

2023-2024  
STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

# Stafford Middle School



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**SOAR**

*Safe Ownership Attitude Respect*

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# Stafford Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Stafford Public Schools is to prepare our students to assume productive, meaningful, and responsible roles in an increasingly competitive global society.

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## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Greetings Stafford Middle School Community,

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to Stafford Middle School and the 2023-24 academic year. For those of you who are returning to us, I hope that your summer months were restful and rejuvenating. To those joining the Stafford Middle School community this year, I am happy to have you as a part of our team. My foremost goal is to have all the members of our learning community come together in a collaborative fashion to forge the best educational experience possible for our students. It is my hope that this will be a successful school year for all of us and that our students will make great strides in their academic, social, behavioral, and emotional maturation.

Every student at Stafford Middle School will be confronted with a rigorous, engaging, and exciting curriculum provided to them with instructional practices designed to promote growth in their ability to critically think, problem solve, communicate effectively, analyze complex ideas, and collaborate with one another. It is my hope that we are able to build on the foundation created in the elementary school to prepare our students for the challenges brought on by the high school and beyond. To this end, we seek to utilize the systems, policies, and protocols articulated in this handbook to offer our constituent student population with a positive, welcoming, and structured learning environment through which they can achieve their greatest potential.

We strive for students to learn to **SOAR** at Stafford Middle School as they learn to be **Safe** in making thoughtful, reasoned decisions, as they become empowered through their **Ownership** of their learning and development, as they become aware of their **Attitudes** and how they impact their perceptions, and that they grow a sense of **Respect** for themselves and for others. It is with this objective in mind that I welcome all of our students back for the 2023-24 school year.

Sincerely,

Timothy Kinell  
Principal



*The mission of the Stafford Middle School is to prepare our students to assume productive, meaningful, and responsible roles in an increasingly competitive global society.*

## **PREFACE**

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents 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.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, 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 need to be familiar with the District’s Student Code of Conduct which is 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. The full text of all Stafford Board of Education policies referenced in this handbook is available on the district website at <https://www.stafford.k12.ct.us/>.

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## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Board of Education complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial of any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ancestry, alienage, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, or veteran status, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law. ([BOE Policy 5145.4\(a\)](#))

- [Discrimination/Harassment Complaint Form](#)

### **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.

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, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

## Important Contacts & Phone Numbers

Mr. Steven Moccio, Superintendent of Schools  
 16 Levinthal Run, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 Phone (860) 684-2208

Ms. Kathie Gabrielson, Director of Pupil Services, Section 504 Coordinator, Board of Education  
 District Title IX Coordinator, PH: (860) 684-4212

## CALENDAR

Access the [2023-2024 School Calendar](#) via the [district website](#).

## Important 2023-2024 Dates

Date	Event
August 24 (1:00-3:00 pm)	6th Grade Orientation
September 6	Picture Day
October 4	PSAT (8th grade only)
October 12 (1:00-3:15 pm, 4:45-6:45 pm)	Parent Teacher Conferences
October 20	8th grade visit to SHS (8th grade only)
February 8 (1:00-3:15 pm, 4:45-6:45 pm)	Parent Teacher Conferences

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY, AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Stafford Board of Education

(the “Board”), through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement the policy. ([BOE Policy 5110](#))

## Procedures for Absences

- When a student is to be absent from school, parents/guardians should notify the school by calling 860-684-2785 x1 by 8:00 a.m. and leave a message on the “attendance line”.
  - If there is no call from home, and the student is not in attendance during the first period, an automated call home will follow.
- If there is no call from home, the student will be marked as **absent unexcused**.
- A note signed by the parent/guardian is required within ten (10) days of the absence.

## Dismissal from School

- Anytime it is necessary that a student leave school early, a written note signed by a parent or guardian is needed. Students should give the note to the main office upon their arrival at school.
- Electronic communications will be accepted so long as they are sent from an email address that is recorded in PowerSchool and is accompanied with a phone call to the SMS Main Office. Emails for dismissal should be sent to the Main Office Secretary, [Lisa Irwin](mailto:irwinl@stafford.k12.ct.us) ([irwinl@stafford.k12.ct.us](mailto:irwinl@stafford.k12.ct.us)).

## Makeup Work

The responsibility for makeup work lies with the student, not the teacher. Students will have the number of days absent to complete the missing work prior to any late deductions (2 excused absences = 2 days to complete work). Only excused absences are eligible for make up eligibility. Work from unexcused absences is expected to be turned in immediately upon the student’s return to school.

## Attendance & Participation in After School Activities

Students who are absent from school will **not** be allowed to participate in any after school activities on the day of the absence. No student may arrive later than 9:00 a.m. on a game/event/practice/rehearsal day. (Students who are absent on Friday will not participate in weekend events.) In extenuating circumstances, the Principal may override this provision of the policy.

## Attendance Records

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 issued three times per year. Parents can view daily attendance within PowerSchool. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers, school counselors, and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

## Attendance Definitions

### **Excused Absences**

A student’s absence from school shall be considered “**excused**” if written documentation **and** a phone call with the reason for such absence has been received within **ten (10)** school days of the student’s return to school **and** meets the following criteria:

1. **For absences one (1) through nine (9)**, 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.
  - Such documentation includes a signed note from the student’s parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a



note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.

- Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence **as well as** the length of the absence.
  - Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.
2. **For the student's tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter**, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation, considered excused only for the following reasons:
- Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
  - Student observance of a religious holiday.
  - Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
  - Court appearance which is mandated (documentation required).
  - The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required).
  - Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.

### ***Unexcused Absences***

**"Unexcused absences"** are those which do **not** fall under any of the excused absences. Students who have unexcused absences may be denied makeup privileges. Such absences may also be reflected in the student's final grade. Disciplinary action may include detentions for each class/study period missed. Tests and academic work missed in class that day may be recorded as a zero grade.

### ***Tardiness***

Students are expected to report to homeroom prior to the 7:20 a.m. bell. If you are late to homeroom or late to school, students must report to the office immediately upon entering the building to sign in. An office detention may be issued to students who are tardy 6 or more times per marking period. Arrivals to school that occur after the completion of one half of the school day will be treated as an absence.

Note: Oversleeping and missing the bus are **not** excused reasons for tardiness to school.

### ***Truancy***

For the purposes of these procedures, **"truant"** means a student, ages five (5) to eighteen (18) inclusive, who has **four (4)** unexcused absences from school in any one-month, **or** ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

### ***Chronic Absenteeism***

For the purposes of these procedures, **"chronically absent"** means a student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year.

### ***Mental Health Wellness Days***

A **"mental health wellness day"** is a school day during which a student attends to such student's emotional and psychological well-being in lieu of attending school. Any student enrolled in grades kindergarten to twelve, inclusive, shall be permitted to take two mental health wellness days during the school year, during which day such student shall not be required to attend school. No student shall take mental health wellness days during consecutive school days.

Mental health wellness days shall be excused when permission by the student's parent/guardian is documented by the student's school, regardless of the number of absences a student has accrued in the

school year. Mental health wellness days will *not* be included in reporting or referrals related to *truancy*. Mental health wellness days *will* count as an “absence” for determining chronic absenteeism.

### **Military Absences**

Notwithstanding the reasons outlined above, a student aged 5 to 18 whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year. In the case of such excused absences, the student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to the student's return to school.

### **Attendance Interventions**

When a student is truant, the school will attempt to improve attendance through various interventions that may include:

- Meeting with the parent and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate reasons for the student's truancy. If the parent declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise non responsive, the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.
- Coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies for providing child and family services.
- Provide information concerning the existence and availability of the 2-1-1 Infoline program, and other pediatric mental and behavioral health screening services.
- Conduct an evaluation of the student by an appropriate school mental health specialist to determine if additional behavioral health interventions are necessary for the well-being of the child.
- Refer the student to the building Student Assistance Team to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The team will also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement team (“PPT”) meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education.
- A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems should be referred to a PPT meeting for program review.
- The Superintendent or designee may, with written parental consent, refer a student who is truant to a Youth Service Bureau.

### **Withdrawal from School**

Any students choosing to withdraw from Stafford Public Schools must meet with the school counselor, return all materials and equipment issued by the district, and complete the linked forms below. Parents should contact the SMS Main Office at 860-684-2785 for procedures or further questions related to the student withdrawal process.

- [Student Withdrawal Form](#)
- [Transfer of Confidential Information](#)

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## **COMMUNICATIONS**

### **District and School Website**

Stafford Public Schools and Stafford Middle School utilizes a website as a method of communication with parents/guardians, and students. The webpage offers a variety of resources. including, but not limited to the following:

- [District Page \(https://www.stafford.k12.ct.us/\)](https://www.stafford.k12.ct.us/)
- [Stafford Middle School Page \(https://sms.stafford.k12.ct.us/\)](https://sms.stafford.k12.ct.us/)

## **PowerSchool**

Stafford Public Schools uses the **PowerSchool** platform and its suite of products to communicate with parents, students and staff. PowerSchool is a web-based student information system that allows administrators at the district and school level to manage student information. PowerSchool is also the tool that teachers use to enter classroom specific data such as grades and attendance. As a web-based tool, PowerSchool and its components can be viewed either online or through a mobile app. Information regarding PowerSchool and the components described below is available on the [Information Technology](#) page of our [district website](#). If you need assistance with your PowerSchool Parent Portal username/password please contact the main office at 860-684-2785.

- [Student and Parent PowerSchool Sign In Link](#) (District Code is NZNJ)
- [PowerSchool Parent/Guardian Portal Account Creation Directions](#)

## **SchoolMessenger Notification System**

The SchoolMessenger notification system uses phone and email to provide timely communication to parents and staff on matters such as school delays and closings, early dismissals, and school or district emergencies. School principals or other district administrators also use SchoolMessenger to provide families with general information or important non-emergency reminders such as school events, district testing, etc. The district will use the contact information on file to send messages to parents. Any communication received through SchoolMessenger will be the most reliable source of accurate information. To learn more about customizing the SchoolMessenger profile, visit the [Information Technology](#) page of our [district website](#).

