

2018-2019
Petersham Center School



Parent Handbook

PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The Petersham Center School community is committed to providing a teaching and learning environment in which the educational needs of every individual child is met. We offer a stimulating, positive atmosphere that is responsive to developmental needs and individual learning styles, and challenges each student to develop to his or her fullest potential and to become a creative and self-motivated individual. Our curriculum is designed to enable students to meet specific academic, social and physical goals; as an educational system we accept responsibility for our students meeting those goals.

Petersham Center School welcomes families and the community as participants in the educational experience, and we seek to give students skills to participate as valued members of their families, and social and educational communities. At Petersham Center School the physical, social and mental integrity of each child is respected and we affirm the importance of differences as well as similarities amongst individuals. We encourage the ideals of cooperation, caring and respect in school, at home and in the community. We strive to provide students with an educational experience that will equip them to become confident and capable learners throughout their lives and to become productive citizens in a democratic society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL

1. The students will be provided with a curriculum that introduces them to basic skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve.
2. The students will be provided with challenges and opportunities to expand their knowledge, interests and cultural awareness.
3. The students will be guaranteed a curriculum that allows achievement for all; a curriculum that provides for individual differences; socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally.
4. The students will be provided with experiences and opportunities to acquire the ability to make responsible decisions and to find positive solutions to problems.
5. The students will be made aware of the importance of being a productive member of our democratic society and will be provided the history, values, and ideals upon which our nation was founded.
6. The student will be encouraged to respect and cherish individual differences among themselves and others; learning to recognize and accept their potentials and limitations.
7. The students will be aided in developing a positive self-image and in becoming self-disciplined.
8. The students will develop an appreciation for using leisure time productively for physical, intellectual, creative, and social activities.
9. The students will be encouraged to develop a desire for lifelong learning.
10. The students will be provided with experiences that encourage them to love, enjoy, and respect their natural environment.
11. The students will be provided with experiences to prepare them for the transition from the Petersham Center School to Middle/High School.
12. The students will be guaranteed a school administration, faculty, and support staff that will uphold the philosophy and objectives of the Petersham Center School.

Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and R.C. Mahar Regional

WHAT IS THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

THE CODE OF CONDUCT for Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and Ralph C. Mahar Regional Schools is based upon the laws, rules, regulations, and policies that seek to allow access to education for all while protecting the due process rights of the individual. Discipline, as defined by the Code, must have the qualities of understanding, fairness, flexibility and consistency. It is the responsibility of the school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and the community to contribute to a school atmosphere which promotes a safe, healthy, and supportive whole-school environment that is conducive to learning. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and the community. The Code of Conduct is intended to be instructive, not punitive and is based on the principles of preventive and positive discipline (i.e. interventions, skill building and consequences) will be aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs, and keeping students in school. In addition, the Code is intended to create clear expectations and graduated levels of support and intervention for all students with consequences for misbehavior that are individualized, consistent, reasonable, fair, age appropriate and that match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Our schools within the Consolidated Districts recognize the importance of individual student growth and development within a safe environment that supports and encourages learning. To help maintain that environment, the Code of Student Conduct will:

- Identify a multi-tiered system of support to ensure safe and supportive whole school environments and individualized student interventions prior to exclusionary practices
- Describe the conduct that is disruptive and/or a violation of the Code of Conduct
- Standardize procedures that the school will use in responding to conduct problems
- Define Due Process
- Specify the rights and responsibilities of students, parents and staff
- Suggest reintegration strategies for disciplined students

Each disciplinary case will be decided according to the facts accompanying it. Efforts will be made to discipline students while maintaining them in regular school programs. Our schools encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to be involved in the disciplinary process. Due process will be followed for all disciplinary actions. In accordance with the United States Constitution and applicable federal and state laws and regulations, no student shall be suspended, excluded, or otherwise disciplined on account of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status.

The Code of Student Conduct is in force:

During regular school hours. Portal to portal including when students are being transported on a school bus. At such times and places including, but not necessarily limited to, school

sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and other activities where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.

Additionally, it is important to understand that Massachusetts law provides a Principal with authority to suspend a student for conduct that occurs away from school if the student is charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint and the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. This law also provides a Principal with authority to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, admitted to guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, 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.

WHAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE EMPHASIZED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

The mission of our schools is to support academic achievement and to develop self-discipline. Therefore the measures emphasized in the Code of Conduct are incremental with the goal of using the least extreme measure that can resolve the discipline problem. In the past, disruptive students and the teachers involved in the incident were not given the opportunity to interact prior to a student's return to the classroom; in fact, teachers often did not know when a student would return from a suspension.

This code includes a multi-tiered system of interventions aimed at preventing behavioral problems as well as bridging and reintegration strategies to decrease the recurrence of the offending behavior. Schools and parents/guardians may offer other bridging strategies that teach appropriate behavior. Teachers and administrators will continue to use and develop a variety of informal disciplinary and guidance strategies in teaching new behaviors before, during, and after disciplinary measures.

School administrators should conduct a thorough investigation into school related discipline matters, including student interviews, prior to recommending disciplinary action.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Petersham School district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, disability, religion, marital status, pregnancy, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title VII (pertaining to employment), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (pertaining to sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (pertaining to disability), the Americans with Disabilities Act (pertaining to disability), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (pertaining to age).

