

Monson Public Schools

Employee Manual

2016 – 2017

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Monson Public School District

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Term Expires 2018

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Term Expires: 2018

Patricia Oney, Secretary

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Term Expires: 2019

Joel Keller, Member

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Term Expires 2019

DIRECTORY OF ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent of Schools

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43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

Director for Curriculum and Instruction

Katherine Watts
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

Director of Pupil Services

Suzanne Morneau
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

Payroll Department

Lisa Poulin
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

DISTRICT COORDINATORS

Harassment, Title IX, and Section 504 Coordinator

Suzanne Morneau
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

Homeless Liaison

Suuzanne Morneau
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

ADA Coordinator

Don Smith
43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 413-267-4150

Monson Public School District

DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

Quarry Hill Community School Pre-K-4

Jennifer C. Beaudry, Principal

43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 Phone (413) 267-4160 Fax (413) 267-4154 Hours: 8:35 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Granite Valley Middle School (Grades 5-8)

Mary K. Cieplik, Principal

21 Thompson Street, Monson, MA 01057 Phone (413) 267-4155 Fax (413) 267-4624 Hours: 7:48 a.m.-2:18 p.m.

Monson High School (Grades 9-12)

William J. Metzger, Principal

55 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057 Phone (413) 267-4589 Fax (413) 267-4157 Hours: 7:35 a.m.-2:05 p.m.

Introduction

This guide is intended to provide employees of the district with information, practices and resources needed to effectively carry out their duties and responsibilities. Employees should refer to the Monson Public School Committee Policy Manual for matters specific to policy, and to their respective Unit Contract Agreement for additional terms of employment.

This manual contains official rules and regulations under which the District and the buildings operate. It is updated annually and provided to each employee. Principals or their designees review the manual with new staff during their orientation process. A school- specific appendix is included to cover information that is not contained in the manual.

Contractual Agreements

Each employee will receive from their union representative, a copy of his/her contract (Units A, B, C, D, E and F) that includes the salary schedule, information on benefits, and leave request procedures. It is the responsibility of the employee to read and become familiar with the language of their contract.

I. PERSONNEL

Please refer to the School Committee personnel/human resource policy manual for more information about the following:

- > Communications
- > Community Involvement
- > Complaints
- > Decision-making/Site-based teams
- > Employment Evaluation
- > Faculty Manual
- > Job Descriptions
- > Nepotism
- > Non-School employment by professional staff members
- > Personnel Records
- > Professional Staff Responsibilities and Conduct
- > Recruitment and Selection of Employees
- > Sexual Harassment
- > Staff gifts and solicitations
- > Staff health and safety
- > Staff participation in political activities
- > Student-teaching and internships
- > Substitute teachers
- > Volunteers

Employees should contact the business office (413) 267-4152 ext. 1201 to obtain information about payroll processing and benefits. Please refer to Appendix B of this manual for a list of corresponding forms.

Substitute Teachers

All substitutes will be expected to provide educational services, rather than to assume merely a student/supervisory role. These services will be based upon lesson plans provided by the classroom teacher. They will be provided with as much support as possible by building administrators and teachers.

Staff responsibilities regarding the use of substitutes:

1. Beginning in September 2011, all staff that will require substitute coverage due to personal or family illness, other approved leave, or attendance at an approved professional development activity should refer to the substitute teacher manual.
2. When a teacher absence is anticipated, teachers are expected to create detailed lesson plans with specific instructions for the use of books, supplies and other materials corresponding to the daily lessons, including building/team's schedules.
3. In addition, each teacher should have a red substitute folder that outlines homeroom and other routines such as attendance, lunch count and basic emergency response protocols. This folder should also contain emergency lesson plans prepared for unexpected absences. These plans should be left in an emergency substitute folder and stored in a visible location (i.e., top center drawer of the desk). In the event of an extended absence, it is the expectation that teachers will collaborate with long-term substitutes in order to ensure continuity of instruction and evaluation. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration. In the event that your illness/injury prohibits you from communicating with your long-term substitute, the team leader will assume responsibility to coordinate your substitute plans.
4. All substitute teachers are subject to a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) background check, and must submit their fingerprints for the state and national background checks.

School Volunteers

Staff should be aware that all school volunteers who are working in any capacity in the school setting are bound by the laws of confidentiality and standards of professionalism. Information obtained through observation or participation in classrooms is completely confidential. All volunteers will be expected to work under the guidelines as defined by current State and Federal regulations. Employees should be aware that no individual may be left alone with a student unless a current Criminal Offense Record Investigation (CORI) is on file. Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) is a record of all Massachusetts adult convictions, non-convictions, and pending offenses. Monson may also elect to require a national criminal history check for certain volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Expectations are described in the School Volunteer Agreement form, signed by the volunteer and collected by the school secretary and/or administrator.

Please sign the acknowledgement of all Monson Public School policies at the end of this manual.

Decision Making and Site-Based Teams

The District encourages participatory decision making at all levels. Staff members, parents and students are important contributors to the decision making process. Each school shall establish site-based teams/councils as defined by the Massachusetts Educational Reform Act of 1993.

Members of the council serve a two-year consecutive term. It is the responsibility of the District Parent Teacher Student Association to select the parent representative, the Teacher Organization to select the teacher representative and the principal to select the community member.

Conflict of Interest Law

Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2009, the ethics reform law, imposes mandatory education and training requirements on public employers and public employees. The requirements may be summarized as follows:

1. By the last week of September, and on an annual basis thereafter, all current regional school district employees must be provided with a summary of the conflict of interest law.
2. By the first week of April each year, and once every two years thereafter, all current municipal employees must complete an online training program prepared by the State Ethics Commission, print the certificate of completion, and present it to their supervisor. All certificates will be kept on file in the Superintendent's office.
3. The link for this ethics training is

<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/conflict-of-interest-law-online-training-programs.html>

Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees

(Version 5: Revised December 23, 2011) described below. The sections referenced below are sections of G.L. c. 268A.

When the Commission determines that the conflict of interest law has been violated, it can impose a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 (\$25,000 for bribery cases) for each violation. In addition, the Commission can order the violator to repay any economic advantage he gained by the violation, and to make restitution to injured third parties. Violations of the conflict of interest law can also be prosecuted criminally.

A. Are you a Municipal Employee for Conflict of Interest Law Purposes?

➤ You do not have to be a full-time, paid municipal employee to be considered a municipal employee for conflict of interest purposes. Anyone performing services for a city or town or holding a municipal position, whether paid or unpaid, including full- and part-time municipal employees, elected officials, volunteers, and consultants, is a municipal employee under the conflict of interest law. An employee of a private firm can also be a municipal employee, if the private firm has a contract with the city or town and the employee is a "key employee" under the contract, meaning the town has specifically contracted for her services. The law also covers private parties who engage in impermissible dealings with municipal employees, such as offering bribes or illegal gifts.

B. On-the-Job Restrictions

➤ **Bribes-Asking for and taking bribes is prohibited. (See Section 2)**

A bribe is anything of value corruptly received by a municipal employee in exchange for the employee being influenced in his official actions. Giving, offering, receiving, or asking for a bribe is illegal. Bribes are more serious than illegal gifts because they involve corrupt intent. In other words, the municipal employee intends to sell his office by agreeing to do or not do some official act, and the giver intends to influence him to do so. Bribes of any value are illegal.

➤ **Gifts and Gratuities-Asking for or accepting a gift because of your official position, or because of something you can do or have done in your official position, is prohibited. (See Sections 3, 23(b)(2), and 26)**

Municipal employees may not accept gifts and gratuities valued at \$50 or more given to influence their official actions or because of their official position. Accepting a gift intended to reward past official action or to bring about future official action is illegal, as is giving such gifts. Accepting a gift given to you because of the municipal position you hold is also illegal. Meals, entertainment event tickets, golf, gift baskets, and payment of travel expenses can all be illegal gifts if given in connection with official action or position, as can anything worth \$50 or more. A number of smaller gifts together worth \$50 or more may also violate these sections.

This summary of the conflict of interest law, General Laws chapter 268A, is intended to help municipal employees understand how that law applies to them. This summary is not a substitute for legal advice, nor does it mention every aspect of the law that may apply in a particular situation. Municipal employees can obtain free confidential advice about the conflict of interest law from the Commission's Legal Division at our website, phone number, and address. Municipal counsel may also provide advice.

The conflict of interest law seeks to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties, foster integrity in public service, and promote the public's trust and confidence in that service by placing restrictions on what municipal employees may do on the job, after hours, and after leaving public service, as similarly situated individuals. Causing someone else to do these things is also prohibited.

Example of violation: A full-time town employee writes a novel on work time, using her office computer, and directing her secretary to proofread the draft. **Example of violation:** A city councilor directs subordinates to drive the councilor's wife to and from the grocery store.

Example of violation: A mayor avoids a speeding ticket by asking the police officer who stops him, "Do you know who I am?" and showing his municipal I.D.

➤ **Self-Dealing and Nepotism-Participating as a municipal employee in a matter in which you, your immediate family, your business organization, or your future employer has a financial interest is prohibited. (See Section 19)**

A municipal employee may not participate in any particular matter in which he or a member of his immediate family (parents, children, siblings, spouse, and spouse's parents, children, and siblings) has a financial interest. He also may not participate in any particular matter in which a prospective employer, or a business organization, of which he is a director, officer, trustee, or employee has a financial interest. Participation includes discussing as well as voting on a matter, and delegating a matter to someone else.

A financial interest may create a conflict of interest whether it is large or small, and positive or negative. In other words, it does not matter if a lot of money is involved or only a little. It also does not matter if you are putting money into your pocket or taking it out. If you, your immediate family, your business, or your employer have or has a financial interest in a matter, you may not participate. The financial interest must be direct and immediate or reasonably foreseeable to create a conflict. Financial interests which are remote, speculative or not sufficiently identifiable do not create conflicts.

Example of violation: A town administrator accepts reduced rental payments from developers.

Example of violation: A developer offers ski trip to a school district employee who oversees the developer's work for the school district.

Regulatory Exemptions

There are situations in which a municipal employee's receipt of a gift does not present a genuine risk of a conflict of interest, and may in fact advance the public interest. The Commission has created exemptions permitting giving and receiving gifts in these situations. One commonly used exemption permits municipal employees to accept payment of travel-related expenses when doing so advances a public purpose. Another commonly used exemption permits municipal employees to accept payment of costs involved in attendance at educational and training programs. Other exemptions are listed on the Commission's website.

Example where there is no violation: A fire truck manufacturer offers to pay the travel expenses of a fire chief to a trade show where the chief can examine various kinds of fire-fighting equipment that the town may purchase. The chief fills out a disclosure form and obtains prior approval from his appointing authority. **Example where there is no violation:** A town treasurer attends a two-day annual school featuring multiple substantive seminars on issues relevant to treasurers. The annual school is paid for in part by banks that do business with town treasurers. The treasurer is only required to make a disclosure if one of the sponsoring banks has official business before her in the six months before or after the annual school.

➤ **Misuse of Position-Using your official position to get something you are not entitled to, or to get someone else something they are not entitled to, is prohibited. Causing someone else to do these things is also prohibited. (See Sections 23(b)(2) and 26)**

A municipal employee may not use her official position to get something worth \$50 or more that would not be properly available to other similarly situated individuals. Similarly, a municipal employee may not use her official position to get something worth \$50 or more for someone else that would not be properly available to other

Example of violation: A school committee member's wife is a teacher in the town's public schools. The school committee member votes on the budget line item for teachers' salaries.

Example of violation: A member of a town affordable housing committee is also director of a non-profit housing development corporation. The non-profit makes an application to the committee, and the member/director participates in the discussion.

Example: A planning board member lives next door to property where a developer plans to construct a new building. Because the planning board member owns abutting property, he is presumed to have a financial interest in the matter. He cannot participate unless he provides the State Ethics Commission with an opinion from a qualified independent appraiser that the new construction will not affect his financial interest.

In many cases, where not otherwise required to participate, a municipal employee may comply with the law by simply not participating in the particular matter in which she has a financial interest. She need not give a reason for not participating.

There are several exemptions to this section of the law. An appointed municipal employee may file a written disclosure about the financial interest with his appointing authority, and seek permission to participate notwithstanding the conflict. The appointing authority may grant written permission if she determines that the financial interest in question is not so substantial that it is likely to affect the integrity of his services to the municipality. Participating without disclosing the financial interest is a violation. Elected employees cannot use the disclosure procedure because they have no appointing authority or benefit worth \$50 or more, or cause another person to do so.

Example of violation: A public works director directs his secretary to fill out time sheets to show him as present at work on days when he was skiing.

