



**Horace W. Porter School**  
**Student Handbook**  
**2020-2021**

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## MISSION STATEMENT OF DISTRICT AND SCHOOL

The Columbia School District is a community of learners providing rigorous programs to ensure that each student can excel as an individual.

## PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communication to students and parents/guardians regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. Consult the district’s website or the individual school’s website for any significant changes.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents/guardians. It contains required and useful information. Because this form of communication cannot be as personal as we would prefer, in it we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents/guardians need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct and school safety and security plans which are intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other

communications.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as designated by law.

Barbara Wilson (Director of Student Services) Director of Student Services is the designated district compliance officer who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## ADMISSION/PLACEMENT

A student seeking enrollment in the Horace W. Porter School for the first time or following attendance in another Connecticut public school district, an out-of-state district, a private school, or is seeking admission through a bona fide foreign exchange program, should contact the principal/superintendent or designee. A student who is transferring from non-public schools or schools outside the district will be placed at his/her current grade level pending evaluation and observation of the student. Following such assessment and consultation with the parents, the principal will determine the grade placement of the child. Nonresidents may attend school on a tuition basis and must be approved by the Superintendent and Board of Education, provided space is available. Parents of students attending District schools have the option to enroll their child(ren) in a magnet school with which the District is a nonparticipating district, if the magnet school has unused student capacity. The District may pay any tuition charge except tuition for a preschool magnet program.

## ADVERTISING

The public schools maintain careful controls on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those directly related to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District-prescribed standards shall be met.

## AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE), and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.



It is the intent of the District to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity in which that person is involved receives federal funding directly.

All individuals who are disabled or “handicapped” are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be “handicapped” under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with “handicaps” are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504 accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities,
2. has a record of such an impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students’ strengths and for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to: providing a structured learning environment, repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments, supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions, adjustment to class schedules, modifying test delivery, computer-assisted instructions, or using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504 in the Columbia School District, please call Barbara Wilson at 860.228.0585 extension 115.

Any eligible person, including any student, parent/guardian, staff member or other employee who feels that he/she

has been discriminated against on the basis of disability may submit a written complaint to Barbara Wilson, the district's designated Section 504 Coordinator, within 30 days of the alleged occurrence.

## ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. The district has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

## ASSEMBLIES

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

## ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success; thus, any absence\* from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

\*Absence means an excused absence or an unexcused absence.

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his/her assigned school or activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age by signing an option form at the school district offices.

A child whose total number of absences at anytime during one school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a "chronically absent" child. The child will be subject to review by the district and/or School Attendance Team.

All children attending district schools must obtain the required immunizations unless they have medical contraindications or religious objections. This obligation may be waived for homeless students.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district-provided form to leave school at age 17.

## ABSENCE

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school between 7:30 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents should contact the principal in order to take advantage of special services such as the collection of homework assignments for a student who must be out for several days.

### Excused Absence

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" only if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For the first through ninth absence in one school year, a student's absences from school are considered "excused" when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials. (Define required documentation.)
- B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absences and all absences thereafter when they are absent from school for the following reasons:
  1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
  2. Student's observance of a religious holiday.
  3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
  4. Court appearances which are mandated. (Documentation required)
  5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.
  6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with the Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.
  7. Additional 10 days allowed for children of military service members.

A phone call with no written follow-up will automatically be coded as an unexcused absence. The responsibility for makeup of work lies with the student. Unless a student has an extended illness, all makeup privileges must be completed within 3 days after the student returns to school.

### Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the categories for excused absences. Students who have unexcused absences may be denied makeup privileges for work due during the time the student was absent. Such absences may also be reflected in the student's final grade.

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards when issued. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, guidance counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

### Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students From School

Under no circumstances may a student leave school or the school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians *and* school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed before the end of a school day, a parent/guardian should send a written request to the office on or before the day of the requested dismissal. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator for the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office. No student may be released in the custody of any individual who is not the parent or guardian of the student, unless the individual's name appears on the list maintained by the school's principal as authorized to obtain the release of students.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian. The Board of Education does not condone/approve students leaving a school campus in third-party ride-sharing vehicles, especially when the policies of such services (Uber, Lyft) explicitly prohibit minors from using them unless accompanied by an adult.

### Tardiness

Students who are not in their homeroom/classroom by 8:25 A.M. are considered tardy and must report directly to the front desk monitor to receive a pass. A student discovered on school grounds who has not signed in will also be considered tardy. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant.

### Truancy

Truancy is defined by statute as absence(s) from school without the knowledge or approval of parents/guardians and/or school officials. A student age five to eighteen\*\* inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered truant.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

## AUTOMATED PHONE MESSAGING SYSTEMS

The Columbia Public School system uses an automated phone messaging system (SchoolMessenger) which gives school administrators the ability to easily contact parents/guardians with news that can be communicated

immediately. Administrators have the ability to send personally prerecorded messages to the entire school community, or they can tailor transmissions to smaller groups, when needed. The system allows the District to program up to three numbers for each parent/guardian of a District student. (home phone, work phone, cell). Such calls are permitted without prior consent if limited to notice of emergency items, such as weather-related closures, issues of student safety and health, and threats of imminent danger. Parental consent will be sought when the messaging system will be used for other informational items.

## BACKPACKS AND BOOK BAGS

Students find it useful to carry book bags, duffel bags and knapsacks. Students are allowed to carry/use these items to and from school only. As students do not need to carry all of their books and notebooks during the entire school day, lockers should be used. Safety and comfort of both students and adults must be considered.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board members are unpaid elected public officials with the responsibility for governance of the school district. The members of the Columbia Board of Education are:

Chairperson: Christopher Lent

Members: Jim Chakulski, David Crim, Linette Dooley, Michael Maziarz, Joseph Napolitano, Kathy Tolsdorf

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Columbia Board of Education holds regular business meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 PM (unless otherwise noted) in the Horace W. Porter School cafeteria. Parents, students and other community members are encouraged to attend.

Meetings of the Board follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement or express a viewpoint (limited to three (3) minutes in length). Following advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda to allow for a more thorough discussion of the topic.

The Board's main purpose is to set policies designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public's opinion on district issues that can assist them in formulating policy which reflects community values and expectations.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Board of Education policies are available on the district's website at [www.hwporter.org](http://www.hwporter.org). The policies are subject to modifications by the Board at any time.

## BULLYING

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication (such as cyberbullying) directed at or referring to another

student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such students,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical violence and attacks
2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
3. Threats and intimidation
4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school ("cyberbullying")
7. Targeting of a student based on the student's actual or perceived "differentiating" characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic or academic status, physical appearance, or intellectual, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Students who engage in any act of bullying on school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
  2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
  3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,
- are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.

Students and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action.

The complaint procedure is also posted on the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist, but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for reviewing a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents/guardians of the alleged perpetrator of the bullying act and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act was directed will receive prompt notification that such investigation has begun. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

## BUS CONDUCT

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while waiting for or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board policy or administrative regulation.

## CAFETERIA

All eating is to be done in the cafeteria with the exception of breakfast, which may be eaten during homeroom class only. No other food is permitted in the building. Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may be cause for forfeiting the right to eat in a particular location or other disciplinary action deemed appropriate for the misconduct.

It is the intent of the Board of Education that our school takes a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. The District complies with the professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs to offer students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Breakfast is offered free to all students daily, and free and reduced priced lunches are available based on financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from EASTCONN Food Services Director or the School website.

Charging meals to a student's account that does not have sufficient funds is not encouraged by the District; however, on those occasions that a student does not have money for lunch, the student will be offered an alternate meal.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided as required for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions that may occur.

## CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation, which in most cases is the teacher. The proper channelling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher/coach, (2) Assistant Principal/Principal, (3) Superintendent, (4) Board of

Education.

This publication has been created to help parents and guardians get answers to their questions in the most expeditious manner.

## Guide for School Questions and Concerns

Have you contacted your child's teacher?	Yes ?	Do you require additional assistance?	Yes ?	Did you contact an administrator?	Yes ?	Do you require additional assistance?	Yes ?	Did you contact the superintendent?	Yes ?	Do you require additional assistance?	Yes ?	Did you contact the Board of Education?
? No		? No		? No		? No		? No		? No		? No
Please contact your child's teacher		We are pleased your question or concern has been resolved.		Please contact an administrator. See back of this document to assist you with the most appropriate administrator.		We are pleased your question or concern has been resolved.		Please contact Maria Geryk.		We are pleased your questions or concern has been resolved.		See list of Board members listed on back of this document.

Administrator	Area
Karen Caputo 860-228-9493 ext. 167 kcaputo@hwporter.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discipline</li> <li>● PBIS</li> <li>● Social Emotional Learning Curriculum</li> <li>● Safe School Climate Coordinator</li> <li>● SBAC</li> <li>● Transportation (regular)</li> <li>● Facilities &amp; Operations</li> </ul>



Alyssa Gwinnell 860-228-9493 ext. 162 agwinnell@hwporter.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff Member questions/concerns</li> <li>● Scheduling</li> <li>● Student Concerns</li> <li>● School day questions/concerns</li> <li>● Teaching &amp; Learning</li> </ul>
Barbara Wilson 860-228-0585 ext. 175 bwilson@hwporter.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Special education questions/concerns</li> <li>● Section 504 questions/concerns</li> <li>● Title IX questions/concerns</li> <li>● EL questions/concerns</li> <li>● Preschool questions/concerns</li> <li>● High School special education and Section 504 questions/concerns</li> </ul>

<b>Superintendent</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Maria Geryk	860-228-8590 ext. 163 <a href="mailto:mgeryk@hwporter.org">mgeryk@hwporter.org</a>

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Christopher Lent, Chairperson	860-573-7449 <a href="mailto:clent929@gmail.com">clent929@gmail.com</a>
Michael Maziara, Vice Chair/Secretary	860-416-6000 <a href="mailto:michaelmaze@gmail.com">michaelmaze@gmail.com</a>
James Chakulski, Jr.	860-55808692 <a href="mailto:jchakulski@yahoo.com">jchakulski@yahoo.com</a>
Linette Dooley	860-368-9969 <a href="mailto:linette.dooley@voya.com">linette.dooley@voya.com</a>
Joseph Napolitano	518-390-2046 <a href="mailto:ioey.napolitano@gmail.com">ioey.napolitano@gmail.com</a>
Arthur Rowbowtham	860-208-3808 <a href="mailto:artr@hallradio.net">artr@hallradio.net</a>
Christine Sposito	860-463-0159 <a href="mailto:csposito@hwporter.org">csposito@hwporter.org</a>

## CHEATING/PLAGIARISM (Academic Dishonesty)

Students are expected to pursue their school work with integrity and honesty. Cheating and plagiarism demonstrates a lack of integrity and character that is inconsistent with district goals and values. All forms of cheating and plagiarism, including by electronic means, are not acceptable. Misrepresentation by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as entirely their own work (when it is not) shall be considered a form of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidents require

disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating will take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

## CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, and other professional school staff including school counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, physicians, licensed behavior analysts, and substitute teachers are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee, to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault, a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

## CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The district collaborates with state and local child welfare agencies to ensure school stability for children in foster care. A child in foster care must remain in his/her school of origin if it is determined to be in the child's best interest. Transportation will be arranged as required. The district's Liaison for Homeless Students and the point of contact for the education of students in foster care is the Director of Student Services.

## CLASS PLACEMENT

Every effort will be made to place students with teachers where a positive student-teacher relationship will be established. Parents have an opportunity to provide information relative to placement; however, the final decision for placement rests with the principal or his/her designee.

## COMPUTER RESOURCES

The district utilizes computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for a computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign an annual user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that email communications using district computers are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using district equipment, while on district property, or at a district sponsored activity unless the posting is approved in advance by a certified teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube or others, when the student is not engaged in district activities and/or not using district equipment.

The district reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at anytime and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the Columbia School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore, students with prior approval by a certified teacher or administrator will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day for work assigned by the teacher and to collaborate with other students.

## STUDENT CONDUCT-SCHOOL CLIMATE

Horace W. Porter School is in its second year of implementing a system of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to encourage, teach, practice and model appropriate, respectful and responsible student behavior.

- PBIS is a framework for Administrators, staff and parents to follow. It will take 3-5 years to develop and implement throughout the school, including classrooms, cafeteria, recess and buses.
- The goal of PBIS is to create a safe and positive school climate where children can learn and grow academically, socially, behaviorally and emotionally.
- School-wide PBIS supports **all** students by clarifying our behavioral expectations, explicitly teaching and modeling these expectations, developing individualized plans for specific students and recognizing when students demonstrate positive behaviors.
- PBIS focuses on the development and implementation of proactive procedures, practices and strategies to prevent problem behavior with the focus being on positive support.
- PBIS helps to guide schools as they respond to discipline issues.

Horace W. Porter School will utilize a positive support system as a means for teaching and promoting these expected behaviors and has established four core behavioral expectations: **Practice Respect, Act Responsibly, Work Together, Safety Matters (PAWS)**, which students will be expected to adhere to as we continue to promote safe and respectful behaviors.

Most students will learn to adhere to the behavioral expectations and accept responsibility for their behaviors. They will change their behavior with positive reinforcement, modeling and re-teaching. However, when the school's core values are not followed disciplinary consequences may be necessary. When this occurs, the following interventions will be utilized:

***TO OFTEN WE FORGET THAT DISCIPLINE REALLY MEANS TO TEACH, NOT TO PUNISH. A DISCIPLE IS A STUDENT, NOT A RECIPIENT OF BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES. ~Dr. Dan Siegel, The Whole Brain Child***

1. Adults redirects the student and reminds them of our behavioral expectations **Practice Respect/Act Responsibly, Work Together Safety Matters.**
2. Adult has a private conference with the student to reinforce the expected behaviors and ensure that the student is aware of the unacceptable behavior he/she is displaying.
3. Re-teaching strategies and in class interventions such as changing the student's seat, positive reinforcement, providing choices, and removal of distractions are just some of the in-class interventions that teachers may utilize.
4. Students may be directed to "Take a Break" either in or out of the classroom.
5. If the problem persists, the teacher may contact parents and decide on classroom consequences which may include loss of activity.
6. Should the behavioral problems continue; the teacher may try an alternate approach or send the student to the office to talk with a building administrator
7. The student may be discussed at the Data Team level for development of individual behavior strategies
8. If the problems continue and all other efforts to remedy the problem have been to no avail or are that of an egregious nature the administrator may call the parent and issue consequences, such as a lunch detention or an after-school detention. A parent conference may also be arranged.
9. The building administrator may decide to suspend the student in accordance with Board of Education policy.
10. The building administrator may decide to expel the student in accordance with Board of Education policy.

Positive reinforcement, re-teaching, practicing and modeling appropriate behaviors typically help students to accept responsibility for their behavior and make positive choices. However, if a teacher decides that the student's behavior threatens the safety and well-being of staff, students and the overall learning environment, the student will immediately be sent to a building administrator rather than following the above progression.