Persons designated to coordinate compliance under Title IX:

Mr. Daniel Haynes, Director of Finance and Operations
Ralph C. Mahar School District, 507 S. Main Street, Orange, MA 01364
978-544-2920

Dr. Rebecca Phillips, Director of Special Services
Ralph C. Mahar School District, 507 S. Main Street, Orange, MA 01364
978-544-2535

Person designated to coordinate compliance under Section 504:
 Mrs. Joanne Menard, Principal
 Petersham Center School, 31 Spring Street, Petersham, MA 01366
 978-724-3363

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Petersham School District is committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment in which to work and learn. We provide a climate that promotes healthy, human relationships and enhances the quality of life for children as well as adults. We believe that:

1. Everyone has the right to be physically safe.
2. Everyone has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.
3. Everyone has the right to a clean, positive, and safe learning environment.

These rights go hand-in-hand with the responsibility to contribute positively to the school environment and to strive for excellence at all times.

Petersham Center School students are expected to observe the following code of conduct throughout the school day, including the lunchroom, bus, and playground activities.

Code of Conduct

Everyone has the right to be safe. Hurtful behavior will not be tolerated.

Physical threats and injury to ourselves and others will be avoided by:

- keeping our hands, feet, bodies to ourselves, except when being helpful
- keeping hurtful comments to ourselves
- facing forward while walking in the building
- using school equipment carefully and appropriately

I'll ensure each person's physical safety by not:

- hitting
- Kicking
- fighting
- tripping
- biting
- pushing
- throwing objects
- inappropriate touching
- play fighting
- attempting to hurt

Weapons (real or toy), illegal drugs, and other unsafe items (matches, firecrackers, snappers, etc.) are not permitted on school property.

Everyone has the right to feel respected and free of fear. Disrespectful or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show respect for ourselves and others by:

- using appropriate words and tone of voice
- taking charge of our work and behavior, letting others take charge of theirs
- including others in our conversations and activities
- respectfully expressing our own ideas, opinions and feelings and listen respectfully to others
- accepting responsibility for our own actions

I'll ensure each person's right to be respected by not:

- swearing
- teasing
- making threatening remarks
- saying put downs
- ignoring speakers
- acting rudely
- disrupting
- yelling or screaming
- bullying
- encouraging aggression or violence
- using vulgar language/gestures

Hats or hoods (other than religious or cultural) may not be worn in the building.

We take care of our environment, our property, and the property of others. Destructive behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show care and respect for our environment and property by:

- leaving work areas and eating areas clean
- enjoying bulletin boards and displays by looking and not touching
- touching only personal property or property of others with permission
- recycling

We will ensure respect for our environment and property by not:

- stealing
- touching or borrowing others' property without permission
- climbing on furniture
- defacing walls, displays , or furniture
- misusing equipment
- jumping up to hit doorways, flags or signs
- jumping down stairs
- chewing gum (at teachers' direction)

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED FOR VIOLATIONS OF CENTER SCHOOL RULES:

The goals of these consequences are to help children:

1. Identify the behavior and discuss why it is inappropriate.
2. Take responsibility for the behavior.
3. "Give back" to the community the calm and peace that has been disrupted, by making amends and repairs.
4. Discuss alternatives to inappropriate behavior.

Minor Offenses

Each will be dealt with according to the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student, and whether or not the behavior is a one-time or repeated event. Specific consequences are at the discretion of the supervisory adult. Whenever possible, consequences will include a community service/repair component.

Major Offenses

These would include, but not limited to, physical aggression (actual or attempted), threat of physical harm, verbal assaults, and gross destruction of property/equipment. These offenses require an automatic Discipline Report. Repeated rude or defiant behavior, repeated use of vulgar language and repeated disruptions of class, which continue after a specific warning from the supervisory adult, would also result in a Discipline Report.

For each offense, a supervisory adult will complete a Discipline Report. The report will be sent to the Principal and remain on file in the office. The Principal will contact the supervisory adult (and the classroom teacher, if not the same person) and Counselor to discuss the reported offense. The Principal will speak to the child involved as soon as possible.

Consequences for Major Offenses are:

First Report

1. Loss of 2 days recess, with time spent on community service/repair.
2. Student completes a Behavior Report describing his/her behavior and reasons why it is unacceptable.
3. Parent/Guardian is contacted and report is carried home by the student for parent to read, sign and return to school. If necessary, classroom teacher will follow-up.

Second Report

1. Repeat all consequences for first referral, with 3 days of community service/repair.
2. Principal will make personal contact with the parent/guardian. Classroom teacher and supervisory adult will be notified of this contact.
3. Student and parent/guardian will be reminded of consequences if a third report is necessary.

Third Report

1. Repeat all consequences for first referral, with 5 days of community service/repair.
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to meet with the Principal, classroom teacher and supervisory adult and the student to discuss the discipline issue.
3. In-school suspension (all assignments completed in supervised space other than regular classroom) may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Additional Reports

In-school or out-of-school suspension may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Note:

Some offenses are of such a serious nature that it becomes necessary to circumvent the stated procedures. Possession or distribution of tobacco, drugs, alcohol and dangerous weapons, as well as major physical aggression are examples of such offenses. Consequences for these and similar offenses will result in the Principal taking immediate action which may include suspending the student and/or notifying the police.

Suspension & Expulsion (Mass Law) Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H1/2, and 37H3/4.

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

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

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

Section 37H:

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to a gun or a knife, or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter ninety-four C including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.

- (b) Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, Teacher, Teacher's Aide, or other educational staff on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the Principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have a representative, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. After said hearing, a Principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b). (Chapter 51 of the Acts of 1994, approved July 1, 1994, effective September 29, 1994.)
- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(This section was amended by Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 on January 4, 1994.)

