the building.

**The Wildcat Way- For Teachers and Students**

A. Practice Respect  
B. Accept Responsibility  
C. Work Together  
D. Safety First

The Wildcat way is used for all classroom and specials teachers to work with their students to create the classroom and specials rules for each special/grade level. Children are more apt to take ownership of the rules when they are part of the process in creating them. Individual teachers will work with students to create, define, and reinforce classroom expectations. Teachers will assist students, recognize their behavior, remind, remodel and redirect to support students in following the schoolwide and classroom expectations.
The Wildcat Way Looks Like…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Respect</th>
<th>All Settings I can...</th>
<th>Hallway I can...</th>
<th>Bus I can...</th>
<th>Playground I can...</th>
<th>Bathroom I can...</th>
<th>Cafeteria I can...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Follow the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated.</em></td>
<td><em>Follow the Golden Rule - treat others as you would like to be treated.</em></td>
<td><em>Take my assigned seat quickly.</em></td>
<td><em>Listen to grown up on duty.</em></td>
<td><em>Take my assigned seat quickly.</em></td>
<td><em>Listen to grown up on duty.</em></td>
<td><em>Use appropriate voice level.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Follow directions with engagement.</em></td>
<td><em>Use appropriate voice level.</em></td>
<td><em>Thank my driver.</em></td>
<td><em>Leave nature out in nature.</em></td>
<td><em>Thank my driver.</em></td>
<td><em>Leave nature out in nature.</em></td>
<td><em>Use appropriate voice level.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Respect property that doesn’t belong to you.</em></td>
<td><em>Use a quiet voice.</em></td>
<td><em>Use a quiet voice.</em></td>
<td><em>Clean up after myself.</em></td>
<td><em>Use a quiet voice.</em></td>
<td><em>Clean up after myself.</em></td>
<td><em>Use appropriate voice level.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accept Responsibility

| Be prepared and engaged *Acknowledge mistakes.* | Great others | Keep my seat space clean | Get to the bus stop on time | Gather personal belongings | Follow expectations | Clean up after myself |
| Be open to feedback without argument *Reflect, apologize, make a change.* | Be open to feedback without argument | Keep my seat space clean | Get to the bus stop on time | Gather personal belongings | Follow expectations | Clean up after myself |
| Cooperate with others *Actively contribute.* | Cooperate with others | Be aware | Give others space to sit | Return equipment when done playing | Take turns | Move along so others can use the restroom |
| Use compassion and empathy | Cooperate with others | Be aware | Give others space to sit | Return equipment when done playing | Take turns | Move along so others can use the restroom |

Work Together

| Make safe choices (emotional and physical) *Think before I do.* | Keep the hallway seat clean | Keep my mask on | Use equipment appropriately | Not climb on rails |
| Think before I do | Keep my mask on | Use equipment appropriately | *Not climb on rails* |
| *Respect personal space.* | Practice emergency drills correctly | Stay with boundaries of playground | *Keep the floor dry* |
| Slow down and walk | Sit quietly over railroad tracks | *Use equipment appropriately.* | *Wash my hands at least 20 seconds* |
| *Stay with boundaries of playground.* | *Tell an adult if I am leaving the playground.* | *Wash my hands at least 20 seconds.* | *Get to the bus stop on time.* |

Safety First

| Dress Code
| Handbook Revisions as of 12/2/21

The classroom and specials teachers will work with the students to create the expectations around what it looks and sounds like for each of their rules just like we have done for the school-wide expectations. (See chart above for schoolwide expectations) Once the classroom/specials charts are completed, teachers will post them on their website. This chart will serve as a reference through-out the school year to help and support teachers to be consistent with common language and to provide students with a constant visual of the behavior expectations.

Reminding, Redirecting, Reinforcing

Our Responsive Classroom approach to teaching a “Social Curriculum” will focus on the first six weeks as a time for teaching appropriate behavior, classroom rules and community building. All the classrooms and schoolwide expectations will be taught and reinforced by all staff in the building. Teachers will spend the first six weeks introducing the expectations, routines and the classroom rules. Once taught they will be reminding, redirecting and reinforcing to make sure all students understand what is expected.

Take a Break

All children make mistakes. In fact our greatest learning comes from our mistakes. We do understand that a system of logical consequences with children helps them understand they are responsible for their choices and actions. Logical consequences are effective because they reinforce the internal need for self-control and commitment. Taking a break is one part of a system of logical consequences. As children grow and learn, they may test limits and boundaries, lose control, act out, or “forget” an expectation. Taking a break can be used as a safety net for boundaries and rules, while promoting self-control. These “Breaks” are intended for minor infractions with the classroom/schoolwide rules and
intended to help students get back on track. The teachers will facilitate a process with the students that helps them identify the problem behavior and steps the student will take to change their behavior. Parents are encouraged to not be upset when a child reports that they needed to take a break in their classroom. Taking a break is part of the normal process and a great strategy for children to learn to help them get back in control.

**Buddy Teacher or Private Space (library)**
Sometimes a child does better with getting in control if they can be in a classroom away from their peers. All teachers have a “buddy teacher” and it is the teacher geographical closest to them. The teacher may ask a child to take a break in a buddy teacher room if the teacher or student feel it would be beneficial to help the student get their controls and reflect on their behavior so they can make good choices. Another reason could be if the student is not using the “break chair” in their own classroom the way it should be used.