The school district believes that exclusionary discipline practices (suspension, expulsion) limit students' access to classroom instruction and fail to improve student outcomes and school climate. These practices will be used as a last resort in a continuum of disciplinary measures.

**At times students may engage in behaviors that violate the law and/or are of a egregious nature that constitute more severe disciplinary action. Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.**

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.
5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
7. Playing with/using matches, fire, or committing arson.
8. Committing robbery or theft.
9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.
12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail, i.e., forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or making derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs, including marijuana, a controlled substance or drug, or an alcoholic beverage.
17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.
18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.
19. Possessing, smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
20. Hazing or bullying.
21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.
22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.
23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.
24. Cheating or plagiarizing, including by electronic means.
25. Threatening in any manner (including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication) a member of the school including any teacher, school administrator or other employee, or a fellow student.
26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise

illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer of other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.

27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.
28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.

## **SCHOOL DANCES:**

During school dances, students may not leave the building until the end of the dance, unless written permission is received from parents indicating that the parents will pick up the student. Once a student leaves the school dance, he/she will not be allowed back into the school. A half an hour following the end of the dance, the school building and school grounds will be secured and adult supervision will end. All school conduct rules are in effect during such activity.

Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of publicized Board of Education policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. In determining whether conduct is “seriously disruptive of the education process” for purposes of suspension and expulsion, the administration (in cases of suspension) and the Board of Education or impartial hearing board (in matters of expulsion) may consider (but consideration is not limited to): (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school, (2) whether other students were involved or whether there was gang involvement, (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon and whether any injuries occurred and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

## **DANGEROUS WEAPONS and INSTRUMENTS**

No guns, knives or any other objects, including martial arts weapons and facsimiles of weapons, capable of threatening or causing injury or death may be brought onto school grounds. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to arrest and prosecution, as well as appropriate disciplinary action. Any student found in possession of a weapon on school grounds or during a school-activity will be expelled from school.

An expelled student may apply for early readmission to school. Such readmission is at the discretion of the Board of Education, unless the Board has delegated authority for readmission decisions to the Superintendent. The Board or Superintendent, as appropriate, may condition such readmission on specified criteria.

## **DRESS CODE**

Student dress may be regulated, and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to particular school situations. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive to the educational process or contrary to law. Administrators will use reason and discretion when determining the appropriateness of attire. The school staff will enforce the dress code in a consistent manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income or body type/size. Enforcement of the dress code will be gender neutral.

\* Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, malodorousness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited.

Students MAY wear shoes that expose the toes and/or heels as long as they are secure on the feet (i.e. No flip-flops), BUT must NOT have a sole/heel higher than one inch.

- o Additionally, closed toed and/or heeled shoes may be required for participation in classes such as Art, Science, and PE depending on the activity. Shoes that do not follow the expectations as stated by the teacher may result in loss of participation and/or grade.

Students may not wear any accessories like:

- chains/wallet chains
- hats, caps, bandanas, or hoods(hoods can be part of the shirt, but not worn on the head in the building), unless part of a uniform necessary to participate in a school event. (Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious practice or belief shall not be prohibited under this policy.)

Special Event Attire: Students participating in a special event are expected to wear clothing that is appropriate to that function in accordance with the school dress code.

Band/Chorus Concert Dress Code: Boys: white dress shirt, tie, black pants, and dress shoes. Girls: white blouse, black skirt/pants, and dress shoes.

This Student Dress Code also applies to all school-sponsored events.

The dress code does not prohibit accommodations for religious garments.

## HALLWAY BEHAVIOR

In order to insure student safety and that of others, middle school students will keep to the right when passing in the hallways, adhere to the HANDS OFF policy, walk, move at a reasonable pace, not obstruct the passage of others, and use double doors on the right hand side. Students in the hallway during class time require a pass. Elementary students will walk in line with their class as directed by their teacher.

## CYBER BULLYING

The district's computer network and the Internet, and the personal electronic devices of students, whether accessed on or off school grounds or during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of harassment. All forms of harassment over the Internet (commonly known as "cyberbullying") are unacceptable and in violation of district policy and of the district's acceptable computer use policy and procedures. "Cyberbullying" refers to any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, such misuses of technology as harassing, teasing, intimidating,

threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs. It is also recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material may be disguised or logged on as someone else.

Students and community members who believe they have been the victims of such misuses of technology as described, should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the Safe School Climate Specialist, the Principal or Director of Technology. All reports of cyberbullying will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist.

In situations in which the cyberbullying originated from a non-school computer but brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of school. Also, such conduct must be violative of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats or making a threat off school grounds to kill or hurt a teacher or student.

Disciplinary action may include loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion. A communicated threat or hate crime will be reported to the police.

Students will be provided instruction regarding appropriate online behavior.

## DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED's)/SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST

Horace W. Porter School has (2) two automatic external defibrillators (AED) and at least (2) school personnel trained in AED operation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The AED and trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds. The school also has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life-threatening emergencies. Coaches, as required by law, review before beginning his/her assignment the State's sudden cardiac awareness education plan.

## DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY: Please see Student Conduct-School Climate

Horace W. Porter School is in the process of implementing PBIS and has adopted four core values: Practice Respect, Act Responsibly, Work Together and Safety Matters. Data indicates that children who receive positive reinforcement and whose positive behavior is acknowledged on a consistent basis are more willing to adhere to the expected behaviors. Most students will learn to adhere to the behavioral expectations and accept responsibility for their behaviors. They will change their behavior with positive reinforcement, modeling and re-teaching. However, when the school's core values are not followed disciplinary interventions/ consequences may be necessary.

Horace W. Porter's disciplinary interventions/consequences actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques such as detention, removal from class, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and



expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, if a student violates the law, that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline up to and including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct that is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized Board of Education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

The school district believes that exclusionary discipline practices (suspension, expulsion) limit students' access to classroom instruction and fail to improve student outcomes and school climate. These practices will be used as a last resort in a continuum of disciplinary measures.

The progression of interventions/consequences are outlined in the Student Conduct-School Climate Section and a description of the disciplinary management techniques are outlined below.

### **Detention**

A student may be detained outside of school hours for not more than one (1) hour on each of one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. The detention shall not begin until the student's parents have been notified of the reasons for the detention and can make arrangements for the student's transportation on the day(s) of the detention.

### **Expulsion**

Parents will be given notice of at least five (5) business days prior to an expulsion hearing. The notice will contain information about the legal rights of the student and parent, information concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate and are available locally and how to access such services. An attorney or other advocate may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent/guardian of the student has the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except if there is an emergency situation, in which case such hearings shall be held as soon as possible after the expulsion.

The Board of Education may expel a student in grades 3 through 12, inclusive, from school privileges if, after a full hearing, the Board finds that the student's conduct endangers person(s), property or the educational process or is in violation of a publicized Board policy. Students who have been expelled for the first time may be eligible for an alternative educational program, as defined in accordance with State Board of Education standards.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extra curricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion.

Any students under 16 years old who are expelled or students between 16 and 18 who are expelled for the first time and have never been suspended may be eligible to have the length of the expulsion period shortened or waived by the Board of Education after the student successfully completes a Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board. Such a Board-specified program does not require the student or the parent/guardian of the student to pay for participation in the program. During an expulsion period students must be offered an alternative

educational opportunity that complies with the State Board of Education’s “Standards for Alternative Educational Opportunities.”

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive are subject to mandatory expulsion for the possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity for a calendar year. A student in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive, who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student’s cumulative educational record. The record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

If students expulsion is shortened or the expulsion period waived based upon the fact that the student was expelled for the first time, has never been suspended and successfully completed a Board specified program and/or met other conditions required by the Board, the notice of expulsion will be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school or, if the Board so chooses, at the time the student completes the Board specified program and meets other Board required conditions.

