

SECTION J**STUDENTS****8. Student Code of Conduct**

(Voted 6/15/70, #70-309; 3/8/71, #71-99; 1/17/77, #77-25; 6/11/85, #85-250; 4/8/86, #86-141; 2/28/89, #89-91; 4/27/89, #89-195; 10/27/92, #92-444; 2/27/03, #03-12; 12/14/13, #13-12; 9/18/14, #14-62; 3/12/15, #15-15; 1/31/19, #19-14; *replaced Conduct and Discipline Policy*; 4/11/24, #24-43)

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

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Philosophy

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) is committed to providing every student with a safe, secure learning environment in which they can thrive. Consistent with the PSB core values of High Achievement for All, Educational Equity, and Respect for Human Difference, this policy is designed to guide expected student behavior based on a general code of conduct and based upon respect for others, respect for self, and respect for property. We believe all students have the right to be treated fairly, courteously and respectfully; to bring complaints to the school Principal or staff for resolution; to tell their side of the story; and to freely express their opinions. All students have a right to a high-quality education. Similarly, all students have the responsibility to not disrupt the educational process or impose upon, endanger, or deprive others of their rights to a high-quality education.

We recognize that our schools provide a unique opportunity for learning and growth related to student behavior. We believe in preventive and positive approaches to discipline and in responding with interventions and consequences aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, and meeting students' needs and keeping students in school. When there is a breach of conduct, the Brookline School Committee believes it paramount that the school response emphasizes learning over punishment, and that it be conducted in a way that calls the student's attention to his or her responsibility for self-discipline and helps the student exercise sounder judgment in the future. We believe in resolving conflicts by every means short of exclusion from school. The purpose of discipline must be to understand and address the causes of behavior to resolve conflicts, while teaching new skills and repairing the harm done, restore relationships and reintegrate students into the school community. In addition, particular attention and intervention support shall be provided to vulnerable families and students at risk of being excluded from school.

We believe it is the responsibility of all school staff, students, families, and the community to contribute to a school community that promotes a safe, secure, and learning environment. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, families, and the community.

J1 - STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights, there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

POLICY MANUAL OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE

Commented [AM1]: MASC policies J1 and J1B relate to students rights and involvement in decision making. These two policies most closely relate to this section of your policy.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights--including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure their rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy, which includes privacy with respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights, and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make and delegate authority to its staff to make rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents/guardians through handbooks distributed annually.

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2021

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); [71:82](#) through [71:86](#)

JIB - STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

As appropriate to the age of students, class or school organizations and school government organizations, such as student councils, may be formed to offer practice in self-government and to serve as channels for the expression of students' ideas and opinions.

The Committee will take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity. Students will be welcomed at Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking in line with the privileges extended to the general public.

Student Advisory Committee

As required by state law, the Committee will meet at least once every other month while school is in session with its student advisory committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The chair of the student advisory committee shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2021

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38M

CROSS REF.: BDE, *Advisory Committees to the School Committee*

Guiding Principles

The goal of the Code of Conduct is to teach students to behave in ways that contribute to academic achievement and school success, and to support a school environment where students and staff are responsible and respectful. We seek to ensure that students remain connected to the learning environment and school community. To that end, we strongly believe in proactive practices with the aim of maximizing learning time in the classroom for all students. We recognize and value the teacher's pivotal role in creating classroom environments that are conducive to engaged learning. Successful, positive conduct is guided by the following principles:

- Effective and engaging instruction, positive school climate, and classroom management are the foundation of effective discipline.
- School discipline is best accomplished by preventing misbehavior before it occurs, and using effective interventions after it occurs.
- School safety and academic success are formed and strengthened when all school staff and personnel build positive relationships with students and are actively engaged in their lives and learning.
- All school staff should promote high standards of behavior by teaching, modeling, and monitoring behavior, and by fairly and consistently correcting misbehavior as necessary.
- School discipline that is paired with meaningful instruction and guidance offers students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community, and is more likely to result in getting the student re-engaged in learning.
- Effective school discipline maximizes the amount of time students spend learning and minimizes the amount of time students are removed from their classrooms due to misbehavior.

Students in Grades PreK-2

The Brookline Early Education Program provides a positive, nurturing environment for the District's youngest learners. Exclusionary discipline removes our youngest students, who have the most to learn about social and behavior skills, from the environment that supports their social, emotional and academic growth. As such, out of school suspensions in early childhood programs, grades PK-2, are limited to conduct that causes physical harm or poses a direct threat to the health and safety of students or educators, and requires the approval of the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~ their designee.

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JK - STUDENT CONDUCT

The Massachusetts General Laws require the School Committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2021

**LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37H ½; 71:37H ¾; 71:37L; 76:16; 76:17
603 CMR 53.00**

JICC (also EEAEC) - STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents/guardians the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents/guardians of students whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their students face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2021

NOTE: The coding of this statement indicates that the identical policy is filed in the E (Support Services) section.

Commented [AM2]: MASC policies JK and JICC most closely relate to this part of your policy.

When we recommend policies, they are more high level and the specifics contained in your appendix.

Disproportionality

While overly harsh school discipline policies can affect all students, national surveys indicate that they may disproportionately impact students of color and students with disabilities. Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and Native American students, in particular, may be more likely to be suspended, expelled, and arrested than their white peers, even for the same behavior. The surveys indicate that students of color also tend to receive harsher punishments than their peers for the same offenses. Federal civil rights data shows students with disabilities have been disproportionately disciplined (e.g., suspensions and expulsions) in K-12 public schools.