Section 37H ½

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six;

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the Superintendent. The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The Superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or Headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The Superintendent

shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be final for the city, town, or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

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

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

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

(This section was added by Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 on January 4, 1994.)

The Department of Education and the Department of Youth Services shall, pursuant to a study and recommendations conducted by the Mass Jobs Council, assure that an educational opportunity is provided for a student whose admission to a school or right to educational services is regulated by the provisions of this act.

Said study shall contain a statistical analysis of the number of students who have been expelled and the services that are now provided, and recommendations for the provision of education to expelled students in the future. Said study shall be completed within five months and shall be submitted to the house and senate clerk and the house and senate chairmen of the joint committee on education, arts, and humanities.

DISCIPLINE APPEAL HEARING PROCEDURE

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION

Section 37H3/4:

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½, the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of

the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the Principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. 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;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. 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; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the Principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating

circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the Superintendent decides to reverse the Principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the Principal shall send his/her determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the Principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the Superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension Principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the Superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the Principal's determination. If the Superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the Superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a 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. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the Principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The Principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a Principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H½

1. The due process procedures above do not apply to a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) an assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony 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, as provided in M.G.L. c.71, §§37H or 37H½.
2. The Principal will inform the student of the specific charges in writing, informing the student of the right to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense) and the right to provide evidence and question witnesses, on the proposed hearing date.
3. The student may appeal the Principal's expulsion determination to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) days of notification of the expulsion.
4. The Superintendent may uphold, reduce, or reverse the disciplinary action after the appeal hearing. Note that a failure to make an appeal to the Superintendent within the ten (10)-day period will exhaust any further right of appeal.
5. All students who have been suspended or expelled who remain residents of the District shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities.
6. If the Superintendent upholds the expulsion decision, if the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan.

SE #46 Procedures for Suspension of Students with Disabilities

DISCIPLINING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Mass. Law)

Generally, students with special needs are expected to adhere to the same discipline regulations as non-special needs students. At the same time, legislation has been enacted to provide procedural safeguards to students with disabilities.

School personnel can remove (suspend) a child with a disability for short periods of time as long as the removal does not constitute a change in placement. A change of placement occurs if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year, and because such factors such as length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed and the proximity of the removals to one another.

School personnel may order, to the extent removal would be applied to children without disabilities, the removal of a child with a disability from the child's current placement for not more than 10 consecutive school days for any violation of school rules and an additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct (as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement).

When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, District personnel, the parent, and other relevant members of the team as determined by the parent and the District, will convene a behavior manifestation determination meeting within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, teacher observations, any relevant information from the parents to determine whether the behavior the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direction result of the Districts failure to implement the IEP.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except, after a child with a disability has been removed for more than 10 school days in the same school year, the District must provide services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals. In addition, the LEA must conduct as appropriate a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child. If the child already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP team shall meet to review the plan and its implementation and modify as necessary.

School personnel may order a change of a placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days if the child carries a weapon to school or a school function or possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function. A hearing officer may order a change to an interim setting for not more than 45 days if the LEA demonstrates that maintaining the current placement is likely to result in injury to the child or others. If an action is contemplated regarding a 45 day removal or other action that constitutes a change of placement the parents must be notified and provided procedural safeguards notice not later than the date on which the decision to take action is made.

Immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, a review must be conducted of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (manifestation determination).

If the child's parent disagrees with the manifestation determination, the parent may request a hearing to appeal. The State or local educational agency shall arrange for an expedited hearing before a hearing officer. If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge an interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child must remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided (45 days), whichever occurs first unless the parent and local educational agency agree otherwise.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and a behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the IEP Team reviews and modifies it as necessary to address the behavior. The student returns to the original placement, except when the student has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting (if the behavior involved illegal drugs, weapons or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while in school or at a school function) unless the parents and District agree otherwise or a hearing officer orders a new placement.

Chapter 766, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997 Amendments), and case law such as *Honig vs. Doe*, affect disciplining students with special needs. The Massachusetts Department of Education and Legislature have also made recent changes to Special Education laws and regulations (effective September 2000).

The section above is only an attempt to highlight applicable laws and regulations and is not meant to replace the actual documents.

The reader should refer to the actual documents for the full text. (Federal Register Vol. 64, No. 48, March 1999 S. 300.519- S. 300.529).

For a discipline flow chart,
see:http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/disc_chart.doc

Our responsibility is to maintain a safe, secure environment for everyone in the school. Any behavior which jeopardizes any individual or the well being of the school as a whole will not be tolerated. Students are to remain conscious at all times about their actions, behaviors, language and the impact of these things on others.

Discipline is an important part of every student's education. Civility and mutual respect between teachers and students and between students is a primary goal at Petersham Center School.

Breaking rules such as fighting, stealing and showing disrespect for staff and other students will not be tolerated. The students involved in these types of incidents can expect severe disciplinary response from suspension to possibly expulsion from school.

SE #46 Description of the Continuum of IAES Options

These following interim alternative educational settings (IAES) utilized by the District are designed to allow the student to continue progress in the regular curriculum, to meet the goals and benchmarks written in the current IEP and to allow students to receive services and modifications designed to help the student address problem behavior.

SE #47 Students not yet determined to be Eligible for Special Education

Petersham School District: Student Discipline under IDEA

If the District does not have prior knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subject to the same disciplinary measures as applied to children without disabilities who engage in comparable behavior.

Students may assert IDEA protection if the District had “prior knowledge” that the student had a disability before the behavior incident.