**Out of Class Time Out (office referral)**
For children who are struggling with their controls, all the strategies listed above are not working and the child is disruptive to the learning of others, the next step is an “Out of Class” time out in the office. Additional behaviors that could warrant this action would be not sitting quietly in a “take a break”, arguing with adults, destroying property, physical aggression, or inappropriate language.

Chain of Support for Out of Class Time Out (OCTO)
1. Escort the student to the OCTO “chair” in the office. Notify Principal, Admin. Asst. or Nurse that you have a discipline issue. If you are alone, call or send a student with a special card labeled, “request for support” card. This alerts the office of the need for an immediate response.
2. The principal or her designee will respond if possible. The order of who is the designee when the principal is not available
   a. School counselor. Ext. 635
   b. School nurse or asst. Ext. 623
   c. Library/technology Educator. Ext. 617
   d. Special Educator Ext. 622

The first “out of class time out” will be facilitated jointly with the classroom teacher and principal or designee which will involve joint communications to the parent about the concerns. Communication will hopefully solve the problem and the student can get back on track. The student will make a plan with the principal/teacher before returning to the classroom. The principal and the child’s parents will be notified of the “Out of Class” time out by a telephone call or email and a written notice from Wallingford Elementary School. The parent letter and discipline referral will be filed in the principal’s office. Documentation of the event will occur using the schoolwide google form. The teacher is required to fill out the google behavior form before the child arrives in the office.

After the first “out of class timeout”, all further incidents will be handled exclusively by the principal or her designee. The student has demonstrated by his/her behavior that additional supports or strategies are needed. The principal will require a conference with the parents to address the concerns. The
student may also be referred to the school’s Educational Support Team, and his/her parents will be expected to be a part of the team to create a plan to improve behavior in the class/classroom, possibly the Restorative Justice process. The principal also has the authority given the severity of the offense to skip steps towards a more severe consequence. This will be especially true in regards to behavior that is unsafe which could result in a student being suspended.

**Search and Seizure**

Desks, textbooks, devices and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened by school employees for cleaning, maintenance or emergencies. When prohibited items are found in the course of routine cleaning and maintenance, or in the case of emergency, they will be confiscated and a report will be made to the principal who will determine whether further investigation is warranted.

School property may also be searched by school employees upon reasonable suspicion on the part of the building administrator or superintendent that a law or school policy is being violated. Searches of school property in the possession of students will not extend to areas or items not reasonably calculated to aid in the enforcement of specific policies or laws.

School employees are not the agents of law enforcement officials. Search and/or seizure by law enforcement officials on school property may occur when a warrant or other legal basis exists authorizing such search and/or seizure, and when the requirements of the board’s policy on interrogations by law enforcement officers have been complied with.

**Smoking, Alcohol, and Other Drugs**

The use of tobacco on school grounds is in violation of state law and is prohibited. This includes all school related activities during and after regular school hours as well as any school-sponsored activity or trip. This is a “Smoke Free Workplace”. WES is a drug-free campus. The use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs are strictly prohibited.

**Student Services**

- The school provides different services to support student learning. These services include Targeted Tutoring/Tiered Instructions and Special Education. In order to provide some Targeted Tutoring/Tiered Instructions, the school has scheduled a specific time each day to provide some of these services so a student will not miss instructional time.
- Our school has developed a schedule that includes a FIT (focused instructional time) block as a part of the Literacy block and a WIN (what I need) in the afternoon. FIT will focus on literacy skills and WIN will mostly focus on math skills. During the first six weeks students will work on various assessments. These assessments will help provide the teachers with information about your child’s strengths and weaknesses. The following six weeks, the fit block will focus on math or literacy depending on your child’s needs. Students might work in groups, which will provide targeted instruction or tutoring, or a math or literacy group. During this time students will be working in either 1:1 or in a small multi-grade group setting. The WES teachers in collaboration with the district intervention teachers will meet to plan this work and assign teachers to support students who have specific goals to support their gaps in learning.
- Special Education provides Individual Education Plans for students with specific learning disability or learning impairment. Students must be tested and meet specific state criteria to be eligible for these services.
Summer Program
The Mill River Unified Union School District offers a summer program for students who are on plans, IEP or 504. This is organized and staffed by the Special Education Director. and information is sent out in the spring.

Technology
Student Acceptable Use: General Procedures
Students have access to the school’s electronic resources for the purpose of enhancing learning. During school hours, students may access the school’s electronic resources for educational purposes only. Acceptable use includes classroom activities, career development, curriculum driven research and may involve electronic communication, as designated by the school. The school’s electronic resources shall not be used for commercial purposes, as a public access service or a public forum, unless the school allows permission. Students are expected to follow the rules of personal conduct outlined in the student handbook, as well as abide by state and federal laws in the use of the school’s electronic resources. Parents/guardians are warned that some material accessible via the Internet, through the school’s electronic resources, may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. While it is the school’s intent to provide appropriate electronic resources to enhance the curriculum, students may find ways to access other materials as well. The District believes the benefits to students from access to electronic resources and the Internet for information gathering, research and to provide opportunities for collaboration, exceeds the potential disadvantages. Ultimately, parents/guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using electronic resources.