➤ **Appearance of Conflict-Acting in a manner that would make a reasonable person think you can be improperly influenced is prohibited. (See Section 23(b)(3))**

A municipal employee may not act in a manner that would cause a reasonable person to think that she would show favor toward someone or that she can be improperly influenced. Section 23(b)(3) requires a municipal employee to consider whether her relationships and affiliations could prevent her from acting fairly and objectively when she performs her duties for a city or town. If she cannot be fair and objective because of a relationship or affiliation, she should not perform her duties. However, a municipal employee, whether elected or appointed, can avoid violating this provision by making a public disclosure of the facts. An appointed employee must make the disclosure in writing to his appointing official.

Example where there is no violation: A developer who is the cousin of the chair of the conservation commission has filed an application with the commission. A reasonable person could conclude that the chair might favor her cousin. The chair files a written disclosure with her appointing authority explaining her relationship with her cousin prior to the meeting at which the application will be considered. There is no violation of Sec. 23(b)(3).

Example where there is no violation: An appointed member of the town zoning advisory committee, which will review and recommend changes to the town's by-laws with regard to a commercial district, is a partner at a company that owns commercial property in the district. Prior to participating in any committee discussions, the member files a disclosure with the zoning board of appeals that appointed him to his position, and that board gives him a written determination authorizing his participation, despite his company's financial interest. There is no violation.

➤ **Confidential Information-Improperly disclosing or personally using confidential information obtained through your job is prohibited. (See Section 23(c))**

Municipal employees may not improperly disclose confidential information, or make personal use of non-public information they acquired in the course of their official duties to further their personal interests.

C. After-Hours Restrictions

➤ **Taking a second paid job that conflicts with the duties of your municipal job is prohibited. (See Section 23(b)(1))**

A municipal employee may not accept other paid employment if the responsibilities of the second job are incompatible with his or her municipal job.

There is also an exemption for both appointed and elected employees where the employee's task is to address a matter of general policy and the employee's financial interest is shared with a substantial portion (generally 10% or more) of the town's population, such as, for instance, a financial interest in real estate tax rates or municipal utility rates.

➤ **False Claims-Presenting a false claim to your employer for a payment or benefit is prohibited, and causing someone else to do so is also prohibited. (See Sections 23(b)(4) and 26)**

A municipal employee may not present a false or fraudulent claim to his employer for any payment

Example: A police officer may not work as a paid private security guard in the town where he serves because the demands of his private employment would conflict with his duties as a police officer.

➤ **Divided Loyalties-Receiving pay from anyone other than the city or town to work on a matter involving the city or town is prohibited. Acting as agent or attorney for anyone other than the city**

or town in a matter involving the city or town is also prohibited whether or not you are paid. (See Sec. 17)

Because cities and towns are entitled to the undivided loyalty of their employees, a municipal employee may not be paid by other people and organizations in relation to a matter if the city or town has an interest in the matter. In addition, a municipal employee may not act on behalf of other people and organizations or act as an attorney for other people and organizations in which the town has an interest. Acting as agent includes contacting the municipality in person, by phone, or in writing; acting as a liaison; providing documents to the city or town; and serving as spokesman.

A municipal employee may always represent his own personal interests, even before his own municipal agency or board, on the same terms and conditions that other similarly situated members of the public would be allowed to do so. A municipal employee may also apply for building and related permits on behalf of someone else and be paid for doing so, unless he works for the permitting agency, or an agency which regulates the permitting agency of selectmen, city council, or similar body. A position is eligible to be designated as "special" if it is unpaid, or if it is part-time and the employee is allowed to have another job during normal working hours, or if the employee was not paid for working more than 800 hours during the preceding 365 days. It is the position that is designated as "special" and not the person or persons holding the position. Selectmen in towns of 10,000 or fewer are automatically "special"; selectman in larger towns cannot be "specials."

If a municipal position has been designated as "special," an employee holding that position may be paid by others, act on behalf of others, and act as attorney for others with respect to matters before municipal boards other than his own, provided that he has not officially participated in the matter, and the matter is not now, and has not within the past year been, under his official responsibility.

Example: A school committee member who has been designated as a special municipal employee appears before the board of health on behalf of a client of his private law practice, on a matter that he has not participated in or had responsibility for as a school committee member. There is no conflict. However, he may not appear before the school committee, or the school department, on behalf of a client because he has official responsibility for any matter that comes before the school committee. This is still the case even if he has recused himself from participating in the matter in his official capacity.

Example: A member who sits as an alternate on the conservation commission is a special municipal employee. Under town by-laws, he only has official responsibility for matters assigned to him. He may represent a resident who wants to file an application with the conservation commission as long as the matter is not assigned to him and he will not participate in it.

> Inside Track-Being paid by your city or town, directly or indirectly, under some second arrangement in addition to your job is prohibited, unless an exemption applies. (See Section 20)

A municipal employee generally may not have a financial interest in a municipal contract, including a second municipal job. A municipal employee is also generally prohibited from having an indirect financial interest in a contract that the city or town has with someone else. This provision is intended to prevent municipal employees from having an "inside track" to further financial opportunities.

Example of violation: A full-time health agent submits a septic system plan that she has prepared for a private client to the town's board of health. **Example of violation:** A planning board member represents a private client before the board of selectmen on a request that town meeting consider rezoning the client's property.

While many municipal employees earn their livelihood in municipal jobs, some municipal employees volunteer their time to provide services to the town or receive small stipends. Others, such as a private attorney who provides legal services to a town as needed, may serve in a position in which they may have other personal or private employment during normal working hours. In recognition of the need not to unduly restrict the ability of

town volunteers and part-time employees to earn a living, the law is less restrictive for "special" municipal employees than for other municipal employees.

The status of "special" municipal employee has to be assigned to a municipal position by vote of the board

Example of violation: Legal counsel to the town housing authority becomes the acting executive director of the authority, and is paid in both positions. **Example of violation:** A selectman buys a surplus truck from the town DPW.

Example of violation: A full-time secretary for the board of health wants to have a second paid job working part-time for the town library. She will violate Section 20 unless she can meet the requirements of an exemption.

Example of violation: A city councilor wants to work for a non-profit that receives funding under a contract with her city. Unless she can satisfy the requirements of an exemption under Section 20, she cannot take the job.

There are numerous exemptions. A municipal employee may hold multiple unpaid or elected positions. Some exemptions apply only to special municipal employees. Specific exemptions may cover serving as an unpaid volunteer in a second town position, housing-related benefits, public safety positions, certain elected positions, small towns, and other specific situations. Please call the Ethics Commission's Legal Division for advice about a specific situation.

D. After You Leave Municipal Employment (See Section 18)

➤ **Forever Ban-After you leave your municipal job, you may never work for anyone other than the municipality on a matter that you worked on as a municipal employee.**

If you participated in a matter as a municipal employee, you cannot ever be paid to work on that same matter for anyone other than the municipality, nor may you act for someone else, whether paid or not. The purpose of this restriction is to bar former employees from selling to private interests their familiarity with the facts of particular matters that are of continuing concern to their former municipal employer. The restriction does not prohibit former municipal employees from using the expertise acquired in government service in their subsequent private activities.

Example of violation: A former school department employee works for a contractor under a contract that she helped to draft and oversee for the school department.

Former municipal employees are barred for one year after they leave municipal employment from personally appearing before any agency of the municipality in connection with matters that were under their authority in their prior municipal positions during the two years before they left.

Example: An assistant town manager negotiates a three-year contract with a company. The town manager who supervised the assistant, and had official responsibility for the contract but did not participate in negotiating it, leaves her job to work for the company to which the contract was awarded. The former manager may not call or write the town in connection with the company's work on the contract for one year after leaving the town.

A former municipal employee who participated as such in general legislation on expanded gaming and related matters may not become an officer or employee of, or acquire a financial interest in, an applicant for a gaming license, or a gaming license, for one year after his public employment ceases.

➤ **Partners-Your partners will be subject to restrictions while you serve as a municipal employee and after your municipal service ends.**

Partners of municipal employees and former municipal employees are also subject to restrictions under the conflict of interest law. If a municipal employee participated in a matter, or if he has official responsibility for a matter, then his partner may not act on behalf of anyone other than the municipality or provide services as an attorney to anyone but the city or town in relation to the matter.

Example: While serving on a city's historic district commission, an architect reviewed an application to get landmark status for a building. His partners at his architecture firm may not prepare and sign plans for the owner of the building or otherwise act on the owner's behalf in relation to the application for landmark status. In addition, because the architect has official responsibility as a commissioner for every matter that comes before the commission, his partners may not communicate with the commission or otherwise act on behalf of any client on any matter that comes before the commission during the time that the architect serves on the commission.

Example: A former town counsel joins a law firm as a partner. Because she litigated a lawsuit for the town, her new partners cannot represent any private clients in the lawsuit for one year after her job with the town ended.

➤ **One Year Cooling-Off Period-For one year after you leave your municipal job you may not participate in any matter over which you had official responsibility during your last two years of public service.**

This summary is not intended to be legal advice and, because it is a summary, it does not mention every provision of the conflict law that may apply in a particular situation. **For further information**, about how the law applies in many situations, please visit the website at <http://www.mass.gov/ethics> or contact the Commission's Legal Division via the website, by telephone, or by letter. For Employee's Disclosure Forms visit the website at <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/disclosure-forms/municipal-employee-disclosure-forms/>

Staff Gifts and Solicitations

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law 268A and State Ethics standards, school personnel are prohibited from accepting personal gifts from a contributor (single or collective) that total more than \$50.00 over the course of a single school year.

No employee of the District will accept a personal gift from a business concern supplying, or with an interest in supplying goods, materials, equipment, or services to the District. This restriction does not relate to the acceptance of gifts for the school system or to the acceptance of small and clearly identifiable advertising and promotional materials.

All gifts to the District or proposal of gifts should be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Committee. Major fundraising efforts by outside parties must seek recommendation of the Superintendent and approval of the committee.

On occasion throughout the year, parents or students may wish to express personal appreciation to a teacher or other staff member. The School Committee urges them to find modes of expression that do not involve personal gifts.

No solicitation of funds for charitable purposes will be made among staff members except with specific approval of the Superintendent. Employees are under no obligation to participate.

For further information or example scenarios, please visit this website:

<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/educational-materials/explanations-of-the-conflict-of-interest-law/public-school-teacher-faqs.html>

Throughout the year, organizations may contact the district to offer donations, services or proposed collaborations. All such requests should be approved by the Superintendent or designee. Requests for distribution of any material or advertising must be directed to the Superintendent's office. Communications that have not been pre-authorized should not be disseminated.

Civil Rights and Equal Educational Opportunity and Confidentiality (FERPA)

The Civil Rights and Equal Educational Opportunity and Confidentiality (FERPA) presentations are included in the GCN tutorials beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Please refer to the GCN tutorial instructions above.

Confidentiality

District employees may be exposed to confidential and sensitive information regarding our students and staff. All district employees are expected to act with discretion when dealing with any confidential issues within the workplace and this information should never be discussed verbally and/or electronically inside or outside the workplace with persons not directly involved. Any employee found violating this confidentiality will risk disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

Personnel Records

A personnel record for each present and former employee will be actively maintained in the Central Business Office. In addition to the application for employment and references, the folders will contain employment records, including, but not limited to, information relative to compensation, evaluations, and discipline. Letters of complaint or commendation will not normally become part of the individual's personnel record. In order for a letter of this type to be placed in the file, the individual's direct supervisor shall attach a letter stating the reason for submittal. The Superintendent shall be the final judge of accepting said letter. The Superintendent will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law. Names and addresses of employees will not be released unless required by law.

Staff members maintain the right to view and/or copy information from their official file in the presence of a central office employee.

Complaints

On occasion, concerns may arise regarding personnel and programs of the District. Such complaints should be directed to the appropriate supervisor. Complaints made to an inappropriate party will be forwarded to the appropriate supervisor.

Professional Staff Responsibilities and Conduct

The District values its staff and recognizes their efforts on behalf of children. Professional development is viewed as a responsibility of both the District and the individual teacher. Professional staff is responsible for developing an atmosphere conducive to education and promoting high standards of excellence. Personal professionalism is expected and serves as a model for student achievement and behavior.

The District expects all employees to be aware of the policies under which the District operates and to abide by these policies and the procedures designed to implement them. The Policy Manual is available to all staff, and Administration will review with staff key components of the Policy Manual as appropriate. Annually, all District personnel will be required to acknowledge in writing that they have access to a copy of the District Policy Manual and agree to abide by its provisions.

In the area of personal conduct, the School Committee expects that teachers and other employees will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects positively towards the District, but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students. Teachers must recognize their responsibility to students by sponsoring and supporting

student activities. Faithfulness and promptness in reporting to work, care and protection of school property, effective home/school communications, and concern for the safety and welfare of students are among the priorities for staff members.