Prior knowledge is defined by the District as follows:

- A parent has the expressed concern in writing to school personnel that the student is in need of special education and related services (not 504).
- A parent has requested an evaluation in writing.
- The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates need for special education.
- The teacher or other school personnel have expressed concern about the student’s behavior or performance to the special education director or to other school personnel involved in the special education referral process.

IDEA protection is not asserted by the District if any of the circumstance listed below have occurred: *District exceptions to prior knowledge:*

- If the District has proposed an evaluation on a student and the parent has not consented to the evaluation.
- The parent has previously refused special education services for the student.
- An evaluation has occurred that resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

No Prior Knowledge:

If the District had no knowledge that a child had a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures, the District can change the placement to the extent it changes the placement of non-disabled children. However, if an evaluation is requested while the student is being disciplined the Petersham School District will place the child in an educational placement pending the results of an expedited evaluation.

Disciplining Students with 504 Plans

1. Disciplinary procedures for students under 504 and the ADA are similar to those under IDEA.
2. Under IDEA, 504 and the ADA, all students are entitled to oral or written notice of charges and the opportunity to tell their side before suspensions of 10 days or less, and a formal hearing before a suspension of more than 10 days.

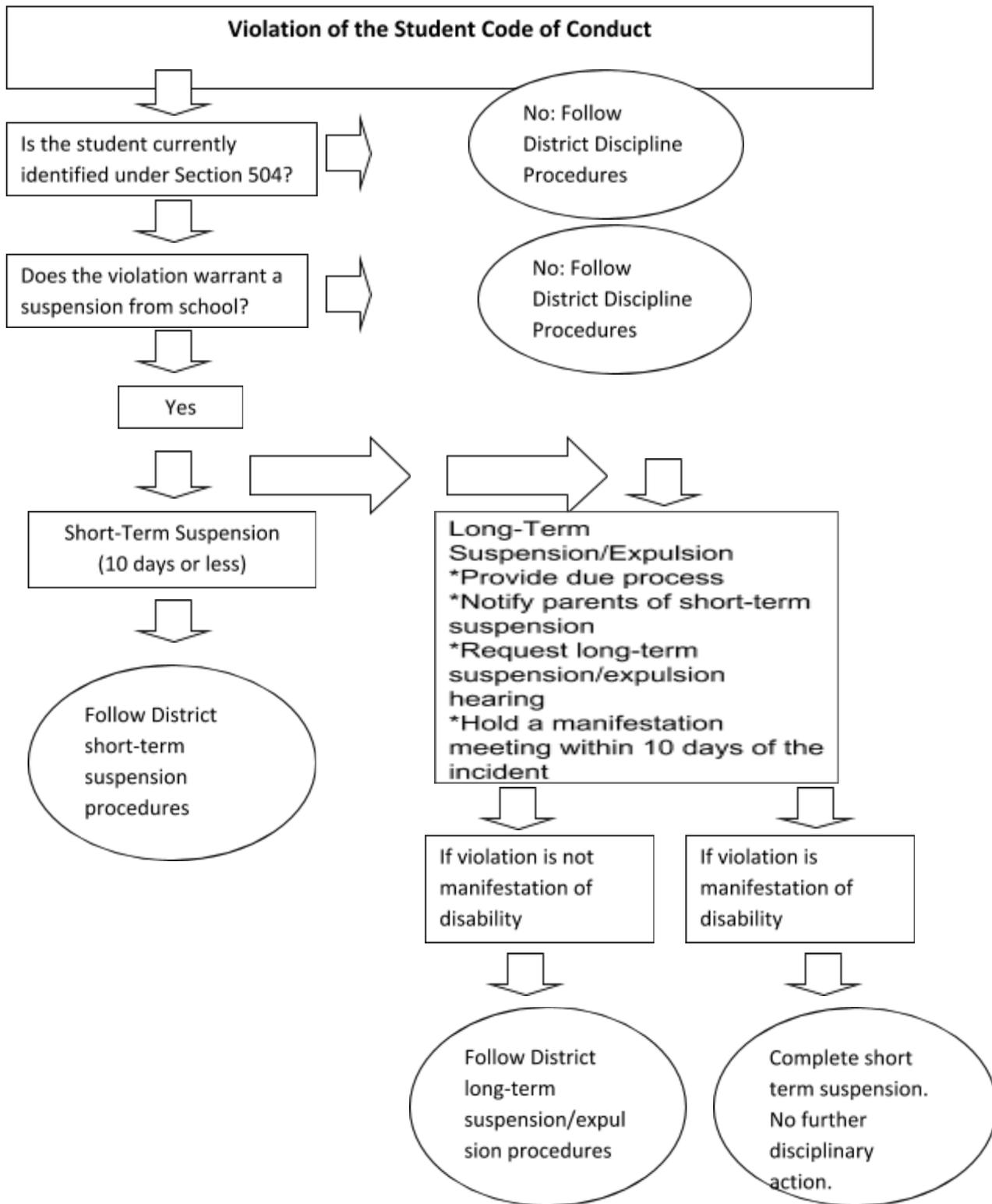
3. Expulsion or suspensions of 10 or more days are considered a *change of placement* and require procedural requirements of IDEA or 504/ADA.
4. A *manifest determination* must be made before suspending or expelling a student under IDEA or 504/ADA for more than 10 days; a manifestation determination is not required for a suspension of less than 10 days (unless this results in a cumulative suspension of more than 10 days).
5. Suspensions of less than 10 days are permissible but cannot set a pattern (school officials should review appropriateness of the placement if cumulative time is more than 10 days).
6. If a *manifest determination* shows no relationship between the behavior and disability, then the student may be disciplined as any other student.
7. If a *manifest determination* shows that there is a relationship between the behavior and disability, then the student may NOT be expelled or suspended; the school should consider the appropriateness of the current program and consider appropriate changes.
8. Special Education students who are expelled must continue to receive a FAPE; 504 students do not have to be provided with FAPE during expulsion or suspension for behavior not related to the disability.
9. Students currently engaged in drug or alcohol abuse are not protected under Section 504.