Individual User Responsibilities
1. Understand that electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communication system is not confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use;
2. Comply with authorized requests from the Technology Department to discontinue activities that threaten the operation or integrity of computers, systems or networks;
3. Distribute personally identifiable information about themselves or others by means of the school’s electronic communication system;
4. Be responsible at all times for the proper use of their account by taking all reasonable precautions to prevent others from gaining access to their system account and password;
5. Refrain from using another person’s system account or password, or present themselves another person, without written permission from the system administrator or school coordinator;
6. Purposefully access or send materials, which include pictures, video or audio files, that are rude, disrespectful, abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal;
7. Interfere or disrupt computer systems and networks and related services, including, but not limited to, the propagation of computer “worms”, “viruses” and “Trojan Horses”;
8. Use the school’s electronic resources and Internet connection for commercial or illegal purposes, or for any other activity prohibited by school policy; not redistribute copyrighted programs or data except with the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, school policy, and administrative regulations;
9. Plagiarize work using the school’s electronic resources (plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as one’s own);
10. Use the school’s electronic mail, or other personal email accounts, in any way that causes recipients or other readers to assume the email message represents the opinion of educators or other school officials, or anyone else without their explicit permission;
11. Waste school resources related to the electronic communication system, or damage or attempt to damage computers, computer systems, computer networks or software;
12. Intentionally or carelessly perform acts which place an excessive load on a computer or the network to the extent that other users may be denied service or the use of electronic networks or information systems may be disrupted;
13. Abuse the school’s electronic communication system by downloading large files or sending annoying or unnecessary messages to a large number of people;
14. Gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to the school’s electronic resources, network or restricted information (including scanning ports, computer and/or networks and attempting to circumvent data protection schemes or uncover security vulnerabilities);
15. Alter or attempt to alter files or systems without authorization;
16. Connect unauthorized equipment to the district’s network or computers;
17. Upload, download or redistribute public domain programs.

**Disciplinary Actions**
The school’s electronic resources system is a limited forum, similar to the school newspaper, and therefore the school may restrict individual user’s speech for valid educational reasons. The school will not restrict speech on the basis of disagreement with the opinions expressed. Users should not expect privacy in the contents of their personal files or record of web research activities. Routine maintenance and monitoring of system resources may lead to discovery of violations of District policy, disciplinary code, or state and federal law. An individual search may also be conducted by the system administrator if there is reasonable suspicion that a user has violated this Acceptable Use Procedures agreement. If there is evidence that a violation has occurred the school Principal shall be notified and will determine appropriate consequences.

**Due Process**
If any of the conditions of this Acceptable Use Procedures agreement are breached, parents/guardians will be notified and may be given an opportunity to review the contents of their child’s electronic files. The school will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through the school’s electronic system or the Internet. In the event there is a claim that an individual user has violated school policy, procedures or disciplinary code, the user will be disciplined in accordance with the school handbook. In disciplinary situations, the Technology Department reserves the right to limit an individual’s access to RSSU networks and resources as well as to remove or limit access to RSSU computers and/or materials posted on RSSU computers.

**Limitation of Liability**
The school makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the school’s electronic system will be error-free or without defect. The school will not be responsible for any damage individual users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service. Other than for student records, the school is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The school will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the unauthorized student use of the system. Parents/guardians of the individual user may be held financially responsible for any harm to the system as a result of carelessness or intentional misuse.

**Telephones**
Each classroom and workspace has a telephone intended for school related business and not for student use. Students must have their teacher’s permission to use the phone and may not use it during class time. Students are responsible for remembering homework, lunch money, instruments, permission slips, and the like. The phone is not to be used to make after school arrangements.

Parents calling to contact teachers or students should expect to leave a message on voicemail during class-time. Calls will not be transferred to classrooms during class-time unless there is an emergency. If parents need to call about after-school arrangements please call before 1:45 p.m. to ensure that your message is received on time. Cell Phones must be turned off and may not be used by students during school hours or on school buses. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged property.

**Testing of Students**
Teachers use various assessment techniques to chart students’ progress. WES takes part in the Mill River School's assessment plan. When necessary, a consulting psychologist, as well as resource room teachers, will test a student if it is felt that more information is needed for a student’s educational program.

**Transfer Program for Public Elementary Schools**
Mill River Unified Union School District (MRUUSD) allows student transfer among the four elementary schools within the supervisory union and Mt. Holly for up to three students. Contact the school office if you would like more information on this program.

**Use of School Facilities**
Organizations wishing to use the school facilities must fill out a building use application. The application can be found on our website. Approval is through the Facilities Manager and some fees may be applicable. A three week window, prior to the desired date is required.

**Vandalism**
In order to maintain the beauty and safety of our school, we take a strong position regarding prosecution of known vandals. Official police complaints will be signed where known violators have been identified and previously warned. We look to you and your usual cooperation to help keep our school beautiful and safe day and night.

**Visitors**
Visitors in our schools can take many forms - guest speakers in classrooms, classroom helpers in the lower grades, dignitaries, etc. All visitors to schools must check in at the school office and serve a specific purpose to the function of the school during the visit. Visits from family or friends, while occasionally appropriate and necessary, should be generally avoided except in emergency or very short circumstances. Visitors should by no means negatively impact the function of the school day or an individual’s work responsibilities.

**Visits to School by Parents**
In the absence of a court order denying visitation rights to a parent, both custodial and non-custodial parents may schedule visits to their child(ren)’s classes. Parents are asked to contact the respective teacher to arrange an appropriate time. Arrangements for other visits should be made through the school office. After consultation with the teacher a convenient time for the visit will be suggested. Requests by
parents to visit classes may be denied by the principal when the visit would result in disruption to the learning process in the classroom.