Supervision of Students

School personnel assigned supervision are expected to act as reasonably prudent adults in providing for the safety of the students in their charge.

In keeping with this expectation of reasonable prudence, no teacher or other staff member will leave his/her assigned group unsupervised except when arrangements have been made to take care of an emergency.

During school hours or while engaging in school-sponsored activities, students will only be released into the custody of parents/guardians, or other persons authorized verbally or in writing by a parent/guardian.

Student Movement

In the morning when students are entering the building, all classroom teachers will station themselves at their classroom doors. Passes are to be used for all student movement within the building while classes are in session. The exception to this is when students are moving in a group under teacher supervision. It is the expectation that teachers will be in the hallway during transition times monitoring student movement including dismissal time.

See your building principal for other specific building procedures with regards to passes.

Use of Technology

During any time other than preparatory, lunch or break time, all staff will not use cell phones for personal communication or any other non-school related activities.

Communication

Staff should check their mailbox, email and voicemails regularly, and at a minimum daily. Before school, after lunch and after student dismissal are suggested times to check your messages. Communications received from administration, parents, students or other community members should be responded to within 24 hours.

Mandated Reporting

School personnel are mandated reporters. If school personnel have reasonable cause to suspect physical or emotional abuse, or substantial risk of harm or neglect, they are obligated by M.G.L., ch. 119, Section 51A, to report these conditions to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

If the reportable incident involves criminal conduct, including physical abuse, violation of a restraining order, assault and battery, indecent assault and battery or rape, school officials shall also report the incident to the police department, and further action may be taken by the county District Attorney's office.

Additional information can be found on the following website: A Mandated Reporter's Guide to Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dcf/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>

Non-School Employment by Professional Staff Members

It is the policy of the District that professional employees working another job will consider employment within the District as their primary responsibility. Conflicts that arise between the demands of the two jobs will be resolved by the employee's supervisor keeping the best interests of the school and students in mind. The employee may appeal this decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) require covered employers to grant eligible employees with a maximum of twelve weeks of leave. The leave may be unpaid, upon exhaustion of accrued paid leave (such as vacation or sick leave). Eligible employees may take leave for the birth of a child, placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care, for the employee's own serious health condition, or for the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, parent or child. Employees who need to access Family Medical Leave coverage should refer to the following steps:

1. The employee who needs the leave of absence will send a formal letter to the Superintendent requesting the leave of absence. The letter should include the reason for the request, the estimated time needed and the effective date of the request. Requests must be made in writing via hard copy letter.
2. A letter in response to the request will be written by the Superintendent or his/her designee. If the request is granted, the employee will receive FMLA forms to be completed.
3. Prior to responding to the request the Superintendent may require further information.
4. Employees will receive a copy of the letter for their records.

Employees may contact their building principal or the Superintendent's office for information.

Personnel Requests

Personnel requests of a contractually exceptional nature regarding time off during the school year outside of defined vacation times must be in writing to the Superintendent of Schools. Email correspondence **will not** be considered.

Payroll Processing

Payroll processing includes the following documents for employees to complete:

1. Form W-4: Required by the IRS, and Form M-4 for Massachusetts withholding.
2. Form I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification – must provide two forms of ID.
3. Massachusetts Teacher's Retirement: Administrators and Teachers only, must register on-line prior to first payroll. The current contribution rate is 11% for new employees. There is an additional 2% contribution on salary in excess of \$30,000 for those who contribute at 5, 7, 8, or 9%.
4. Hampden County Retirement: Eligible non-teaching MPS staff is enrolled – the current contribution rate is 9%. There is an additional 2% contribution on salary in excess of \$30,000. Employees must provide a copy of their birth certificate.
5. Form SSA-1945: Required by law – must be read and signed by employee covered by a State pension plan.
6. OBRA: All other MPS staff not eligible for a State pension plan must enroll in a deferred compensation (457B) plan - the current contribution rate is 7.5%. Contributions may be withdrawn when employment is terminated.
7. Chicken Pox form: mandated by the MA Dept. of Public Health – MPS staff must advise their status in writing.
8. Direct Deposit Authorization form: MPS employees are encouraged to use direct deposit for their bi-weekly net pay. The Payroll Department will need a voided or cancelled check from the employee's checking account to verify the ABA routing number. Deposits may be split into up to four accounts (checking and/or savings) for either a fixed dollar amount or a percentage.
9. School Department employees are required to have State-mandated training in the *Conflict of Interest Law* every two years and provide proof of that training. New employees are given a packet of information and have 30 days to complete the requirement.

Options for eligible employees:

1. **Health Insurance:** the Town of Monson offers 6 health insurance plans (family or individual) through the Group Insurance Commission. The Payroll Department will provide a packet of information to eligible staff. New employees have 10 days to choose a plan. Health insurance coverage begins in approximately 60 days from hire date. The employee pays his/her portion of the premiums one month in advance via deductions twice per month. The staff is notified of the annual open enrollment period (usually April to May).
2. **Dental Insurance:** the Town of Monson offers the Dental Blue dental insurance plan (family or individual) through MIIA/Blue Cross Blue Shield. The Payroll Department will provide a packet of information to eligible staff. New employees have 30 days to enroll. Dental insurance coverage begins the 1st day of the month following the employee's hire date. The employee pays the premium one month in advance via deductions twice per month. The staff is notified of the annual open enrollment period (usually May to June).

II. HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H, the School Committee hereby adopts a safety policy on behalf of the students and staff of the District. The responsibility of implementation of a safety program will rest with many individuals, including principals, teachers, custodial/maintenance employees and other staff, as directed by the Superintendent. It is the goal and responsibility of the District to provide that all District programs and facilities are maintained at a consistent level designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the students, employees and public who use those facilities.

Each building has a District Emergency Management Guide (red flipchart) that delineates staff roles and responsibilities during an emergency situation, and every employee is expected to review relevant procedures at least annually, participate in all related drills and exercises (such as evacuation and lockdown procedures) as scheduled by district and/or town emergency managers, and follow outlined procedures during an actual event.

Routine protocols are clearly outlined in the guides located in each classroom and other common areas of every building.

Security

Public school buildings and grounds are one of the greatest investments of the towns and it is deemed in the best interests of the District and the towns to protect these assets. The Director of Business, Facilities and Management will provide technical and administrative assistance to principals in maintaining the buildings and grounds in a secure manner conducive to learning.

Access to school buildings and grounds outside regular school hours will be limited to persons whose approved activity requires it. For information regarding community use of buildings please see the "Facilities" section of this policy manual. An adequate key control system will be established, which will limit access to buildings to authorized personnel and will safeguard against the entrance into buildings by unauthorized persons. Valuable records will be kept in a safe place. Principals will set access times for non-school hours for staff specific to their building.

The School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private properties are costly. Individuals who are found responsible for acts of vandalism will be dealt with in accordance with state and local laws. If it is ascertained that students are responsible for any vandalism, they, and/or their parents or guardians, will be held accountable and reimbursement will be sought for damages.

Fingerprinting Law

In January 2013, the state of Massachusetts passed An Act Relative to Background Checks. The Act requires all K-12 school employees, who have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with students, to submit to a new fingerprint-based background check. As a result, all Monson Public Schools' employees (including, but not limited to, educators, substitute teachers, maintenance staff, clerical staff, technology support staff, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers) are required to complete a new fingerprint-based background check.

Employees hired prior to July 1, 2013 must complete the background check prior to September 1, 2016. Employees hired after July 1, 2013 must complete the fingerprint process prior to the start of the 2014 – 2015 school year. Unless otherwise notified, this is and will be a condition of employment for all school employees in MPS.

Fingerprint-based criminal history checks will only be conducted as authorized by the MPS District Policy, M.G.L. c.71, §38R and 42 U.S.C. § 16962, in accordance with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations, and in compliance with M.G.L. c.6, §§ 167-178 and 803 CMR §§2.00, et seq. This process supplements the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check that is already conducted on all employees. However, unlike the CORI check, which has no associated fees, individuals will have to pay a fee (\$55 for DESE licensed staff; \$35 for non-licensed employees) to comply with this requirement. To complete a fingerprint background check, employees must schedule a fingerprinting appointment through the [MorphoTrust USA IndentGo Massachusetts Registration website](#).

Building Entry Protocol and Intruder Awareness

All visitors are expected to “buzz” in and wait to be admitted by the receptionist so that arrivals and departures can be logged. Parents/guardians and guests should not bypass this system by entering with a staff member. Employees should ask any visitors not wearing a badge to return to the front desk and sign in and remind parents/guardians and guests to sign out and return their badges when they are leaving a classroom or meeting area.

Please note that according to the District Emergency Management procedures an intruder is defined as any unauthorized presence in the building and any person who does not comply with established safety protocols. This includes any individual appearing to be unidentified, disruptive, or otherwise suspicious.

All staff members observing behaviors that could in any way compromise the safety and security of the school environment are expected to report these concerns to an administrator and to call 911 if the situation is urgent.

Reporting of Threats and Harmful Behaviors

For the protection of students and staff, any staff member who observes or becomes aware of a potentially threatening situation must report this immediately to a building administrator, or call 911 if the situation is life-threatening. This includes awareness of any verbal, written or electronically communicated threat and observation of any suspicious behavior including a student under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or in possession of a weapon.

Modifications of Schedule and Assigned Duties during Critical Incidents

Under any emergency situation, it may be necessary to reassign personnel to assist or supervise student evacuation or lockdown. As determined by the Superintendent or emergency manager, circumstances may require off site evacuation to another facility, or extension of the school day when routine dismissal procedures cannot be followed. All employees are expected to react calmly and professionally, and to develop personal contingency plans that will support the priority of our students' needs during a crisis. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Fire Prevention

The District will cooperate with each town's fire department in maintaining fire-safe conditions within all school buildings. The principal of each school has the responsibility for insuring periodic fire safety inspections of every room, corridor and space in the school.

There will be at least three to four evacuation drills each year. The first drill will be held during the first month of the school year. Instructions regarding fire exits will be posted in a prominent place near the door of each room. Upon evacuation of the building, attendance will be taken by teachers and each person in school that day must be accounted for at this time. There may be occasion, in an emergency situation, where evacuation may not be the best course of action. Each school will develop "lockdown procedures" that will attempt to provide safe havens within the building.

School Emergency Management

Employees should refer to the District Emergency Management Guide (red flipchart) for protocols pertaining to specific emergencies.

Emergency Closing, Delayed Opening, Early Dismissal, Lockdown and Evacuation

The Superintendent, following established procedures, may close schools, delay openings, or dismiss students early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and staff members. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening, or to dismiss students early, the Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory, and operational activity is continued as may be possible. If conditions affect only a single school, only that school will be closed.

The following procedures apply for the opening and closing of schools during winter storms or emergency situations:

1. When weather conditions warrant, school will be cancelled. "No School" announcements will be made via AdminNotify, the automated telephone notification system; via the District's List Serv, the automated e-mail notification system; posted on the District's Facebook page and broadcast on local radio and television stations. When school is cancelled, school activities, school-related meetings and athletic events are also cancelled.
2. When morning weather conditions are improving, the schools may open on a "delayed opening" basis. On these days, school start will be delayed between 1 hour and 2 hours. Consequently, all activities, commencing with the start of the bus runs, will follow a 1-hour to 2-hour later pattern. When school is delayed, there will be no morning Preschool Program.
3. Parents are reminded that while schools may operate on the basis of improving weather conditions, they should exercise their own good judgment as to the attendance of their children.
4. When the start of school is operating on a "delayed opening" basis, dismissal will be at the regular dismissal times.

In severe weather or similar emergencies when road conditions are expected to deteriorate, it is sometimes best to dismiss students early. Parents will be informed of dismissal times through the advisories listed above.

The need to evacuate the students from a building before the regularly scheduled closing time could arise from a relatively minor incident such as a power failure, or from a major event such as a fire or bomb threat. During evacuation, students are guided to the nearest exit and assemble at a pre-determined location. During an evacuation, release times, communication with school officials, admission into the school and/or transportation services may be temporarily disrupted and families will receive information and instructions from the above-listed communication resources.

Lockdown or sheltering-in-place is implemented when it has been determined that conditions outside of the classroom or building are potentially unsafe. Situations that may activate a lockdown/sheltering response include a hazardous materials situation near the school, police activity close by or potential intruder alerts. While lockdowns are extremely rare, lockdown drills are conducted periodically to ensure that all staff members and students are prepared to respond professionally and calmly. During a lockdown drill, as with an actual event, students and staff remain quietly in a designated location within the room or are guided to a secure location to wait for the “All Clear” signal. It is not possible to enter the building until an “All Clear” signal is given by the principal or public safety official. Information concerning the lockdown is given to families through the above-listed communication resources. Parents are discouraged from attempting to pick up their child. In these cases, parents will be directed to an emergency communication center.