From: Smith, T.E.C. (2004). Section 504, the ADA, and public schools: A handbook for educators. Fayetteville, AR

Disciplining a 504 Disabled Student

What is the discipline process for a 504 disabled student?

Section 504 disabled students are subject to the same disciplinary action as a non-disabled student, provided that the student's behavior is not a manifestation of his or her qualifying disability. A 504 Team must conduct a manifestation determination whenever a disabled student is subject to out-of-school suspension for 10 consecutive school days or more. If the 504 Team concludes that the violation is a manifestation of the student's qualifying disability, the discipline process must end and the 504 Team should review the 504 Plan to determine if changes are appropriate. If the violation is not a manifestation, the student is subject to the same disciplinary action that any non-disabled student would receive for the same violation.



IAES for Long-Term Placement

CAPS Education Collaborative

CAPS works with the District to tailor programs for students needing both long-term and short-term placements. These requests include exclusions, long-term suspensions, IAES placements for students involved with weapons or drugs and other interim placements needed by the District. Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis and are adapted to the needs of the student and the District.

DUE PROCESS

Due process is the protection of rights. All students are entitled to full consideration and protection under law- particularly concerning suspension and expulsion. The due process procedure assures that every aggrieved student receives oral or written notification of any charges and a fair hearing and judgment.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Petersham School Committee consists of three members. They are responsible for setting overall policies and establishing programs and procedures which will best allow the individual educational achievement of each student. The Committee also proposes a budget and oversees the spending of money allocated to the school.

The Petersham School Committee meeting times and dates are posted prior to each meeting at the school, and at the Town Office. Meetings are open to the public.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a child and is regarded as a very serious problem.

The School Committee does recognize, however, that in accordance to state law parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine,
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family,
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child and
4. For observance of major religious holidays.
5. A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

Extended vacations during regularly scheduled school time are discouraged. If you plan to excuse your

child for an extended vacation, please collaborate with the appropriate teachers upon your return regarding missing assignments. Work will not be provided ahead of time.

A student's understanding of the importance of day to day school work is a critical factor in the shaping of character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, **parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child.** This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. A phone call or email from the parents to the nurse is required on the day(s) your child is absent. If we have not been informed of a student's absence by 9:00 a.m. on the day the student is out, the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parent or guardian to confirm that the child had not arrived at the school. If a child has missed three or more days for an illness, please bring a doctor's note.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Repeated absence may result in retention of student in current grade placement.

For absences less than three days, missed school work will be provided to the student upon their return. For absences greater than three days, parents may contact the teachers to pick up missed school work at an agreed upon time.

School is compulsory for students under the age of sixteen. A student may be considered truant and court proceedings initiated when the student accumulates more than seven unexcused absences in a six-month period (MGL CH. 76, S.2 and S.5).

CH. 76, Section 5. Every person shall a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Students are expected to be in their seats ready to learn at 8:20 a.m. late arrival, even by a few minutes, disrupts class, causes loss of instruction time and is often uncomfortable for the tardy student. Any student who arrives at school after 8:20 a.m. is considered tardy and must be signed in by their parent/guardian and receive a late pass from the office prior to entering the classroom. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is exhibiting a pattern of tardiness or is frequently tardy.

When absent, the following will happen:

- after six tardies/absences in a month, Principal Menard will send a letter home
- after nine tardies and/or absences in a month, Principal Menard and the Nurse Warburton will meet with parents

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students can not be dropped off any earlier than 8:00 a.m. as the main school doors will unlock at that time. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 8:20 .am. Grounds outside the building are off-limits unless accompanied by a teacher prior to school starting.

If students arrive after 8:20 a.m., they are tardy and a parent/guardian must sign the student into the office. That student will then pick up a tardy slip from the office before going to class.

Students can get to school either by riding the school bus, walking, riding their bike if in grade 2 or above, or get dropped off.

Walkers and riders are dismissed through the front doors of the school. Parents are asked to wait outside the double doors for their children. Riders will be dismissed directly to whoever is picking them up and will not be sent out to the cars. Parents who are picking up their children from school should be at the school for the 2:50 p.m. dismissal time.

School staff supervise the playground during the lunch recess. The playground is not supervised before and after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal.

Bus students are dismissed through the community entrance near the gymnasium. School is dismissed at 2:50 P.M. for grades K-6.

EARLY DISMISSAL

At times students may need to be picked up from school prior to dismissal time. Parents should send in a note with their child. If you forget to send in a note in the morning, you can call the school. However, a written note is preferred.

WALKERS

Students who walk to school should come straight to school. They should remain on the side of the road at all times and use caution when crossing a street. The cross-walks by the school should be used.

Walkers should not arrive before 8:00 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

When walkers are dismissed, a teacher is on duty to cross Spring Street and Hardwick Road with the students. Students who are walkers must cross with the teacher at dismissal time.

BICYCLES

Students in grades 2-6 are permitted to ride bicycles to and from school. Bicycles are to be left in the bike rack and may not be ridden during recess periods. The children should observe all bike safety rules when riding their bikes.