For the safety of our children, all visitors are required to sign the visitor's log at the office, including the purpose of the visit, and to obtain and wear a visitor's pass. Visits by individual students from other schools must be requested at least one day in advance. Such visits may be approved at the discretion of the classroom teacher if not disruptive to the educational program.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. All volunteers are expected to observe the same high standards of confidentiality which is required of school staff. In addition, regular volunteers and coaches will be asked to complete a criminal record check at the RSSU central office. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your child’s teacher or the school office.

**Winter Recess Clothing Expectations**

1. **Students Outdoor Dress:**
   Pre-K-2nd: All students need to be properly dressed with gear to keep them safe in the out of doors. This includes snow pants, coats, boots, hats and mittens/gloves. They must go to the nurses office to get proper gear if they came to school without.
   3rd-6th: All must at least wear a hat, coat(heavy sweatshirts), gloves/mittens or if their parents sent them with the gear, they must put it on.
   Playing in the snow(sledding or otherwise): Must have snow pants, hand wear & boots.
   If not dressed fully, students must stay on the court or swings. Teachers on duty will make judgements on appropriate play and the student’s wellness using the guidelines above.

2. **Footwear inside:** Students need to have a second set of footwear, one set for outside and a second to change into for indoor wear. All wet footwear are lined up neatly in the hallway outside the classroom

**STATE AND FEDERAL HANDBOOK REQUIREMENTS**

**Bullying, Harassment and Hazing**

*District Equity Coordinator:*
Brian Hill, Chief Academic Officer

*School-based designees for receiving complaints of bullying or harassment:*
Wendy Herrick, School Counselor
Jonathan Raucher, Special Education

“**Bullying or harassment at WES are addressed immediately as students who are being bullied or harassed suffer in their learning.”**

**BULLYING**

Bullying is an act or series of acts against a student by one or more students:
- that is meant to be mean, to hurt, to embarrass, to make fun of, to scare or to make the person feel bad
that happens anywhere on school grounds or the bus or at a school activity, including before the
school day and during after-school activities
• often happens again and again.

HARASSMENT
Harassment is one or more incidents:
• verbal, physical, written, or visual affront
• related to a student’s or family member’s actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or disability
• that interferes with a student’s education or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes:
Sexual Harassment which includes unwelcome advances, requests for favors and/or unwelcome physical conduct;
Racial Harassment and Harassment of other protected categories (creed, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or disability) which includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, written or visual material and insults related to a manner of speech or customs. Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination.

EDUCATION and REPORTING BULLYING OR HARASSMENT
Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment and bullying have no place in our learning environment.

These behaviors violate an individual's rights, undermine the integrity of the school environment, and adversely affect students, teachers, parents and other school personnel whether they are direct subjects of the harassment and/or bullying or not.

Discussions about the nature of bullying and harassment and the process for reporting are held with all classes at the beginning of each school year and these topics are reviewed as necessary.

All staff members have a responsibility to report incidents of bullying or harassment and all students are encouraged to do so as well. Bullying or harassment complaints may be reported to a child’s teacher or directly to a school administrator. All incidents or suspicions of bullying or harassment must be communicated to a school administrator who has the responsibility to investigate the complaint. Bullying and Harassment may be reported anonymously.

The school will contact the parents or guardians of any student who engages in bullying or harassment. Consequences may include: conference with parent; restrictions from class, recess or other school activities; removal from class or other activities for a period of time; apology and promise made to the student who was offended. The student who bullies or harasses others will be expected to develop a plan to change behavior and to demonstrate an understanding of the potential consequences if this behavior continues.

Bullying and Harassment are dangerous, hurtful, disrespectful, and against the law. (Vermont State Law 16 VSA 11–14; 565; 1161) Parents and guardians are urged to contact the school with any questions or concerns regarding bullying or harassment.

Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students
The Wallingford School District (hereinafter “District”) is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Harassment may also constitute a violation of Vermont’s Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

It is also the policy of the District to prohibit the unlawful hazing and bullying of students. Conduct which constitutes hazing may be subject to civil penalties.

The District shall address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person-subject to the jurisdiction of the board-who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more of the board’s disciplinary policies or the school’s code of conduct.

The Model Procedures are expressly incorporated by reference as though fully included within this Model Policy. The Model Procedures are separated from the policy for ease of use as may be required.

II. Implementation
The superintendent or his/her designee shall:
1. Adopt a procedure directing staff, parents and guardians how to report violations of this policy and file complaints under this policy. (See Model Procedures on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students at the end of this policy)
2. Annually, select two or more designated employees to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or harassment at each school campus and publicize their availability in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for the school.
3. Designate an Equity Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the implementation of this policy as it relates to obligations imposed by federal law regarding discrimination. This role may also be assigned to one or both of the Designated Employees.
4. Respond to notifications of possible violations of this policy in order to promptly and effectively address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.
5. Take action on substantiated complaints. In cases where hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated, the District shall take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying; prevent its recurrence; and to remedy the impact of the offending conduct on the victim(s), where appropriate. Such action may include a wide range of responses from education to serious discipline. Serious discipline may include termination for employees and, for students, expulsion or removal from school property. It may also involve penalties or sanctions for both organizations and individuals who engage in hazing. Revocation or suspension of an organization’s permission to operate or exist within the District’s purview may also be considered if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes or condones hazing.

III. Constitutionally Protected Speech
It is the intent of the District to apply and enforce this policy in a manner that is consistent with student rights to free expression under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this policy

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is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person’s protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

IV. Definitions. For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

A. “Bullying” means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:
   a. Is repeated over time;
   b. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and
   c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or
      (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student’s right to access educational programs.