This District therefore is committed to ensuring that discrimination or bias that may present barriers to success for our students plays no role in the disciplinary process.

All staff members are specifically charged with being aware of the impact of their actions on students from racial and ethnic groups or other protected classes that national surveys indicate have historically been over-represented among those students who are suspended, expelled, referred to alternative schools, arrested, or referred to law enforcement. The District shall evaluate any evidence that punitive measures may be used disproportionately against students of any protected class and, if confirmed by such evidence, shall take appropriate corrective action.

It is the Policy of the School Committee to abide by all laws applicable to student discipline, including, but not limited to, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §§ 37H, 37H ½, and 37H ¾, constitutional due process and other requirements of the federal and state constitutions, laws and regulations. School staff should consult the applicable statutes and the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), 603 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 53, and/or Town Counsel's Office as appropriate for further guidance.

School-Based Rules

This Code of Conduct establishes uniform rules and procedures to be followed throughout the Public Schools of Brookline in disciplinary actions, including non-exclusionary, positive and preventative approaches to student discipline. Any school-based rules related to discipline must be consistent with this Code of Conduct.

Alternatives to Exclusions

We prioritize building strong and positive relationships within the school community. We want all individuals to feel respected and valued, and value others. As such, it is important that our responses to misconduct convey our value for building and maintaining relationships and mutual respect for ourselves and others. We believe in resolving conflicts by every means short of exclusion from school. We understand the research that demonstrates exclusionary discipline can be ineffective and harmful.

The purpose of discipline must be to understand and address the harm caused, while teaching new skills and repairing the harm done, restore relationships and reintegrate students into the school community. In every case of student misconduct for which suspension or expulsion may be considered, a Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence(s) for the offense while ensuring opportunities for student to remain engaged in learning while

maintaining the safety of the school community. The District will make every reasonable effort to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid future harm.

Please reference the amended language of M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H ¾, effective 11/08/2022, as described more fully in the Principal's Hearing Procedures section on page J85.

Tiered Interventions and Consequences

We believe that student discipline practices work best when they are instructive, not punitive, and that the purpose of discipline must be to understand and address the causes of behavior to resolve conflicts, while teaching new skills and repairing the harm done in order to restore relationships and rebuild community.

Our approach is based upon a framework of progressive responses. There should be a gradient of interventions and consequences that range in severity proportional to the behavior, while also addressing the need for restoration and skill building at every level. While some behaviors may warrant exclusionary disciplinary, the aim should always be to prioritize minimizing the length of time a student is out of the learning environment.

Further, we believe that intervention is most effective when the educator working most directly with students intervenes in the way they believe will most effectively support the student.

Below is a description of different levels of intervention offered and parties involved:

- Level 1 interventions should be implemented by the teacher working most closely with the student.
- Level 2 interventions include teacher, student, and parent/guardian.
- Level 3 interventions involve teacher, student, parent/guardian, and support staff. Often times, Level 3 interventions will involve specialized training and expertise from support staff such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, or Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), to name a few.
- Level 4 interventions include the addition of an administrator as these interventions typically require an increased level of authority.
- Interventions at Level 5 involve administrative level referral and the potential for exclusion from school.

In every case the Principal or designee shall determine the appropriate intervention or consequence based on the specific facts and circumstances. For specifics on the types of intervention strategies and responses to specific behaviors, please refer to Appendix B.

In accordance with the Public Schools of Brookline Wellness Policy (effective July 1, 2018), teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity or withhold opportunities for physical education or activity (e.g., recess) as consequence. The denial of recess will not be used as a punishment or discipline unless the student's removal from recess has been determined as appropriate by the school Principal and communicated with the parent/[guardian](#).

Please reference the amended language of M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H ¾, effective 11/08/2022, as

described more fully in the Principal's Hearing Procedures section on page J85.

Investigations of Disciplinary Incidents

Upon notification of a report of a disciplinary offense the Principal shall promptly; (1) notify the parents/[guardians](#) of the involved students within the confines of student confidentiality protections as outlined by the Massachusetts student record regulations and/or FERPA, and (2) review submitted incident report, and (3) conduct and conclude an investigation within five (5) school days, unless circumstances, such as witness availability, require a longer period. If a longer period is required to complete an investigation, all impacted parents/[guardians](#) will be notified.

The details of the PSB's procedures pertaining to reports of disciplinary violations are set out in the PSB's disciplinary procedures and supporting templates.

If the report of a conduct violation involves student(s) from another school, the Principal shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school so that both may take appropriate action. In that instance, the administrators shall agree on which one should supervise the investigation.

Confidentiality shall be used to the greatest extent permitted by law to protect a person who reports disciplinary offense or retaliation, who provides information during an investigation, or who is a witness.

The Principal shall document and maintain a file of all reports of disciplinary and subsequent investigations, and disciplinary determinations. A quarterly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall inform the School Committee periodically of any trends or implications of these reports in order to give the School Committee the opportunity to review and amend this policy. No such report by the Superintendent shall convey information about specific identifiable students.

Students may be subject to discipline for violations even if that conduct occurs on property not owned or controlled by the district, or outside of school hours. This is if the conduct is connected to activities or incidents that have occurred on property owned, or controlled by, the district or conduct that affects that school environment.

Role of Brookline Police Department

Our schools strive to only involve law enforcement for educational and supportive purposes. The Brookline Police Department (BPD), through its School Resource Officers (SROs), offers educational programming to our students as well as behavioral health and de-escalation support for students in crisis. At times, situations may necessitate the involvement of the Brookline Police Department for other purposes. At any point after receiving a report of an incident, the Principal shall immediately notify the BPD if there is a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued or if the conduct is reasonably believed to put persons at risk of harm, including the student in question. Such notification will be made after consultation with the

Superintendent. The Principal shall document the reasons for the decision to notify law enforcement if such notification is made.

