

2024-2025



FISHER HILL SCHOOL

ORANGE
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

STUDENT
HANDBOOK



Orange Elementary Schools

Welcome to Fisher Hill School, where we celebrate every student, every day.

We serve over 500 pre-kindergarten through 6th-grade students in western Massachusetts. At Fisher Hill School, we celebrate each other's differences and strive to meet the needs of all students through collaboration and recognition. We invite you to learn more about our services and programs. Please contact us if we can assist you.

School Committee

Committee Member	Email	Term Expires
Mallory Ellis	malloryellis@orange-elem.org	2025
Frank Hains	frankhains@orange-elem.org	2026
Yareyn Ramos-Martinez	yarelynramos-martinez@orange-elem.org	2025
Jessica Reske	jessicareske@orange-elem.org	2026
Josefa Scherer	josefascherer@orange-elem.org	2027



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Contact Us

978 544-0018

Title	Name	Contact
Superintendent of Schools	Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski	978 544-2920 (office)
Principal Vice Principal	Dr. Lisa Lewis Paul Fraleigh	978 544-0018
Director of Special Education	Dr. Phil Saisa	978 544-6980
Director of Finance and Facilities	Michele Tontodonato	978 544-2920
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	Marie Cole	978 544-2542



Statement of Non Discrimination

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

Dr. Phil Saisa, Director of Special Education, has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies pursuant to Title IX, Title VI and Section 504, and MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5. If you feel that we are in violation, you are encouraged to contact the Director of Special Education 978 544-6980 Further information regarding these policies can be obtained from:

The Bureau of Equity and Language Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

EQUAL ACCESS

Both state and federal legislation govern schools in the Commonwealth regarding equal access: Massachusetts General Law 76 Section 5 (also known as Chapter 622), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title IX.

Mahar works diligently to adhere to the highest standards of the laws.

The law (MGL Chapter 76, Section 5) reads: No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

Enactment of this law advances efforts to ensure that all students can attend school in a safe, supportive environment that is conducive to learning.

PROVISIONS FOR TRANSLATION Orange Public School District To the extent possible, the Orange Public School will provide oral or written translation for Parents/Guardians in their home language of important documents and oral or written translation in their home

language for students for matters of counseling and guidance.



OES ONLINE CALENDAR

OES			School Starts
1/2 Day	Teachers Only	No School	Color KEY

Orange Elementary School ACADEMIC CALENDAR: SY 2024 - 2025

<p>AUGUST '24</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td></tr> </table> <p>3 Days: OES</p>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	<p>26 Convocation – All Districts All Staff Report</p> <p>27 Teacher Prep Day – All Districts (Teachers Report)</p> <p>28 Students Report Grades 1-12: All Districts</p>	<p>FEBRUARY '25</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>15 Days: OES</p>	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		<p>12 1/2 Day – Teacher PD</p> <p>17-21 February Vacation No School</p>							
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DAILY SCHEDULE

The school year lasts 180 days for students and includes more than the required 990 hours of instruction. Teachers arrive for 8:05 AM daily. Students should arrive at the school no earlier than 8:08 A.M.. Our teachers' day ends at 3:15PM

GRADE	START TIME	END TIME
K-6	8:25 AM	2:55 PM
PRE-K	8:45 AM	11:00 AM (HALF DAY AM)
	12:00 PM	2:30 PM (HALF DAY PM)
	8:45 AM	2:30 PM (FULL DAY)

WEATHER RELATED DELAYS AND CANCELATIONS

A decision to not open school for severe weather conditions is usually made before 5:45 A.M. so that we can notify the bus contractors, personnel and the public. Such a decision takes into consideration the road conditions in all parts of the town. Sometimes it is possible to delay the opening of school if it appears that conditions will rapidly improve. On rare occasions, it is necessary to close school early due to rapidly worsening weather conditions or other emergencies that may arise. It is advisable that parents develop an alternate childcare schedule in the event of an early dismissal.

The automated calling system, available to all student households, is utilized for notification as well as the superintendent's Facebook page - Superintendent of Schools for Orange, Petersham and R.C. Mahar Regional.

On days school is canceled due to inclement weather, all activities (and the use of buildings) are canceled.

Orange Elementary School is committed to building a learning community in which every teacher and child is respected and given the tools they need to learn and grow. At OES everything we do is “learner driven, evidence informed.”