B. “Complaint” means an oral or written report information provided by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying.

C. “Complainant” means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged hazing, harassment or bullying.

D. “Designated employee” means an employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and bullying pursuant to subdivision 16 V.S.A. 570a(a)(7). The designated employees for each school building are identified in Appendix A of this policy.

E. “Employee” includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with the District, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, “agent of the school” includes supervisory union staff.

F. “Equity Coordinator” is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for the District and for coordinating the District’s compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of the District’s Preventing and Responding to Harassment of Students and Harassment of Employees policies. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees.

G. “Harassment” means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student’s educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive
environment. Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

1. Sexual harassment, which means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written visual or physical conduct of asexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur:

   a. Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student’s education, academic status, or progress; or
   b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

   Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive so as to deny or limit the student’s ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program on the basis of sex.

2. Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.

3. Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived creed, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

H. “Hazing” means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and

   ● Which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extra-curricular, or military training program goals, provided that:

1. The goals are approved by the educational institution; and
2. The activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the educational institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

With respect to Hazing, “Student” means any person who:

1. is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution;
2. has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or
3. intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

I. “Notice” means a written complaint or oral information that hazing, harassment or bullying may have occurred which has been provided to a designated employee from another employee, the student allegedly subjected to the hazing, harassment or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the school learns of possible hazing, harassment or bullying through other means, for example, if information about hazing, harassment or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the school’s response. These factors include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged harassment; and whether those individuals want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, notice may occur when an employee of the district, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful harassment or bullying.

J. “Organization” means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.

K. “Pledging” means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

L. “Retaliation” is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment, hazing or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further harassment, intimidation, and reprisal.

M. “School administrator” means a superintendent, principal or his/her designee assistant principal/technical center director or his/her designee and/or the District’s Equity Coordinator.

N. “Student Conduct Form” is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

**Model Procedures on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students**

**I. Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying witnesses.**

**A. Student Reporting:** Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee.

**B. School employee reporting:** Any school employee who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form.
Any school employee who overhears or directly receives information about conduct that might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall immediately report the information to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form. If one of the designated employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to the other designated employee or the school administrator.

C. **Other reporting:** Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee.

D. **Documentation of the report:** If the complaint is oral, the designated employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a Student Conduct Form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.

E. **False complaint:** Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that hazing, harassment and/or bullying occurred or is occurring.

F. **Rights to Alternative Complaint Process:** In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT. 05633-6301
(800)416-2010, or (802)828-2480(voice), (877)-294-9200(tty), (802)828-2481(fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice) 877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

II. **Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)**

A. Upon notice of information that hazing, harassment and/or bullying may have occurred the designated employee shall:
i. Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the conduct, and the identity of the participants and complainant.

ii. Promptly inform the school administrator(s) of the information;

iii. If in the judgment of the school administrator, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying, the school administrator shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on hazing, harassment and bullying and these procedures to the complainant and accused individual, or if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.

B. Upon initiation of an investigation, the designated employee shall:

i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:

   1. an investigation has been initiated;
   2. retaliation is prohibited;
   3. all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and
   4. they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

C. All notifications shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying, or other misconduct occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

III. Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints

A. Initiation of Investigation-Timing. Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) or the police, the school administrator shall, no later than one school day after Notice to a designated employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the school administrator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying.

B. Investigator Assignment. The school administrator shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the school administrator from assigning him/herself or a designated employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.

C. Interim Measures. It may be appropriate for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the school may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the school’s investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate. In all cases, the school will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved—the complainant, the witnesses, and the accused—except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. No contact orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.
D. **Due Process.** The United States Constitution guarantees due process to students and District employees who are accused of certain types of infractions, including but not limited to sexual harassment under Federal Title IX. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The District will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.

E. **Standard Used to Assess Conduct.** In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. The complainant and the accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The school will also consider the impact of relevant off-campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student’s equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

F. **Completion of Investigation –Timing.** No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the designated employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the school administrator.

G. **Investigation Report.** The investigator shall prepare a written report to include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes hazing, harassment and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by either Vermont AOE, or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.

H. **Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians.** Within five school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee shall:

   i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
      1. the investigation has been completed
      2. whether or not the investigation concluded that a policy violation occurred (and which policy term was violated, i.e. harassment, hazing and/or bullying);
      3. that federal privacy law prevents disclosure of any discipline imposed as a result of the investigation unless the parent/guardian of the accused student and/or the accused eligible student consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, as set forth in Section II, Part C, above.

   ii. Notify the Complainant Student-or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian in writing of their rights to:
      1. an internal review by the school of its initial determination as a result of its investigation as to whether harassment occurred;
      2. request pan Independent Review of the school’s “final” determination as to whether harassment occurred within thirty (30) days of the final determination or although a “final” determination was made that harassment indeed occurred the school’s response to that harassment was inadequate to correct the problem; and that the review will be
conducted by an investigator to be selected by the superintendent from a list developed by the Agency of Education;

3. file complaints of harassment with either the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education’s Office of Civil Rights.

iii. Notify the Accused Student—or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian-in writing of their right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.

I. Violations of Other Policies. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the designated employee shall report such conduct to the school administrator for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

IV. Responding to Substantiated Claims

A. Scope of Response. After a final determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has been committed, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing and/or bullying, and remedy its effects on the victim(s). In so doing, the following should be considered:

(i) Potential Remedial Actions. Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the hazing, harassment and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences, counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she understands what constitutes hazing/harassment and/or bullying and the effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the hazing/harassment/bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the school may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize hazing/harassment/bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.