## **PowerSchool Parent Portal**

Parent Portal is the tool within PowerSchool that helps us foster communication between the school and parents. Through Parent Portal, parents can view student grades and attendance; contact teachers through embedded email links; update student information electronically; and manage School Messenger preferences. If you need assistance with your PowerSchool Parent Portal username/password please contact the main office at 860-684-2785.

## **Channels of Communications: Questions and Concerns**

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. In most cases this is the teacher.

The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher; (2) principal/assistant principals; (3) school counselor; (4) curriculum supervisor; (5) superintendent/central office; and (6) board of education.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational success. Individual 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 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.

School wide parent teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year. (Please see [Calendar](#) for dates.)

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## **ACADEMICS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Stafford Public Schools continually strive for academic excellence. 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 the goals and values of the District. Cheating on homework and/or a test is unacceptable. A student who engages in any form of academic dishonesty may be subject to the loss of credit for the work in question, as well as other disciplinary measures. ([BOE Policy 5121.3](#))

### **Grading Policy**

Stafford Middle School has adopted a common grading policy. For details, please reference the complete [SMS Grading Policy](#). For your convenience, key points are outlined below.

#### **Grading Categories**

All gradebooks will utilize the below categories and percentages in grading calculations.

- Summative Assessments: 40%
- Formative Assessments: 40%
- Completion/Homework: 20%

#### **S.O.A.R. Classroom Expectations**

Stafford Middle School recognizes that habits of work and effort impact student achievement towards mastery of learning standards. These habits are often considered the “soft skills” students will need to be successful in their future professions and careers. At SMS, we define these habits through our S.O.A.R. expectations. S.O.A.R. stands for Safe, Ownership, Attitude, and Respect. Teachers will provide feedback towards these expectations every trimester. While this feedback has no impact on student grades, it serves to provide useful information on how a student may improve their habits and efforts for increased success in the future.

#### **Portrait of the Graduate**

The Stafford Public School's Portrait of the Graduate Framework prioritizes the skills and dispositions for students to become 21st Century learners in a rapidly evolving global community. The five dispositions are:

- Communicator
- Collaborator
- Creative Innovator
- Contributor
- Critical Thinker

The framework serves as the strategic map to execute the vision of teaching and learning for the students, staff, and administration of the school district.

Students will have multiple opportunities for feedback on their progress and growth as it applies to the Portrait of the Graduate while at SMS. Teachers will provide feedback towards these expectations within PowerSchool using our SMS Portrait of the Graduate Rubric.

#### **Late Work and Retake Policy**

Late student work will receive a score deduction. Some assignments may be eligible for retake opportunities when related to an improved demonstration of mastery of content/skills. Please see the [SMS Grading Policy](#) for details.

## Honor Roll

- High Honors – An average of 90 or higher in all subject areas with no grade below 85.
- Honors – An average of 85 or higher in all subject areas with no grade below 75.

## Standards of Practice Document

Every teacher or grade level team will provide students with a copy of their SOP, or Standards of Practice document. This document is also posted on Google Classroom. The SOP provides important class overview and teacher policies. Please take time to review this document and refer to it when questions arise.

## Report Cards

Student grades are continually updated in PowerSchool, and both students and parents are encouraged to monitor progress throughout the entire school year. Official report cards will be issued three times a year, at the end of each trimester. Report cards will be distributed electronically via SchoolMessenger. (If needed, printed copies of report cards can be requested from the school's main office.) Should parents wish a conference with individual teachers, both teachers and administrators can be reached at any time during the school year via the telephone or by email. Parents who wish to have any additional information about their child's progress or placement should contact the school counselor.

## Grades

<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Failure</i>
A+ (97-100)	B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	F (0-59)
A (93-96)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	D (63-66)	
A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	D- (60-62)	

The following may also appear on report cards:

- I = incomplete
- W = withdrawn
- ME = medical excuse
- NG = no grade

### *Incomplete Report Card Grades*

Please note the school policy regarding incomplete report card grades. If a student has received an incomplete on his/her report card, the necessary work must be made up and converted to a grade within **two weeks** of issuance of the report card, unless the principal approves an extension. If the student does not make up the missing work within two weeks, each missing assignment will be counted as a zero, and his/her/they term grade will be averaged accordingly.

### *Band or Chorus*

If a student wishes to drop band or chorus, they must do so at least 30 days prior to an event and/or concert by contacting the teacher and school counselor directly.

## Report Card Dates

	T1 Trimester 1	T2 Trimester 2	T3 Trimester 3
Start Date	8/28/2023	11/27/2023	3/4/2024
Close Date	11/22/2023	3/1/2024	6/7/2024
Report Cards Issued	12/8/2023	3/15/2024	6/21/2024

*Please note: These dates are tentative depending on school closings.*

## Homework

([BOE Policy 6154](#)) Homework as independent study is an important component of a student's education. It is important for the student to be taught concepts related to the subject area and how to study in school before he/she is given work to do at home.

Worthwhile homework benefits students. Homework also affords the parent an opportunity to observe his/her child's academic progress. Homework should be an extension of the class lesson, be clearly understood by students, be well planned and meaningful, and be evaluated with feedback provided to the students.

The three types of homework, as defined by BOE Policy 6154 are:

1. Practice of Skills: Practice provides students with the opportunity to reinforce and master specific skills presented in class and to review content.
2. Preparation for Future Classes: Prepares students for the next class meeting, and may include reading, library research, or other information-gathering activities.
3. Extension of Classwork: Extension focuses on individual application, research, and study; takes students beyond work covered in class.

In recognition of the developmental difference among students at different grade levels, BOE Policy 6154 recommends that students in grades 6-8 receive 5-10 hours of homework per week, noting the time will vary depending on courses.

The length and frequency of individual homework assignments will be determined by the developmental stage, 504 Plan or special needs of the students, including their ability level and by the resources available in homes.

## Homework Guidelines for Students and Parents

At Stafford Middle School we recognize the importance of developing student responsibility as it relates to homework.

Student Responsibilities and Goals:

1. The student will do all work assigned on time and to the best of their ability.
2. The student will be responsible for recording homework assignments and making up work missed when absent within the prescribed time period as defined by the teacher.
3. The student will understand that homework will affect the course grade.
4. The student will plan enough time to complete all homework assignments.
5. The student will assume responsibility for obtaining the proper resources and materials to complete homework assignments.

## Parent Responsibilities and Goals:

1. Parents should arrange a quiet, suitable place, with adequate workspace for their child to work.
2. Parents are encouraged to check their child's PowerSchool as well as progress on homework assignments/projects.
3. Parents should demonstrate discretion concerning the amount of assistance given to their child relative to homework.
4. Parents can communicate with the teacher at any time.

## Extra Help

Students may always seek extra help from teachers if the work is difficult or if the student has been absent. Students should make arrangements with their teachers for help during Learning Lab or after school.

## Testing/Assessments

([BOE Policy 5121](#)) Smarter Balanced assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics are administered annually to all students as part of Connecticut's summative assessment system. In addition, the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) test is administered to students in grade 8. The PSAT 8/9 is administered in the fall for all grade 8 students. Special education students participate in mastery testing programs except in the rare case when participation in an alternate assessment is detrimental to the student's IEP.

## Promotion and Retention

([BOE Policy 5123](#)) It is the intention of the Stafford Board of Education that all students are placed in instructional programs in which they can achieve academically as well as emotionally, socially and physically. Students who have demonstrated satisfactory performance at an appropriate level relative to their grade placement, and as measured by criteria including district and state assessments, benchmarks, and grade level reporting, will be promoted to the next level. Students who do not meet these measurable, objective criteria will be supported through a range of programming options and services to develop their educational potential.

### Promotion

Students who have achieved satisfactorily and at an appropriate level relative to their grade, as determined by teacher assessment, will be promoted.

### Retention

In grades 6 through 8, any student who either, 1.) fails both English and mathematics, or 2.) fails three or more major subject areas (English, mathematics, science, social studies, and either world language or reading) will be recommended for retention. The following factors will be considered by the building conference team in regard to possible retention:

1. The student's chronological age
2. The student's potential
3. The student's academic achievement
  - A. Students who are in jeopardy of failing two or more academic subjects.
  - B. Students who are in jeopardy of failing the same subject for the second time.
4. The student's work and study habits
5. The student's physical development
6. The student's social maturity
7. The student's emotional maturity
8. The student's attitude toward school
9. The student's attendance record

## Library/Media Center

The Library Media Center is a place for students to read and do research as well as to borrow and return books. Students are responsible for returning library books on time and in good condition. There are no fines for overdue books; however, students will be charged the replacement cost for books that are damaged or not returned. All students must come to the library with a pass from their subject teacher during the school day

## Books

Books are the student's responsibility and should be treated with care. Students will pay for all lost or damaged books.

## 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.

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## BELL SCHEDULES

Please access the [SMS website](#) to view our 2023-2024 bell schedules.

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## TECHNOLOGY

### Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Internet Safety

([BOE Policy 5131.83](#)) Computers, computer networks, electronic devices, Internet access, and e-mail are effective and important technological resources. The Stafford Board of Education has installed computers and a computer network, including Internet access and an e-mail system, on Board premises and may provide other electronic devices that can access the network such as wireless and/or portable electronic hand-held equipment that can be used for word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture and recording, sound recording, information transmitting and/or receiving, storing etc. (including, but not limited to, laptops, Kindles, radios, I-Pads, Chromebooks or other tablet computers). These computer systems are business and educational tools. As such, they are made available to students in the district for education-related uses.