Our goal for our Pre-K - 2nd grade students is to create home-and-school connections to help our preschool through second-grade students build a strong foundation for academic success. These connections bridge the gap between the classroom and the family table with family activities, parent resources, and student homework.

Our third through sixth grade students learn in a safe, inclusive environment where we design instruction with each learner’s strengths, passions, and needs in mind. Adults in our building are role models for our students, showcasing the importance of the work-life balance.

The Orange Elementary Schools follow the revised current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. State standards are embedded in all curricular areas. The Orange Elementary Schools teach an integrated curriculum using a research-based approach. Emphasis is placed on the process of learning. The following activities are encouraged:

- Inquiry and exploration, hands-on experience, critical thinking skills
- Using trade books (popular literature and content-based readers)
- Process writing, learning to use resources, cooperative learning, phonics instruction, project learning.

Standard programs that are available in our schools to help meet educational goals include:

- Phonics - Appleseeds (K-2)
- Penmanship - Appleseeds K-2 and Wonders (3-6)
- Mathematics - Into Math (K-6)
- Reading and Writing - Wonders Literacy Program (K-6)
- Social Emotional Learning - Second Steps (Pre-K -6)
- Positive Behavior Interventions Systems (PBIS) (K-6)
- Science - Known Atom Science (K-6)
- Savvas My World Social Studies/Geography (K-6)
- Pre-K - Learning Without Tears Curriculum



HOMWORK

PRE-K - 2ND GRADE

The purpose of homework at this early childhood level is to encourage family involvement and practice new skills. Many of our “assignments” include activities like doing household chores, tying your shoes, and reading before bedtime. These types of responsibilities help children develop language, math, social skills, and confidence. We encourage parents to help children build skills organically. Read with your children, play games together, and eat as a family. You can make math part of the home environment by teaching your children to pair socks; cut a pizza into equal slices; and count change when shopping. Giving your child a voice in family activities can help them develop social-emotional competencies like self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making and teach them important communication skills.

3RD - 6TH GRADE

We believe that after school, students should be engaging with family, doing things they enjoy, or simply relaxing after a day at school. This does not mean we do not give homework, but when we do, we choose assignments that enrich education by making deeper connections to the curriculum and offering student’s choices in what they do. Your child should receive no more than 30 minutes of homework per night. If you are finding your child is spending more time than this, please contact your child’s teacher.



REPORTING SYSTEM

The reporting system is a standards-based report card and is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and set-up to correspond with this system of learning. Academic skills are still separated from work/study skills, and a new social skills section has been added. Report cards are sent home twice a year-January & June. Parent/Caregiver - Teacher conferences are held in November. The parent/ Caregiver-teacher conferences are extremely valuable as they provide an opportunity to discuss all facets of the child's progress.

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to reach out to their child's teachers to discuss progress and or any concerns. The written progress report will give the child a rating according to his/her capacity within the level at which they are working. At Fisher Hill Innovation School, instead of A, B, C, D, the student will be graded on their progress (Meeting grade level expectations, Progressing toward grade level expectations with some support, and Working towards grade level expectations with direct support).

LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

Literature distribution for independent outside organizations is distinct from sponsorship. Because of the Boy Scouts restrictive admission policy, 603 C.M.R. 26.06(1) precludes a public school from sponsoring the Boy Scouts as an extracurricular activity for students. For purposes of its regulation, the department of Education interprets "sponsoring" to mean endorsing, supervising or participating in the organization of the activity. Literature distribution is part of the limited forum that our district provides. The Orange School committee is not sponsoring or endorsing any outside organizations whose literature the school makes available to students.



ASSESSMENT

At designated times during the school year or as needed, students may be formally assessed depending on their grade level and needs. The following standardized assessments may be used for assessing students:

- MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) (3-6)
- Access ELL Testing (K-6)
- NWEA MAP Testing Math
- NWEA MAP Testing Reading (1-6)
- DIBELS (K-3)

All data collected during these assessments is analyzed and used to track growth and progress toward grade level content.

TITLE I

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) is the largest federal aid to our education program. It was the first and most important federal program assigned to the U.S. Office of Education to recognize that educationally deprived school children may need extra help, or what educators commonly call compensatory education.