(ii) School Access/Environment Considerations. The District will also take efforts to support victims’ access to the District’s programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies, where appropriate. Accordingly, steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the school may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the school offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the District will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student’s academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate harassment and/or bullying and will be responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

(iii) Hazing Case Considerations. Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations that or individuals who engage in hazing and revocation or suspension of an organization’s permission to operate or exist within the institution’s purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.
(iv) **Other Remedies**: Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s), and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).

**B. Retaliation Prevention.** It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated. The District will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against the student who made the complaint (or was the subject of the harassment), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure that the students and their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school’s investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there have been any new incidents or any retaliation.

**C. Alternative Dispute Resolution.** At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to:

1. the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases),
2. the age of the complainant and the accused individual,
3. the agreement of the complainant, and
4. other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

**V. Post Investigative Reviews**

**Rights of Complainants**

**A. Internal Review of Initial Harassment Determinations By Complainant.**
A complainant or parent of a complainant may request an internal review by the District of a designee’s initial determination (following investigation) that harassment has not occurred via a written request submitted to the District superintendent. All levels of internal review of the investigator’s initial determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the District, be completed within 30 calendar days after review is requested.

**B. Independent Reviews of Final Harassment Determinations By Complainant.**
A complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of a final determination if s/he: (1) is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment occurred, or (2) believes that although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school’s response was inadequate to correct the problem.

The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the superintendent of schools within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 570a.(b)(1) and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that she/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school’s investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing: (1) as to the sufficiency of the school’s investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and (2) of
recommendations of any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Secretary of Education.

The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by the District. The District may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

C. Rights to Alternative Harassment Complaint Process.
In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

A. Appeal.
Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying may appeal the determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken directly to the school board of the school district. The school board shall conduct a review on the record. The standard of review by the school board shall be whether the finding that an act(s) of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the school level fact finder. Appeals should be made to the school board within ten (10)calendar days of receiving the determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline. The school board shall set the matter for a review hearing at the next scheduled school board meeting to the extent practicable, but not later than 30 days from receipt of the appeal filing.

B. Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings.
The school district shall make available upon request of the Accused Student/Appellant, any relevant information, documents, materials, etc. related to the investigation and related finding on appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when an
Accused Student/Appellant seeks a review on the record before the school board of the school district, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school’s determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

VI. Confidentiality and Record Keeping
A. Privacy Concerns.
The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the District’s obligation to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.

Concerns Related to Harassment Complaints.
The scope of appropriate response to a harassment complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a minor student reporting the harassment asks that the student’s name not be disclosed to the harasser or that nothing be done about the alleged harassment. In all cases, school officials will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the complainant initially. The school will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school’s ability to respond. The school will remind the student that both federal Title IX and Vermont Title 9 prevent retaliation and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged harasser, the school will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the school should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the student’s request as long as doing so does not prevent the school from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing harassment of other students. The school will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the school might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment, the age of the student harassed, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is contained in an “education record” of the student alleging the harassment, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the school will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student’s consent.

B. Document Maintenance.
The Superintendent or school administrator shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the District in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records created in conformance with this model policy and model procedures, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees and District/Supervisory Union Central Office for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

VII. Reporting to Other Agencies
A. Reports to the Department of Children and Families. When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4911,et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the
age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901et seq.

B. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a harassment complaint is made in a public school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Commissioner. If a harassment complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the head of school is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.

C. Reporting Incidents to Police
1. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school’s response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may constitute an “educational record” regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
2. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.
3. Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) soliciting direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person’s authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity. Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.

D. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

VIII. Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting
A. Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the District shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the District that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the District.

B. Student Training. The school administrator shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help prevent hazing, harassment and bullying.

C. Staff Training. The board or its designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to hazing, harassment and bullying.
D. **Data Gathering.** Public school districts shall provide the Vermont Agency of Education with data requested by the Secretary of Education.

**Legal References:**
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d;
Public Accommodations Act, 9 V.S.A. §4500 et seq.;
Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. §11(26);(30)(A);(32);
Education, Bullying, 16 V.S.A. §570;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570f;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570b;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570;
Education, Discipline, 16 V.S.A. §1161a;
Education, Suspension or Expulsion of Pupils; 16 V.S.A. §1162;
Child Abuse, 33 V.S.A. §§4911 et seq.;
Child Find Notice (34 CFR §300.111)

All children and students with disabilities who are in need of special education and/or related services and who are legal residents of the towns of Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Tinmouth or Wallingford, need to be identified, located, and evaluated by the Mill River Unified Union School District. Regardless of the severity of their disability, this includes children who are not enrolled in school, attending private or independent schools, enrolled in home study programs, suspected of having a disability despite advancing from grade to grade, who are highly mobile (such as migrant children), and who are homeless or in the custody of the state. Any person with information about any disabled person fitting these descriptions should contact the MRUUSD, Director of Student Services, at (802)-775-3264.

In accordance with MRUUSD’s policies and with 34 CFR Part 99 (the Family Education Rights Privacy Act of 1974), this public notice informs all parents within this jurisdiction about how information is maintained when it is collected during the identification, location, and evaluation of all people with disabilities.