### Student Conduct

Students are permitted to use the district's computer systems for legitimate educational purposes. Personal use of district computer systems is expressly prohibited. Conduct which constitutes inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Sending any form of a harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to computer systems;
- Damaging computers, computer files, computer systems or computer networks;
- Downloading or modifying computer software of the district in violation of the district's licensure agreement(s) and/or without authorization from a teacher or administrator;
- Using another person's password under any circumstances;
- Trespassing in or tampering with any other person's folders, work or files;
- Sending any message that breaches the district's confidentiality requirements, or the confidentiality of students;
- Sending any copyrighted material over the system;
- Using computer systems for any personal purpose, or in a manner that interferes with the district's educational programs;



- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, obscene as to minors, or contains child pornography, as defined in [BOE Policy 5131.83](#);
- Transmitting or receiving e-mail communications or accessing information on the Internet for non-educational purposes;
- Cyberbullying;
- Accessing or attempting to access social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) without a legitimate educational purpose.

In addition, as noted above, if a particular behavior or activity is generally prohibited by law, by Board policy or by school rules or regulations, use of these computer systems for the purpose of carrying out such behavior or activity is also prohibited.

Misuse of the computer systems, or violations of these policies and regulations, may result in loss of access to such computer systems as well as other disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, depending on the specific conduct.

Anyone who is aware of problems with, or misuse of these computer systems, or has a question regarding the proper use of these computer systems, should report this to his or her teacher or principal immediately. Most importantly, the Board and the Administration urge any student who receives any harassing, threatening, intimidating or other improper message through the computer system to report this immediately. It is the Board's policy that no student should be required to tolerate such treatment, regardless of the identity of the sender of the message. Please report these events!

### ***Student Use Agreement***

Before being allowed to use the district's computer systems, students and/or their parents/guardians must sign a computer system use agreement, stating that they have read and understood the district's policies and regulations regarding the use of its computer systems. [Acceptable Use Agreement - Middle & High School](#)

### **Use of Private Technology Devices by Students**

([BOE Policy 5134.84](#)) The District provides an electronic device for every student and all students are expected to utilize the device provided while on school grounds in accordance with Board policy 6160.2 One-to-One Device Program. Privately-owned technological devices may not be used during instructional time, except as specifically permitted by instructional staff or administration, or unless necessary for a student to access the district's digital learning platform or otherwise engage in remote learning.

On school property, at a school sponsored activity, while in use for a remote learning activity, or while being used to access or utilize Board technology resources, the use of any such device for an improper purpose is prohibited. Improper purposes include, but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of a harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to Board technology resources;
- Damaging Board technology resources;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, obscene as to minors, or contains pornography;
- Cyberbullying;
- Using such device to violate any school rule, including the unauthorized recording (photographic, video, or audio) of another individual without the permission of the individual or a school staff member; or
- Taking any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.

### ***Search of Privately Owned Technological Devices***

A student's privately owned technological device may be searched if the device is on Board property or in a student's possession at a school-sponsored activity and if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Any such search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

### ***Responsibility for Privately Owned Technological Devices***

Students are responsible for the safety and use of their privately owned technological devices. If a privately owned technological device is stolen, lost, or damaged while the device is on school property or during a school sponsored activity, a report should be made to the building principal, who will investigate the loss in a manner consistent with procedures for stolen or damaged personal property. Students and parents should be aware that the Board is not liable for any privately owned technological device that is stolen, lost, or damaged while at school or during a school-sponsored activity. For that reason, students are advised not to share or loan their privately owned technological devices with other students.

### ***Disciplinary Action***

Misuse of the Board's technology resources and/or the use of privately-owned technological devices to access or utilize the Board's technology resources in an inappropriate manner or the use of such devices in any manner inconsistent with this policy will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. For students, a violation of this policy may result in loss of access privileges, a prohibition on the use and/or possession of privately-owned technological devices on school property or at school-sponsored activities, and/or suspension or expulsion in accordance with the Board's policies related to student discipline.

### ***Social Media while at SMS***

Social media applications are not to be used during the school day. Students will not use their personal or district provided devices to access these services. Student posting on social media accounts which disrupts the school or learning environment may be subject to the student code of conduct and referral to school administration.

### ***Stafford Middle School Cell Phone Policy***

Student cell phones (and other privately owned technological devices) may not be visible, used or turned on during the school day on school grounds. Per [BOE Policy 5131.81](#), they must be off and put away out of the sight of any staff member.

- The first violation of this policy will result in a verbal warning and direction to put the device away by the observing staff member.
- The second violation will result in confiscation of the device, held in the Main Office, and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- The third and each subsequent violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the device, with return only to a parent or guardian. Students may be subject to additional disciplinary actions and restrictions.

Should it be absolutely necessary, the most effective way for parents/guardians to reach a student during the day is to contact the main office at 860-684-2785. Attempting to directly contact a student by text or call during the day may interrupt the educational environment.

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## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention and Safe School Climate Plan**

([BOE Policy 5131.911](#) and [BOE Policy 5131.912](#)) The Stafford Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional 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.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. The Board further prohibits any form of teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such violence substantially disrupts the educational process.

Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited. Students who engage in bullying behavior or teen dating violence shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

#### **Definitions**

**“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, 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 at 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 their property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- 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 characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and 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.

**“Cyberbullying”** means 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.

**“Teen Dating Violence”** means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

### ***Reporting Bullying***

To report bullying, complete a [Report of Suspected Bullying or Teen Dating Violence Form](#) and return it to any school employee.

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. As the Safe School Climate Specialist, Bethany Holland is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

### **Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

[\(BOE Policy 5145.6\)](#) It is the policy of the Board of Education (the “Board”) that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited in the Board’s education programs and activities, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to substantial control by the Board. The Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education programs or activities that it operates and the Board is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and its implementing regulations (“Title IX”) not to discriminate in such a manner. Students, Board employees and third parties are required to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students, employees and third parties. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion or termination, respectively.

### ***Reporting Sex Discrimination or Sexual Harassment***

It is the express policy of the Board to encourage victims of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to report complaints of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment promptly in accordance with the appropriate process set forth in the Administrative Regulations. The Board directs its employees to respond to such complaints in a prompt and equitable manner. The Board further directs its employees to maintain confidentiality to the extent appropriate and not tolerate any reprisals or retaliation that occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment. Any such reprisals or retaliation will result in disciplinary action against the retaliator, up to and including expulsion or termination as appropriate.

Any Board employee with notice of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment allegations shall immediately report such information to the building principal and/or the Title IX Coordinator, or if the employee does not work in a school building, to the Title IX Coordinator.

### ***District Title IX Coordinator***

The District’s Title IX Coordinator is the Director of Pupil Services. Any individual may make a report of sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment directly to the Title IX Coordinator using any one, or multiple, of the following points of contact:

Director of Pupil Services  
11A Levinthal Run  
Stafford Springs, CT 06076  
DPS@stafford.k12.ct.us  
(860) 684-4212

Complaint forms are located in the main office and can be found in [BOE Policy 5145.6 REG - Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment](#).

## **Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse/Neglect**

([BOE Policy 4118](#)) All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses 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, to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use. State law prohibits retaliation against a mandated reporter for fulfilling his/her obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect 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.

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## **CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE**

### **School Wide Expectations - S.O.A.R.**

Stafford Middle School Eagles show Eagle Pride through embodying our S.O.A.R. expectations. Students will be Safe, demonstrate Ownership, have a positive Attitude, and be Respectful in order to become productive and meaningful citizens in an increasingly global society.

At SMS, we are committed to creating a learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Our SMS S.O.A.R. expectations are the foundation of our Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) system. Their objective is to help all students acquire the behavioral skills, social-emotional intelligence, and academic skills to be productive citizens in a global society.

In general, students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. Students should strive to be an active participant of a community that creates a positive learning environment through relationship building and consistent, good decisions. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off-campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.
4. Showing respect toward others.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Paying required fees and fines.
7. Abiding by the code of conduct and SOAR expectations.
8. Following all school rules, including safety rules, and the District's Acceptable Use Agreement.
9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Student responsibilities are outlined in our [S.O.A.R. matrix](#):