In an extreme emergency when a school has been evacuated and it is not possible to return, an off-site meeting place may be needed. Parents will be directed, through the above advisories, to go to the closest available school building or designated information center in the community. The Superintendent, with public safety personnel, will determine the location that best meets the needs of the specific emergency, and staff will be on site to assist with dismissal procedures utilizing the following guidelines:

- No student will be dismissed from a primary or secondary evaluation site unless a parent (or individual designated by a parent on the student’s Emergency/Non Prescription Medication Form comes for him/her and is able to present photo ID to identify him/herself upon request.
- All parents, or designated persons, who come for students, will be required to sign out at the front office or from a designated alternate release location.
- In addition to the above notification resources, signs will be posted if an alternate location is needed.

Smoking and Tobacco Free Policy

The Education Reform Act of 1993 prohibits the use of any tobacco products within school buildings and school facilities, on the school grounds, or on school busses, by any individual. Furthermore, student possession, as well as the use of tobacco products (i.e., cigarettes, chewing tobacco, cigars, electronic or vapor cigarettes), is prohibited within the school building, on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities off school grounds, and on school busses at any time.

Policy Concerning the Illegal Drug and Alcohol Drug-Free Workplace

It is the policy of Monson Public Schools to maintain a workplace free from illegal drugs and Alcohol, to provide a safe and effective educational environment. In order to assist employees who are experiencing difficulties involving abuse of drugs or alcohol the school has available resources such as counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs. The District will maintain privacy and confidentiality to those employees seeking and/or accepting services.

Employees engaged in the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance present a danger to the educational environment, and will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as referral to law enforcement agencies for potential criminal prosecution.

Contagious Diseases

Contagious diseases present the schools with unique challenges. Sometimes parental notification is appropriate in an attempt to limit the spread of such diseases. Head lice are not a contagious disease. Nurses will use nursing judgment regarding the scope of necessary notifications regarding head lice cases.

In instances of contagious diseases, notification in compliance with State laws and as thought appropriate by the health staff, will be made. The health staff will keep parents informed of Massachusetts' regulations relative to communicable diseases.

Acquired Immune Deficiency (AIDS)

The District recognizes that AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) and infection with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), the virus that causes AIDS, are serious public health concerns. Schools must play a major role in the concerted effort to stop the spread of the virus by helping students make healthy choices about their personal behavior. A developmentally appropriate curriculum will be delivered to students within the District covering the various aspects of the AIDS/HIV epidemic.

Students with AIDS and HIV are entitled to the same rights as other students. The District will abide by guidelines established by the Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding disclosure privacy and precautionary procedures.

First Aid

It is the policy of the District to provide first aid for its students and employees that will be administered by the school nurse or another first aid certified person. First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness, which enables the individual to be taken safely home or to a physician. It does not include diagnosis or treatment. Procedures are in place at each school for the proper handling of an injury to, or sudden illness of, a student or staff member. These are approved by the Superintendent and reviewed annually with staff members and students.

Medications

Only the school nurse, or trained designee, will administer medication. This can only be done under a physician's order. The district reserves the right to reject requests for administration of medication.

Administration of Medications

The District will follow the procedures for the administration of medications as outlined by the Department of Public Health and developed locally. A copy of these procedures will be included in the school manuals and be available at each school.

Staff members are prohibited from making recommendations or suggestions regarding a students' need for medication. If a teacher or other staff member suspects that a child has not taken a prescribed medication, the student should be referred to the school nurse.

Injectable Epinephrine

In the case of a child who has severe allergies, it will be the responsibility of the parent, guardian, or person who has legal custody of such child, to supply the District with an Epi-pen auto injector at the school. It shall be the responsibility of the District to safely keep the Epi-pen and provide willing staff training on proper procedures. In the case of a staff member who has severe allergies, it will be the responsibility of that person to inform the nurse and carry their own Epi- pen.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Willing District employees shall be trained and certified through the American Heart Association in CPR and in the use of an AED. Recertification is required every two years. Employees shall use the AED solely in the manner in which they were trained.

Each employee willing to be trained shall be temporarily issued an American Heart Association manual entitled “Heartsaver AED” in order to prepare for the class. The manuals will be available through the nurse leader and may be requested to periodically review the material. Only persons trained and certified may access and operate the AED.

III. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (ICAP)

The Monson Public School District provides guidelines and resources to meet the needs of diverse learners within general education classrooms. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), a reference tool located in the principal’s office, is designed to assist teachers in their efforts to employ quality teaching strategies for all students. Teachers are expected to document these efforts on the students’ instructional services record, a blue form located on the inside cover of the students cumulative folder. These strategies for success should be updated at the end of each school year, and reviewed by receiving teachers for incorporation into the students’ regular educational program.

Field Trips

A school-sponsored field trip is an excursion of students that is organized on school property and/or on school time and/or utilizes school funds or equipment and receives the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee. School sponsored field trips may be conducted during school or non- school time.

The School Committee delegates to the Superintendent or his/her designee authority to approve field trips (within budgetary limitations) so long as each individual trip meets all of the following conditions:

1. Is directly related to either the curriculum or a school sponsored and school-approved extra- curricular activity (i.e., band, student councils, etc.).
2. Field trips must be completed within one day, unless special permission for an overnight trip is received from the Superintendent.
3. Written parental permission is required before any student is allowed to participate in a field trip.
4. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to allow eligible students with disabilities to participate in scheduled field trips.
5. School staff organizing the field trip will notify administration and front office staff of field trip at least six weeks in advance to make the necessary arrangements including transportation.

6. The school staff member planning the field trip must notify the school nurse of the field trip as soon as possible, but at least three weeks in advance. This time is needed for the nurse to identify a need and secure a nurse to accompany the students on the field trip and to put plans in place for safe management of any health conditions including medication administration.
7. Some out of state field trips, where it is identified that a nurse is needed, may require an application for a temporary nurse license travel permit that the nurse needs to complete in advance. The school nurse will need at least six weeks advance notice of an out of state field trip to make the necessary arrangements.
8. School staff will be sensitive to the participant's costs when organizing field trips.

Guest Speakers

The School Committee recognizes the value of guest speakers. They enrich our curriculum and provide additional resources for the classroom teacher. Building administrator approval must be obtained before engaging guest speakers. In instances where the content of the speech may be objectionable to some parents, all parents must be notified of the nature of speech, and parents must be given the option have their child excluded. Administrative approval is also required for any handouts to be distributed, with an additional set available in the office for parental viewing in advance of the material's distribution to the students. Staff should be sensitive to their responsibility to safeguard the integrity of the educational program. Care should be taken to ensure that presentations are objective and present all viewpoints.

Informal Classroom and School Visitations

The District supports and encourages the active involvement of parents in their children's learning. In an effort to develop home-school partnerships the District welcomes parental visits to their children's classrooms. Informal visitations (as distinguished from formal observations described in the next section), are opportunities for parents to support their child's participation in a school or classroom activity or event. Informal visitations are not to be used to determine the appropriateness of a program and/or to become more familiar with the program and staff or to evaluate academic programs or staff. The following procedures must be followed during informal classroom and school visitations:

- All parents must follow District protocol for safety when visiting our schools.
- Parents must make prior arrangements with the school principal and teacher.
- All visits shall be of such reasonable length and at such a time as to be non-disruptive to the instruction of students, as determined by the teacher and school principal.
- All visitors are to report first to the school principal's office. No unauthorized person will be permitted access to any classroom.
- The schools reserve the right to limit the number of visits to classrooms to protect the learning process and the confidentiality rights of students.

Formal Parent Observations in Classrooms

The Monson Public School District believes parents are important partners in educating students and welcomes parental participation in determining a child's appropriate educational program. To that end, we open our classrooms to parents or a parent representative who want to observe a child in the school setting. For the purposes herein, parent representative means an independent evaluator, educational consultant, or an individual who preferably holds certification or licensure from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in a field directly related to the child's educational program. The following procedures shall be followed when an observation is requested:

1. A request to observe a child in the child's current or potential educational placement must be scheduled at least five (5) days in advance through the building principal;

2. The building principal shall contact the Director of Pupil Services, Suzanne Morneau, to notify her of the observation purpose, date, and time for future follow-up.
3. The building principal shall contact the parent(s) to schedule a meeting or phone conference within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request to discuss the purpose(s) of the observation;
4. The observation will be scheduled at a mutually- agreed upon time and date after consultation with the classroom teacher(s);
5. The principal will consult with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the parameters of the observation (including, but not limited to, conferences with school staff, review of work products, and placement of the observer in the classroom);
6. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual basis. The start and end time and day(s) of observation periods will be determined in advance. In order to minimize classroom disruption, the length and number of individual observation periods may be limited. The complexity of the child's needs, as well as the program(s) to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it.
7. The parent must sign a release for a parent representative to observe a child;
8. The parent or parent representative must be silent at all times and not interrupt the educational process in the classroom. If the observer's presence disrupts the learning environment, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important since the presence of parents can influence the performance of the child being observed as well as other children;
9. The parent or parent representative is not observing for the purpose of evaluating a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual duties;
10. The parent or parent representative must report to the school office (as do all visitors) as part of the School District's Safety Protocol. A school administrator or designee will accompany the observer and may remain and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to anything that is atypical during the observation period;
11. Observations during MCAS testing or during the first or last weeks of school are highly discouraged and will generally not be scheduled;
12. The parent or parent representative must sign the an Observation Agreement so that both the School District and classroom parents have assurance that information concerning other students' education remains in the classroom and is not discussed in public.

IV. ADDITIONAL STATUTORY AND LEGAL REFERENCES

Homelessness

Any staff member who has reason to believe that a student may be homeless should report their concern to the building principal, school nurse or school adjustment counselor, who will refer the situation to the District's McKinney-Vento liaison. **For further information** on understanding homeless eligibility as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, please visit the website at www.doe.mass.edu/hsss/haa.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, school districts are obligated to identify students who may be homeless and, once homeless status is determined, provide certain accommodations and services to those students and their families. Under this federal legislation, children are defined as homeless if they:

Lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

- Reside in temporary, emergency or transitional shelters.
- Are awaiting foster care placement, or are abandoned, or not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless students are eligible for special consideration and services specified by McKinney-Vento. These services could deviate from regular school policy in matters of transportation, immunization requirements, residency verification, free lunch eligibility, etc., as noted in the following eligibility clarifications:

A family whose home is destroyed or uninhabitable in the event of a fire, would be eligible for consideration under the Homeless Education Act. If the family temporarily relocates to a nearby community, transportation may be arranged by the district.

- Students who are homeless are immediately presumed eligible for free lunch. The USDA has waived all restrictions and eligibility formulas.
- Likewise, students who are homeless are automatically qualified or available for Title I services.
- Determinations are made case-by-case. "Unaccompanied Youth" (typically high school students who have left or been sent out of their homes) may be eligible for homeless services, even if they are "doubled up" with another family. Depending on the age of the student, DSS or DYS may be involved. Students under DSS custody may also be eligible for consideration if the placement is temporary.

Access to education and services for homeless students may not be delayed while awaiting records, including proof of residency or immunization. It is to be presumed that these records exist, and the homeless liaison should be contacted to facilitate their access without disrupting the student's enrollment.

If you suspect that a student is homeless, please contact the building principal, nurse, or counselor immediately. With your assistance, they will initiate a referral form that will be used to determine eligibility and to document available resources and services that are offered and/or provided.

Non-Discrimination

Students will be treated without discrimination based on sex, age, marital status, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or handicap, national origin or pregnancy in compliance with State and Federal laws. Equal educational opportunity is available to all students with respect to enrollment, programs, and participation in school, athletic, and extracurricular activities, including those students who are pregnant or parenting. In addition, the District believes that students should learn in an atmosphere free of harassment or bullying, and will take affirmative steps to eliminate any inappropriate conduct brought to its attention.

The Monson Public Schools District, pursuant to Title II of the American's with Disabilities Acts (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, M.G.L. c. 76, sect.5, M.G.L. c. 151B, M.G.L. c. 151C, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972, and Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, does not discriminate against:

1. Any adult on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status, or veteran status in any employment status or access to programs available to such adults; and
2. Any student on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, be denied equal access or admission to school programs, courses, and/or extra-curricular activities.

Any student, parent, or guardian who believes he or she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation in any district program or activity on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in violation of this policy may file a written grievance with the Superintendent of Schools or designee.