- Personally identifiable information will be protected by the district.
- Personally identifiable information about eligibility, referral, or consideration for special education services is maintained by the district.
- Parents have the right to know what types of information have been designated as directory information (i.e. contained in a student’s education record and is not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed). This information includes the student’s name (unless otherwise requested), address, phone number, date/place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially-recognized activities/sports, weight/height, membership in athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees/awards received, and previous school attended.
• Parents have the right to know the types and locations of educational records kept by the school and the titles and addresses of officials responsible for the records.

• A list of the names and positions of employees within MRUUSD who have access to personally identifiable information shall be available for public inspection.

• If anyone other than an authorized MRUUSD employee looks at the educational record of a child, that person shall so indicate by signing her/his name, date, and purpose for reviewing the record on a form to become part of the education record.

• Parental permission will be obtained prior to disclosing confidential information to anyone who is not an authorized employee of MRUUSD.

• Information relevant to a child’s specific disability (such as: medical information, intelligence test results, social/developmental history, comprehensive evaluation report, and the individualized education program) will be part of the education record.

• Personally identifiable information will be gathered from screenings, qualified diagnostic centers, and other sources, as deemed necessary, to complete a comprehensive evaluation.

• Parents, or eligible students, will be able to access personally identifiable information and inspect and review their education records no later than (45) days after the request is made.

• Parents have the right to a response to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the education records.

• Parents may obtain a copy of the education record without a fee for copying, if a fee will be a financial burden and/or will prevent them from obtaining the record.

• Parents have the right to request the education record be amended. The school district will decide whether to amend the record within a reasonable time of the request. If the district refuses to amend the record, it shall inform the parent and advise the parent of the right to a hearing. If, as a result of the hearing, it is found that the education record must be amended, the school district will amend the record and inform the parent in writing. If, as a result of the hearing, it is found the disputed information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy right of the child, the school will inform the parent of her/his right to place in the education record a written statement commenting on the information or stating any reasons for disagreeing with the results of the hearing. This written statement will become part of the education record and will always be included whenever the contents of the education record are properly viewed or requested.

• Parents have the right to a hearing to challenge the education records of their child.

• Parents will be notified prior to the school district’s destruction of personally identifiable information about their child.

• The parent has the authority to inspect and review records relating to her/his child unless MRUUSD has been advised that the parent does not have the authority under applicable state law governing matters such as guardianship, separation, and divorce.

• Parents have the right to file a complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by MRUUSD to comply with this policy.
Civil Rights Act Provisions
Civil Rights Act Provisions requires “recipients” of federal funding to provide information to “beneficiaries” regarding the nondiscrimination requirements of the Civil Rights Act as applied to the recipient’s operations.

Concussions and Other Head Injuries
The principal or headmaster of each public and approved independent school must ensure that statewide concussion and other head injury guidelines are provided annually to each youth athlete and the athlete’s parents or guardians and that each youth athlete and a parent or guardian annually signs a form acknowledging receipt of the concussion and other head injury guidelines. There are training requirements for all coaches and referees of a contest on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or other head injury.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law. Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school. For additional information, you may call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) (voice). Individuals who use TDD may use the Federal Relay Service.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§1400, et seq.,** requires notice to parents in a variety of ways. However, the most prominent requirements are found in 34 C.F.R. §§300.111, 300.503 and 300.504. The Federal Special Education Law requires notice to parents in a variety of ways.

- 34 C.F.R. §300.111 relates to “Child Find” activities - as interpreted in Vermont regulations, child find includes, among other activities, notifying the public of the availability of special education services for children with disabilities aged 3-21. Similar provisions address child find for students aged birth-3. See Rule 2360.3 and Rule 2360.5.2 of the Vermont State Board of Education Manual of Rules and Practices.
- Requires written notice to a parent of a student with a disability within a reasonable period of time before the school district proposes to initiate or change the identification (eligibility), evaluation or educational placement of the student or the provision of a free, appropriate, public education to the student, or whenever it refuses to do the same.
- §300.504 requires notice of “procedural safeguards” whenever a child is initially referred for a special education evaluation, whenever an Individual Education Plan meeting is called, whenever a reevaluation is sought, and whenever a due process complaint has been filed.

**Special Education**

Students PreK-12 receive services in accordance with their IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Students are determined eligible for special education services through a comprehensive special education evaluation process, which is led by a district-wide Evaluation (Testing) Team. General educators and special educators are required to provide input and data for IEP’s and evaluations by specified deadlines. Attendance at IEP and evaluation meetings is required unless other arrangements have been made with the LEA (Local Education Agency Representative). If a teacher's absence from a special education meeting is approved, the teacher is still expected to submit input in writing to the student’s case manager at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Any member of the district who receives a written or verbal request for special education testing from a parent or person acting in the capacity of a parent is expected to forward the request to the Director of Student Services within 24 hours of receiving it so that it can be responded to in accordance with state law. Any questions or concerns regarding the delivery or compliance of special education services should be discussed with the assigned LEA and/or Director of Special Services.

**Mandated Reporting**

All school employees are mandated reporters, and it is our duty to help protect students from abuse and neglect. Act 60 of 2015 provides that any mandated reporter who reasonably suspects abuse or neglect of a child shall report in accordance with the law within 24 hours of the time information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect was first received or observed.
**New Americans**
We have a responsibility to ensure that all of our students feel safe and supported. This occurs when we create school cultures that are responsive to the needs of the children in our care, and our families. Under Federal law, undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents (Plyler vs. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982)). And, under state law, all Vermont children, including undocumented children are required to attend school until the mandated age of 16. Meeting this obligation means going beyond telling families to enroll their student(s). It includes working proactively to ensure they feel safe, supported and welcomed.