This District seeks to avoid the unnecessary criminalization of our students; as such, police will be involved in situations when it is reasonably believed to be necessary to protect the physical safety of students, staff, or other persons in the community, or appropriate to address criminal behavior of persons other than students.

JIH - SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

Searches by Staff

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding students, their own property and school property.

Nevertheless, exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each student's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school district to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Interrogations by Police

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

1. When law enforcement officials find it necessary to question students during the school day or periods of extracurricular activities, the school Principal or their designee will be present when possible. An effort will be made to contact the student's parent or guardian so that the responsible individual may be notified of the situation.
2. If custody and/or arrest are involved, the Principal will observe that all procedural safeguards, as prescribed by law, are followed by the law enforcement officials.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2021

Academic Progress

Any student who is suspended, expelled, or removed on an emergency basis shall have the opportunity to earn credits and make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents/[guardians](#) of the services and

POLICY MANUAL OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF BROOKLINE

Commented [AM3]: MASC policy JIH most closely related to this section. There is an additional policy in Section K - [KLG RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES](#) that outlines the Memorandum of Understanding with the police department.

arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

Any student who is given a long-term suspension or expulsion shall have an opportunity, through the school-wide education service plan, to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements.

For each student who is given a long-term suspension or expulsion, whether in-school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

In addition to the provisions detailed above, students with disabilities are afforded all the protections relating to discipline to which they are entitled under applicable law, including but not limited to, Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1415(k), and implementing regulations, 34 CFR 300.530-537, the Rehabilitation Act, Section 504, and the Massachusetts special education law, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B, and implementing regulations, 603 CMR 28.

Students with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in addition to those given to their general education peers in the context of student discipline. These protections are to prevent interruptions of their educational placement and receipt of mandated services.

When a student with a disability displays inappropriate behavior which may be a violation of the code of conduct this may indicate a need for an immediate IEP and/or 504 team meeting with a discussion of behavioral supports which should be included in the ~~child's~~ student's IEP and/or 504 Plan. This is especially true when the student displays inappropriate behavior on a regular basis or when the behavioral incidents may result in suspensions or other disciplinary measures that exclude the student from accessing curriculum.

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If a student displays inappropriate behavior despite having an IEP and/or 504 Plan that includes behavioral supports, this may indicate that the behavioral supports in the IEP and/or 504 Plan are not being appropriately implemented, or that the behavioral supports in the IEP and/or 504 Plan are not appropriate for the student.

In these situations, the IEP and/or 504 Team shall meet to determine whether the current IEP and/or 504 should be amended to ensure that the interventions and supports in the IEP and/or 504 can be implemented, or whether the behavioral interventions and supports that are currently in place should be revised.

If a student with a disability is attending a school outside the PSB system pursuant to an out-of-district placement, that student shall be subject to the out-of-district school's discipline policies during their attendance and not to the discipline policies of the PSB.

Non-Discrimination/Civil Rights and Bullying

School district staff responsible for implementing this policy shall do so without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability¹.

Student misconduct may violate not only a school's code of conduct, but also (1) one or more federal civil rights statutes, including Title VI (discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin), Title IX (discrimination on the basis of sex), or Section 504 (discrimination on the basis of disability), and analogous Massachusetts statutes and/or (2) Massachusetts statutes which prohibit bullying and hazing.

Any misconduct alleging violations of Title VI/IX and disability statutes will be investigated in accordance with the *PSB Policy Against Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Retaliation* (J40). Allegations of bullying behaviors, including cyber-bullying, will be investigated in accordance with the *PSB Bullying Prevention Policy* (J46). In all instances where violations are confirmed, discipline shall be administered in accordance with the standards and procedures set forth in this Policy.

JICFA - PROHIBITION OF HAZING

No student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Principal, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

Commented [AM4]: MASC policies JICFA and JIFCB most closely relate to this section of your policy. There are additional anti-discrimination policies referenced here that are in our Section A.

¹ MGL Chapter 76 Section 5

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2021
LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19

JICFB - BULLYING PREVENTION

The School Committee is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

"Bullying" is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

"Cyber-bullying" means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of electronic medium in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents/guardians and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;

- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or their designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred they shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or their designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

Target Assistance

The school district shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the school district website.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended

Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR 26:00

M.G.L. 71:37O; 265:43, 43A; 268:13B; 269:14A

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination

ACAB, Sexual Harassment

JIC, Student Discipline

JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2021

Staff Training

Every school within the District shall make an appropriate annual allocation of professional development time to training in classroom management, conflict resolution, and non-punitive approaches to discipline in order to ensure that the disciplinary program in each school is effective and that relevant policies and procedures are equitably applied. In addition to behavioral supports for students with disabilities, it may also be necessary, and consistent with IDEA requirements, to provide training to school personnel which is appropriate to address the behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

Every school within the District shall determine a time and method to provide all staff with training regarding the District's Code of Conduct. Such training shall occur annually and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment.

Community Involvement

Meaningful parent/[guardian](#), student, and community involvement in the creation and application of school and district policy is essential for building effective schools with positive and inclusive learning environments. As such, parents/[guardians](#), students, and community members should have input in the development of discipline rules for their school and classrooms, subject to the requirements and limitations of applicable law. Ultimately the development of such rules is the sole responsibility of the schools' administrations and the school district.