Non-Discrimination against Students with Disabilities

The Monson Public Schools is committed to a policy of non-discrimination against qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law (MGL 151B). Qualified students with a disability may not be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or denied access to any program or activity based solely on their disability.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons because of handicap in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as one whom:

- Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such impairment
- Is regarded as having such impairment

In order to fulfill its obligations under Section 504, the School District recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person falling under the provisions of Section 504 will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the school system. The School District has specific responsibilities under the Act which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and, if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services.

Any student, parent, or guardian who believes that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability should immediately bring the problem to the attention of the School District officials in writing. A written complaint should be directed to the attention of the District 504 Coordinator, where the complaint will be investigated expeditiously.

No student, parent, or guardian will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference, or retaliation for registering a complaint or for assisting in an investigation of any alleged violation of laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability.

For further information, contact Melissa Manello, District 504 Coordinator, 43 Margaret Street, MA 01057 or (413) 267-4160.

Acceptable Use of Technology

It is policy of the District to maintain an environment that promotes ethical and responsible conduct in all on-line network activities by staff and students. Use of technology is a privilege and any abuses may result in loss of access and/or disciplinary action. Specific rules and regulations regarding acceptable use of technology shall be published annually in each school/student manual. Although the district does have CIPA compliant filtering of all computers, it is not one hundred percent capable of blocking all inappropriate Internet traffic. It is for this reason that faculty and staff members are required to preview all content prior to publicly showing such content.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY - TECHNOLOGY

Purpose

The Monson Public Schools shall provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks, for limited educational purposes. Educational purposes shall be defined as classroom activities, career and professional development and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and the ability to communicate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, governmental agencies, and businesses. *Internet access through the Monson Public Schools is a PRIVILEGE, not a right. Therefore, user access may be limited or revoked by school officials at any time of this privilege is abused or violates acceptable use in any*

way. Users engaged in unacceptable use of the Internet will also be subject to disciplinary action in conformity with the Monson Public Schools Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

Access to the system/network, including external networks, shall be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures.

All system users shall be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and shall agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Monson Public Schools.

The Monson Public School District makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The Monson Public School District shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.

Acceptable Use

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of Monson Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

Monitored Use

All use of the Internet is to be conducted under supervision. Nevertheless, system users are responsible for acceptable use of computer networks, just as they are responsible for their behavior in other areas of the school/district.

Student use of the internet is limited: access to the internet shall be provided for students solely to conduct educational research and support educational endeavors. Access to internet services will be provided to students who agree to act in an acceptable manner and who demonstrate individual responsibility for appropriate use of the Internet.

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by system users shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes.

All students must be familiar with and agree to abide by the Monson Public Schools and Acceptable Internet Use Policy before accessing the Internet and World Wide Web.

Grades K-5:

Before students in grades K-5 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they will take part in an annual grade-level appropriate discussion of the Monson Public Schools' Acceptable Internet Use Policy with their staff. Parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) must sign a statement indicating that they understand and have discussed the Acceptable Use Policy with their child.

Grades 6-12:

Before students in Grades 6-12 will be authorized to access the Internet and World Wide Web, they and their parent(s) / legal guardian(s) will be asked to sign a statement that they have read and understood the Monson Public Schools' Acceptable Use Policy and agree to fully adhere to it.

Administrators' Access to Files

System users should not assume that their uses of the Monson Public Schools' Internet access will be private. All files and records may be accessed and examined by the school administration, Technology Coordinators and other staff for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that this Acceptable Internet Use Policy is being adhered to. Pursuant to local, state and federal laws, administrators and staff may provide access to student Internet files and records to law enforcement authorities. All Internet files will be subject to the Monson Public School's Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy and local, state and federal laws and regulations.

Unacceptable Uses

Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:

- 1. Placing unlawful and/or inappropriate information on a system. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted software or data.*
- 2. Using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message.*

3. *Sending messages or posting information that would likely result in the loss of a recipient's work or system.*
4. *Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, subscribing to "listserves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission, or using the Internet for access for any other personal use, without prior permission.*
5. *Participating in other types of use which would cause congestion of the network to interfere with the work of others.*
6. *Using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law. This includes, but it is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening material and spreading of computer viruses.*
7. *Accessing or transmitting materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, or pornographic and accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet.*
8. *Revealing one's own personal address or telephone number.*
9. *Revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network. Students in grades 5-12 will have their passwords changed annually. Passwords for staff will be changed at the request of the individual staff member or when deemed appropriate.*
10. *Attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, including attempts to override, or to encourage others to override, any firewalls established on the network.*
11. *Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.*
12. *Exhibiting any other action, whatsoever, which would in any way subject the user of the Monson Public School District to any civil or criminal action.*
13. *Discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in email communications.*
14. *Using the Monson Public School District technology network to buy, sell, or advertise anything.*
15. *Accessing discussion groups or "chat rooms", or engaging in any other form of online conversation or communication whose purpose is not primarily educational.*
16. *Using the Monson Public School District technology network for gambling.*
17. *Using the Monson Public School District technology network for political campaigning purposes, including attempts to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office.*
18. *Failing to log off the computer network at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of system administrators.*
19. *Using the computer network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies.*
20. *Installing software or data on the computer network without first having the information scanned by the computer technology coordinator for viruses or other incompatibility.*

Liability

The Monson Public Schools shall not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Monson Public Schools shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

The Monson Public Schools reserves its right to seek restitution from any user for costs incurred by the district, including legal fees, due to such user's inappropriate use of electronic resources.

Administrative Procedures for Implementation

1. The district will provide training to users in the proper use of system/network.
2. The district will provide each user with copies of the acceptable use policy and procedures.
3. Access will be granted to employees with a signed access agreement (annually) and permission of their supervisor.
4. Access will be granted to students with a signed access agreement (annually) and permission of the building principal or designee(s).
5. Account names will be recorded and kept on file at the building and district level.
6. Students completing required course work will have first priority for after-hours use of equipment.
7. Principals or their designee will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies.
8. Principals or their designee will ensure that all users complete and sign the acceptable use policy prior to the use of the system/network. All such agreements are to be maintained at the building and district level.
9. The superintendent and/or his/her designee shall be authorized to monitor or examine all student/faculty use, including electronic email transmissions, as deemed appropriate to ensure proper use.
10. Network administrators shall be responsible for establishing appropriate retention and backup procedures.
11. Network administrators shall be responsible for establishing storage limitations.
12. System users should delete electronic information that is no longer needed. Network administrators may establish a schedule to purge the deleted information.
13. System users may redistribute copyrighted material only with the written permission of copyright designee. Such permission must be specified in the document in accordance with applicable policies and procedures.

Monson Public School District
Computer/Network/Email Access Release Authorization Form (Faculty/Staff)

As a condition for using the Monson Public School District networks, I understand that the use and access to public networks, i.e. the Internet, is a privilege, and agree to the following:

- 1. I will abide by such rules as adopted by the Monson Public School District including the Acceptable Use Policy and District School Committee policy.*
- 2. The Monson Public School District has the right to review any material stored on any system provided by the district, and can edit or remove any material. I hereby waive any right which I may otherwise have in and to such material.*
- 3. All information and services available on the Internet and school networks are placed there for informational purposes. I use them at my own risk.*
- 4. The Monson Public School District does not warrant the function of its school networks, or any of it accessible, to meet any specific requirements that I may have, or that its school networks will be error free or uninterrupted. The Monson Public School District staff members are not liable for any damages incurred to connection with the use, operation, or inability to use its school networks.*
- 5. In consideration for using and having access to public school networks, I hereby release the Monson Public School District and its officers, employees, and agents, from any claims and damages arising from my use, or inability to use its school networks.*
- 6. I have read and agree to comply with the district's Acceptable Use Policy. I also understand that any violation of the regulations is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked and disciplinary action taken.*

I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and agree to promote this agreement and abide by the provisions within. I understand that violation of these provisions may results in disciplinary action.

Social Media Guidelines

Purpose:

The Monson School Committee (the “Committee”) recognizes the increasing importance of electronic communication and social media for social interaction and education. As the Monson Public Schools (the “MPS”) continues working to provide a 21st century education which prepares students for life in a global economy, it has become apparent that we need to move ahead with both enthusiasm and caution. With the expansion of means and ease of communication comes a heightened concern for student safety and well-being.

While the Committee sees the value of social media and electronic communication, the Committee also recognizes that the opportunity for impropriety is increased through this ease of access. This accessibility can provide a forum for cyber bullying, inappropriate behavior, and other potential dangers. The Committee finds that the rapid progress of technology leaves it and the District frequently facing new challenges regarding social media and electronic communication.

The Committee is charged with ensuring our schools’ educational environments are safe and conducive to learning. Recognizing this, the Committee has adopted this policy.

Definitions:

Social Media: Any medium hosted on the Internet, on which interactions between students, or between the staff of the MPS and students can be conducted. This includes web- and mobile-based technologies that support interactive communication between organizations, communities, and individuals that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social media technologies take on many different forms including, but not limited to, on-line magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking, and message boards. Examples of social media websites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, MySpace, Wiki and Wikipedia.

Electronic Communication: Any communication or interaction which occurs through electronic means. Such electronic means include, but are not limited to, computers, tablets, cellular devices, so-called “smart phones”, iPads, iPods and Internet capable MP3 players, etc. Such communications and interactions include, but are not limited to, email, texts, posts on social media websites (including text, video and audio), private messages on social media websites, instant messages, video chat, and blogs, etc. Electronic communications include communications that have no specific intended recipient (i.e., posting a “status” on Facebook that, depending on privacy settings, may be viewed by a group of users).

Student: Any individual currently enrolled in the MPS.

Prohibited Conduct: Staff shall not engage in the following types of conduct, which are strictly prohibited. The following are examples of conduct only and are not intended to be all inclusive. Any conduct which is similar to that listed below is likewise prohibited.

- a. Fraternization with students using any social media or electronic communication. Staff may not invite/accept current MPS student as “friends” on social media websites. Classroom participation on educational websites or professional pages (described herein) for instructional purposes is permitted with prior approval of the principal or his/her designee.
- b. Electronic communication to students of content of a sexual or other inappropriate nature. This includes posts on social media websites that are publicly visible or accessible, and/or visible or accessible to any student or group of students.
- c. Electronic communication to a student(s) of content advocating the use of alcohol, drugs, and/or other illicit or illegal activities between students and staff. This includes posts on social media

websites that are publicly visible or accessible, and/or visible or accessible to any student or group of students.

- d. Electronic communication to students of content encouraging or constituting hazing or bullying. This includes posts on social media websites that are publicly visible or accessible, and/or visible or accessible to any student or group of students.
- e. Electronic communication of private information regarding students or other staff, including, but not limited to, student record information, private cell phone numbers, private photos and pictures, and private email addresses. This includes posts on social media websites that are publicly visible or accessible, and/or visible or accessible to any student or group of students.

The District: The Monson Public Schools (MPS) and its staff.

The Committee: The Monson School Committee and its members.

Staff: All employees of the MPS and any contractor or individual employed by a contractor who provides services in or to the MPS.

Section 1. Statement to MPS Staff

The Committee recognizes that social media and electronic communication have valuable functionality both in and outside of the classroom. This policy is not intended to limit any staff member's right to speak publicly as a citizen on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow union members on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of job duties.

Notwithstanding this, when staff members speak through social media on matters concerning their work, they are speaking as employees and, as such, restrictions may be placed upon their freedom to express themselves. Staff members are role models, not students' friends, and should always conduct themselves in accordance with this understanding.

Section 2. Responsibilities of the Committee, the Superintendent, and the Administration

a. Responsibilities of the Committee

- 1. The Committee is responsible for maintaining, implementing, and updating this policy.
- 2. The Committee will support the efforts of the Superintendent and the Administration to act upon this policy in a timely manner.
- 3. The Committee will require the Superintendent to periodically report upon the results, consequences, and concerns related to this policy.
- 4. When necessary, the Committee will update this policy, pursuant to the recommendations of the Superintendent or other relevant parties.

b. Responsibilities of the Superintendent and the Administration

- 1. The Superintendent of Schools will develop and maintain a technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). It will be the responsibility of the Superintendent to work with representatives from the staff to review this policy annually and propose updates when appropriate.
- 2. The Superintendent and the Administration retain the right to monitor all activity on district related social media, all activity on MPS owned equipment (i.e., computers, tablets, etc.), and all

activity on MPS's network for the purpose of maintaining the safety of students and staff and to ensure that this policy is followed by all staff members.

3. The Superintendent and the Administration will have all staff read, review, and sign this policy at the beginning of each school year.