Public schools may not:
1. Deny or terminate a student’s enrollment on the basis of actual or perceived immigration status.
2. Treat a student differently to verify legal residency in the United States.
3. Engage in any practices that have the effect of discouraging students from enrolling or attending school based on their immigration status.
4. Require students or their parents to disclose their immigration status or inquire of students or parents in ways that may expose their undocumented status.
5. Deny or terminate a student’s enrollment due to the student’s or parent’s failure to provide a social security number.

See the letter on the State’s responsibility to protect the rights of undocumented Vermont students:

- [Letter Regarding Undocumented Vermont Students](#)
- [Letter Regarding Undocumented Vermont Students (Spanish)](#)

** Notices Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act **

**Periodic Hearing and Vision Screening**
Vermont State law requires schools to test the hearing and vision of students pursuant to research-based guidelines. Parents have the right to opt out of the screening and to do so must notify the school (opt out form is on page 31).

**Protection of Pupil Rights Act**
The Protection of Pupil Rights Act, requires parental notification in a number of respects:

- Requires local education agencies to notify parents annually, at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any amendment thereof, of the adoption or continued use of PPRA policies. These local policies must include the following:
  - The rights of parents to inspect surveys created by a “third party” (meaning not federally funded) before it is administered,
  - Procedures for such inspection of surveys,
  - Arrangements to protect student privacy with respect to surveys on sensitive matters,
  - The right to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum,
  - Procedures for inspecting the instructional materials,
  - The administration of any physical examinations or screenings,
  - The collection or disclosure of student information for marketing purposes,
  - The right of a parent to inspect any instrument used in the collection of personal information for marketing purposes before such information is collected or disclosed, and
Procedures for obtaining access to such instruments in a timely fashion.

- Requires an annual notice to parents of the right to opt out of certain activities including collection of personal student information for marketing purposes, administration of certain surveys, and non-emergency invasive physical examinations or screenings.
- Provides that schools notify parents, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates when any of the following will occur: collection of information for marketing purposes, administration of surveys containing sensitive questions, and any non-emergency, invasive physical examinations or screenings.
- Provides that schools must “give parents and students effective notice of their rights under this section [PPRA]”.

Seclusion and Restraint

PERTAINING TO THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

All schools within the Mill River Unified Union School District make every effort to establish and maintain a positive and safe learning environment that promotes academic achievement and positive social, emotional, and behavioral development. By providing multi-tiered support systems focused on positive behavioral interventions and supports, we promote the use of positive behaviors and prevent the occurrence of unsafe behaviors. This is accomplished by the direct teaching, prompting and encouraging of prosocial behaviors for all students and staff members. For students who struggle to meet behavioral expectations despite these supports, our schools provide a continuum of additional evidence-based strategies and supports.

The use of physical restraint and seclusion is considered only for emergency situations when a student poses an imminent threat of significant physical injury to themselves or others. Our school operates in compliance with Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4500 regarding the use of restraints and seclusions in schools. These interventions (again, only used when a student poses an imminent threat of serious physical injury) are implemented only as a last resort, after all other less restrictive interventions have been tried, and only by those staff members who have been trained to do so. The restraint or seclusion is ended as soon as the student demonstrates that he/she is in unnecessary pain or significant physical distress; as soon as the student’s behavior no longer poses an imminent danger of physical injury; or when less restrictive interventions can be effectively applied to stop dangerous behaviors. Following any restraint or seclusion, the student will be evaluated and monitored for the remainder of the school day and a series of reports will be made to ensure that parents/caregivers and the building administrator are informed of the incident. When necessary, reports are also provided to the Superintendent of Schools and to the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Education. Debriefing in the days following these interventions is provided for the student, for the staff members involved, and for parents/caregivers in order to examine the incident further, to ensure that proper procedures were used, and to examine any follow-up actions that should occur to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

Once again, please understand that our school emphasizes and prioritizes the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports to prevent the need for restraints and seclusions.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our school’s efforts to maintain a positive and safe learning environment, feel free to contact Principal Daniel Betts by phone at (802)-446-2141 or by email at dbetts@millriverschools.org.
Section 504
Section 504 requires schools to notify parents and others that the school does not discriminate on the basis of handicap; the school’s notice shall identify the responsible employee designated to coordinate compliance with Section 504 and of the availability of a grievance procedure to address complaints regarding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Title IX Grievance Procedures and Dissemination of Policy
Title IX requires that recipients of federal funding publish their grievance procedures with respect to discrimination on the basis of sex and that each recipient “implement specific and continuing steps to notify…. students and parents of elementary and secondary school students….that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational program or activity which it operates, and that it is required by Title IX….not to discriminate in such a manner.” The latter section requires publication of this notice in a variety of ways, including in bulletins, catalogs, or application forms.

Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students
All students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. Many questions arise for students and school staff when considering the best supports for transgender and gender nonconforming students. The Continuing Best Practices for Schools Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students are designed to provide direction for schools to address issues that may arise concerning the needs of transgender and gender nonconforming students.

Wellness Programs
A list of school and community programs which have the potential to improve childhood wellness is made available to all school districts and community organizations that request it. Current information about Vermont wellness programs is available online. Schools are required to have a wellness plan and the district's plan can be found on the MRUUSD website.