Suspensions and Expulsions of Students

The use of measures that remove students from the classroom, such as in-school/out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools, should be minimized. These punitive measures may result in the loss of valuable instructional time, damage to relationships, and should be reserved for infractions that cannot be appropriately or adequately addressed through other interventions and disciplinary responses. Please see Appendix C for more information.

JHD - EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Commented [AM5]: MASC policy JHD most closely relates to this section of your policy.

Denial of Admission

Denial of admission means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the District.

The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to school or for diversion to an appropriate alternative program:

Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;

Failure to meet the requirements of age for beginning school as fixed by the School Committee as provided in Massachusetts General Laws;

Not being a resident of the District and the District has opted not to participate in the School Choice Law;

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated Legal Reference - 2023

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [76:12](#); [76:12A](#); [76:12B](#)

603 CMR [26:00](#)

CROSS REF: [JEB](#), Entrance Age

Tobacco and Paraphernalia

It is unlawful for any person, including any student, enrolled in either primary or secondary public schools in Massachusetts, to use tobacco or any tobacco product on school grounds, within school buildings, school facilities, or on school buses, as indicated in M.G.L. c. 71, s. 2A. Possession or use of tobacco or any tobacco product including any tobacco delivery systems is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

The definition of “tobacco product” encompasses vaping devices, electronic tobacco/nicotine delivery products, and any component, part or accessory of a tobacco product or any item that has been modified for the purpose of vaporization or aerosolization. Students are not permitted to possess or use these products, even if they are empty or do not actually contain tobacco, on school grounds, within school buildings, school facilities, or on school buses. Examples of tobacco products include:

- Vaporizers
- Electronic Cigarettes
- Electronic Pipes

Additionally, in accordance with the Town of Brookline's Tobacco Control By-law, Article 8.23, students and school personnel are not permitted to smoke on school grounds and within 400 feet of any Brookline school building.

The District values the health and well-being of all of its students. Thus, if students are found in possession of tobacco and/or nicotine-related products, the Principal or designee will prioritize working with the student and parent/guardian to understand the cause of possession, educate all involved, and develop a plan for abuse prevention education, if deemed necessary. School responses can include a range of consequences, including but not limited to notification to and discussion with parent/guardian and student, exclusion from school, and referral to the Brookline Substance Abuse Prevention Program's Tobacco Education Program (TEP), for high school students. The TEP program consists of one education and assessment meeting with the student and a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians are given the option to sign their student up for additional sessions, and will be given information about additional resources.

JICH - ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUG USE BY STUDENTS PROHIBITED

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

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

Commented [AM6]: MASC policy JICH most closely related to this section of your policy.

Verbal Screening

- The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 9.
- Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.
- All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2021

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L.71:2A; 71:96; 71:97; 272:40A

CROSS REFS.: ADC, Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited

GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy

GBED, Tobacco use on School Property by Staff Members Prohibited

IHAMB, Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco

Distribution of Policy

The District shall distribute a copy of this policy to all students and their parents/[guardians](#) in a language they can understand. It shall also be posted on the district website and be accessible in each school main office for parent/[guardian](#)/staff reference.

Reporting and Review

In order to ensure equitable implementation of this policy, the Office of Student Services shall keep records of all disciplinary actions, including relevant demographic data on students involved in any action reported under this policy. This data shall be regularly reviewed by the Superintendent to provide constructive feedback on the policy and PSB practice, and a summary shall be made available to the School Committee

Appendix A - Code Implementation and Behavior Matrix

The purpose of this section is to support all educators, teachers in particular, in implementation of the Code. As you utilize this appendix, keep in mind the following principles set forth in the Code:

- We prioritize building positive relationships with students. All students need caring adults in their lives. All want to be a positive member of a community
- Relationships should be at the center of corrective action, with all other strategies seen as tangents. Rather than asking, “What’s the consequence that will fix the problem?” better to ask, “Is there a consequence that might be part of how we help this student?” This approach is especially important for the most vulnerable students; students with the most chaos and trauma in their lives - those who make us angriest - are the least likely to benefit from harsh punishments.¹
- We believe in preventive and positive corrective response and so seek to understand and address the causes of behavior to resolve conflicts while teaching new skills and repairing harm done, restore relationships, and reintegrate students into the school community.
- We believe in resolving conflicts by every means short of an exclusion from school.

There should be a gradient of interventions and consequences that range in severity proportional to the behavior, while also addressing the need for restoration and skill building at every level. While some behaviors may warrant exclusionary discipline, the aim should always be to prioritize minimizing the length of time a student is out of the learning environment.

Below is a description of different levels of intervention offered and parties involved:

- Level 1 interventions should be implemented by the teacher working most closely with the student.
- Level 2 interventions include teacher, student, and parent/guardian.
- Level 3 interventions involve teacher, student, parent/guardian, and support staff. Often times, Level 3 interventions will involve specialized training and expertise from support staff such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), or vice Principal to name a few.
- Level 4 interventions include the addition of an administrator as these interventions typically require an increased level of authority.
- Interventions at Level 5 involve administrative level referral and the potential for exclusion from school.

In every case the Principal shall determine the appropriate intervention or consequence based on the specific facts and circumstances.

¹ “Getting Consistent with Consequences”, <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept18/vol76/num01/Getting-Consistent-with-Consequences.aspx>

Relevant Factors in Making Discipline Decisions

When choosing consequences for students' misbehavior, teachers, administrators, and staff must consider the following factors:

- Age, health, and disability or special education status of the student;
- Relationship of academic performance and behavior;
- Student's prior conduct and record of behavior;
- Student's attitude;
- Student's willingness to repair the harm;
- Seriousness of the offense and the degree of harm caused; and
- Impact of the incident on overall school community

Intervention Levels

The list of response options is not exhaustive or exclusive. In every case, the teacher working most closely with student in collaboration with the Principal or designee shall determine the appropriate level of intervention based on the specific facts and circumstances.