Section 3. Communication Media

a. Cellular Telephones and Text Messaging

Background:

Staff employed by Monson Public Schools are charged with, among many things, maintaining a safe educational environment for students. Although staff members should not generally provide their personal contact information such as cellular and home telephone numbers, there are limited instances described herein where it is appropriate to give out this information. Staff who lead school sponsored trips or organize events that require travel shall maintain a line of communication with students and parents by providing their personal cell phone number to all student participants and their parents. Students may also provide their personal cell phone numbers to staff who lead school sponsored trips or organize events that require travel to facilitate ease of communication during travel. The purpose of this limited exchange of personal information is to protect student safety during travel.

Procedures:

1. Prior to providing any student with his/her home and/or personal cell phone number, a staff member shall inform the school's principal or his/her designee and obtain prior authorization.
2. Staff members shall communicate to students and their parents that the staff member's personal cell phone number is being provided for educational, informational, or safety purposes only.
3. Staff members shall only contact students via their personal cell phones for specific purposes (i.e., the student has not returned to a bus on a field trip). The MPS prefers communication related to academic issue occur in class or be directed through district provided email addresses.
4. Staff members who provide students with personal contact information shall explain the limited reason it is being provided and shall report any unauthorized use of this information by students (i.e., a student contacts the staff member via personal cell phone for an unauthorized purpose) to the principal or his/her designee immediately.

b. Email Communication

Background:

Email communication has become a standard way of conveying information between parties. Email communication refers to any electronic mail or messaging done over the Internet.

Procedures:

1. Staff may communicate with students, staff, parents, PTSA's, members of the Committee, and members of the community through district owned email addresses regarding issues pertaining to their role as employees of the MPS. Other professional communication may include blogs, wikis, webpages, virtual classrooms and similar forums. All communication is to remain professional in nature at all times.
2. Staff shall not provide their personal email addresses to students.
3. Staff of the high school shall not request students' personal email addresses, nor shall they direct any communications to personal email addresses provided by students. District owned email addresses have been provided to high school students and all email communication between staff and high school students shall be directed through district owned email addresses.

Staff of the middle and elementary schools shall notify parents that the MPS has provided students with school email addresses as part of the curriculum. Parents must be informed and must provide consent for their child to use the email address assigned.

4. All email communication sent from a public entity (i.e., using a MPS owned computer, network, email address, etc.) are part of the public record, may be disclosed, and may be monitored by the District for any reason without notice. Users of district-owned email addresses should have no expectation of privacy in the content of communications on district-owned email addresses.

c. Social Media, Webpages, and Applications

The increased proliferation of social media has provided the MPS with the opportunity to utilize these websites and applications as educational tools. It is a goal of the District's strategic plan to engage students through both traditional media as well as through the use of technological immersion, creating 21st century global citizens. Our goal is to integrate technology with the curriculum through modeling best practices, mentoring, using study groups, developing online formats and creating and updating technology related policies.

COPA law prohibits the use of services which require personal information of children under 13. The use of social media, webpages and applications by staff and students together shall be strictly for educational purposes only. Personal communication between students and staff via social media, webpages and applications shall be limited to educational purposes.

d. Use of Photographs

1. Staff shall not, without the prior, express written permission of the superintendent or his/her designee, electronically communicate (including, but not limited to, posting on social media websites) the logo of the school or school district, any photo of the school-or its likeness, or any photo of any other property belonging to the MPS.
2. Staff shall not use, copy, disseminate or share in any manner, including via social media, photos or videos of students where the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) has selected to opt out by completing and submitting the form titled "Permission to Photo/Video Students" as provided by MPS online or from your school's office.
3. Staff must keep in mind that videos and images of students may constitute "student records" within the meaning of federal and state law.
4. Staff shall not identify students by their full name in any photograph at any time. First name will be the only identifying information used

e. Social Networking Websites.

With nearly one billion users worldwide, Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks, have become ubiquitous.

1. Staff wishing to use a social media profile for both personal and educational purposes must maintain separate personal and professional work profiles.
2. Staff may only create professional social media accounts (i.e., accounts used exclusively for educational purposes) on district approved websites and platforms. The direct link to these pages must be provided to the principal or his/her designee and to the MPS Director of IT once it is created.
3. Staff shall not communicate with students via the direct messaging feature of any social media site, but rather only communicate through district provided email accounts or social media posts that are publicly accessible via the staff member's professional account on a district approved website or platform.

4. Staff shall report any inappropriate use of these sites by students or by fellow staff members to their district administrator immediately.
5. Staff must cite links to all sources of information from third parties posted on professional social media webpages.
6. Staff must notify parents of the use of professional accounts on social media sites, and provide students who are unable to access content hosted on these sites with the relevant information necessary for participation in the class through other means (i.e., hand-outs, email, etc.).

f. Blogs, Wikis, Class Pages, etc.

1. Staff may use blogs, wikis, or any other website for instructional purposes, including but not limited to homework pages and blog pages.
2. Staff shall provide the web address of his/her page to the principal or his/her designee before disseminating the address to students.
3. Staff shall identify students only by their first names on these pages.
4. Staff shall notify parents of the use of these pages and provide students who do not have access with alternative means of obtaining the information provided over these pages (i.e., hand-outs, email, etc.).
5. Staff shall cite all sources of content they provide on these pages and comply with applicable copyright laws and other applicable intellectual property laws.

Section 4. Public Records Law and Copyright Protection

The Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has determined that any document created or received by a public employee in his or her capacity as such is subject to retention and perhaps disclosure under the public records law.

- a. Staff shall not delete any message posted on a social media site, webpage, blog, homework page, etc.
- b. Staff shall save all direct messages and communications conveyed through social media sites and through their own district email address.
- c. Staff shall comply with applicable copyright laws when posting information produced by another person or entity and shall cite all third-party sources of information posted or shared.

Section 5. Student and Staff Conduct

The district has multiple policies regarding student and staff conduct which overlap with this policy. The Committee and Administration recognize that the use of electronic communication technology in an educational setting presents new challenges to appropriate student and staff conduct. However, behavioral expectations will not be diminished in these settings and appropriate professional boundaries shall be maintained at all times and through all means of communications. As such, the District retains the right to moderate and restrict student and staff use on District related pages. The Committee and the Administration expect staff and students to maintain the same level of decorum in electronic communications, including the use of social media, as in face-to-face interactions. This policy is intended to supplement existing policies, not to supersede them.

a. Bullying and Cyber Bullying

The Committee and MPS are committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students. With regard to bullying, please see Policy Section V, and, in particular, references to cyber bullying. Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

b. Acceptable Use of School Equipment and Networks

The Committee and MPS are committed to maintaining the security of MPS networks, the quality of MPS equipment, and the privacy of MPS students. See Policy Section IV, page 25 - Student Acceptable Use Policy.

c. Student Manuals

At the beginning of each school year the building administrator or homeroom teacher shall distribute student manuals which detail the expectations of behavior for MPS students and set rules for student conduct. Nothing contained in this Policy shall diminish those expectations and rules. The on-line behavior of both students and staff shall reflect the same standards as those used for face-to-face communications at the MPS.

Section 6. Discipline

The Superintendent or assigned designees may conduct internet searches to determine whether staff members have used social media in ways that violate this Policy. If a violation of the Policy is determined to have occurred, the Superintendent or assigned designee shall bring the violation to the attention of the staff member and shall consider and apply disciplinary measures up to and including termination. The disciplinary process for staff shall proceed in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement under which the staff member is covered.

The MPS and the Committee disclaim all liability for the content of materials that users access on Social Media, for damages suffered in the course of or as a result of social media use, and for any related consequences. The MPS shall not be responsible for any unauthorized use of the District's network, including any and all unauthorized costs, financial obligations, fees, charges, or purchase.

Fundraising and Access to Students

The School Committee respects students, seeks their input into decision-making processes as deemed appropriate, and accords students' rights consistent with State and Federal laws. Students should not be taken out of their student role and involved in activities that detract from the educational process. The school should safeguard the integrity of the educational program against such interruptions. And, under no circumstance should students be sent off school grounds on personal or school-related errands.

Students and school organizations shall not be used as a means of collecting information not directly pertinent to the school program.

The distribution of information of an advertising or promotional nature shall be allowed only if it relates directly to an approved school-based activity. Information regarding the activities of a non-profit local group, which is age appropriate and in the best interest of students, may be allowed, although schools will establish reasonable limits on the number of distributions within the school year. Final approval of distribution of all material covered by this section shall be at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

The schools will consider all student information as confidential and will not release any information without a signed release of information.

Physical Restraint Regulations

School District General Policy

It is the policy of the District to use physical restraint only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution.

In accordance with this policy, physical restraint shall only be used by employees who have received the necessary training under 603 CMR 46.04(2) or 603 CMR 46.04(3). Employees shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is direct physical contact which prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical Escort Not a Restraint- A physical escort, defined as a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student that is agitated to walk to a safe location, is not considered to be a physical restraint.

Permitted physical escorts include guiding a student to time-out (if the student is not fighting the re-direction against his/her will), redirecting students by a busy road, or grabbing a student who is about to fall, or breaking up a fight between students.

Only staff members, who have received training in the use of physical restraint as a member of the program staff, or in-depth training as a school-wide resource, can administer physical restraint.

The use physical restraint only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. Whenever possible, the restraint must be witnessed by at least one person who is not participating in the restraint.

Emergency Situations- The student represents an imminent danger to self or others.

Last Resort- Other methods of de-escalation or behavior support have been unsuccessful, or would be inappropriate.

When the use of physical force is appropriate, a properly trained employee shall only use the amount of force reasonable necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The use of physical restraint shall be done in the safest method available and appropriate to the situation in a manner to prevent or minimize physical harm. Physical restraint shall not be administered in manner in which the student is prevented from breathing or speaking.

During the restraint a staff member must continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature and color, and respiration. If, at any time during a physical restraint, the student expresses or

demonstrates significant physical distress including, but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

Any use of physical restraint shall end as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to him/herself and/or others.

Principal Approval Required for Restraints In Excess of Twenty (20) Minutes- If a student is restrained for a period longer than twenty (20) minutes, program staff shall obtain the approval of the principal. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.

Prohibited Use of Physical Restraint

The use of physical restraint as a form of punishment, on students with medical conditions which pose safety concerns, in response to student misbehavior not resulting in legitimate threat to safety, or as a standard response (such as in a behavioral intervention plan or individualized education plan) is prohibited.

Punishment- Physical restraint as a means of punishment is strictly prohibited.

Student Medical Safety Concerns- Physical restraint shall not be used where it cannot be safely implemented because of medical conditions (such as asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting).

Student Misbehavior Not Resulting in Assault or Imminent, Serious, Physical Harm- Physical restraint may not be used in response to a destruction of property, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious physical harm.

Physical Restraint as a Standard Response Prohibited- Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response. Employees are required to engage in positive behavioral interventions. No written behavioral or individualized educational program (IEP) may include the use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.*

***Note:** Teams must be proactive at IEP meetings to remove references to the use of restraints which were permitted prior to January 1, 2016.

Prohibited Methods of Physical Restraint and Separation Techniques

The use of mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion are prohibited in all instances. The use of prone restraint is generally prohibited.

Mechanical restraint- Mechanical restraint is defined as the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's movement.

Medication restraint- Medication restraint is defined as the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

Seclusion- Seclusion is defined as the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving.

Prone Restraint- As indicated above, the use of prone restraint is generally prohibited. Prone restraint is a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face down position.

Prone restraint is prohibited, except when all of the following criteria are met:

- the student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious injury to self or others;
- all other forms of restraint have been unsuccessful in ensuring safety;
- there are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;
- there is psychological or behavioral justification with no psychological or behavioral contraindications as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
- the program has obtained consent from the parent to use prone restraint in an emergency, and the consent has been approved in writing by the principal;
- the program has documented all of the above in advance of the use of prone restraint.

Time-outs

Seclusion occurs when a student who is left alone with no staff present or immediately available in an area where the student is prevented from leaving. Seclusion is not permitted under any circumstance.

Time-outs are a permitted behavioral support strategy. Time-outs involve a temporary separation of a student from learning activities or the classroom, either by choice or by direction of staff for the purpose of calming. Time-outs must end as soon as the student has calmed. During a time-out the student must continually be observed by staff member(s). Staff member(s) must be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times.

The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming.

Notification Requirements

Employee Notification to Principal- The employee(s) who administered restraint are required to verbally inform the principal as soon as possible, and submit written report no later than the next school day.

Parent Notification- The Principal or Director of Pupil Services, or his/her designee, will make reasonable efforts to verbally notify the student's parents of the physical restraint with twenty-four (24) hours of the event. A written report will be sent to the parents/guardians within three (3) school days by an email provided to the school by the parent/guardian or postmarked within three (3) school days by regular mail. If the parent/guardian receives school-related information in a language other than English, the written report shall be provided in such non-English language. The student and parents/guardians shall have the right to respond to the use of physical restraint as well as the content of the report verbally or in writing.