# S.M.S EAGLES SOAR!

## Show Eagle Pride by:

	Arrival / Departure	Classroom	Hallway / Stairs	Bathroom / Locker rooms	Cafeteria	Auditorium	Bus
<b>Safe</b> Keep yourself and others from being harmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk on the right side</li> <li>Keep hands, feet, and objects to self</li> <li>Stay on sidewalk</li> <li>Report unsafe behaviors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep work and walking spaces hazard-free</li> <li>Obey procedures and follow adult directions</li> <li>Keep hands, feet, and objects to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk on the right side</li> <li>keep hands, feet, and objects to self</li> <li>Report hazardous conditions to an adult</li> <li>Have permission to be there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep water and soap in the sink</li> <li>Throw trash in the garbage</li> <li>Report unsafe conditions to an adult</li> <li>Have permission to be there</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk</li> <li>Remain in your seat</li> <li>Eat your own food</li> <li>Keep hands, feet, and objects to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walk when entering / exiting</li> <li>Sit appropriately</li> <li>Keep aisles clear</li> <li>Listen to and follow adult cues and directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow posted rules and adult directions</li> <li>Remain in your seat</li> <li>Voices off at railroad crossings</li> <li>Keep hands, feet, and objects to self</li> </ul>
<b>Ownership</b> Take responsibility for resources, time, and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep track of belongings</li> <li>Arrive to homeroom on time</li> <li>Pack up quietly and quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be prepared with appropriate materials</li> <li>Be an active and engaged learner</li> <li>Stay up-to-date with assignments</li> <li>Take pride in your work and request help when needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go directly to your destination</li> <li>Limit time</li> <li>Keep hallways/stairs clear of personal belongings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flush</li> <li>Wash your hands</li> <li>Conserve bathroom resources</li> <li>Keep walls, sinks, and stalls clean</li> <li>Limit your time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put your own trash in the wastebasket</li> <li>Clean up after yourself (table, floor, etc.)</li> <li>Return and Stack your trays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain in your original seat / location</li> <li>Be actively engaged and responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit in your assigned area</li> <li>Keep track of belongings</li> <li>Follow adult instructions</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b> Be open-minded, polite, and positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and encourage positivity</li> <li>Be tolerant of personal differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and recognize how your attitude affects others</li> <li>Be honest and value the perspective of others</li> <li>Try your best, accept and offer appropriate feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and encourage positivity</li> <li>Stand up for yourself and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind</li> <li>Use a conversational voice level</li> <li>Keep the space clean and appropriate for guests</li> <li>Keep all surfaces free of writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and encourage positivity</li> <li>Be tolerant of personal food choices</li> <li>Cooperate with adult directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and encourage positivity</li> <li>Enter with a positive attitude</li> <li>Value other perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be kind and encourage positivity</li> <li>Cooperate with adult directions</li> </ul>
<b>Respect</b> Demonstrate the value of people, places, and things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greet / Say farewell to others</li> <li>Be patient with locker neighbors</li> <li>Use kind and appropriate language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop, Listen, and respond politely to adults</li> <li>Contribute to a positive learning environment</li> <li>Use kind and appropriate words</li> <li>Value others' personal space and property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a conversational voice level</li> <li>Be patient with locker neighbors</li> <li>Use kind and appropriate words</li> <li>Stop, Listen, and respond politely to adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop, listen, and respond politely to adults</li> <li>Use a conversational voice level and appropriate language</li> <li>Value personal space and property</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow adult instructions and requests</li> <li>Stop and listen when lights are off</li> <li>Appropriate voice level and language</li> <li>Raise your hand if you need something</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use kind and appropriate words</li> <li>Participate in a positive, appropriate manner</li> <li>Be quick to settle down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stop, listen, and respond politely to adults</li> <li>Use a conversational voice level and appropriate language</li> <li>Value personal space and property</li> </ul>

A student who violates the district's code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. The disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as verbal warning, restitution for damaged/stolen property, counseling, detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when 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, which 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.

## Discipline and Punishment

Good student behavior in a school is extremely important in creating the kind of educational environment in which students will be able to realize their greatest opportunities for growth. Good discipline habits assume consideration for the rights and privileges of others, cooperation with all personnel in the school community, and basic self respect as well as respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work and achievement within one's ability.

The development of good discipline practices is an ongoing interactive process that begins early in a child's life and continues throughout his/her life. The school becomes a critical part of this process because it has the responsibility of teaching and guiding children toward achieving and inculcating good self discipline. However, if the process is to be successful, the school and the home must work together in an effort to help and guide children toward achieving good self discipline.

### ***Disciplinary Procedures and Interventions Overview***

#### Teacher Disciplinary Interventions

- Individual teachers will establish classroom expectations that are consistent with school PBIS and district policies. Behavior that endangers others or interferes with classroom instruction will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary consequences. Teachers will contact parents to discuss concerns.
- Teacher Detention
  - Individual teachers will assign lunch or after school detention as a consequence for misconduct, failure to comply with classroom rules and/or unacceptable standards of behavior. Students will be given 24-hour notice for after school detentions due to the need for the students to inform parents and arrange for transportation.
- Student Behavior Referral
  - Individual teachers will complete a MIR (minor incident referral) or Major behavior referral to both document behavioral concerns as well as direct the student to an administrator for possible disciplinary action when the teacher has been unsuccessful in correcting student behavior or when the infraction is outside of the teacher's authority.

#### Administrative Disciplinary Interventions

- When minor violations occur the usual procedure will be a discussion of the problem with the student and counseling of the student to eliminate repetition of the violation.
- Repeated minor occurrences or a serious violation should lead to a parental conference.
- Office Detention
  - Administrators will assign lunch or after school office detentions. All after school office detentions will be held from 1:50-3:00 pm.
- When these measures prove ineffective, other disciplinary measures (i.e. removal from classroom, suspension or expulsion) may be warranted and imposed by the school principal, his/her designee, the Superintendent and/or the Board.

### ***Special Education Students***

Students requiring special education and related services shall be subject to discipline consistent with state and federal law.

### **Removal, Suspension and Expulsion**

([BOE Policy 5114](#)) Disciplinary consequences are defined by board policy as follows:

**“Suspension”** means the exclusion of a student from school and/or transportation services for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, provided such suspension shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed; and further provided no student shall be suspended more than ten (10) times or a total of fifty (50) days in one school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion, unless such student is granted a formal hearing as provided below.

**“In-School Suspension”** means an exclusion from regular classroom activity for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, but not exclusion from school, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which such in-school suspension was imposed. No student shall be placed on

in-school suspension more than fifteen (15) times or a total of fifty (50) days in one (1) school year, whichever results in fewer days of exclusion.

Unless an emergency situation exists, no student shall be suspended prior to having an informal hearing before the principal or designee at which the student is informed of the charges and given an opportunity to respond. In the event of an emergency, the informal hearing shall be held as soon after the suspension as possible.

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

During any period of suspension served **out of school**, the student shall not be permitted to be on school property and shall not be permitted to attend or participate in any school-sponsored activities, unless the principal specifically authorizes the student to enter school property for a specified purpose or to participate in a particular school-sponsored activity.

**“Expulsion”** means the exclusion of a student from school privileges for more than ten (10) consecutive school days and shall be deemed to include, but not be limited to, exclusion from the school to which such student was assigned at the time such disciplinary action was taken. The expulsion period may not extend beyond one (1) calendar year.

Students may be expelled for conduct on school grounds, on school transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity that either (1) violates a publicized policy of the Board and is seriously disruptive of the educational process, or (2) endangers persons or property.

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

**“Emergency”** means a situation in which the continued presence of the student in school poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption of the educational process that a hearing may be delayed until a time as soon after the exclusion of such student as possible.

### ***Actions Leading to Disciplinary Action, including Removal from Class, Suspension and/or Expulsion***

Conduct that is considered to violate a publicized policy of the Board includes the offenses described below. Any such conduct may lead to disciplinary action (including, but not limited to, removal from class, suspension and/or expulsion in accordance with this policy):

1. Striking or assaulting a student, members of the school staff or other persons.
2. Theft.
3. The use of obscene or profane language or gestures, the possession and/or display of obscenity or pornographic images or the unauthorized or inappropriate possession and/or display of images, pictures or photographs depicting nudity.
4. Violation of smoking, dress, transportation regulations, or other regulations and/or policies governing student conduct.
5. Refusal to obey a member of the school staff, law enforcement authorities, or school volunteers, or disruptive classroom behavior.
6. Any act of Protected Class Harassment or reprisal or retaliation against any individual for reporting in good faith incidents of Protected Class Harassment, or who participate in the investigation of such reports.



7. Refusal by a student to identify himself/herself to a staff member when asked, misidentification of oneself to such person(s), lying to school officials or otherwise engaging in dishonest behavior.
8. Inappropriate displays of public affection of a sexual nature and/or sexual activity on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity.
9. A walk-out from or sit-in within a classroom or school building or school grounds.
10. Blackmailing, threatening or intimidating school staff or students (or acting in a manner that could be construed to constitute blackmail, a threat, or intimidation, regardless of whether intended as a joke).
11. Possession of any weapon, weapon facsimile, deadly weapon, martial arts weapon, electronic defense weapon, pistol, knife, blackjack, bludgeon, box cutter, metal knuckles, pellet gun, air pistol, explosive device, firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, whether functional or not, or any other dangerous object or instrument. The possession and/or use of any object or device that has been converted or modified for use as a weapon.
12. Possession of any ammunition for any weapon described above in paragraph 11.
13. Unauthorized entrance into any school facility or portion of a school facility or aiding or abetting an unauthorized entrance.
14. Possession or ignition of any fireworks, combustible or other explosive materials, or ignition of any material causing a fire. Possession of any materials designed to be used in the ignition of combustible materials, including matches and lighters.
15. Possession, sale, distribution, use, or consumption of tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery systems (e.g. e-cigarettes), electronic cannabis delivery system, or vapor products, or the unlawful possession, sale, distribution, use or consumption of drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages (or any facsimile of tobacco, drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages, or any item represented to be tobacco, drugs or alcoholic beverages), including being under the influence of any such substances or aiding in the procurement of any such substances. For the purposes of this Paragraph 15, the term "electronic nicotine delivery system" shall mean an electronic device used in the delivery of nicotine or other substance to a person inhaling from the device and includes, but is not limited to, an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe or electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device. For the purposes of Paragraph 15, the term "electronic cannabis delivery system" shall mean an electronic device that may be used to simulate smoking in the delivery of cannabis to a person inhaling the device and includes, but is not limited to, a vaporizer, electronic pipe, electronic hookah and any related device and any cartridge or other component of such device. For the purposes of Paragraph 15, the term "vapor product" shall mean any product that employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit or other electronic, chemical or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, to produce a vapor that may or may not include nicotine, that is inhaled by the user of such product. For the purposes of this Paragraph 15, the term "drugs" shall include, but shall not be limited to, any medicinal preparation (prescription and non-prescription) and any controlled substance whose possession, sale, distribution, use or consumption is illegal under state and/or federal law, including cannabis.
16. Sale, distribution, or consumption of substances contained in household items; including, but not limited to glue, paint, accelerants/propellants for aerosol canisters, and/or items such as the aerators for whipped cream; if sold, distributed or consumed for the purpose of inducing a stimulant, depressant, hallucinogenic or mind-altering effect.
17. Possession of paraphernalia used or designed to be used in the consumption, sale or distribution of drugs, alcohol or tobacco, as described in subparagraph (15) above. For purposes of this policy, drug paraphernalia includes any equipment, products and materials of any kind which are used, intended for use or designed for use in growing, harvesting, manufacturing, producing, preparing, packaging, storing, containing or concealing, or injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing controlled drugs or controlled substances into the human body, including but not limited to items such as "bongs," pipes, "roach clips," vials, tobacco rolling papers, and any object or container used, intended or

designed for use in storing, concealing, possessing, distributing or selling controlled drugs or controlled substances, including cannabis.