LEVELS OF INTERVENTIONS	RESPONSE OPTIONS
LEVEL ONE implemented by the teacher working most closely with the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher/Student Conference • Reminders and Redirection • (Re)Teaching of Expectations and Skills • Reflective Essay or Other Reflective Activity • Independent Study • Role-Play • Restorative Practices (Circle, Group Conferencing, Dialogue)
LEVEL TWO includes teacher, student, and parent/guardian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Lower-Level Interventions • Parent/Guardian Outreach • Inclusionary Time-Out with re-entry plan to re-engage with learning community • Seat Change • Self-Charting of Behaviors • Daily Report Card on Behavior Task Completion, and Achievement • Loss Of Privileges (e.g., class job, position in line, exclusion from extra activities)
LEVEL THREE involves specialized training and expertise from support staff such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any lower-level Interventions • Student/Teacher/Parent/<u>Guardian</u> Conference • Referral to Support Staff (e.g. guidance counselor, social worker, <u>psychologist</u>, school resource officer, or nurse)

<p>Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), or vice Principal, etc</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral to CST/SIT • Short-term Behavioral Progress Reports • Behavioral Intervention Plan • Change in Schedule/Class • Referral to After-School Program • Community Service • Mentoring Program • Peer Mediation • Functional Behavioral Assessment • Exclusionary Time-Out • Referral to School-based Health/Mental Health Clinics • Referral to Community-Based Services • Mini-Course/Training (e.g., conflict resolution, anger management, social skills) • Substance Abuse Treatment Services • Amendment to IEP (if applicable)
<p>LEVEL FOUR includes the addition of an administrator as these interventions typically require</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Lower-Level Interventions • Detention • Saturday Detention² • Opportunity to reset the day • Restitution, replace, recompense
<p>LEVEL FIVE involves administrative level referral and the potential for exclusion from school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any Lower-Level Interventions • In-School Suspension – 1 to 3 days, with re-entry plan to re-engage with learning community • Out-of-School Suspension - 1 to 10 days (may be extended as necessary), with re-entry plan to re-engage with learning community • Mobile crisis support (i.e., BEST) • Interim Alternative Education Setting • Recommendation for Expulsion • Referral to Law Enforcement

² Except where such detention conflicts with a student's religious beliefs or practices.

Behavior Matrix

The matrix below is a guide for administrators when determining the appropriate level of intervention. Schools retain the right to determine the appropriate level of intervention based on the facts and circumstances of each case. Those working with student(s) should determine plan to monitor student response to interventions and when additional interventions are necessary. The list of behaviors is not exhaustive or exclusive. In every case, the teacher working most closely with student in collaboration with the Principal or designee shall determine the appropriate level of intervention based on the specific facts and circumstances.

INAPPROPRIATE OR DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR	INTERVENTION				
	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Dishonesty (e.g. cheating or plagiarizing, forgery)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alcohol			✓	✓	✓
- Under the influence, Using, Selling, or Possession			✓	✓	✓
Assault or Battery					
- Simple Assault: Attempt to cause serious physical harm to another individual, or causing individual to be in fear or apprehension of imminent battery				✓	✓
- Simple Battery: Unauthorized or unlawful use of force to the body of another person.					
- Assault with a Weapon or Battery Causing Serious Injury					✓
Bullying: Repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that					
- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; and/or					
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her <u>their</u> property; and/or			✓	✓	✓
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target; and/or					
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; and/or					
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.					
Bus Disruptions					
- Minor disruption on the Bus (e.g. eating, drinking; being too loud, standing, throwing objects from the bus)	✓	✓	✓		
- Serious, repeated disruption on the Bus				✓	
Classroom Disruption (e.g. talking out in class or talking out of turn, throwing objects, and other behavior that distracts from student learning)	✓	✓	✓		
Defiance of Authority and/or Insubordination	✓	✓	✓		

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(e.g. non-violent/non-physical, talking back to school staff, failure to follow directions, failure to respond to school staff questions or requests, refusal to participate in classroom activities, etc.)					
Disrespectful Behavior (e.g. verbal insults or put-downs, including the use of profane or offensive language; picking on, bothering, teasing, or distracting other students; making inappropriate gestures or comments; and other behavior that is rude or disrespectful)	✓	✓	✓		
False Activation of a Fire Alarm				✓	✓
Fighting					
- Physical Aggression (e.g., pushing and shoving)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
- More Serious Fighting (may include incidents involving minor injuries and repeated physical aggression)				✓	✓
Gambling: Playing a game for money or other stakes		✓	✓	✓	
Hallway Misbehavior. Running, Making Excessive Noise or Loitering	✓	✓	✓		
Harassment: continuous pattern of intentional behavior based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, ancestry, age, or religion against members of the school community		✓	✓	✓	✓
Illegal Drugs, Controlled Substances, Tobacco Products (including vaporizers and electronic delivery systems, marijuana/cannabis)					
- Under the Influence, Using, or Possessing, including paraphernalia			✓	✓	✓
- Selling					✓
Giving False Information to, or Misleading School Personnel	✓	✓	✓		
Portable Electronic Devices Use at Unauthorized Times	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Property Damage					
- Intentional Damage or Defacement of Another Person's or School Property (less than \$50)		✓	✓	✓	
- Intentional Damage or Defacement of Another Person's or School Property (more than \$50)				✓	✓
Sexually-Based Behaviors					
- Sexual activity ³	✓	✓	✓	✓	
- Sexual Harassment (e.g. unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature)				✓	✓
- Sexual Assault					✓

³ To the extent that sexual activity occurs on property owned, or controlled, by the district or conduct that affects that school environment.