Written report must include:

The written report to parents within three (3) school days must include the following:

- 1) The name of the student; the names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the principal or designee who was verbally informed following the restraint; and, as applicable, the name of the principal or designee who approved continuation of the restraint beyond 20 minutes pursuant to 603 CMR 46.05(5)(c).
- 2) A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
- 3) A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
- 4) Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any consequences that may be imposed on the student.

- 5) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parents to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student, and any other related matter.

Additional Administrative Requirements

The District is required to take certain follow up procedures in addition to the report. The follow up procedures required are dependent upon whether the student was restrained once over the course of a week, or was restrained multiple times over the course of the week.

Single Restraint of Student in the Course of a Week- After the release of a student from a restraint, the District shall review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint, review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and consideration of whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Multiple Restraints of Student in the Week- The Principal is required to conduct weekly reviews of restraint data. If the Principal identifies a student or student(s) who have been identified as being restrained multiple times during the course of the week, the Principal shall convene a team to assess the restrained student's progress and needs. This assessment shall include as least the following:

- 1) review and discussion of the written reports and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- 2) analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
- 3) consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- 4) agree on a written plan of action by the program.

*Note- If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the superintendent or board of trustees shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

Principal Monthly Review- As mentioned above, the Principal is required to conduct weekly reviews to determine if any students have been physically restrained multiple times. Additionally, the principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

Data Reporting

Injury reports and annual data on the use of physical restraints must be reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department).

Injury reports- All restraint-related injuries will be reported by the District to the Department. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report detailed above postmarked no later than three (3) school days of the administration of the restraint. The District shall also send the Department a copy of the record of

physical restraints written reports for the thirty (30) day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. Within thirty (30) calendar days the Department will determine if any action is warranted.

Annual report- The District will collect data concerning every use of physical restraint and report such data to the Department on an annual basis. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

Staff Training Requirements

Annually the District will conduct general staff training covering information on the role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint. The training will cover the district's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures, including the use of time-out as distinct from seclusion.

Staff will be instructed in interventions that could be used to preclude the need for restraint, as well as de-escalation techniques and other alternatives. Staff will also receive information on the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history. Staff who have received or will receive in-depth training and who can serve as resources to others should be identified to the school staff as a whole.

For those staff members who will receive in-depth training, the Department recommends that the training in that the training in the use of physical restraint be at least 16 hours and include an annual refresher training. Such training must include at least the following:

- Appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint;
- A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
- The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
- Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
- Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and,
- Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

Wellness Policy

The Monson Public School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Monson Public School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold during the school day will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These guidelines are to be followed thirty minutes before the school day starts to 30 minutes after the school day ends
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will

accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program)
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Health Advisory Council

The Monson Public School District will create and maintain a Health Advisory Council. The council shall be district-wide and representative of all three schools in the district. Membership can include staff, parents, students, administration, community members and School Committee representation. The Health Advisory Council will develop, implement, monitor, review and, as needed, recommend revisions to the wellness policy.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables; [\[1\]](#)
- offer low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain. [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#)

When possible, schools should engage students through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals: Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. [\[4\]](#) Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students.

Meal Times and Scheduling: Schools will, to the extent possible:

- provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch;

- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district’s responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.[\[5\]](#)

Sharing of Foods and Beverages: Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children’s diets.

Classroom Celebrations: Holidays and Birthday Celebrations will not include food items of any kind. No “goody bags” that include food/candy will be allowed. Teachers will be provided with a list of nonfood celebration ideas.

Breakfast/Daily Snacks: Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits, vegetables, and/or whole-grains as the primary snacks and offer low-fat milk as the primary beverage.

Daily Snack is allowed at the Elementary School and at the Middle School. All snacks must comply with the district Life Threatening Allergy Policy. Students who bring in an unsafe snack in an allergen free classroom will be given a safe snack or will eat their snack at an alternate site.

Students at the High School are allowed to eat a reasonable, healthy snack during the first few minutes of class. Snacks that contain peanut butter/other nut butters are not allowed to prevent cross contamination of surfaces. Students may carry clear containers of water. All breakfast food/drinks must be consumed prior to entering the school building.

Food will only be used in a classroom when it is part of a school sponsored, curriculum driven, and classroom lesson plan. Examples of this include Culinary Schools and Life Skills Programs. There must be prior approval from the School Administration, the School Nurse and Parent notification. If the School Nurse is unable to determine if it is safe to offer a certain food/beverage, it will not be approved.

Food/Drink in classroom is allowed for any student with a documented medical reason for a snack (including but not limited to diabetes, metabolic disorder, or if specified in IEP or 504)

Breakfast/Snack given before standardized testing will be compliant with the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals and the LTA Policy

Rewards/Punishment Schools will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior unless specified in an IEP or 504. [\[8\]](#) Schools will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually During the School Day (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, school stores, etc.)

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children’s

limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should include low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle and High Schools. In middle and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed:** water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; offer unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- A food item sold individually:
 - o will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - o will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;[\[6\]](#)
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).[\[7\]](#)

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - o One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - o One ounce cookie for Elementary School; Two ounce cookie for Middle and High School;
 - o Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream on menu for all schools;
 - o Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;

- o No more than twelve fluid ounces for beverages, including plain and flavored water; and
- o The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities: To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, Monson Public School District strongly recommends that school fundraising activities not involve food or use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). It is strongly encouraged that school-sponsored events will offer choices that meet nutritional guidelines.

Staff: Should keep and ingest any food/drinks at their desks or in staff approved dining areas.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Monson Public School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise); and
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting: For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- if possible, opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers are encouraged to provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents: The district will support parents’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily

physical activity for their children. The district may offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. While schools should encourage healthy snacks brought from home, the Monson Public School District does respect the right of parents to make those choices.

The district will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Staff Wellness. The Monson Public School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each district should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee, which could be a subcommittee of the school health council. The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12 will be offered physical education. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. If there is an interest and funding is available, elementary, middle, and high school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers, other school personnel, and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

Extracurricular activities, such as sports, are subject to the discretion of the coach and do not fall under this category.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those

policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school committee and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.^[9] The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Footnotes

^[1] To the extent possible, schools will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

^[2] As recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005.

^[3] A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

^[4] It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.

^[5] School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

^[6] If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars(in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

^[7] Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

^[8] Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

^[9] Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

The Monson Public School policies were developed by the Wellness Policy Committee (2005-2006) with guidance from the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity.

Legal Reference: Section 204 of Public Law 108-265 – June 30, 2004, Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

Adopted 6/12/06

Harassment Policy: Sexual Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing and Intimidation

Equal Educational Opportunity

Equal educational opportunity and non-discrimination laws protect the rights of students to participate in all activities pertaining to their education. The law in Massachusetts states:

No person shall be excluded from denied the benefits of, 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, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

- Students will be treated without discrimination based on sex (including pregnancy), age, marital status, race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability in compliance with State and Federal laws.
- Equal educational opportunity is available to all students with respect to enrollment, programs, and participation in school, athletic, and extracurricular activities, including those students who are pregnant or parenting. **Refer to ‘Physical Limitations’ on page 21 of the Student Manual.**

In addition, the District believes that students should learn in an atmosphere free of discriminatory harassment or bullying, and will take affirmative steps to eliminate any inappropriate conduct brought to its attention.

The Monson Public School District, pursuant to Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Acts (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, M.G.L. c. 76, sect.5, M.G.L. c. 151B, M.G.L. c. 151C, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, does not discriminate against:

1. Any adult on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, marital status or veteran status in any employment status or access to programs available to such adults.
2. Any student on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, in equal access or admission to school programs, courses, and/or extra-curricular activities.

Any student, parent, or guardian who believes he or she has been discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation in any district program or activity on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity in violation of this policy may file a grievance with the Superintendent of Schools or designee. **For complaints of discrimination on the basis of sex, refer to MPS’ Title IX grievance procedures on page 35 of this manual.** You may also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Suzanne Morneau, 43 Margaret Street, Monson, MA 01057, 413-267-4150 .

Glossary of Relevant Definitions Related to Bullying and Discriminatory Harassment

Bullying

For the purposes of requirements related to Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 legislation bullying is defined as the following: The repeated use by one or more students [aggressor(s)] of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of requirements related to this law, bullying shall include cyber-bullying. See section 5 of the legislation for more details on the definition of cyber-bullying and more.

Discriminatory Harassment

Unwelcome verbal, physical or other conduct that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent to create a hostile environment resulting in a denial or limitation in a student's ability to participate or benefit from the school's program. To determine whether the conduct denies or limits benefits or services consideration must be given to subjective and objective perspectives. Under the subjective standard, the conduct must actually be perceived by the student/victim as offensive in order to interfere with his/her participation in the program. Under the objective standard, consider whether a reasonable person in the student's position (including the student's age, sex, and any other relevant factors) would find the conduct offensive.

Also consideration must be given to whether conduct is sufficiently severe or serious. The more severe the conduct, the less need to show repeated incidents and the effect of the conduct on the student's education. Other relevant considerations might include the type, frequency, location, and duration of conduct; number of students involved; and the relationship/roles of the parties.

Types of Discriminatory Harassment:

1. Disability harassment is intimidation or abusive behavior toward a student based on disability that creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's participation in or receipt of benefits, services, or opportunities in the institution's program. Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as nonverbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements, or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. When harassing conduct is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates a hostile environment, it can violate a student's rights under the Section 504 and Title II regulations. A hostile environment may exist even if there are no tangible effects on the student victim where the harassment is serious enough to adversely affect the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program.
2. Racial harassment is harassing conduct (e.g., physical, verbal, graphic, or written) based on race, color and/or national origin that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or privileges provided by the District.
3. Sexual harassment is conduct that is of a sexual nature; is unwelcome; and creates a hostile environment that denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or receive the benefits, services or opportunities of the District's programs.
4. Hazing is any conduct or method of initiation, even if consented to, into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Types of Hazing:

1. Subtle hazing is behaviors that emphasize a power imbalance between new members/rookies and other members of the group or team. Termed “subtle hazing” because these types of hazing are often taken-for-granted or accepted as “harmless” or meaningless. Subtle hazing typically involves activities or attitudes that breach reasonable standards of mutual respect and place new members/rookies on the receiving end of ridicule, embarrassment, and/or humiliation tactics. New members/rookies often feel the need to endure subtle hazing to feel like part of the group or team. (Some types of subtle hazing may also be considered harassment hazing).
2. Harassment hazing is behavior that causes emotional anguish or physical discomfort, in order to feel like a part of the group. Harassment hazing confuses, frustrates, and causes undue stress for new members/rookies. (Some types of harassment hazing can also be considered violent hazing).
3. Violent hazing is behaviors that have the potential to cause physical and/or emotional, or psychological harm.
4. Retaliation refers to retribution or other coercive, threatening or intimidating actions taken against any individual or associates of that individual because that individual or associates of that individual made a charge, testified, assisted, participated in any manner in an investigation, or advocated for rights protected under MPS’s applicable policy and applicable Federal laws.

Title IX Coordinator Job Description

1. Oversee the Title IX grievance procedure for use by students, parents, staff and third party individuals accessing MPS programs or facilities. The Coordinator will provide information about the availability and use of the grievance procedure.
2. Maintain a record of all grievances and resolutions as well as conduct an annual review of the Title IX grievance procedures to assess the process and identify patterns.
3. Inform District personnel of the Coordinator’s responsibilities and assure periodic meetings of the Coordinator to update staff on Title IX activities. Require immediate reporting of any issues that potentially would result in a Title IX investigation by the building principal or designee to the current Title IX Coordinator.
4. Provide ongoing review of District bulletins, catalogs, Board of Education policies, counseling procedures, yearbooks, and administrative regulations and practices related to compliance with Title IX.
5. Ensure that annual notice of the Title IX Coordinator’s name, address, and telephone number is placed on the District’s web-site, manuals, etc.
6. Review student sponsored organizations and suggest criteria for compliance with Title IX.
7. Become familiar with resources/information for technical assistance on Title IX available from the Office for Civil Rights. Take advantage of on-going training opportunities on sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
8. Oversee the systematic procedure for monitoring compliance with Title IX, as well as conduct periodic surveys of schools to determine the climate on Title IX issues.
9. Disseminate information about student rights in relation to Title IX.
10. Assure that cooperative training agreements and/or HWEA contracts have appropriate nondiscrimination statements.
11. Students, parents, employees and third party individuals are welcomed to arrange a meeting with the District’s Title IX Coordinator to discuss any Title IX concern by calling 413-267-4150.
12. If someone wishes to file a complaint regarding the Title IX Coordinator, the person would contact the Superintendent of Schools at (413) 267-4150.
13. The District’s Title IX Coordinator will consult with the School Resource Officers in each town annually to review the MOU and procedures for reporting such cases. The Title IX Coordinator will work parallel with law enforcement but understanding that the District is obligated to comply with Title IX, and it is the role of the District’s Title IX Coordinator to coordinate Title IX compliance.