18. The destruction of real, personal or school property, such as, cutting, defacing or otherwise damaging property in any way
19. Accumulation of offenses such as school and class tardiness, class or study hall cutting, or failure to attend detention.
20. Trespassing on school grounds while on out-of-school suspension or expulsion.
21. Making false bomb threats or other threats to the safety of students, staff members, and/or other persons.
22. Defiance of school rules and the valid authority of teachers, supervisors, administrators, other staff members and/or law enforcement authorities.
23. Throwing snowballs, rocks, sticks and/or similar objects, except as specifically authorized by school staff.
24. Unauthorized and/or reckless and/or improper operation of a motor vehicle on school grounds or at any school-sponsored activity.
25. Leaving school grounds, school transportation or a school sponsored activity without authorization.
26. Use of or copying of the academic work of another individual and presenting it as the student's own work, without proper attribution; or any other form of academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism.
27. Possession and/or use of a cellular telephone, radio, portable audio player, CD player, blackberry, personal data assistant, walkie talkie, Smartphone, mobile or handheld device, or similar electronic device, on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity in violation of Board policy and/or administrative regulations regulating the use of such devices.
28. Possession and/or use of a beeper or paging device on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity without the written permission of the principal or his/her designee.
29. Unauthorized use of or tampering with any school computer, computer system, computer software, Internet connection or similar school property or system, or the use of such property or system for inappropriate purposes.
30. Possession and/or use of a laser pointer, unless the student possesses the laser pointer temporarily for an educational purpose while under the direct supervision of a responsible adult.
31. Hazing.
32. Bullying, defined as an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent, or pervasive, which:
  - a. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;
  - b. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
  - c. infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.Bullying includes, but is not limited to, repeated written, oral or electronic communications or physical acts or gestures based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, 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.
33. Cyberbullying, defined as 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.
34. Acting in any manner that creates a health and/or safety hazard for staff members, students, or the public, regardless of whether the conduct is intended as a joke, including but not limited to violating school or District health and safety protocols.
35. Engaging in a plan to stage or create a violent situation for the purposes of recording it by electronic means; or recording by electronic means acts of violence for purposes of later publication (other than to school officials).

36. Engaging in a plan to stage sexual activity for the purposes of recording it by electronic means; or recording by electronic means sexual acts for purposes of later publication (other than to school officials).
37. Using computer systems, including email, remote learning platforms, instant messaging, text messaging, blogging or the use of social networking websites, or other forms of electronic communications, to engage in any conduct prohibited by this policy.
38. Use of a privately owned electronic or technological device in violation of school rules, including the unauthorized recording (photographic or audio) of another individual without permission of the individual or a school employee.
39. Engaging in teen dating violence, defined as any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.
40. Any action prohibited by any Federal or State law.
41. Any other violation of school rules or regulations or a series of violations which makes the presence of the student in school seriously disruptive of the educational process and/or a danger to persons or property.

### ***Notification to Parents or Guardians***

The parents or guardian of any minor student against whom disciplinary action (removal, suspensions and expulsions) is taken under this policy shall be given notice of such disciplinary action within twenty-four (24) hours of the time the student was excluded.

### **Backpacks and Cell Phones****Stafford Middle School Cell Phone Policy**

All backpacks and cell phones must remain in student lockers during school hours.

- Read more on [Lockers](#)
- Read more on [Cell Phones](#)

### **Gum, Candy, Food**

The eating, chewing, and or distribution of gum and candy is not allowed.

Food is allowed only in the cafeteria unless an alternate eating location plan is in place. Please see [Cafeteria Rules and Expectations](#) for guidance regarding food.

### **Dress Code (BOE Policy 5132)**

The impact of one's dress, appearance, and behavior generally reach beyond the individual student. In general, attire and grooming of individual students in this school are the responsibility of the students and their parents. There are, however, general principles of good taste and modesty, which must be observed.

Students' overall appearance should fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness and cleanliness. Generally, the students are expected to dress and groom themselves for the business of school so as not to disrupt the education process, or pose a health or safety threat to anyone. Clothing should be free from the promotion of or reference to drugs, alcohol, and/or tobacco and of slogans, names, titles or the like which are defamatory toward person(s), group(s), the school or other organizations.

Students whose dress or grooming is judged by the staff to be disruptive or dangerous to personal safety will be asked to change. Students will have access to their gym locker, hallway locker, will be offered clothes to change into, or may call home to have something brought in.

In order to maintain an environment conducive to the educational process, the Board of Education (the "Board") prohibits the following from wear during the academic school day:

- a. Winter coats, jackets or other attire normally worn as outerwear. Outerwear shall not be worn, carried or kept in the classroom during regular school hours. Exceptions may be made by a staff member due to temperature variations.
- b. Head coverings of any kind, including but not limited to scarves, bandannas, masks, visors, kerchiefs, hats, caps or hoods. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious or cultural practice or belief, or as required or permitted in conjunction with school district health and safety protocols, shall not be prohibited under this policy. Head coverings shall not be worn, carried, hung on belts or around the neck or kept in the classroom during regular school hours.
- c. Unsafe footwear. Footwear must be worn at all times and students must follow building and/or subject-specific safety requirements.
- d. Sunglasses being worn while inside the building.
- e. Spiked or studded bracelets, oversized or multi-finger rings, unsafe belts or any other article of attire with spikes or studs attached, or any other clothing item that may present a safety hazard to the student, other students or staff.
- f. Attire or accessories that contain vulgarity or that contain overly offensive, discriminating, slanderous, or disruptive writing or pictures, which are likely to disrupt the educational environment.
- g. Attire or accessories depicting or suggesting violence, ethnic prejudice, systemic racism, provokes others to act violently, or causes others to be intimidated by fear of violence.
- h. Attire or accessories that depict logos or emblems that encourage the use of drugs, tobacco products, or alcoholic beverages.
- i. Shirts that reveal the abdomen, chest, or undergarments. Tank top straps must cover all undergarments and have appropriate underarm coverage.
- j. Clothing that reveals undergarments, buttocks, midriff, or is see-through. Pants worn below the waist.
- k. Pajama, lounge and/or dorm pants.

Students who fail to comply with Board policy and regulations concerning student dress code will be subject to school discipline in accordance with the Board's policy on student discipline.

## **Search and Seizure Procedures**

[\(BOE Policy 5145.12\(a\)\)](#) Board of Education policy permits district officials to search a student's person and property, including property assigned by the District for the student's use, when the below requirements are met. Searches may be conducted at any time on district property or when the student is under the jurisdiction of the District at school-sponsored activities.

All searches for evidence of a violation by the District shall be subject to the following requirements:

1. The District official shall have individualized, "reasonable suspicion" to believe evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule is present in a particular place;
2. The search shall be "reasonable in scope." That is, the measures used are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age, gender, maturity of the student and nature of the infraction.
3. District officials may also search when they have reasonable information that emergency/dangerous circumstances exist.

## **Desks and School Lockers**

Desks and school lockers are the property of the schools. The right to inspect desks and lockers assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property with reasonable care for the Fourth Amendment rights of students.

The exercise of the right to inspect also requires protection of each student's personal privacy and protection from coercion. An authorized school administrator may search a student's locker or desk under three (3) conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains the probable presence of contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material poses a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in the school.
3. The student(s) have been informed in advance 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.

Use of drug-detection dogs and metal detectors, or similar detective devices may be used only on the express authorization of the Superintendent.

District officials may seize any item which is evidence of a violation of law, Board policy, administrative regulation or school rule, or which the possession or use of is prohibited by such law, policy, regulation or rule.

### ***Student Searches***

A student may be searched if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and the nature of the infraction.

Strip searches shall not be conducted by school authorities. All searches by the Principal or his/her designee shall be carried out in the presence of another adult witness.

### ***Police Involvement in Searches and Interrogations of Students***

The District is committed to cooperating with police officials and other law enforcement authorities in order to maintain a safe school environment. Police officials, however, have limited authority to interview or search students in schools or at school functions, or to use school facilities in connection with police work.

Students may be searched by law enforcement officials on school property or when the student is under the jurisdiction of the District upon the request of the law enforcement official. Such requests ordinarily, shall be based on a (1) warrant; or (2) probable cause to believe a crime has been committed on school property or at a school function; or (3) an invitation by school officials. The school Principal or designee will make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents in advance to give the parent the opportunity to be present during the police questioning or search of students under 16 years of age, and will be present for all such searches.

### ***Weapons and Dangerous Instruments***

[\(BOE Policy 5131.7\)](#) Possession and/or use of any dangerous instrument, deadly weapon, firearm, or destructive device or martial arts weapon in any school building on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity is prohibited. Such weapons include but are not limited to any weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, billy, blackjack, bludgeon or metal knuckles.

Pursuant to federal law, the term firearm includes, but is not limited to, any weapon designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, the frame or receiver of any such weapon, a

muffler or silencer for such a weapon, or destructive device. A student who violates this policy will be reported to law enforcement authorities.