Tardiness					
- Persistent or Excessive Tardiness to Class/School	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Theft					
- Less than \$50	✓	✓	✓	✓	
- Greater than \$50				✓	✓
Trespassing (Level 5 interventions may only be used when a student has entered onto school property without permission and then refused to leave school property upon request)			✓	✓	✓
Unauthorized Use of School Equipment	✓	✓	✓		
Unexcused Absence from School due to class cutting or skipping school	✓	✓	✓		
Weapons, Firearms, and Explosives				✓	✓
- Bringing or Possessing Fireworks				✓	✓
- Igniting Fireworks				✓	✓
- Bringing, Possessing, or Using Other Explosives (non-fireworks)				✓	✓
- Threat or False Report related to Explosives				✓	✓
- Bringing, Possessing, or Using Firearms				✓	✓
- Bringing or Using Other Deadly Weapons				✓	✓
- Possessing Other Deadly Weapons				✓	✓

Appendix B - Definitions

- **Detention:** The supervised retention of students beyond the regular school schedule when a teacher requests that the student show improvement of behavior resulting from violation of the school rules and/or student code of conduct.
- **Disciplinary offense:** any alleged or determined disciplinary infraction by a student,
 - **Section 37H offense** means conduct in the nature of that addressed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H, which occurs on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic contests, namely, (1) possession of a dangerous weapon (including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife), (2); possession of a controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 94C (including, but not limited to, marijuana/cannabis, cocaine, or heroin), and (3) assault on a member of the educational staff.
 - **Section 37H ½ offense** means conduct in the nature of that addressed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H ½, namely, conduct that is the subject of a felony charge or conviction or a felony delinquency charge or conviction if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.
 - **Section 37H ¾ offense** means all conduct other than that specifically addressed by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½, including, but not limited to, bullying, hazing, discrimination, and harassment .
- **Emergency removal** means the temporary removal of a student from school when student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. *See appropriate* Section below for specific criteria and procedures applicable to emergency removals. A temporary removal shall not exceed two school days (see the complete definition at CMR 53.07). Students with disabilities may be afforded additional rights.
- **Exclusionary Time-Out:** an intervention that should be reserved for use only when students are displaying behaviors which present, or potentially present, an unsafe or overly disruptive situation in the classroom. In such circumstances, the student may either ask to leave the classroom, or the student may be directed to a separate setting for the purpose of helping the student to calm. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Unless it poses a safety risk, a staff member must be physically present with the student who is in an **exclusionary** time-out setting. If it is not safe for the staff member to be present with the student, the student may be left in the time-out setting with the door closed. However, in order to ensure that the student is

receiving appropriate support, a school counselor or other behavioral support professional must be immediately available outside of the time-out setting where the individual can continuously observe and communicate with the student as appropriate to determine when the student has calmed. Students must never be locked in a room. For students displaying self-injurious behavior, a staff member must be physically present in the same setting with the student. Exclusionary time-out must end when the student has calmed.

- **Expulsion:** the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2. Students with disabilities may be afforded additional rights.
- **Incident Report:** Any time a student is involved in behavior that requires the intervention of any additional staff, or is removed from the classroom, and at other times at the discretion of school administrator, an incident report will be completed and shared with the student's parents/[guardians](#) as soon as practicable. Students with disabilities may be afforded additional rights.
- **Inclusionary Time-Out:** when the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom. The use of **inclusionary** time-out functions well as a behavior support strategy while allowing the student to remain fully aware of the learning activities of the classroom. **Inclusionary** time-out includes practices used by teachers as part of their classroom behavior support tools, such as "planned ignoring," asking students to put their heads down, or placing a student in a different location within the classroom (this does not include walled off "time-out" rooms located within the classroom; use of those is considered to be an **exclusionary** time-out -see *exclusionary time-out* definition). These strategies, used to reduce external stimuli in the student's environment while keeping the student physically present and involved in learning, have proven to be useful tools for classroom management.
- **In-school suspension:** removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall be considered a short-term suspension. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes. Students with disabilities may be afforded additional rights.
- **Long-term suspension:** removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten consecutive school days, or for more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any

school year. For Section 37H $\frac{3}{4}$ offenses, such suspensions shall be for no more than ninety (90) school days in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

- **Manifestation determination:** The district must conduct a manifestation determination if a student with a disability will be removed for more than 10 consecutive school days, or when multiple shorter suspensions for similar reasons add to ten days. The manifestation determination must determine if the conduct in question was "caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the ~~child's~~ student's disability...or was a direct result of [PSB's] failure to implement the IEP." Note that an "in-house" suspension may be considered a change in placement if it otherwise meets the criteria.
- **Parent:** for the purposes of this policy, "parent" means a student's father, mother, or legal guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or legal guardian.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** a set of ideas and tools that schools use to improve the behavior of students. PBIS uses evidence and data-based programs, practices and strategies to frame behavioral improvement in terms of student growth in academic performance, safety, behavior, and establishing and maintaining positive school culture. PBIS addresses the needs of at-risk students as well as the multi-leveled needs of all students in regards to behavior, which creates an environment for both teaching and learning to occur in schools
- **Restorative Practices:** a set of formal and informal responses to harms large and small after they occur. In keeping with restorative practices' respect for human dignity, participation in any restorative practice must entirely voluntary. The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them rather than to them or for them. Restorative Justice asks three questions: 1) What was the harm caused to both the individual and the community? 2) Who is responsible for causing the harm and making things right? 3) How can the harm be repaired and relationships restored to the greatest extent possible? Restorative practices focus on how to build connection between individuals and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making. The use of restorative practices in schools helps to improve human behavior, develop and maintain relationships, explore learning opportunities, and teach leadership and personal accountability.
- **Time-Out:** See *inclusionary time-out* and *exclusionary time-out*.
- **Tobacco Product:** A product containing, made or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed or ingested by any other means

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including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff, electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes, electronic nicotine delivery systems or any other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization; provided, however, that “tobacco product” shall also include any component, part or accessory of a tobacco product; and provided further, that “tobacco product” shall not include a product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for the sale of or use as a tobacco cessation product and is marketed and sold exclusively for the approved purpose.