The parent or guardian of a student who normally rides the bus must inform the school if his/her child plans to ride a bike. Bike riders should not arrive before 8:00 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

CHANGES IN GOING HOME ROUTINE

On any day that your child does not follow her or his usual routine for going home, please send a written note to the teacher with complete instruction. Without written instructions we will help the child follow their regular plan. Please be careful about this; each year we have a good deal of anxiety, confusion and lost time because children are not sure whether or not they are to be picked up, go home on the bus, or have some other special arrangement. If there are any changes after arrival in the morning, a parent/guardian must call the office prior to 2:15 p.m. to help us avoid any last minute confusion.

CANCELLATION AND DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL

Cancellation or dismissal of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. We are aware of the hardship which can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be cancelled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances.

In event of a cancellation or delay, all households will receive an automated message from the Superintendent of Schools with information regarding the change in schedule.

Delayed openings and cancellations are posted on Facebook and local TV stations.

On rare occasions it is necessary to close school early due to rapidly worsening weather conditions or other emergencies.

If school must be dismissed early because of hazardous weather or other emergencies, the office will make every attempt to contact you at the number listed on your child's emergency form. If we are unable to contact you, we will call the emergency contact people listed on your child's form.

Lastly, if school is not closed and you feel road conditions are not adequate for safe bus transportation, it is reasonable that as a parent you may decide not to allow your children to attend school that day.

BUS RULES

The Petersham Center School currently uses F.M. Kuzmeskus Bus Company for transportation. They can be reached at 413-863-2595.

Approximate pick up times are provided in the Athol Daily News Back to School Edition and posted on the school's website. Bus routes change from year to year depending on the number of students and the area where students live.

All students are expected to remain in their seats and keep conversations at a reasonable volume. Students are expected to follow bus rules to ensure everyone's safety.

Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time. Any such suspensions will be initiated by the school Principal. Suspension of riding privileges is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any one infraction.

PARENT-TEACHER GROUP

The PTG is a very active organization in our school. The purpose of the PTG is to plan programs which are informational and beneficial to parents, students, and teachers and which are under the guidance of the Principal. The most important function of the PTG is to foster the interaction of Parents, Teachers and Principals who work together for the success and benefit of the children and of the school. All parents are welcome to attend and participate in PTG activities. Meetings are posted on the monthly PTG calendar and also in the newsletters.

VOLUNTEERS

All parents, guardians, family members, and community members are encouraged to volunteer their time in various areas including but not limited to, library, individual classroom, or readers. All adults who volunteer at the school are required to complete a CORI (Criminal Offense Record Investigation) as well as other forms; these forms can be obtained at the school office. If you are interested in doing volunteer help, please contact any teacher or call the school. Your help will be warmly accepted and we guarantee your efforts will be most rewarding.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted legislation which calls for the establishment of a School Council for each elementary, secondary and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. Each council is to have the following categories of membership: principal, teachers, parents of students attending the school, and community representatives who are not parents, teachers, or students at the school.

Councils are to assist Principals in adopting educational goals for each school, identifying the educational needs of the students attending the schools, and formulating a school improvement plan. Parent representatives on this council must be elected by the PTG.

REPORT CARDS/CONFERENCES

In September there will be an evening Open House to share information about the general nature of your child's classroom and to answer questions you may have about the school program.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held in October for grades K – 4. In December, grades five and six will have student-led student conferences. At this meeting your child's progress is reviewed, questions and concerns shared, and goals established for the school year.

Report cards will be issued three times a year for all students. Please carefully review your child's progress and contact the school if you have questions regarding grades. Report cards should be returned within one week of receiving them. They may be kept upon completion of the grade level.

ADMISSION

All children who reach the age of five years on or before September 1st of the current school year are eligible for Kindergarten in September. Children are registered for Kindergarten in the school office. Proof of birth date (birth certificate, passport) is required, and Massachusetts law requires proof that each child has been immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, polio, Hepatitis B, and Chickenpox. Effective March 1, 1990, Kindergarten children must have had a screening for lead poisoning.

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING

Each child who enters Kindergarten will be given a "screening" in fulfillment of the requirements of Massachusetts Chapter 766 regulations and to help us know the child and plan appropriately for his or her needs.

The screening gives us information about a child's strengths and needs. For example, the gross motor items on the screening help us identify children who will profit by activities designed to develop their coordination in tasks using large muscles (such as running, throwing a ball, etc.). This screening occurs just before the start of the school year. Parents are notified if there are any concerns regarding their child's development.

SPECIALS

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

Physical Education

Art

Music Theory & Concepts

Performing Arts

*Please be sure your child is dressed in appropriate clothing and sneakers for both P.E. and Music class. Music class is held in the gymnasium and involves a significant amount of movement.

HOMEWORK

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. In an effort to increase students' study skills the school has the following homework policy. The average times of the homework assignments are as follows:

Grade 1 -- 15 minutes

Grade 2 -- 15-20 minutes

Grade 3 -- 20-30 minutes

Grade 4 -- 45 minutes

Grade 5 -- 45 minutes

Grade 6 -- 45 minutes - 1 hour

In order to help your child develop and increase his/her study skills, the following suggestions are provided.