A “destructive device” is considered any device with an explosive, incendiary or poison gas component or any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device or from which a destructive device may be readily assembled. A destructive device does not include any device which is designed primarily for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line-throwing, safety or similar device.

The possession or use of any such weapon or devices will require that the proceedings for the suspension and/or expulsion of the student involved will be initiated immediately by the principal. If the student is found to have possessed a firearm or other dangerous weapon as defined in C.G.S. 53a-3 in violation of 29-35 or 53-206, in or on the real property of a school or at any school activity as defined in C.G.S. 10-233a, he/she must be expelled for one calendar year. The Board of Education or hearing board may modify the period of expulsion on a case by case basis. All legal restrictions and requirements will be adhered to pertaining to special education students. Moreover, a student must be expelled for a calendar year if, off school grounds, the student possessed a firearm or did possess and use such a firearm, dangerous instrument, deadly weapon, or martial arts weapon in the commission of a crime.

A safe learning environment is essential to the learning process. Any student found to be in the act of possessing, handling, using or threatening to use any firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon, or a facsimile thereof, shall be subject to immediate and serious disciplinary consequences including: up to a ten (10) day suspension, possible recommendation for expulsion, and/or possible referral to the police consistent with BOE Policy and Connecticut General Statutes 53-3.

### **Alcohol Use, Drugs, and Tobacco (including Performance Enhancing Substances)**

([BOE Policy 5131.6](#)) Stafford Middle School prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, other illegal drugs, prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs/stimulants, mood altering substances or alcohol in school, on school grounds, on school transportation and at school sponsored activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions outlined previously in this handbook, up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution. This policy also applies to all CIAC controlled activities sponsored by the district/school. The CIAC may impose sanctions beyond those applied by the district for the use of performance-enhancing substances.

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## **CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Co-curricular and extracurricular school activities are defined as sports teams and other school activities which occur outside of school hours. These activities require acceptable conduct and achievement in and out of school.

### **Eligibility to Participate in Co-Curricular/Extracurricular Activities**

([BOE Policy 5135](#)) Students who wish to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities, including but not limited to school trips, field trips, athletics, drama, yearbook, cheerleading, madrigals, etc., must maintain passing grades (60 or above) in all classes, or, if failing one course, must have an academic average of 70 or above. If failing two or more classes, students are deemed ineligible to participate. A student who is ineligible to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities or events due to academic standing will not be permitted to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities or events, including any relevant contests, games, practices, productions, meetings, trips and/or rehearsal. Eligibility to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities based on academic standing will be based upon the previous marking period or, for fall activities, on the previous year’s average.

## **Discretionary Nature of Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities**

The opportunity to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right. Administration may suspend or remove students from participation in its discretion to promote or maintain the safety, welfare, and discipline of students and others involved in the activities.

## **The Stafford Middle School Athletic Program**

Stafford Middle School conducts an athletic program to enhance the personal and educational growth of its participants by providing healthy and challenging competition. We believe a competitive athletic program is an integral part of the overall educational program of the school that:

1. Provides an opportunity to engage in healthy competition.
2. Teaches new skills and offers the opportunity to improve on those already possessed.
3. Provides opportunities for the development of lasting friendships with both teammates and opponents.
4. Provides opportunities to observe and exemplify good sportsmanship.
5. Gives students an early understanding that participation in athletics provides leadership training.
6. Provides opportunities for students to place the interest of the group above themselves and learn to practice self-discipline for the overall benefit of the team of which they are members.
7. Provides opportunities for students to develop a feeling of unity and belonging, team pride, teamwork and respect for rules and authority.

### ***The Athlete and Attendance***

1. Student athletes must attend all practices and games as scheduled.
2. Student athletes must attend classes on the day of a contest. Arrival at school after 9:00 a.m. on the day of a contest constitutes an absence unless approved by the school principal. Absence on a Friday will disallow participation in the following Saturday's contest.
3. Absences from team activities due to other school related activities, family obligations, or medical appointments are acceptable when approved in advance by the team coach.

### ***Attending After School Games and Activities***

Students may not stay after school to watch sporting events or practices unless supervised by an adult who has agreed to chaperone students. The team's coach is not responsible for students other than those on the team. When teams are playing home games, students may stay after school with a teacher until the game starts. If students do not have permission to stay with a teacher students must leave at dismissal and return to school to attend the game.

### ***Athletic Director and Website***

Damian Frassinelli, Director of Athletics

860-851-8333

[frassined@stafford.k12.ct.us](mailto:frassined@stafford.k12.ct.us)

[Stafford Middle School Athletics](#)

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## **SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY**

### **Access to School Building**

The school building opens at 7:05 a.m. for students on school days. To help maintain the security of students and staff, access doors to the building will be locked during the school day beginning at 7:20 a.m. After 7:20 a.m., students, parents, staff and guests will be provided access to the building through the main entrance at the front of the building using our security system. This policy is consistent with all state and local fire and safety codes.

## Visitors to Stafford Middle School

Stafford Middle School maintains a secure environment in which members of its community feel safe. All doors to the building are locked throughout the day and visitors wishing entrance must utilize a televised-entry system, which is monitored by the main office staff. Upon entrance to the building from the main front entrance ONLY, all visitors must report to the main office where they sign in utilizing the School Gate Guardian Kiosk. All visitors will be required to indicate the reason for their visit and the time of arrival will be recorded. Office staff helps in addressing the visitor's needs, and each visitor is given a name tag/badge to wear throughout his or her stay at SMS. Upon completion of the visit, guests are asked to sign out of the main office indicating the time of their departure. If you notice an unfamiliar visitor who does not have a nametag, please immediately inform the nearest middle school staff member. (You may be asked to turn in your car keys to ensure proper sign out from the building)

Note: While visitors are welcome at SMS, it is our goal to maintain minimal disruption of the educational process and to assure that visits are appropriate and timely.

## Video Recording on School Buses/ School Campus

The district has installed recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Recordings will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Recordings shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Recording/audio equipment will be used to monitor student behavior in common areas or campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The Principal or his/her designee will review the recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the District's discipline policy.

## Volunteers (Chaperones, Interns and other Non-Employees)

[\(BOE Policy 1212\)](#) The Stafford Board of Education (the "Board") recognizes the importance of school volunteers at all levels of schooling. Volunteers can enhance collaboration between the school and community, broaden the school's educational environment and ultimately enrich students' school experience. Persons interested in volunteering their services should first read [BOE Policy 1212](#) and then contact [Mr. Kinelt](mailto:kinelt@stafford.k12.ct.us) ([kinelt@stafford.k12.ct.us](mailto:kinelt@stafford.k12.ct.us)), SMS Principal.

The following procedure has been established for screening volunteers, interns and other nonemployees ("volunteers") within the Stafford Public Schools (the "District"). For the purpose of this procedure, volunteers are defined as those individuals who volunteer their time to assist in schools for the benefit of the student body with the express knowledge, consent and direction of a District employee. Student interns are defined as individuals currently enrolled in a postsecondary program for which an authorized internship is required or for which the student may be granted credit as part of an approved course of study; however, student interns are not students who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program, as defined in section 10-10a of the Connecticut General Statutes. As with other volunteers, all student interns must be approved in advance by the building administrator or their designee and must be under the direction of a Board employee.

This procedure identifies those situations in which an individual may be required to submit to state and federal criminal record checks and a record check of the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") Child Abuse and Neglect Registry within 10 days of application and/or request to volunteer within the Stafford Public Schools. All results must be received by the Human Resources Department before the volunteer may commence their services. Volunteers required to submit to such checks shall be subject to such checks each school year. No person who is required to register as a sex offender under state or federal law, or whose name is currently listed on the DCF registry, may volunteer in the Stafford Public Schools.



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## ***Screening Procedure Definitions***

The District has identified two classifications of volunteers: Group I and Group II.

### ***Group I***

Volunteers will be classified in Group I when they assist school staff members with school activities in the presence of a District employee. Group I volunteers must complete the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability and a DCF background check form. Criminal background checks (i.e. security checks/fingerprints) will not be required of Group I volunteers. Group I volunteers are those who assist school staff members with school activities such as those listed below:

- a. assisting in a classroom, cafeteria, or library when a staff member is present; or
- b. accompanying a class on a field trip during the school day with a staff member; or
- c. helping in the school office during regular school hours; or
- d. assisting in the cafeteria or library during regular school hours; or
- e. assisting during extracurricular events (e.g., dances, fairs, open house, sporting events).

### ***Group II***

Volunteers will be classified in Group II when they provide services to students when not in the direct presence of a District employee. Group II volunteers will be required to complete the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability and DCF background check form. Group II volunteers will be required to complete a consent form regarding the release of information concerning any prior or pending criminal offenses as indicated on the Volunteer Information Form and Waiver of Liability, and submit to a criminal background check which includes, but may not be limited to, fingerprinting (which must be completed at the volunteer's expense). Volunteers required to submit to such checks shall be subject to such checks at least every three (3) years.

Group II volunteers are those who engage in activities such as those listed below:

- a. accompanying a class on a field trip in which the plans include that students be divided into small groups supervised solely by the volunteer chaperone for any length of time; or
- b. chaperoning an overnight field trip; or
- c. working in direct contact with students without the direct presence of a Stafford Public Schools employee;
- d. working as a student intern; or
- e. coaching.

## ***Department of Children and Families Abuse and Neglect Registry Check***

All volunteers (in Group I or Group II) will be required to submit to a record check of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse and Neglect Registry on a yearly basis.

Upon receipt of DCF Abuse and Neglect Registry results indicating that the volunteer is involved in an abuse or neglect investigation or that the volunteer is listed as a perpetrator of abuse or neglect on the Registry, the Superintendent or their designee will notify the volunteer of the results of the Registry check and will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond to the results of the Registry check. No person who is required to register as a sex offender under state or federal law, or whose name is currently listed on the DCF registry, may be approved to volunteer within the Stafford Public Schools.