- **School Wide Education Service Plan:** the document developed by a Principal, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 21, which includes a list of education services available to students who are expelled or who are suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days.
- **Short-term suspension:** the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Appendix C - Suspensions and Expulsions of Students

The use of measures that remove students from the classroom, such as in-school/out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to alternative schools, should be minimized. These punitive measures may result in the loss of valuable instructional time, damage to relationships, and should be reserved for infractions that cannot be appropriately or adequately addressed through other interventions and disciplinary responses.

Disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½ means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions:

- (a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
- (b) possession of a controlled substance (including, but not limited to, marijuana/cannabis, cocaine, or heroin);
- (c) assault on a member of the educational staff; and
- (d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½.

1. Section 37H Offense Procedures (Expulsions and Suspensions)

- a. Except in cases of emergency removal, the following procedures shall be used. Students are entitled to constitutional due process and to the procedural protections set forth in Section 37H.
 - 1. Notice Procedures: Prior to suspending or expelling a student on the basis of a Section 37H offense, the student and parent must be notified orally and in writing of:
 - a. the charge(s);
 - b. the basis for the charge(s);
 - c. the opportunity for a hearing before the Principal
 - d. the opportunity at the Principal's hearing to receive an explanation of the evidence, an opportunity to explain the circumstances and/or dispute the charge(s), and an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider;
 - e. the right to counsel at ~~his/her~~ their expense at the Principal's hearing; and
 - f. the right to present witnesses and evidence at the Principal's hearing.

The Principal shall provide oral and written notice in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

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b. Principal's Hearing Procedures: Disciplinary hearings regarding an alleged Section 37H offense shall be conducted in a manner that affords students all of the procedural protections outlined above ("Notice"). Students and parents have the right to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate. In addition, with regard to contemplated long-term suspensions students have the following additional rights:

1. the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely;
2. the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses against him/her; and
3. the right to a recording of the hearing.

c. Consequences: After said hearing, the Principal may, in ~~his/her~~ their discretion, decide to suspend or expel a student who has been determined to have committed a Section 37H offense, subject to this Policy.

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d. Notification of Principal's Decision:

1. Determinations of Short-Term Suspension

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal (see Section H below.) The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

2. Determinations of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

The Principal shall send a written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent. If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- a. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- b. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;
- c. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- d. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information. The notice shall be made in both English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home

if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate;

- e. In the event the Principal has expelled a student, inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
 - the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within ten days of the expulsion.

e. Appeal to Superintendent (Expulsions Only): Any student who has been expelled from the PSB pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent, however, any expulsion shall remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal:

1. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of ~~his/her~~ their appeal. The appeal hearing shall take place within a reasonable time following receipt of the notice of appeal.
2. The student shall have the right to counsel at the hearing
3. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of Section 37H.
4. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing that is as described with respect to Principals' written determinations regarding long-term suspensions and expulsions above. If translation of the decision into the primary language spoken in the student's home is required, such translation shall be provided as soon as reasonably possible, but shall not be subject to the 5 calendar day deadline. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.

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2. Section 37H ½ Offense Procedures (Expulsions and All Suspensions)

- a. Except in cases of emergency removal, the following procedures shall be used. Students are entitled to constitutional due process and to the procedural protections set forth in Section 37H ½
 1. Notice Procedures: Prior to suspending or expelling a student on the basis of a
 - a. Section 37H ½ charge, the student must be notified orally and in writing of:

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- b. the charge(s);
- c. the basis for the charge(s);
- d. the opportunity for a hearing before the Principal
- e. the opportunity at the Principal's hearing to receive an explanation of the evidence, an opportunity to explain the circumstances and/or dispute the charge(s); and an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider;
- f. the right to counsel at ~~his/her~~ their expense at the Principal's hearing; and
- g. the right to appeal a suspension or expulsion decision to the Superintendent, if the student notifies the Superintendent in writing of ~~his/her~~ their request for an appeal no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension.

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For contemplated expulsions and out-of-school suspensions: the Principal shall provide oral and written notice in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

- b. Principal's Hearing Procedures: Disciplinary hearings regarding alleged Section 37H ½ offenses shall be conducted in a manner that affords students all of the procedural protections outlined above ("Notice"). Students and parents have the right to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate. In addition, with regard to contemplated suspensions of more than ten (10) days, students have the following additional rights:

- 1. the right to review documents;
- 2. the right to confront and cross-examine witnesses against him/her;
- 3. and the right to a recording of the hearing.

- c. Consequences: After said hearing, the Principal may, in ~~his/her~~ their discretion, decide to suspend (in the case of a felony charge or conviction, or a felony delinquency charge or conviction) or expel (only in the case of a felony conviction, or felony delinquency conviction) a student who has been determined to have committed a Section 37H ½ offense if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, subject to Section B of this Policy. A student shall not be suspended or expelled except on the basis of substantial evidence.