Expelled students, under age 16, will be offered an individualized learning plan as part of an alternative education. Students between ages 16 and 18 who are expelled, even for conduct that endangers others, will be offered an alternative educational opportunity if it is the students first expulsion (PA 16-147). Once a student is admitted to an alternative educational placement, an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) will be developed to govern the programming for the student during the period of expulsion.

A district student who has committed an expellable offense who seeks to return to a District school after having been in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement for one year or more, in lieu of expulsion from the District, shall be permitted to return to the appropriate school setting within the District. Further, the District will not expel the student from any additional time for the offense(s).

### Suspension

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal

hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or his/her parents.

## DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

Printed materials may be distributed to parents by students as a means of communication. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations, will be referred to the office of the superintendent to determine whether the request complies with school policy.

The principal or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.
2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.
4. Does not promote profit making organizations.
5. Does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the principal. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspapers, and yearbook.

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND GAMES (Radios, CD Players, Cell Phones)

The school strives to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment while providing students with opportunities for reasonable access to cell phones and other electronic devices. This policy also recognizes the use of electronic devices for educational purposes with administrative permission or with teacher approval within the classroom. The possession and use of electronic devices at Horace W. Porter School is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of privileges.

Students are solely responsible for any electronic devices brought to school. Students should not leave them unattended. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen devices.

Mobile devices are not allowed in classes unless their use is part of the teacher's lesson plan and students have the permission of the teacher. Teachers have discretion concerning how the devices may be used for learning. However, mobile devices such as cell phones, may be used for information access and/or text-based communication during class if instructed by the teacher or before and after entering the school.

No recording, video or audio, or photographs may be taken in school unless it is part of a lesson and all appropriate privacy protections, such as contained in FERPA, are honored.

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting.

## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event school is closed or released early due to bad weather or another emergency, announcements will be made on television and radio stations, such as WILL, WTIC, WFSB, NBC. Emergency closings will also be posted on the district website, <http://www.hwporter.org>. Additionally, electronic notification will be provided through the SchoolMessenger Notification System.

## ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES (English Learners)

The number of students in our district who come from non-English speaking backgrounds is increasing, including those with limited English proficiency. Such students will be identified, assessed and provided appropriate services.

## EQUITY and DIVERSITY

Students deserve a respectful learning environment in which their cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. The school learning and work environment is enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and the very presence of diverse participants.

## EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION

A student will be exempted from instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), or Family Life and Sex Education upon receipt of a written request for such exemption from his/her parent or guardian. In addition, a student will be excused from participating in, or observing animal dissections as part of classroom instruction upon a written request from the student's parent or guardian. The student must complete an alternate assignment determined by the school.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### Athletics

Athletics are considered an integral part of the school's educational program. Whether participation is on the intramural, interscholastic, or class level, students have an opportunity to acquire qualities of fitness, self-discipline, and cooperation.

Student athletes may not participate in any intramural or interscholastic activity unless the student athlete and his/her parent/guardian complete the concussion education plan and sign the informed consent form.

The concussion education plan may consist of written materials, online training or videos, or in person training. The consent form includes a summary of the school/district's concussion education plan and applicable school board concussion policies.

Student interscholastic activities shall be governed by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) regulations. Eligibility for participation is determined by ability and scholarship and is governed by state law as well as the regulations of the CIAC.

Any student participating in after school activities must be in attendance for half of the scheduled school day in order to participate that afternoon or evening. Exceptions to this rule will be considered only if the student's parent explains the unusual circumstance to the principal or designee.

### Clubs and Performing Groups

Student clubs, performing groups, athletic teams and other extracurricular activities may establish rules of conduct for participants that may be stricter than those of students in general.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups may establish standards of behavior, including consequences for misbehavior, that are different than those for conduct in the general education classroom environment.

### Dances and Social Events

School dances may be scheduled periodically during the school year. Only legally enrolled students of Horace W. Porter School may attend the school dances unless other arrangements have been made and approved by the administration. Students are expected to dress appropriately for all dances.

Standards of dress, admission costs, and other pertinent instructions will be announced prior to each dance.

## FACILITIES

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place.

Unless the student continues to be involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately following dismissal from an activity.

## FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. A student is expected, however, to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, erasers, calculator, and notebooks. The student may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

1. Security deposits.
2. The materials for a class project that the student will keep.
3. Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
4. Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
5. Student accident insurance.
6. Insurance on school-owned instruments, instrument rental and uniform maintenance.
7. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment.
8. Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extra-curricular activities.

## FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be scheduled for educational, cultural, or extracurricular purposes. Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by the principal. While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that rules of conduct must be followed and dress standards must be appropriate for the field trip activity. The Board of Education strongly encourages all transportation of student to be on buses or other transportation vehicles which conform to the requirements of law and regulations of the State Department of Education. The Board realizes that, on limited occasions, it may be more cost effective and/or responsive for school employees to transport small numbers of students in private automobiles with prior permission from administration.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied opportunity to participate in any class or school sponsored activity because of inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact a guidance counselor, advisor or administrator to request confidential help.

## FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held at regular intervals as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills as appropriate. Crisis response drill will be planned and conducted with the local law enforcement agency, and will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and stay-put responses.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly and in an orderly manner.

When the alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet and calm manner.

Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

Local law enforcement and other local public safety officials will evaluate and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills.

## FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

The Columbia Public School District recognizes that students have a right to bring into our schools, in a judicious manner governed by regulations, items for posting that are not considered obscene, libelous, disruptive, vulgar, and are deemed by the Administration to be consistent with community standards. Further, no expressed idea will be suppressed because it is not shared by the majority. However, expressions which involve false statements, disruptive or potentially dangerous content, the use of obscenities, and advocacy of violation of law or school regulations are unacceptable.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management. A plan will be implemented for each student for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease.

Substitutions to the regular meal provided by the school will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of their disabilities, when that need is certified in writing by a physician. Meal services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. An Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with life threatening food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law. An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) may be part of the Section 504 plan.

A student with glycogen storage disease is permitted to have a parent/guardian or a person they so designate to provide food or dietary supplements on school grounds during the school day.

A student with an allergic condition may retain possession of an EpiPen or similar device while receiving school transportation services.

## FUNDRAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the Principal at least 14 days before the event.

Any food items sold as part of any fund-raising activity must meet the nutritional standards published by the Connecticut Department of Education. Beverages or foods that are not allowed for sale during regular school hours may be sold provided (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) the sale is at the location of such an event, and (3) food or beverages are not sold from a vending

machine or school store.

All online fundraising activities (including Crowdfunding) are subject to administrative approval prior to the posting of any such fundraising solicitation.

## GIFTED and TALENTED PROGRAM

The school's gifted and talented program provides opportunities for students to explore and extend their unique gifts and talents of intellect and talent.

## GRADING SYSTEM

### Report Cards

Written reports of student grades and absences shall be issued to parents at least once every four (4) for the middle school and three (3) times a year for elementary school. At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, the parent will be notified if the student's grade average is near or below 70 or below the expected level of performance. Report cards must be signed by the parents and returned to the school within three (3) school days.

Grades given to students are determined by the teacher of the course, and the determination of the student's grade by the teacher, in the absence of clerical or mechanical mistakes, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency, shall be final.

Grades arrived at by a teacher will be considered final and will be changed only (1) by the teacher, with the consent of the principal after a re-evaluation of the student's work or (2) by an appeal made to the school principal and then to the superintendent or designee.

## GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS

A green cleaning program is used to maintain the school. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

"No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect."

## GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The school's counseling department is committed to a program of comprehensive developmental services structured to anticipate and nurture the personal, social, career, and educational growth of all students as they pass through specific developmental stages. This complete program incorporates a school counseling curriculum, individual



planning, responsive services and program management. Social services and counseling are rendered by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the social worker and school counselor include helping the student function more successfully within the school environment.

The school counselor will use a variety of methods to assist students in overcoming barriers to learning, to make strong connections with the educational opportunities in the school and to ensure that every child learns in a safe, healthy and supportive setting.

Counseling is an opportunity to talk with someone about things that are important to students. These opportunities to talk may be personal, social, educational or vocational. Counselors will listen and be open and honest with students. The school counselor is encouraged to issue appointment request forms to students. Appointments can also be arranged by contacting the school counselor before school, between classes or after school. Generally, the school counselor services grades 5-8.

Educational and career planning guidance is available along with information to develop a plan for the student's future. This may include a long-range plan of studies for grades 6-8. The Naviance program is used to assist in this process and will be continued in high school. Parents will be notified and involvement will be solicited.

Referral for psychological assistance by other social services agencies within or outside the school may also be recommended. Please note: The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parents/guardian's written consent.

## HANDS-OFF POLICY

Students must refrain from all physical contact that is potentially unsafe or distracting to the educational process. Unacceptable behavior includes "horsing around" or fooling around which results in physical contact, poking, pushing, tripping, and/or jostling one another. The policy is HANDS-OFF. Students must also refrain from overt acts of affection. Violence will result in teacher/team and/or administrative consequences.

## HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any disability they may have. The District prohibits harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) that if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or the principal. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to the principal, assistant principal or trusted adult. The allegations will be investigated and addressed, and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary.

## HEALTH SERVICES

The school health office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Vision and hearing tests are administered to students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, and 5. Postural screening, with parental permission, will be done in grades 5 and 7 for female students and grade 8 or 9 for male students. If time permits, vision screening will be provided to grades 2, 6, 7, and 8. The results are provided to the parents. Screenings are done at no cost to parents.

Parents are encouraged to have oral health assessments for their child(ren) prior to school enrollment, in grade 6 or 7. Such assessment may be conducted by a dentist, dental hygienist, physician, physician assistant (PA) or an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) trained in conducting such assessments.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the school nurse in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

### Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in original containers with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The parent's signed statement must be accompanied by a statement from the student's physician, dentist or advanced practice registered nurse indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic conditions and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is also required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified school employee,” may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified/school employee,” may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student’s individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and written order from a physician is required.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, administer a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written order from a physician are required.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities that are on or off school grounds.

### Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

### Disabilities

School district will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

### Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

### Health Records

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut “Health Assessment and Record Form.” These records

are accessible to certified staff working with the child and school health aides if permission is granted by the nurse or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent when a student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

A diabetic student may test his/her own blood glucose level per the written order of a physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self testing. Such self testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

## Homebound

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of two weeks or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

## Homeless Students

Students defined as “homeless” by federal and state legislation may continue to attend the school of origin and will have all programs, services, and transportation that are available to all other students. The local liaison for homeless children is the Director of Student Services. The District has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin “to the extent feasible,” unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student’s parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

A homeless student who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, shall have full access to his/her educational and medical records in the Board’s possession.

## ILLNESS

### Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided using the appropriate form which can be obtained from the school nurse. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Rubella, Influenza and Hemophilus Influenza Type B.\*

Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

Parents/guardians that want their child(ren) excused from immunizations due to the religious beliefs of the child or of his/her parent/guardian must request such exemption in writing to the superintendent. The request must be officially acknowledged by any of the following: notary public, judge, clerk/deputy clerk of a court, town clerk, justice of the peace, attorney or school nurse. Such request must be made before initial entry into the school system and prior to entering grade 7.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and eighth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding immunizations contact Fayne Sears, School Nurse.

### Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7). All students in grades K and grades 1, 3, 4, 5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, and 5. Postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grades 5 and 7 and for male students in grade 8. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district's homeless liaison.

## HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents with the student's work in school.

In order for homework to be an effective support for learning, the homework policy requires a partnership among the school system represented by the teacher, the student, and their parents. Without this partnership in support of learning, students will not achieve their full potential.

## HONOR ROLL

In lieu of the traditional honor roll, Academic Excellence and Academic Achievement will be acknowledged. It is published in the local newspaper for grades 6th-8th at the end of each term and at the end of the school year. Additionally, acknowledgement of achievement is distributed with report cards. To be considered for the honor roll, students must meet the appropriate criteria:

Academic Excellence includes all A's (of any type) in all graded subject areas for grades 6th-8th.

Academic Achievement includes all A's, B's (of any type) in all graded subject areas for grades 6th-8th.

## ITEMS NOT PERMITTED IN SCHOOL

In order to ensure student safety and the protection of personal property, parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor closely those items that are brought or worn to school by students. The following items are specifically prohibited on school grounds: weapons, including martial arts (real or fake), knives, razor blades, sharp items, skateboards, roller skates, roller blades, sneakers with wheels, baseball bats, lacrosse sticks, matches, caps, fireworks, laser pointers, and portable game systems.

## LASER POINTERS

Students are not permitted to possess or use laser pointers while on school property, while using District transportation, or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities, whether on or off school property unless under a staff member's supervision and in the context of instruction. Laser pointers will be confiscated and students will be disciplined.

## LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS (ENGLISH LEARNERS)

Parents of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students/English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the parent's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. After 30 months, students in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

## LOCK DOWN PROCEDURE

In the event of a critical emergency, all school personnel including students, will follow the district "LockDown Procedures." Students will be informed of specific actions they should take when a Lock Down Procedure is put into effect. Lock down drills, like fire drills, will occur periodically during the school year.

## LOST AND FOUND

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the main office or directly brought to the lost and found depository. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of and/or donated periodically throughout the school year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office. Whenever practical, items brought to school should have a name placed on them to assure return to the rightful owner.

## LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, videos, CD's and other materials, including computers, located in the library. Students are responsible for any material they sign out. Materials must be returned to the librarian at the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage. A student's grades, transcripts or report card may be withheld until the student's obligation is met.

## MAGNET SCHOOLS

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for students placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an interdistrict magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

## MAKE-UP WORK

A student will be permitted to make-up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Secondary teachers may assign a late penalty to any project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

For any class missed, students may be assigned make-up work based on the instructional objectives of the subject or course and the needs of the student. The student is responsible for obtaining and completing make-up work within the time specified by the teacher.

## MIGRANT STUDENTS

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

## NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

Federal legislation requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions and assessment instruments.

## ON-CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

Students at the middle school level will be informed of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and training of technical high schools and (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. Full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science and technology education center, magnet schools, charter schools will be provided.

## OUT OF SCHOOL MISCONDUCT

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of a publicized board policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Examples of off-school conduct that may result in such discipline include but are not limited to:

1. Sale, possession, use, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including martial arts weapons;
2. Use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs;
3. Violent conduct;
4. Making of a bomb threat;
5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff; where any such activity has a reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of school property, individuals thereon, and/or the educational process.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational success. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours, but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules. Scheduled conferences will be made available twice during the school year.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Education is most successful for students when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communication, interactions and engagement. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high



priority on education and to make the most of the educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in school parent organizations, attendance at Board of Education meetings, and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

## PARENT PORTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Board of Education has enhanced its student information system to include a parent portal. The parent portal will allow a parent/guardian of students in grades 5 to 8 to access student records via a secure website. A parent/guardian will be able to view attendance, homework assignments and grades. If you need assistance in accessing the parent portal, please contact Tammy Nye at 860.228.9493 ext. 161.

## PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The PTO is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Its aim is to support the school and coordinate efforts of parents/guardians to develop a closer relationship between home and school. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the PTO.

## PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide application in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas scheduled to receive pesticide applications will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advance notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact Brenda Morey, Superintendent's Administrative Assistant at [bmorey@hwporter.org](mailto:bmorey@hwporter.org) or 860.228.8590.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

From time-to-time during the school year, school personnel and/or the media take photographs. If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website use or for media purposes, the school office must be alerted in writing. Photos of individual and classroom groups are taken annually, which may be purchased by parents/guardians (but they are not obligated to do so).

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students enrolled in elementary school shall have included, in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise of not less than 20 minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services.

This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical

education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities.

Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This restriction does not apply to brief periods of respite/time-outs, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons. Students in elementary school may not be denied participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline. Loss of recess or other physically active learning opportunities may be permitted on an administratively approved case-by-case basis.

## POSTERS

Signs and posters that students wish to display must be approved by the principal. Posters displayed without authorization will be removed. Any student who posts such material without authorization shall be subject to disciplinary action.

## PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school principal.

Students must demonstrate attainment of the basic skills needed for graduation based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

## PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student.

Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline up to and including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities will be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

Each student is assigned a cubbie or hall locker and other equipment. These items are the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year, and should be kept in good order and not abused.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in their child's desk or locker.

Students should not attempt to repair school equipment but should notify the main office immediately if it is not functioning properly. Any damage occurred will be the responsibility of the person to whom it was loaned for the current year. Students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school. Liability for these items remains with the student.

## PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for a student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, the District is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before he/she may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

## PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

The right of community members to register individual or group concerns about district instruction, programs, materials, operations and/or staff members is recognized. Complaints and grievances will be handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible. Complaints will be referred back through the proper administrative channels before investigation or action by the Board unless the complaint concerns Board actions or operations only. A procedure also exists for the placing and response to criticism or approval of instructional materials.

Specialized complaint procedures exist regarding identification, evaluation or educational placement of a student with a disability; loss of credit due to absences; discrimination on the basis of sex; harassment; sexual abuse or harassment; and instructional materials.

## RECORDING OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The District prohibits the covert recording of classroom activities. The recording of teachers or students in class is inherently disruptive of the educational process. Students violating this rule will be subject to discipline and confiscation of the electronic device.

## RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

The school district acknowledges each individual's rights to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behavior. The District strives to provide religious accommodations to students in an equitable and appropriate way in accordance with District policies and corresponding guidelines.

## RESPECT

All students, teachers, administrators, staff, parents and all who enter our school are expected to treat each other with respect.

## SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the school's code of discipline
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are overseeing the welfare of students.

## Social Emotional Learning:

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Systemic SEL is promoted across multiple contexts every day. SEL is more than just a program or lesson. It is about how teaching and learning happens, as well as what you teach and where you learn. (Casel) The SEL framework is composed of five core competencies including, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

**MindUp** is a classroom-based social and emotional learning program (SEL) designed to enhance self-awareness, social awareness, attention, self-regulation, problem solving, and pro-social behavior (helping, sharing, and cooperating). Mind Up is an evidenced based curriculum *which* establishes core practices of deep breathing and attentive listening, which are then practiced several times a day throughout the school year. These practices are designed to enhance students' self awareness, focus attention, promote self-regulation, and reduce stress.

## SCHOLARSHIPS, FINANCIAL AID, AND AWARDS

Students should start early to establish records worthy of scholarship consideration. In general, requirements for scholarship consideration are some combination of the following: serious attention to studies, good character, financial need and involvement in the activities of the school.

Many scholarships and awards are available to qualified students. Students should consult a Guidance Counselor for information about what scholarships are available and how, when and where to apply.

## SCHOOL ALTERNATIVES

Connecticut schools offer a range of educational programs to meet the diverse needs and career aspirations of its students in a variety of settings, including comprehensive local schools, regional vocational-technical schools, vocational agriculture centers, charter schools and magnet schools. These programs serve to prepare students for

college, the workplace and active citizenship.

## SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as, but not limited to, Martin Luther King Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and Presidents Day are encouraged. Horace W. Porter reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class pay shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided at the beginning of each school day for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

## SCHOOL CLIMATE-STUDENT CONDUCT

### **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports - PBIS**

Horace W. Porter School is in its second year of implementing a system of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to encourage, teach, practice and model appropriate, respectful and responsible student behaviors.

- PBIS is a framework for Administrators, staff and parents to follow. It will take 3-5 years to develop and implement throughout the school, including classrooms, cafeteria, recess and buses.
- The goal of PBIS is to create a safe and positive school climate where children can learn and grow academically, socially, behaviorally and emotionally.
- School-wide PBIS supports all students by clarifying our behavioral expectations, explicitly teaching and modeling these expectations, developing individualized plans for specific students and then recognizing when students demonstrate positive behaviors.
- PBIS focuses on the development and implementation of proactive procedures, practices and strategies to prevent problem behavior with a focus on positive supports and interventions.
- PBIS helps to guide schools as they respond to discipline issues.

Horace W. Porter School will utilize a positive support system as a means for teaching and promoting these expected behaviors and has established four core behavioral expectations: Practice Respect, Act Responsibly, Work Together, Safety Matters (PAWS), which students will be expected to adhere to as we continue to promote safe and respectful behaviors.

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, parents, students and staff will be provided with information and training as we roll out the different aspects of PBIS. If you have any questions or concerns regarding PBIS and the discipline philosophy at Horace W. Porter School please feel free to contact Mrs. Karen Caputo, Assistant Principal at 860-228-9493 ext. 167.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT RECORDS

Interested persons may inspect “public district records” which are maintained at the office of the Superintendent of Schools, during normal hours of business. Copies of records, permitted by law to be disclosed, may also be attained.

## SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

The District has developed and implements a school security and safety plan based upon the standards issued by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. Horace W. Porter, as required by law, shall establish a school security and safety committee which will assist in the development and administration of the school’s security and safety plan. Horace W. Porter will conduct a security and vulnerability assessment every two years.

The District has developed, maintains, an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan for implementation as needed (“School Security and Safety Plan”). The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders, (law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads and local public health administrators). The plan, representing an all hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery. The school utilizes a school resource officer .

## SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized school administrator may search a student’s locker or desk under the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student’s desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities.

The District may use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used on lockers. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. Drug-sniffing dogs will not be used to sniff students. A locker, a vehicle, or an item in the classroom to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The district wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical, includes, but is not limited to the following: (Give examples which are age appropriate.) Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) when the allegations are not minor and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, Barbara Wilson at [bwilson@hwporter.org](mailto:bwilson@hwporter.org) or 860.228.9493.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs such as but not limited to, gifted and talented, bilingual, services for students with learning disabilities and for those with other disabilities which affect a student's success at school. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact Barbara Wilson, Director of Student Services; the coordinator of each program is available to answer questions about eligibility requirements, programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations.

The District utilizes the Scientifically Researched Based Instruction (SRBI) process which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic or behavioral progress at expected levels in the general curriculum. When students are experiencing difficulty with academics or behavior, every effort is made to provide support to help the child succeed within the regular classroom setting through the Scientifically Researched Based Instruction (SRBI) process.



For students in need of Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, which includes parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions. Parents have the right to have the school paraprofessional assigned to work with their child, if any, attend and participate in PPT meetings. Parents, as required by law, will be provided information at PPT meetings about their right to have advisors and paraprofessional attend PPT meetings.