Title IX Grievance Procedures

Students, parents of elementary and secondary school students, employees, applicants for admission and employment, third parties, and sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment with Monson School District have the right to file a complaint alleging noncompliance with the regulations outlined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Complaints may be filed with the building principal or the District's Title IX Coordinator.

Statement of Assurances

The District will not require the reporting party to resolve the issue with the alleged offender without the appropriate involvement of the District. The alleged victim retains the right to stop any informal resolution attempts and proceed with a formal complaint.

1. The District will consider the potential impact of sexual harassment beyond the school campus of the grievant that may have an impact on his or her environment within the school campus.
2. The District will consider providing interim measures in relation to those involved in the complaint while the District conducts an investigation, including separating the parties, providing counseling, making academic adjustments, etc. The building principal has the authority to implement such measures.
3. The District will use the legal definition of preponderance of evidence standard to determine whether sexual harassment or sex discrimination under Title IX has occurred.
4. The District shall annually review Title IX complaints for the purpose of identifying potential patterns at a particular school(s) or population.
5. The District will take steps, reasonably calculated, to end discrimination that has been found, prevent reoccurrence of any discrimination, such as harassment, and correct its discriminatory effects on the grievant and others, if appropriate.
6. Both the grievant and accused have a right to access the appeals process.
7. Title IX protects grievant and others involved from retaliation for reporting allegations of sexual harassment, and/or participating in an investigation of sexual harassment, and District officials will take steps to address and prevent retaliation.

Procedures

Level 1: Principal or Immediate Supervisor Employees or students claiming sexual harassment or other sex discrimination may first discuss the grievance with their principal or immediate supervisor, with the object of resolving the matter informally. A student, parent, employee, or third party individual with a sex discrimination/harassment complaint may discuss it with the teacher, counselor, or building administrator involved. Level 1 of the grievance procedure is informal and optional and may be bypassed by the grievant.

Level 2: Principal or Immediate Supervisor

If the grievance is not resolved at Level 1 with the principal or designee and the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, or if Level 1 is not appropriate for resolving the grievance, the grievance may be formalized by filing a written complaint, providing an interview, or an assisted written complaint when necessary. The principal or designee will seek a list of witnesses or evidence from the grievant, the accused, and others as relevant, as part of the investigation. The principal will conduct a formal investigation under the direct supervision of the District's Title IX Coordinator. The complaint shall state the nature of the grievance and the remedy requested. The filing of the formal, written complaint at Level 2 must be within six months from the day of the event giving rise to the grievance or from the date the grievant could reasonably become aware of such an occurrence. The grievant may request that a meeting concerning the complaint be held with the Title IX Coordinator. A minor student may be accompanied at that meeting by a parent or guardian. A written report from the principal to the grievant and accused regarding action taken will be sent within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the complaint.

Level 2: Investigation Procedures Investigating the Complaint

1. The principal or designee will conduct a prompt investigation of the complaint and complete the investigation in a timely manner. The building principal or designee will inform and consult with the District's Title IX Coordinator prior, during and after the investigative process. The principal will document the investigative activities (e.g. takes notes of interviews conducted). The time to complete the investigation will vary depending on the nature and complexity of the issue but generally will not take more than ten (10) working days after receipt of the complaint.
2. The investigation may include interviews of the grievant, the individual(s) accused of engaging in discriminatory or harassing behavior, and any other witness who may reasonably be expected to have relevant information. All interviewed parties and witnesses will be provided an opportunity to present any evidence they reasonably believe could be relevant to the situation.
3. The MPS will respect the privacy of the grievant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is made, and the witnesses to the extent possible consistent with the MPS' legal obligations to investigate and take appropriate action and to comply with discovery and disclosure obligations. All records generated in connection with the investigation will be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.
4. If a complaint is made about any of the persons having responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of the policy forbidding sex discrimination and harassment, the School Committee Chair will appoint an independent person to assume those responsibilities.
5. At the conclusion of the investigation, the building principal or designee will obtain a signature from the Title IX Coordinator indicating proper oversight of the investigation. In addition to providing a written report to the grievant and accused regarding action taken within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the complaint, as described above, the principal or designee will also prepare a written report to deliver to the Superintendent summarizing the evidence gathered during the investigation, providing a determination whether or to what extent the complaint has been substantiated, and recommending the corrective action if appropriate. The corrective action should be designed to stop the harassment/discrimination, prevent it from recurring, and remedy its effects, including services to the victim(s), if appropriate.

Level 3: Superintendent

If the complaint is not resolved at Level 2, the grievant or accused may proceed to Level 3 by presenting a written appeal to the Superintendent within ten (10) working days after the grievant receives the report from the principal or designee. The grievant or accused may request a meeting with the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent or his/her designee has the option of meeting with the grievant or accused to discuss the appeal. A written decision will be rendered by the Superintendent or his/her designee within ten (10) working days after receiving the written appeal.

The procedure in no way denies the right of the grievant or accused to file a formal complaint at any time with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or other agencies available for mediation or rectification of grievances, or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination.

For further information about these guidelines or help with sexual harassment problems or any other form of harassment, consult the Title IX Coordinator, Monson Public Schools District, at (413) 267-4150.

Legal References

1. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 703
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
3. Chapter 151C, Massachusetts General Laws
4. M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5
5. M.G.L. Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19
6. M.G.L. Chapter 71, §§82, 84

Alternative Procedures

Individuals are not limited to a formal complaint procedure through MPS, but may seek resolution through other agencies.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Congress St., Boston, MA 02114 (617) 565-3200

Mass. Commission against Discrimination

One Ashburton Pl., Boston, MA 02108 (617) 727-3990

U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil Rights

5 Post Office Square, 8th floor, Boston, MA 02109 (617) 289-0111

Any retaliatory action of any kind taken by an employee or student of the MPS against anyone as a result of that person's advocacy for rights protected under MPS's applicable policy and applicable Federal laws, seeking help, cooperating in an investigation, or otherwise participating in any proceeding is prohibited.

Bullying, Hazing and Intimidation Policy

It is the policy of the Monson Public School District to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees, and visitors free from bullying, hazing, and intimidation. Such action may constitute discriminatory harassment when it occurs on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, as defined above. **For complaints of sex discrimination, including harassment based on sex, refer to MPS' Title IX grievance procedures on page 35 of this manual.** For complaints of disability-based discrimination, contact the Title IX Coordinator. Bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing and intimidation are prohibited:

➤ At school and at all school facilities.

- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds.
- At school bus stops and on school buses or any other vehicle owned or used by the school district.
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school.
- At non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school; infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Monson Public Schools District will develop a bullying prevention and intervention plan. The principal is responsible for implementing the plan. Each plan must contain several provisions, including:

1. Procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying.
2. Strategies for protecting those who report bullying.
3. Notice to the parents or guardians of students involved in bullying, including perpetrators and victims.
4. Appropriate services for students who have been bullied or who are bullies.

5. Inclusion of age-appropriate summaries of the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention Plan in the Student Manual.

Bullying Policy

It is a violation of the Bullying Policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone bullying in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of bullying.

This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such bullying occurs out of school but has a connection to school, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities.

It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize and report acts of bullying and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to bullying has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

The building principal or designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of bullying.

Retaliation in any form against any person who has made or filed a complaint relating to bullying is forbidden. If it occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff personnel and/or removal from the educational setting for a student. A referral to law enforcement may be made.

Confidentiality - Reports of bullying should be confidential, consistent with necessary investigation procedures, with the goal of protecting the victim and stopping the behavior.

Preventing Bullying - to create more positive school climates and prevent as much bullying as possible, age-appropriate instruction for students in each grade on bullying prevention must be incorporated in a school's curriculum. Professional development for teachers and other staff to help them prevent and stop bullying is required. In addition, schools must offer education to parents about bullying prevention.

Children on the Autism spectrum must have provisions in their Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) to ensure they obtain the skills to avoid and respond to bullying, an especially challenging task for Autistic children.

Reporting and Stopping Bullying - To stop bullying as soon as it occurs, all school staff are required to promptly report bullying when they witness or become aware of it. A school principal or his designee must immediately investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action.

Bullying, Hazing, Intimidation Claims Procedure

In school systems, bullying may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be of staff member to staff member, staff member to student, student to staff member, or student to student. Guidelines for dealing with any charge of bullying are:

1. **Students and Adults:** By law, bullying is defined by the victim's perception in combination with objective standards or expectations. What one person may consider acceptable behavior, another person may view as bullying. In order to protect the rights of both parties, it is important that the victim make it clear to the bully that the behavior is objectionable.
2. **Students and Adults:** In all charges of bullying, the victim should report the specifics of the complaint to ensure that the subsequent investigation is focused on the relevant facts. Oral and anonymous complaints will be reviewed but are inherently difficult to investigate and may not be procedurally fair. No disciplinary action shall be taken on anonymous complaints unless verified by clear and convincing evidence. All other complaints will be reviewed based on a preponderance of evidence standard.
3. **Students and Adults:** Any school employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying, hazing, or intimidation shall immediately report it to the administration; each school shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and confirmed, and report all incidents of hazing, intimidation, bullying or cyber-bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, in accordance with state laws and regulations.
4. **Students:** A good faith report from a staff member renders the staff member immune from discipline for making a report and is considered to have been made in the course of the staff member's employment for purposes of M.G.L. c. 258. School staff are indemnified from any cause of action arising out of a good faith report of bullying or the district's subsequent actions or inaction in connection thereto.
5. **Students:** If an instance of student to student bullying is reported to a staff member other than an administrator, the staff member must inform the assistant principal or the building principal.
6. **Adults:** If the alleged bully is responsible for conducting an investigation, the Superintendent or committee shall designate an alternative coordinator, who is immediate supervisor of the alleged bully.
7. **Adults:** If a situation involving a charge of staff member to student bullying is brought to the attention of any staff member, the staff member should notify the building principal or Assistant Superintendent immediately.
8. **Students:** In a situation involving a charge of student to staff member bullying the staff member should notify the building principal or Assistant Superintendent.
9. **Adults:** In a situation involving a charge of staff member to staff member bullying the staff member should notify the building Principal or the Dean of Students.
10. **Students and Adults:** once a charge of bullying has been made, including charges of mental, emotional or physical bullying as well as threats to a person's safety or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action should be taken:
 - a. The building Principal should investigate the charge through discussions with the individuals involved.
 - b. In situations involving allegations against a staff member, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion.
 - c. In situations involving students, the Principal should engage the appropriate classroom or special subject area teacher .
 - d. Parents will be informed of the situation in incidences involving students. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit.
11. After an investigation with the involved parties, if the building principal determines that disciplinary action must be taken, the following could occur:
 - a. **Students and Adults:** In instances involving student to student or student to staff member bullying, the student may be subject to discipline including but not limited to counseling, suspension, and in appropriate cases expulsion.

- b. **Adults:** In instances involving staff member to student and staff member to staff member bullying, findings will be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for further action. Personnel action may also be initiated at this point, consistent with the applicable law and collective bargaining agreement.
- c. **Students and Adults:** In all cases a referral to law enforcement will be considered by the Principal or Superintendent based on the circumstances. School officials will coordinate with the Police Department to identify a police liaison for bullying cases.

APPENDIX: A

Identity of State and Federal Authorities

The **Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination (MCAD)** enforces the state law prohibiting sexual harassment. The MCAD can be reached as follows, if you wish to file a formal complaint with them:

MCAD

436 Dwight St., Suite 220 Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 739-2145

MCAD

One Ashburton Place, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108-1532
(617) 727-3990

The **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** enforces the federal law prohibiting sexual harassment. The EEOC can be reached as follows if you wish to file a formal complaint:

EEOC

One Congress St., Room 1001 Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-3200

EEOC

1801 L St. N.W. Washington, DC 20507 (202) 663-4900

APPENDIX: B

Section 504/ADA
Title IV/Title VI
Title IX
M.G.L. c. 151C
M.G.L. c. 76 §
Physical Restraint Policy

- Disability
- Race, Color, National Origin
- Sex/Gender
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Violation of Physical Restraint Policy

Acknowledgement of Monson Public Schools Policies

Please sign below acknowledging that you have received or have access to a copy of all Monson Public Schools' policies as written in the school committee policy manual and the employee manual and understand that it is your obligation to read and abide by the policies at all times.

Return this signature page to your building Principal or supervisor within 10 days of the start of school.

Employee Name (Please Print) _____

Employee Signature _____

Date _____