1. Establish a homework time and area in your household. Choose a time and place each day that will minimize interruptions and that will be the best for your family.
2. Eliminate distractions. Research suggests that children can concentrate more easily when the television, radio and stereo are not in use. If you have more than one child, establish a quiet time for all. Younger children could look at a picture book or perhaps play a quiet game. Children in lower grades could read, write a letter to a grandparent, draw, etc.
3. Be available. Don't expect your child to go to his/her room and return later with everything completed. Encouragement, praise and occasional help let your child know that the work he/she is doing is important and that you care.
4. Time. If your child completes the assignment quickly there is probably a long term assignment such as a book report or report that could use attention or he/she could review for a test. Encourage your child to go beyond the assigned work and use the extra time for pleasure reading and for letter and creative writing. This helps develop study skills and a lifelong enjoyment for learning.
5. Ask. If you have a question, please call or email your child's teacher at school. Let the teacher know if the assignments are taking considerably longer than expected or if your child fails to bring home an assignment.

Homework provides practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all materials needed to complete assignments are brought home at the end of the school day.

INSURANCE

School insurance will be offered at the beginning of each school year. Information and envelopes for school insurance will be issued to each child. If you wish school insurance, please place the exact amount in the envelope and return it according to the directions given. Checks should be made out to the insurance company.

LUNCH, BREAKFAST, SNACK AND MILK

Children may purchase hot lunch which includes milk, or purchase milk separately. Children can choose either the hot lunch option or the alternate. The price for hot lunch, which includes milk, is \$2.75. Milk only is \$0.50. Lunch may be purchased by the week or month. Please indicate the student's name and the day or days that hot lunch will be purchased on their ticket. The dollar amount should be included on the outside of the payment envelope. The payment envelope should contain the lunch ticket and money/check for lunch that week or month. If you plan to pay for lunch by check, please make it payable to "PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL". If your child does not intend to ever purchase school lunch, parent can send in a note that they will be cold all year.

Children may purchase breakfast prior to the start of school each day. Breakfast costs \$1.75. Students who are eligible for reduced or free lunch are also eligible for reduced or free breakfast. Every day breakfast items include cereal, juice, milk. In addition, pancakes, breakfast wraps, homemade muffins and bagels are served on specific days. Breakfast menus are listed on the monthly lunch menu. Students

cannot bring outside food/drink into the classroom to eat breakfast there. If your child is eating breakfast in the car on the way to school, it must be finished before coming into the building or put into their backpack to be eaten at snack time.

Students can either bring their own snack from home or purchase a snack from the school. We offer students a wide range of snack food from \$0.25-\$1.00. Snack money is collected at the time of purchase and should not be sent into the office.

Please note that we do not allow parents to send in snacks or treats for individual birthday recognition or to share with the class. At times the classroom teacher may ask for donations of snacks for a special event such as a holiday party. If your child does bring in a snack to share with the class we will store it for them and send it home at the end of the day.

A student that has any past due lunch money will receive a written notice on Friday with the past due total listed. This notice will be sent home with the student(s). Past due money will be expected by the start of the following week. If a past due total reaches \$25.00 or more, a phone call home from Principal Menard will be warranted.

There will be NO charging for breakfast or snack. All money needs to be paid ahead of time or by the student that day directly to the cafeteria.

RECESS

Your child will have outdoor recess every day unless the Nurse, Principal, or Lead Teacher determines the weather conditions to be too unsafe. All children who are able to attend school are to participate in outside recess whenever it is offered, except in extraordinary circumstances.

Please remind your child to dress warmly during the winter months. Boots, mittens, a hat, a jacket and snow pants are essential. Children who are not dressed appropriately for the weather will not be able to participate in outdoor recess. Students should not wear their boots during the school day; they should have other footwear for the classroom. It is helpful for both student and teacher if all outer clothing worn to school is marked with your child's name, especially in the primary grades.

RECORDS

Records are kept on each student by the administration and classroom teacher. Parents may make an appointment to review the records or test scores by calling the office. Student records are released to a new school when the school receives a signed transfer form or when the parent completes a transfer form at the Petersham Center School.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

The first day of school your child will bring home information regarding an emergency information packet which will include important information the school will need if an emergency arises. If there are any changes in information contained on the form during the school year, please contact the office or your child's teacher.

HARASSMENT

The Petersham Center School endeavors to maintain an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. All members of the school community are expected to act in an appropriate manner and to show respect for others.

It should be understood that harassment of any sort is not tolerated. Laws add weight to this statement of policy. Any case of harassment connected with race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, handicap, or unwanted sexual attention, or any action which creates a hostile environment, such as a threat, creates a legal liability for both the student or students and the school.

Students who feel that they have been subjected to harassment should immediately report the incident to a staff member. Harassment can result in a suspension or other disciplinary action.

Harassment Policy

The Petersham School District recognizes that harassment and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate. Students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give the single-minded attention they need for success. Harassment can also lead to more serious violence. Every student has the right to an education and to be safe in and around school.

1. **Definition of Harassment.** Harassment is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being "picked on". Harassment includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name calling; threatening looks; gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.
2. **Harassment is Prohibited.** The Petersham School District and staff shall not tolerate any harassment on District school grounds or at any activity on their school campus.
3. **Staff Intervention.** The District expects staff members who observe or become aware of an act of harassment to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene-unless intervention would be a threat to staff member's safety. If a staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the harassment persists, he/she shall report harassment to the school administration for further investigation.
4. **Students and Parents Shall Report Harassment.** The District expects students and parents who become aware of an act of harassment to report it to the school administration for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting harassment may be subject to the consequences listed below in paragraph six.
5. **Investigation Procedures.** Upon learning about a harassment incident, the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents of both the aggressor and the victim, interview both students and thoroughly investigate the incident. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues.
6. **Consequences/Intervention.** Consequences for the students who harass others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include counseling; a parent conference; detention; suspension and/or expulsion. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These

may include implementing a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing staff support for students as necessary; reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Only School personnel who have completed the comprehensive restraint training shall perform restraints. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations, after other less intrusive alternative have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. If a restraint is necessary, the office should be contacted as soon as possible. Trained school personnel shall use physical restraint with the following goals in mind: To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm; and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint (603 CMR 46.00)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

State and Federal law guarantees a free and appropriate public education for children who have been identified as having a significant handicap that prevents optimum learning or functioning for them within the regular education program. A team of parents, teachers, administrators, and specialists join together to discuss the child's educational needs and creates an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Specialists at the Petersham Center School include a Learning Specialist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Behavioral Specialist, and Special Needs Administrator.