The Fisher Hill Elementary School currently offer school-wide Title I programs. A school-wide program allows Title I funds to be utilized to provide supplemental support to any student in the Orange Elementary Schools. Orange Elementary qualifies to run as a Title I school-wide program based on their percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

ESSA

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that parents/caregivers have access to school report cards developed by the department of Education on an annual basis. The information is a general breakdown of district information relating primarily to staff and recent MCAS testing data. This report card is available on the district website www.orange-elem.org.



ADMISSION INFORMATION

ENTRANCE AGE

Massachusetts's law requires children to begin school during the calendar year in which they become six years of age.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Kindergarten- A child entering Kindergarten must reside in Orange and be five years of age on or before August 31 of that academic year. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent.

First Grade- Students entering first grade or transferring to the first grade in Orange from other schools, public or private must reside in Orange or be accepted for School Choice and be six years of age on or before August 31 of that academic year. Children accepted for school choice will follow the same age and date requirements.

Records Required for Kindergarten Entrance-An official birth certificate must be shown when the child is registered in the spring (usually in April) prior to the September the child will enter kindergarten. No child can be registered without a birth certificate.

At this registration parents/caregivers will be provided with an official state school physical form for their child to be completed by their family physician sometime before entrance to school. The doctor will fill out the form as they completes the physical examination.

Parents/caregivers must also provide information that the child has received immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps and rubella. Proof of a lead paint test is also required, and a tuberculin test is recommended.

The only exceptions that are allowed are: 1) a written statement from the parent/caregiver that such immunization is against their religious beliefs or 2) a physician's statement to the effect that a particular immunization is not in the best interests of a particular child or 3) that the necessary immunization is currently in progress.



NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

(Compliance with P.L. 107-110, Section 111 1(h)(6)(A)

The Federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents/caregivers of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, Orange Elementary Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects they teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

Orange Elementary Public Schools are committed to providing quality instruction for all students and do so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above regarding your child's teacher, please contact your child's principal.

REQUESTING TEACHERS

The Orange Elementary School will no longer be accepting requests by parents /caregivers for their child's next year's placement.



RETENTION

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will use all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will typically progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.



CODE OF CONDUCT

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

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



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

The Code of Student Conduct is in force during regular school hours, portal to portal. This includes when students are being transported on a school bus to and from school, as well as such times and places as school sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and other activities where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.

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

WHAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE EMPHASIZED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

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



This code includes a multi-tiered system of interventions aimed at preventing behavioral problems as well as bridging and reintegration strategies to decrease the reoccurrence of the offending behavior. Schools and parents/caregivers may offer other bridging strategies that teach appropriate behavior. Teachers and administrators will continue to use and develop a variety of informal disciplinary and guidance strategies in teaching new behaviors before, during, and after disciplinary measures. School administrators should conduct a thorough investigation into school related discipline matters, including student interviews, prior to recommending disciplinary action.

STUDENT INTERVENTIONS AND TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

All of our schools have adopted a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Guided by student outcome data, a multi-tiered approach is used to make decisions to improve student achievement and behavior by assisting in the creation of well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention.

Orange Elementary is implementing the Massachusetts model of tiered systems of support (MTSS). MTSS is a blueprint outlining a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system level change across the classroom, school, and district to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. It guides both the provision of high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and academic and/or non-academic targeted interventions/supports for students who experience difficulties and for students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.



CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Students are required by law to attend school when it is in session. If a student is ill or for some other reason cannot attend, or will arrive late, a parent or caregiver must call the school with this information, and do so each day that the student will be absent or arrive after the beginning time. If we do not hear from you, we will put our call back system in place. When a student returns to school after an absence, or arrives after the beginning of school, he or she is still required to bring a note from the parent or guardian indicating the nature of the absence or the reason for the tardiness.

The Department of Transitional Assistance requires that, under the Welfare Reform Law, in order to receive benefits under the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, children under the age of 14 must meet specific school attendance requirements. The school may release attendance records to D.T.A. under 603 CMR. The school must have written absence notes stating the reason for the absence.