When a criminal record check of a volunteer reveals a criminal conviction, whether disclosed or undisclosed on the volunteer's consent form, the Superintendent will make a case-by-case determination as to whether to allow the individual to volunteer in the Stafford Public Schools. Prior to any such decision by the Superintendent or designee, the Superintendent or designee shall inform the volunteer and shall provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the falsification or omission of any

information on a volunteer consent form, including, but not limited to, information concerning criminal convictions pending criminal charges, may be grounds for the Superintendent or designee to prohibit the individual from becoming a volunteer.

### ***Prior Approval Required***

All school volunteers (including student interns or other non-employee working in the schools) must be approved in advance by the building principal or other administrative designee. The school district, acting through the appropriate building administrator or their designee, reserves the right to discontinue or disallow the services of any volunteer at any time at the discretion of the administration.

Central Office will maintain a list of all regular volunteers in the district (chaperones on field trips, aides, library and classroom volunteer assistance, assistance at athletic events, field days, etc.).

### ***Sign-in Procedure***

All volunteers must report to the school office upon arrival to sign in and must report to the office prior to departure to sign out. A sign-in/sign-out log will be maintained in each school office. Volunteers must indicate the purpose of their visit and include any other information (i.e. destination; provide proof of identification etc.) as may be required by the log. Additionally, volunteers will be provided with identification badges, which must be displayed during each visit.

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## **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENT SERVICES**

Stafford Public Schools ensures that all children, through 22 years of age, residing within the jurisdiction of the district who may be in need of special education and/or related services are identified, located, and evaluated. This applies to all students. The Stafford Public Schools will also identify those students from grades PreK-12 who are academically gifted, or talented. For more detailed information regarding a child or about a specific school's program, the building principal should be contacted. You may also access the [Pupil Services Department](#) website and/or [Special Education Procedures and Practices Manual](#). For broader issues, you may also contact the Pupil Services Department at (860) 684-4212.

### **Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)**

The Stafford Public Schools embraces a coherent and proactive MTSS process which provides a multi-tiered system of academic and behavioral support to all learners in order to strengthen learning outcomes to move students toward grade level expectations.

MTSS or Multi-Tiered System of Supports, uses three different levels of support called "tiers", to identify and address academic or behavioral concerns. When students need extra support to reach their goals, a plan is made and a specific goal is created. This area of concern is targeted in small groups for a period of time and data is collected and progress is monitored. If the goal is achieved, students can move out of support or remain in support to work on another targeted intervention. If the goal is not achieved a student can move to a higher tier with a longer duration and a smaller group size. If the child does not make progress even in the highest tier, the process of a referral to special education begins.

### **Student Assistance Teams (SAT)**

The school SAT is composed of school professionals including a building administrator, school social worker, school psychologist, reading specialists, math specialists, classroom teachers, and pupil services staff as needed. Meetings are held weekly within the school day. The team serves as an effective problem solving group to assist classroom teachers with concerns about student academic and/or behavioral concerns. Any student receiving a Tier 3 intervention or showing a lack of progress is added to an agenda for support.

## **School Counseling**

The purpose of the [School Counseling Department](#) is to enhance and promote student development toward becoming a successful and highly productive member of society. The department's mission is based on a philosophy that recognizes each individual as a unique and emerging personality who is capable of continual growth and high levels of achievement. The department advocates striving for strong academic performance and developing social emotional well-being for all students with special regard for individual interests, aspirations and capabilities. The department provides academic, career, and personal counseling services.

Students are welcome to make an appointment for counseling at any time in the school year. Counseling services are rendered by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the school social worker, school psychologist, student support/school climate specialist and school counselors include helping the student function more successfully within the school environment. Students may set up an appointment with the main office secretary to see their school counselor and they are encouraged to make those appointments before school, during lunch or after school, except in cases of crisis or an emergency. During the course of the year, counselors may call or give students passes to meet during class time; teachers are asked to contact the counselor when these meetings interfere with important assignments/tests.

### ***School Counselor***

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. Appointments can be arranged by stopping by the main office before school, between classes or after school, or obtaining a pass from a teacher.

### ***Social Worker***

The School Social Worker sees students on a temporary or ongoing basis for social, emotional or behavioral concerns. The social worker's primary role is to service special education students who are mandated to receive counseling hours, to counsel non-mandated students who are struggling and to act as a consultant to teachers, staff and parents. Students are seen individually and/or in a group format.

### ***School Psychologist***

School psychologists help youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They collaborate with educators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments that strengthen connections between home, school, and the community for all students. The school psychologist works to identify and address learning and behavior problems that interfere with school success. The school psychologist also evaluates eligibility for special education services.

**IMPORTANT:** Concerns of an urgent nature must be reported to an adult immediately. Please contact a teacher, school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, or other trusted adult as soon as concerns arise. If they are not available, please contact administration immediately.

## **Physical Restraint(s)/Seclusion of Students (use of)**

[\(BOE Policy 5144.1\)](#) The Board of Education seeks to foster a safe and positive learning environment for all students. Board of Education employees will restrict the use of physical restraint or seclusion of students to emergency situations, in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative regulations and applicable law. Physical restraint and seclusion of a student may be necessary in an emergency situation to maintain the safety of the student or another individual. The Board also regulates the use of exclusionary time out in accordance with this Policy and accompanying regulations and applicable law.

“**Physical restraint**” means any mechanical or personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the free movement of a child’s arms, legs, or head. “**Seclusion**” means the confinement of a person in a room from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. In a public school, seclusion does not mean any confinement of a child where the child is physically able to leave the area of confinement including in-school suspension or time out.

## English Learners (EL)

Connecticut state law requires every school to know which languages students and their families speak. Based on the Home Language Survey, which is completed as part of school registration, the district contacts families whose children may qualify to receive English Learner (EL) services. The Language Assessment Scales (LAS) Placement Test is used to evaluate a student’s English language proficiency. If your child qualifies for services, district personnel will contact you to discuss the EL program.

## Homeless Students

Under the McKinney Vento Federal Act Homeless students are defined as those lacking a “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence”. Students meeting this definition are protected and have the right to maintain their educational placement, are eligible for free school meals and for Title 1A services. If you believe your family meets this definition, please contact the SMS Principal, Timothy Kinel, or the Stafford Public Schools Director of Pupil Services.

## Military Families

In June 2008, a memorandum of agreement was established creating a partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of Education to support the education of military students. CREC recognizes that for those active duty members, Department of Defense civilians and those activated or deployed National Guard and Reserve members the phases of pre-deployment, deployment, reunion or post-deployment can be challenging to families and children. We can help. Please contact the Safe School Climate Specialist, Bethany Holland, for assistance.

## Title I

### *Comparability of Services*

All district schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

### *Parental Involvement*

Parents of a child in a Title I funded program will receive a copy of the district’s parental involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review and implementation of Title I programs.

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## HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICIES

### Illness

1. If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must go to the nurse or the main office if the school nurse is not available.
2. Students are **not** to make their own transportation arrangements prior to seeing the nurse. The nurse will call parents.

3. Students may be excluded from school for any illness which might be communicable as determined by CDC and/or CT DPH, i.e., Covid like symptoms, rashes, impetigo, mononucleosis, hepatitis, strep throat, scabies, ringworm, and flu.
  - a. A note from a doctor is needed for re- admittance to school.
  - b. Students must be symptom free (vomiting/diarrhea) for 24 hours **and** fever free for 24 hours **without** medication before returning to school.

## Accidents

Students must report any injury to their teacher. The nurse administers First Aid and will call parents.

## Illness Emergency Contacts

Students will be given an Emergency Contact sheet at the beginning of the school year. Parents are asked to include the names of at least two friends or relatives who may be contacted to transport an ill or injured student home when the parents cannot be reached. Students will not be allowed to leave school with anyone other than those listed on the illness emergency contact sheet.

## Administration of Medication (BOE Policy 5141.21)

([BOE Policy 5141.21](#)) Medications to be dispensed at school must be delivered to the school nurse by a parent/guardian or designated adult. The medication must be in the original container as obtained from the pharmacy with the student's name clearly indicated. A written order (on an authorization for medication school form) for the medication signed by the student's licensed physician, licensed dentist, licensed advanced practice registered nurse or licensed physician's assistant must also be presented to the school nurse and kept on file. Please be aware that written orders must be renewed each school year for medication prescribed for longer term use. In addition, you will need to sign an authorization for the nurse to administer medication or in his/her absence, a school administrator. Finally, administration of over the counter medications requires the same procedures, including a written order by a licensed health care provider as noted above. Over the counter medications include but are not limited to aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, antacids, cough drops and topical ointments.

## Immunizations Required for School Admission (BOE Policy 5144)

([BOE Policy 5144](#)) The following immunizations are required by law and the Stafford Board of Education for admission to the Stafford School system:

### Grade 6

- Hep B: 3 doses, last dose on or after 24 weeks of age DTaP/Td: At least 4 doses. The last dose must be given on or after your 4th birthday. Students who start the series at age 7 or older only need a total of 3 doses.
- Polio: At least 3 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4th birthday
- MMR: 2 doses separated by at least 28 days, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday
- Varicella: 2 doses separated by at least 3 months-1st dose on or after 1st birthday; or verification of disease. 28 days between doses is acceptable if the doses have already been administered.
- Hepatitis A: 2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1st dose on or after 1<sup>st</sup> birthday

### Grades 7-8

- Hep B: 3 doses, last dose on or after 24 weeks of age
- Tdap/Td: 1 dose for students who have completed their primary DTaP series. Students who start the series at age 7 or older only need 3 doses of tetanus-diphtheria containing vaccine, one of which must be Tdap

- Polio: At least 3 doses. The last dose must be given on or after 4th birthday
- MMR: 2 doses separated by at least 28 days, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday
- Varicella: 2 doses separated by at least 3 months-1st dose on or after 1st birthday; or verification of disease. 28 days between doses is acceptable if the doses have already been administered.
- Hepatitis A: 2 doses given six calendar months apart, 1st dose on or after 1st birthday
- Meningococcal: 1 dose

## Health Assessments: Screenings (BOE Policy 5143)

([BOE Policy 4143](#))

- Vision Test – Per State Regulations/Statutes
- Scoliosis – Per State Regulations/Statutes
- Hearing Test – Per State Regulations/Statutes

## Physical Examination for all 6th Graders

In accordance with state law, sixth graders must have a physical examination and updated immunizations, due by April 30<sup>th</sup> of the current 6th grade school year.