BULLYING

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, was signed into law on May 3, 2010 and took effect immediately. The law requires each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved day or residential school, and collaborative school to develop and implement a plan to address bullying and intervention. The statute directs the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate regulations addressing a Principal's duties under one of the ten required elements of the bullying and intervention plan, namely, notification to parents or guardians of the victim and the perpetrator of bullying or retaliation and the action taken to prevent further bullying, and notification to law enforcement of bullying or retaliation, when the perpetrator's conduct also may result in criminal charges. The law further provides that the regulations must be promulgated by September 30, 2010.

Definition of Bullying:

Pursuant to M.G.L. C71, S 370, means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or damage to his or her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying shall include cyber bullying. Amendments were made to the Massachusetts anti-bullying law, which became effective July 1, 2013. The amendments

extend protections to students who are bullied by a member of the school staff. As defined in M.G.L. C71, S370, as amended, a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or a paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or “perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Bullying is a major distraction from learning. Continued bullying may be defined as harassment which has severe consequences. Fear generated from bullying can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully. As a rule bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in the middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Most bullying by students starts out verbally, teasing and put-downs, and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Petersham School District will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental or written interactions.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological.
2. Threats or assaults of any kind, stated or implied, in any form.
3. Misuse of student property.

The school committee expects administrators and staff to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school sanctioned transportation or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Principal will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The Principal will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

References:	National School Safety Center Maine Project Against Bullying The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
Legal Reference:	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 Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00
Cross Reference:	AC Nondiscrimination ACAB Sexual Harassment JICFA-E Hazing

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Consolidated District has established policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that all members of the school community, including students, parents and staff know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents/guardians or others may be oral or written. Oral reports made by, or to, a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are required to immediately report to the Principal (or designee) any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of, or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents/guardians or other non-employees may be made anonymously. The district will make reporting forms available to the community in each school office, counseling and nursing offices and on the district website.

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff, students and parents/guardians with notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal (or designee), will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the district website, and in information about the Petersham School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents/guardians.

Principal: Mrs Joanne Menard, Tel #978-724-3363, Petersham Center School, 31 Spring Street, Petersham, MA 01366

1. Reporting by staff: Staff members will immediately report to the Principal (or designee) when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal (or designee) does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the school's policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.
2. Reporting by students, parents/guardians and others. The district expects students, parents/guardians and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal (or designee). Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/guardians and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal (or designee).

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal (or designee) will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be

circumstances in which the Principal (or designee) contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety could include: creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal (or designee) will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of, and after, the investigation as necessary.

2. The Principal (or designee) will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation of a student who has witnessed or reported bullying or retaliation, or provides information during an investigation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school’s obligation to investigate the matter.

C. Obligations to Notify Others:

1. Notice to parents/guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal (or designee) will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor of the incident and discuss the planned response.
2. Notices to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal (or designee) first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the Principal (or designee) of the other school/s of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR.
3. Notices to Law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal (or designee) has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal (or designee) will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be confidentiality maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Directions: Bullying or Retaliation are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, or faculty member, and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying or retaliation, complete this form and return it to the Principal or Administrative Designee at the student's school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

Reported act(s) of bullying will be investigated, and parents/guardians will be informed.

Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report:

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of the alleged report.)

Check whether you are the : Target of the behavior

Reporter (not the target)

Check whether you are a Student Staff member (specify role)

 Parent

 Administrator

Other (specify)

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

If you are a student, what grade are you in? _____

Information about the incident:

Name of Target: (of behavior) _____

Name of Aggressor (person who engaged in the behavior) _____

Date(s) of incident(s): _____

Time of Incident : _____

Location of Incident (be as specific as possible): _____

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it)

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Name: _____ Student Staff Other _____

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be confidentiality maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Administrative Use Only

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____

(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

Form Given to: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date received** _____

INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ **Position(s):** _____

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ **Date:** _____

3. Any prior documented Incidents by the aggressor? Yes No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? Yes No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)
Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form
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 Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

- YES NO
 Bullying Incident documented as
 Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- Target's parent/guardian Date: _____
 Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____
 District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____
 Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges Detention STEP referral Suspension
 Community Service Education Other

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____
 Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date _____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date _____

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____

Petersham Center School
 31 Spring Street
 Petersham, MA 01366
 978-724-3363 School
 978-544-2535 Superintendent Office

Stop A Bully

Safe and Anonymous

Date:
Submitted by (optional):
Name of Bully:
Grade of Bully:
Date of Incident:

Details of Incident:

Location of Incident:
Time of Incident:
Number of Witnesses:
Who has been told:
Number of times this has happened:

It is the responsibility of the school to investigate the accuracy of every Bully report and then take the steps necessary to stop any further harassment. The Petersham School district agrees to treat reports in a professional manner and respect the person who submitted it in their desire to remain safe and anonymous. This report is considered confidential whether you choose to remain anonymous or not. School staff will show it only to the persons who are directly involved in the incident.