A school must offer an IEP that is “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.” Every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.

## STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM/PEER PROGRAM

Student volunteers are trained through the peer mediation program to assist other students in resolving conflicts. Mediation is a process used in which a neutral third party helps disputing parties find their own solutions to conflicts.

## STUDENT COMPLAINTS/GRIEVANCES: DUE PROCESS

A student or parent who has a complaint should first bring the matter to the appropriate teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the principal should be requested within three (3) calendar days of the event or events causing the complaint. If the outcome of the conference with the principal is not satisfactory, a conference with the Superintendent or designee can be requested within three (3) calendar days following the conference with the principal. If the outcome of this conference is not satisfactory, the student or parent may appear before the Board of Education, in accordance with Board policy.

A student and/or parent with a complaint regarding possible discrimination on the basis of gender should contact Barbara Wilson, Title IX Coordinator.

A complaint or concern regarding the placement of a student with disabilities concerning special education or programs and services should be discussed with Barbara Wilson, Director of Student Services.

## STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Connecticut legislation, PA 16-189, (C.G.S. 10-234bb (a)) An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy, as amended by PA 17-200 and PA 18-125, restricts how student information may be used by (1) entities that contract to provide



educational software and electronic storage of student records (“contractors”) and (2) operators of websites, online services or mobile applications (i.e., apps). Not later than five (5) business days after executing a contract with such contractors, the contract will be posted on the District’s website. The notice will include a brief description of the content and the purpose of the contract and will state what student information, student records or student-generated content may be collected as a result of the contract. Student information will be deleted by operators of websites, online services, or mobile apps upon student, parent, guardian or board of education request. Such operators may not create student profiles for use in targeted advertising and for purposes unrelated to school. Parents and students will be notified of breaches in data security. Students and parents/guardians will be notified no later than two business days upon notice of a breach of security by a contractor to the Board of Education.

## DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings provided such distribution does not interfere with or disrupt the educational process. No literature may be distributed unless a copy is submitted in advance to the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Building Principal.

## STUDENT RECORDS

A student’s school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record’s custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student’s records. “School officials with legitimate educational interests” include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon the written request of the parent.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

The District will release to the Parent Teacher Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTO for its own school activities or school business.

When a student moves to a new school system or charter school, the District will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

## STUDENT SUCCESS PLANNING

A student success plan for each student enrolled in grades six through twelve shall be created. Such student success plan shall include a student's career and academic choices in grades six through twelve, inclusive.

The Student Success Plan (SSP) is an individualized student-driven plan developed to address every student's needs and interests to help the student stay connected in school and to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals.

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

Students are required to maintain high standards of behavior when being taught by a substitute teacher. Substitute teachers must be given cooperation, courtesy and respect from all students. Misbehavior with a substitute teacher will result in teacher and office disciplinary action.

## SURVEYS/STUDENT PRIVACY

Your child will not be required to participate, without parental consent, in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children.

Parents will be notified of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination that is required as a condition of attendance and administered by the school and which is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students. Parents will be given an opportunity to opt their child out of the exam. Hearing, vision and scoliosis screening are not subject to prior notifications.

The District will not collect, disclose or use personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information or providing it to others for that purpose.

## TEACHER AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher's undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

## TESTING

All students in grades 3 through 8 inclusive shall annually take a statewide mastery examination in reading, language arts and mathematics. Students in grades 5 and 8 shall annually take a statewide mastery examination in science. Special education students participate in mastery testing programs except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is determined by the student's IEP. The mastery examination test is one of the measures to be used to determine if students have met identified standards. All English learners are required to participate in all content areas of the state summative assessment.

## TEXTBOOK CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library books or other educational materials.

## TRANSPORTATION

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus may result in suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
4. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
5. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.

6. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
7. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco.
8. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
9. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed. Unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, will subject the passenger to disciplinary action.
10. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
11. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the principal or designee, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required.
2. The principal or designee may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The principal or designee and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

All vehicles coming into or leaving the school grounds are subject to the regulations of the school.

## TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator. A written record of all complaints will be maintained, and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Morning care is available at no cost to all families. Morning care begins at 7:30am (9:30am on late opening days). Students in PK through grade 4 cannot be dropped off without an adult or sibling, who attends grades 5 through 8, present.

## VACATIONS

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times which coincide with school vacations. Student absences for reasons of a family vacation or trip that takes place when school is in session may be considered "unexcused absences," if not excused by the principal prior to the event.

## VIDEO RECORDERS ON SCHOOL BUSES/SCHOOL CAMPUS (for School Security Purposes)

The district has installed video recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Videotaping will be done randomly during the school year; students will not be notified when a recording device has been installed and in use on their bus. Tapes will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Video equipment is used to enhance the safety and security of all individuals. It is also used to monitor student behavior in common areas or campus. The principal or his/her designee will review the tapes routinely and document students' misconduct as appropriate. Discipline will be in accordance with the District's discipline policy. Any student, staff member, or visitor to the school is prohibited from tampering with or damaging the school's video surveillance equipment.

## VISITORS

Parents and other visitors are welcome to visit Horace W. Porter School. All visitors must first report to the reception desk upon entering the building. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the principal's approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment.

All doors that open to the outside of any school must remain locked in order to preserve the safety and security of students and staff. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds. School principals are authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or uncivil discourse will not be permitted. Visits cannot interfere with the educational program of the school nor interrupt teaching activities.

## WEBSITES

School web pages must contain material that reflects on educational purposes. School web pages are not to be used for personal, commercial or political purposes; and are considered a publication of the Board of Education. The Principal or his/her designee will approve all material posted on the school's web page. The District is committed to ensuring accessibility of its website for parents, students, and members of the community with disabilities.

## WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

If a student needs to withdraw from school during the school year, the student's parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and obtain all necessary signatures. All books, materials, athletic equipment and other equipment loaned by the school must be returned or paid for by the student or his/her parents/guardians. This document can be obtained in the school office.

## Student Handbook Acknowledgement Page

I have received a copy of the 2020-2021 Student Handbook.

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Parent Signature

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Date

---

Student Name

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Homeroom

Please return this page to your child's homeroom teacher.

Thank you.





# **COVID 19 Family & Student Handbook**

**August 14, 2020**

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## **IN-SCHOOL INSTRUCTION**

In school instruction will look very different during the 20-21 academic year. Our reopening committee has been working hard to develop an educational plan that meets the educational and social emotional needs of all children. Our main goal is that we create a safe, healthy and positive school climate for in-person, hybrid and remote school environments. Within this handbook you will find the procedures and protocols that HWP will mandate and employ throughout the school year. Please read the handbook carefully and review the material with your child. If you have any questions or concerns please contact either Alyssa Gwinnell or Karen Caputo for assistance

## **A. Mask information and mask breaks**

Masks are one of the three pillars (along with handwashing and social distancing) in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Students should have a supply of face coverings that are comfortable and completely cover their mouths and noses. They should have two clean masks for each day. Masks that become contaminated will be placed in a baggie and sent home for cleaning. Please practice mask wearing with your student(s) before school starts. While we encourage all students and staff to provide their own mask, we have purchased enough masks for all students or staff who might need them, including pediatric masks for our young children.

The school will provide lanyards that the masks clip onto for when students are eating or having a mask break. Mask breaks will be provided throughout the day. Please teach your students to wash their hands and not to touch their masks. Remind students not to touch the masks or their faces unless they wash their hands first.