Please let us know if your child will be absent due to illness or other reasons as soon as possible in the morning. As a school, we want every opportunity for your child to be met with success; we will pay close attention to attendance and have every expectation that all students attend school on a regular and consistent basis. In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 1B, Parent(s)/caregiver(s) will be notified by letter when a student has missed at least five (5) or more school days in a school year. We value your child's education and if a student accumulates 7 cumulative absences within a six month period (See MGL Ch. 76, S. 2), a meeting will be setup with the Principal to develop a plan to get the student to school consistently. Your child's success is important to us and we want them to share in the experiences throughout the whole school day. Please be advised that if the child's attendance at school does not improve, the school will be required to involve the District Attorney's Office through the filing of a CRA. Please contact the school office, in advance, to notify the school of any planned absence. Students are responsible for completing all owed work following an absence.



Building a Learning Community.

One of the major goals of our schools, and of each of our teachers, is to encourage social behavior marked by self-control and concern for others. This is so essential to the learning environment. The rules, regulations and procedures listed in this handbook are designed, of course, to ensure the safety of students and staff, but they are also designed to describe a learning community in which our differences are cherished, individual rights are protected, and we commit ourselves to work together towards common goals.

Parent/Caregiver Concerns. Parents/caregivers who have a concern about their child's progress or behavior should first talk with the classroom teacher. A conference time convenient for both the parents/caregivers and the teacher may be arranged by calling the school office. Should they be dissatisfied after this conversation, parents/caregivers may turn to the principal and teacher together, and then to the Superintendent.

Parents/caregivers and visitors to the schools are required to go to the office to register their presence before proceeding to a classroom or other area. This is important for the safety of everyone. Parents/caregivers must sign in and out and wear a visitor's badge when they are visiting the school buildings. Trespassers will be prosecuted.

Truancy: (State Law - Ch.76) A child will be considered truant if they miss 7 or more day sessions within any period of six months.

There is no doubt that one of the keys to academic achievement is good attendance. Consistent participation in school and school-based activities is important for making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Student tardiness and truancy are challenges that confront many communities like Orange and across the state. Often, these behaviors are the first indicators that a student may be experiencing stress or other difficulties in his or her life.

Notification and Contact Information

Chapter 76, section 1A of the Massachusetts General Laws states that parents/caregivers must be provided each year with the instructions for calling a designated phone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a student and the reason for the absence. In addition, parents/caregivers must provide the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number so that they may be contacted during the school day so the school may call and inquire about said absence.



Who is a Supervisor of Attendance?

Chapter 76, section 19 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that each school committee must employ a supervisor of attendance. A supervisor of attendance has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child in the district fails to attend school. Our Attendance Supervisor is Assistant Principal Paul Fraleigh.

What is a CRA?

A "CRA" (Child Requiring Assistance) replaced a "CHINS" (Child In Need of Services) in 2012. Under the law the school district can petition the courts if a child is: "Habitually Truant": A child between 6 and 18, who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter. The school applicant must state whether or not the child and the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E. Under M.G. L. c. 119, § 39G, dismissal must occur when the child turns 16. The Court's authority pursuant to a CRA petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of the state agency known as the Dept. of Social Services.

What is a 51A?

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Dept. of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

Parental Responsibility

Parents or caregivers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or caregivers not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/caregivers.

Inducing Absences

It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully to employ or to harbor a minor who should be in school.



Attendance at Field Trips and Other Special Events: Field trips and other special activities and events are integral parts of the whole education of the child. They enhance day-to-day curriculum by offering hands-on experiences that bring to life what students read about in books or hear about from their teachers. Our hope is that all children will always be part of these experiences. There are times, however, when alternate decisions need to be made regarding attendance at these events. If a child's behavior is such that it is deemed unsafe to take him/her on a field trip or to an event, then the principal will notify the parent/caregiver of this decision as early as possible.

Dismissal: If a student's normal dismissal procedure changes, a note is required from the parent/caregiver notifying the school of the change. Parents/caregivers are asked not to request such a change by telephone. Calls for changes to dismissal will NOT be accepted beyond 2:15 p.m. except in the case of an emergency. Such changes can be made via phone directly to the main office. As the end of the school day is a busy time, please plan accordingly and limit these exceptions to emergencies ONLY.

If a family emergency or other special circumstances require that a student be dismissed before the end of the school day, the parent/caregiver should notify the school via phone. The parent/caregiver should come to the school office to meet the student at the time, which has been stipulated. A student dismissed early will not be allowed to wait outside the building for his/her ride. Students in emergency situations may use the school telephones. Children involved in after school programs must be picked up at the ending time of the activity by a person who has been identified as the responsible party to pick up the student.