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- d. Notification of Principal's Decision:

- 1. Determinations of Short-Term Suspension

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of

suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

2. Determinations of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

The Principal shall send a written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent. If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- a. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- b. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;
- c. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- d. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information. The notice shall be made in both English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate;
- e. Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
 - i. the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five calendar days of the effective date of suspension; and that
 - ii. the suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

e. Appeal to Superintendent:

Any student who has been suspended or expelled from the PSB pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent, however, the student's suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect pending the appeal.

- The student must request an appeal in writing no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion.
- The Superintendent must hold a hearing with the student and parent within 3 calendar days of the student's request.
- The procedures applicable to Principal's hearings for contemplated expulsions or long-term suspensions are applicable to the Superintendent's appeal hearing.
- The student has the right to counsel at ~~his/her~~ their own expense at the appeal hearing.
- The student has the right to present oral and written testimony at the appeal hearing.
- The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing that is as described with respect to Principals' written determinations regarding long-term suspensions and expulsions above. If translation of the decision into the primary language spoken in the student's home is required, such translation shall be provided as soon as reasonably possible, but shall not be subject to the 5 calendar day deadline. The Superintendent may overturn or alter the decision, including recommending an alternate education program. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.

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3. Section 37H ³/₄ Offense Procedures for All Suspensions EXCEPT In-School Suspensions of 10 Days or Fewer

a. Except in cases of emergency removal, the following procedures shall be used.

- i. **Notice Procedures:** A Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and parent. The notice shall set forth in plain language:
 1. the disciplinary offense;
 2. the basis for the charge;
 3. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
 4. that a hearing will be held to afford the student the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and that the parent/guardian may attend and participate in the hearing;
 5. the date, time, and location of the hearing;

6. the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
6. if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the Principal;
7. the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b); and
8. the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The Principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the Principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

b. Principal's Hearing Procedures: Students and parents have the right to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate. In addition, Principal's Hearings are subject to the following required procedures.

- Contemplated Short-Term Suspensions
 - (1) The Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.
 - (2) The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate.
 - (3) The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
- Any principal, head of school, superintendent, or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process: and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm

upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. The principal, head of school, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school- or district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however that school- or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.”⁴

- **Contemplated Long-Term Suspensions**

The student shall have all of the rights enumerated in Section b above (“Short-Term Suspensions”). In addition, the student shall be afforded the following protections:

- (1) In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- (2) The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
- (3) The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
- (4) The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- (5) The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

⁴ Amended language of M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H ¾, effective 11/08/2022.

c. Consequences: After said hearing, based on the available information (including mitigating circumstances), and subject above, the Principal may decide to suspend a student who has been determined to have committed a Section 37H $\frac{3}{4}$ offense.

d. Notification of Principal's Decision:

- Determinations of Short-Term Suspension

(1) The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

(2) If the student is in a preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall, before the short-term suspension takes effect, send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension. PSB policy for suspensions of students in PK-2 requires the approval of the Superintendent or ~~his/her~~ their designee.

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- Determinations of Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion

(1) The Principal shall send a written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent. If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- (a) Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- (b) Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;
- (c) Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well

as a date of return to school;

(d) Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information. The notice shall be made in both English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate

(e) Inform the student of the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and

the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:

- the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five calendar days of the effective date of suspension; and that
- the suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

(2) If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the Principal shall, before the suspension takes effect, send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension.

- e. Appeal to Superintendent (Long-term Suspension Only): Any student who has been placed on long-term suspension or expelled from the PSB pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent; however, the student's suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect pending the appeal.
- i. *Time to File Appeal*. The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the Superintendent within five calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the Superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the Superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
 - ii. *Time for Superintendent's Appeal Hearing*. The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.
 - iii. *Superintendent's Written Notice of Appeal Hearing and Good Faith Effort to Accommodate parent's Schedule*. The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and Superintendent to participate. The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

- iv. *Appeal Hearing/Audio Recording.* The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- v. *Student Rights.* The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspensions under section b, above. The student must request an appeal in writing no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion.
- The Superintendent must hold a hearing with the student and parent within 3 calendar days of the student's request.
 - The procedures applicable to Principal's hearings for contemplated expulsions or long-term suspensions are applicable to the Superintendent's appeal hearing.
 - The student has the right to counsel at ~~his/her~~ their own expense at the appeal hearing.
 - The student has the right to present oral and written testimony at the appeal hearing.

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The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing that is as described with respect to Principals' written determinations regarding long-term suspensions and expulsions above. If translation of the decision into the primary language spoken in the student's home is required, such translation shall be provided as soon as reasonably possible, but shall not be subject to the 5 calendar day deadline. The Superintendent may overturn or alter the decision shall:

- Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
 - Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Superintendent;
 - including recommending an alternate education program;
 - Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (*see* section f below)
- vi. *Consequences.* If the Superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision.

- f. Finality: The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.

4. Emergency Removal (All Offenses)

- A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and, in the Principal's judgment, the continued presence of the student in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school (in 37H and 37H ½ offenses) or poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption (in 37H ¾ offenses). The Principal may take this step only after adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.
- Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger or disruption presented by the student.
- The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall:
 - (a) Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
 - (b) Provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
 - (c) Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with 603 CMR 53.08(2) or (3), as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent.
 - (d) Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(2)(c) and (d) or (3)(c) and (d), as applicable. If translation of the decision into the primary language spoken in the student's home is required, such translation shall be provided as soon as reasonably possible, but shall not be subject to the applicable deadline for written decision.