In addition to face masks we have purchased face shields for our staff and for students who have a documented health-related medical reason, which requires them to wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask. **Please contact Fayne Sears (School Nurse) if your child has a documented medical reason which may necessitate a face shield.**

The following links will assist your child with proper use of a face mask:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wash-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

## **B. Hand Washing**

Hand washing is the second pillar in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Frequent hand washing will occur at regular intervals and we will continue to provide education to both students and staff on appropriate cleaning techniques. Please practice proper handwashing with your students. Show them how to turn on the faucet, wet hands, apply soap, and scrub hands for at least 20 seconds, rinse hands, dry hands and use a paper towel to turn off the faucet. At school many of these steps will be touch-free. Have them get into the habit of washing their hands before and after eating, after using the bathroom, before touching their mask, and upon entering the building. If soap and water aren't available, hand sanitizer can be used. They should get into the habit of applying an amount of hand sanitizer that takes 20 seconds to rub in.

Posters will be in every bathroom and in classrooms where there are sinks explaining how to properly wash your hands. Hand sanitizer will be located throughout the building including, entrance/exits, classrooms & offices.

The following links can help:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>

### **C. Social Distancing**

Social distancing is the third pillar in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Class sizes will be smaller than usual; averaging in size from 7-10 students for the Hybrid Model & 14-16 In school full instruction. To every extent possible, we will try to maintain six feet of social distancing in our classroom layout. Students and teachers will have desk shields to use as necessary and teachers will also be provided with face shields. We know that it may not always be possible to maintain six feet of distance, which is why masks and these additional safety precautions are so important. Please discuss with your students how to keep six feet apart. Remind them that they should not touch other people. Hand holding and hugging other students and staff will be discouraged. The loss of being able to be in close proximity to our students saddens us, but we have to prioritize safety during this pandemic. These videos can help:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYULTeYWWNQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZmajkrTj6A>

### **D. Cohorts:**

Students will stay in the same cohort throughout the school day. Related arts teachers will come to them whenever possible, in order to minimize students traveling throughout the building. Breakfast and lunch will be served in the classroom and during the warmer months outside when possible. We will also require that students practice social distancing in the hallways. Students will be with their cohort and supervised in the hall the majority of the day. Outdoor classrooms will be utilized to every extent possible during the warmer months

### **E. Bathrooms:**

Cohorts of students will be assigned bathrooms within their designated area. Bathroom breaks will be scheduled within the master schedule. Additionally, teachers will be able to contact the office to request assistance during the day if needed. If at all possible, only one student will be allowed in the bathroom at a time to ensure proper social distancing. Signage specific to hand washing and expected behaviors will be in every bathroom.

## **F. Bus Transportation:**

All students will be required to wear a mask that fully covers the nose and mouth while on a bus. If a student does not have a mask, the bus driver will provide one to him or her. Additionally, if a student refuses to wear a mask the bus driver will not allow the student on the bus and will contact the school. Students will load the bus from back to front regardless of their age/grade and will be required to sit with siblings. M&J will enhance their cleaning and disinfecting protocols and all seats and railings will be wiped down following the high school bus runs in the morning and afternoon.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1e4et5mmRY-PNazOWmg4T6d5nQiRDtCwK/edit>

## **G. Morning Care:**

Horace W. Porter School will provide morning care free of charge again this year. Morning care begins at 7:30. Procedures for morning care are as follows:

- All students need to be registered prior to attending for the specific days they will attend.
- Morning care begins at 7:30 and all students will need to be dropped off by 7:55. No students will be allowed to enter the building from 7:56-8:15. Please do not drop your child off PRIOR to 7:30 or later than 7:55.
- Students will be allowed to eat breakfast during morning care
- Students will sit with their cohort, or siblings: 6ft apart during morning care.
- Students will not be allowed to share materials or toys during morning care

## **H. Parent Morning Drop Off Procedures:**

### **I. Parent After School Pick Up Procedures:**

Parent pick up will begin at **2:50 at the soccer field. Tents will be set up and signage will be posted indicating which tent you can meet your child.**

Please practice social distancing, and ensure that you sign your child out with the staff on duty. **Parents will not be allowed in the building**

Please be patient as we will stager dismissal to avoid numerous parents and children congregating. Staff will be outside helping with parent pick up.

Parent pick up will occur from 2:50-3:05/3:10.. Please be on time as we would like dismissals to occur prior to the buses arriving

## **J. Breakfast/Lunch:**

**Breakfast-** Breakfast is free for ALL students and will be served in the classroom to elementary students. . **Breakfast orders/counts for elementary** will be submitted by parents utilizing a google doc. A monthly menu will be posted on the website and sent to families each month. Breakfast will be prepackaged and there will be limited choice. All breakfasts will be served with fruit/juice and milk. There will be breakfasts available to those students who did not order.

**Middle School** students will pick up their breakfast in the cafeteria on the way to their classroom in the morning.

**Lunch-** Lunch will be delivered and eaten in the classroom for **ALL GRADE LEVELS**. All lunches will be pre-packaged and will mostly be cold sandwiches. However, there may be items such as chicken sandwiches, hot dogs, and hamburgers. A monthly menu will be posted on the website.

## **K. Food Services for Remote Learners/Hybrid:**

Meals will be provided by Eastconn to Remote Learner and during the Remote learning day. However, meals will no longer be free of charged. Eastconn is developing procedures for parents to order meals in advance and a schedule for pick ups will be shared in the coming weeks.

## **L. Cleaning & Disinfecting:**

Horace W. Porter School has greatly enhanced our cleaning practices, and our facility technicians have received guidance on how to clean during a pandemic. In addition, bathrooms will be cleaned at least twice daily, and a sign in sheet will be created and reviewed by our Facilities Technician Supervisor and Administration. Additionally, desks will be wiped down and sanitized, at regular intervals throughout the day, including after lunch and when students are outside for mask breaks. Furthermore, areas such as sinks, doorknobs, classroom phones and light switches will be cleaned more often throughout the school building.

## **M. Supplies:**

A paws cinch bag have been purchased for all students to keep their supplies and eliminate the need to share. All school supplies will remain in school. Chromebooks will be stored safely in each student assigned Chromebook bag.

## **Health and Illness Protocols- Attendance**

## **N. Illness Protocols:**

It is important that students and staff stay home when they are sick. If your child does not feel good, please have them stay home and report their illness to the school. If they are present in school and report that they do not feel well, they will immediately be assessed by the school nurse and you will be contacted following Ms. Sears initial assessment.

### **O. Accessing the nurse and if a child gets sick at school**

Students will not be allowed to leave the room to come to the nurse. Please do not send your student to school if they are ill. If a student requests to see the nurse, the teacher will call the nurse first. In most cases the nurse will go to the classroom, do an initial assessment, and the student will go back to class or be escorted to the health room or isolation room. If your child needs daily medication while at school, the nurse will go to the classroom and call the student out into the hallway to give the medication. If your child needs to use an inhaler and they do not have permission to self-carry, the nurse will bring the inhaler to the classroom and help the student use the inhaler in the hallway. If a child has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, he/she will go to the isolation room and be monitored by staff until a parent picks him/her up.

### **P. Return to school After and Illness:**

Guidelines for returning to school following COVID-19, suspected COVID-19, fever or other illnesses will follow CDC, DPH, and EHHD guidelines. Negative COVID testing and/or a doctor's note may be required. The nurse will work with each family (as well as the school medical advisor and EHHD) to determine what criteria need to be met for a student to return to school after an illness.

### **Q. School closures**

Parents need to be aware that based on incidences of illnesses, school may be closed for a period of time between 2-14 days. All students would go to a distance learning model. School closure decisions will be made by the superintendent in consultation with the school nurse, school medical advisor, and the EHHD. These decisions will need to be made quickly so parents should be prepared for the eventuality that school may close and reopen quickly.