## Athletic Physical Examination

Athletic Physical Examinations Physicals need to be up to date (within 13 months) prior to tryouts or practices. An adequate medical examination must be provided for athletes yearly. Athletes should be referred to their physician when the need arises. Following an illness or injury, the re-admittance of a student to participate in athletics should be made only on a physician's recommendation and continued under his/her supervision.

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## FOOD SERVICES

The [district food services website](#) provides important information and resources including meal pricing, menus, and SNAP benefits information.

### *Student Meal Accounts*

SMS utilizes PaySchools Central in managing student meal accounts. Each student receives a PIN number to be used when purchasing food in the cafeteria. Students should not share their pin number with others. Parents may deposit money into a child's debit account in the cafeteria. Students may purchase lunches and snacks by using their PIN number to debit their account. Students will be alerted when their account is nearly depleted.

- [PaySchools Central log in](#)
- [PaySchools Central user guide](#)

### *Free and Reduced Meals*

Application forms for free and reduced breakfasts and lunches will be available in the office. These forms must be completed by parents **every year** regardless of previous eligibility. They can be filled out at any point during the school year and should be returned to the main office as soon as possible.

## Cafeteria Rules and Expectations

All eating is to be done in the cafeteria. Food is not permitted elsewhere in the building. Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may be cause for receiving an assigned seat or forfeiting the right to eat in that location or such other disciplinary action deemed appropriate for the misconduct. (Misconduct could include but is not limited to standing in single file lines while waiting to be served, rearranging tables, not disposing of waste, not reporting directly to the cafeteria at the start of lunch, leaving early, blocking exits, bringing food outside of the cafeteria, or cutting while in line.)

Students shall:

1. Students are to go directly to the cafeteria.
2. Students are expected to keep noise to a minimum when socializing with peers.
3. All students are expected to display good table manners and be courteous and considerate to fellow pupils, teachers, and cafeteria workers.
4. Before being dismissed, students are responsible for cleaning their table and picking up any rubbish on the floor after eating lunch.
5. To help keep our school clean, all food and drink must be kept in the cafeteria and designated areas.
6. Students are to leave the cafeteria in a quiet and orderly manner.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Bus Transportation**

([BOE Policy 5131.1](#)) The Board of Education provides bus transportation for all students. All students are expected to go to and from school on the assigned bus provided. The school bus is an extension of the classroom. Appropriate behavior is expected on the bus in the same way as in the classroom.

Any student who acts in an unruly, dangerous, or disruptive manner while being transported by the district shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action which may include long term denial of transportation services.

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 their designated bus stop.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion (please wait until the bus comes to a complete stop upon arrival at your stop).
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, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required.
2. The administration 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 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).

### **Assigned Bus Changes**

According to Board of Education policy, students may only ride a different bus for one of the following three reasons:

1. Transfer to a daycare arrangement in the child's school attendance zone.
2. Transfer due to legal agreement.
3. Emergency transfers as authorized by the building administrator.

### **Bus Pick up and Drop Off Changes**

During the school year the school office must be notified of any changes in student pick up and drop off points at least 48 hours in advance, except for an emergency.

### **Late Bus**

- Late bus service is available for students who remain at school for academic support or activities.
- Students must be supervised by a teacher.
- Students must have a late bus form filled out by their parent or guardian for permission to ride the late bus. Late bus permission is part of the parent online check in at the start of the year. For questions, please call the main office at 860-684-2785.
- Students must sign up to take the late bus in their homeroom each day the bus is needed because space is limited.
- Seats are issued based on the sign up list. If student(s) do not sign up during homeroom they need to sign up for the late bus in the main office prior to 10:30 to obtain a late bus pass.
- The late buses leave from the main entrance to the building at approximately 3:05 p.m. daily. There will be no late bus service for students who live in Union.
- The bus travels only on the main roads. If you use the late bus, be sure your parents know that you may not be dropped off at your usual bus stop.

### **Transportation Concerns**

Please contact the main office at 860-684-2785 with any concerns related to transportation.

## **Alternate Transportation**

### **Student Drop Off and Pick Up by Parent**

Parents must drop off and pick up students in the back of the building. The driving lane in front of the school is a fire lane. After 2 pm parents may pick up in the front; No parking in front of the building (fire lane) will be permitted at any time.

### **Walking or Biking**

Students may NOT walk or ride bicycles to or from school since all means of access onto and off the campus (i.e., trails through the woods, "sidewalk-less" roads) are potentially dangerous to their safety and cannot be supervised by the school.

## **School Bus Safety Notice**

The Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles has recently expressed concern to school districts throughout the state regarding the growing number of incidents in which school buses are being passed by motorists while loading and unloading children on school property with red lights flashing. Red flashing lights signal motorists to stop and wait until the flashing light is off or the bus driver signals the vehicle to pass.

The DMV has reminded us that the same penalties apply on school grounds as on the public roads. Passing a school bus with the lights flashing will result in a written warning by civil authorities for the first infraction and a \$450 ticket for any subsequent infraction. This is a safety issue, which has the potential for tragic results and is of joint concern to the school system and the community we serve. In an effort to keep our children safe, the school system and the motoring public need to be aware of school bus safety.

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## **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. Following dismissal, unless students are involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, they are expected to leave the campus immediately.

### **Lockers**

Lockers are the property of the school and are subject to routine administrative inspection. Lockers should be kept clean and orderly. Food is not to be left in lockers. Students are assigned one locker to use during the year. Students should not share lockers or locker combinations with other students. The locker combination is available in the office. All material stored in individual lockers is the responsibility of the student. The school is not responsible for any goods lost or stolen at school. Any student discovered taking articles from another person's locker will be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Green Cleaning Programs**

([BOE Policy 3524.2](#)) It is the policy of the Stafford Board of Education to achieve the maintenance of clean, safe, and healthy schools through the elimination of contaminants that affect children and adult health, performance and attendance and the implementation of cleaning processes and products that protect health without harming the environment.

The Board of Education, by July 1, 2011, will reduce exposure of school building occupants to potentially hazardous chemical cleaning products by adopting this Green Cleaning policy. This policy requires the use of cleaning products in the schools that meet the guidelines or standards set by a national or international certification program approved by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) in consultation with the Commissioner of Environmental Protection in order to minimize the potential harmful effects on human health and the environment.

The Director of Building Services is responsible for the implementation of this policy. 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" (a required statement by law).

### **Hazardous Materials in School (Asbestos/Pesticides Statement)**

([BOE Policy 3524.1](#)) As annually required by state law, all asbestos materials at Stafford Middle School are fully encapsulated and are in keeping with the Asbestos Management Plan (AMP). For further information, contact the Director of Building Services (860-684-0754).

This serves as our required annual notification pertaining to Asbestos Management in the school system. To the best of our knowledge, there were no Asbestos containing materials used in the construction of Stafford Middle School. If you request further details, you may see the Asbestos Management Plan available in the main office. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Additionally, students and parents are informed on the rare occasions when pesticides may be in use at the middle school.

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## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **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 service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

### **Stafford Middle School PTA**

The PTA exists to strengthen the link between home and school and to provide additional financial support for special school projects and assemblies. Meetings are regularly held each month. A membership drive will start in early September. Anyone interested please contact [Mr. Kinel \(kinelt@stafford.k12.ct.us\)](mailto:kinelt@stafford.k12.ct.us), Stafford Middle School Principal.

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## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**

### **Student Records**

[\(BOE Policy 5125\)](#) A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. 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.

### **Directory Information**

[\(BOE Policy 5145.15](#) and [BOE Policy 5125](#) ) Directory information may be released without prior written consent, unless notified in writing to the contrary. Directory information includes information contained in an education record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. If a parent does not wish to have this information released, the parent must notify the main office in writing.

Directory information includes, but is not limited to, the parent's name, address and/or e-mail address; the student's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, photographic, computer and/or video images, date and place of birth, major field(s) of study, grade level, enrollment status (full-time; part-time), participation in school sponsored activities or athletics, weight and height (if the student is a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, degrees, honors and awards received, the most recent previous school(s) attended, and student identification numbers for the limited purposes of displaying a student identification card. The student identification number, however, will not be the only identifier used when obtaining access to education records or data. Directory information does not include a student's social security number, student identification number or other unique personal identifier used by the student for purposes of accessing or communicating in

electronic systems unless the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN or password.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses, and telephone listings unless the secondary student or the parent of the student objects to such disclosure in writing. Such objection must be in writing and shall be effective for one school year

## **FERPA Notification of Parent Rights**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend their child's or their education record should write to the school principal or designee, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. [NOTE: FERPA requires a school or school district to make a reasonable

attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request or the disclosure is initiated by the parent or eligible student.]

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

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## Revision Notes/History

- 7/2023: Creation of current version, updating and consolidating previous handbook to include current policies
- 11/2023: Revision to reflect revised BOE policies, adopted at Oct BOE meeting