Absence Reporting: If your child will be absent from school, please contact the school office via phone by 8:30 a.m. or as soon as possible.

Emergency Information: Parents/caregivers are responsible for completing the emergency information sent via email on the first day of school. This information is very important to the office as they are used to call parents and caretakers in emergency situations and when a child is sick or needs to be dismissed for some reason. Parents/caregivers are responsible for updating the school when changes in telephone numbers and addresses are made. No student will be dismissed to unauthorized individuals without parent/caregivers consent via note (or telephone call in emergencies). These persons, if unknown to the schools, will be asked to produce proper identification.



Legal Documentation: If legal documentation exists pertaining to your child, please provide the office with copies of such documentation. This may be in the form of custody papers, restraining orders, adoption papers etc. We know that family situations may change at any given time therefore changing the legal documentation. We must be notified with updated information in order to look out for the best interest of all students and families. Our schools comply with all MA. laws regarding custodial access to student information.

Fire Drills & Emergency Evacuations: Fish Hill School has fire drills. The schools may also be confronted with other emergencies that require the evacuation of the school. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the schools, there are procedures in place for such evacuation. It is mandatory on such occasions that every occupant of the building leave the building in an orderly manner and in silence. Students are to remain with their teacher or other staff member and may not re-enter the building without explicit instruction to do so.

Student Behavior: Should a student's behavior become disruptive to the learning process, or appear to be dangerous to themselves and/or to others, the teacher will be the first to seek a change in such behavior. If change does not occur, the teacher will discuss the matter with the parents/caregivers and may also seek the assistance of the principal. Examples of unacceptable behavior include throwing objects, fighting, vandalism, vulgar language, mocking others with reference to their religion, color, economic status, gender or physical attributes, disrespect for teachers and staff and disregard for the rules of the classroom, bus, playground or cafeteria. If a student should need to be restrained, it will be in accordance with School Committee Policy and Massachusetts General Laws.

Discipline: The health and safety of children is one of our primary goals. All of our resources are used, and the assistance of the parents/caregivers earnestly invited, in order to alter behavior, which is disruptive or dangerous to the student or others. If suspension or relocation to another academic setting seems to be the only alternative, the rights of the student and of the parents/caregivers will be fully protected in accordance with School Committee policies and the laws of the Commonwealth. The “out of school” suspension of a student is a rare event.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, section 37G, prohibits the use of corporal punishment and this law is, of course, observed in our schools. [See Appendix A for more on discipline.](#)



Inspection and Searches: The Schools reserve the right to inspect students' lockers, desks and personal possessions, if there is a reasonable suspicion that they may harbor illegal drugs, tobacco products, dangerous weapons, alcohol or any other item which may be detrimental to that student or to others and to take possession of any item which is found. If such a search is indicated, it will be done by at least two persons, one of whom, when possible, should be a school administrator. Inspections of all lockers and desks for the purpose of encouraging tidiness may also be made.

Bringing Things to School: Young people sometimes have a desire to bring favorite things to school to show to their friends and the teacher, such as trading cards, small toys, etc. Since some things may disrupt the learning environment or prove injurious to others, students may bring to school only what is necessary for the school program, unless they have explicit permission from the teacher. On field trips, audio equipment may be allowed with permission from the classroom teacher and bus driver. Special occasion deliveries, for example flowers, balloons, etc., are discouraged at all schools. At Fisher Hill all deliveries will be held in the office until the end of the day when it is expected that an adult will pick them up.

Vandalism: Vandalism of school property is prohibited, as is the defacing of the building or grounds itself. Stickers are not to be placed on lockers, inside or out. School property that is lost or destroyed needs to be paid for. We would appreciate your help in seeing that library books are taken care of and returned on time. The School Committee has adopted a materials selection policy, which outlines procedures for selecting library materials. If you have any concerns or questions regarding library materials, please talk to the principal.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS (from Article II.A.15.f.)

The Orange Elementary Schools are committed to the regulations set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as they apply to the use of physical restraint on students of publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. This policy and regulations apply to all students including regular education students, collaborative students, and students with disabilities. The two goals that this policy enforces, only after less intrusive methods have been attempted or considered, are:

- To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm; and



- To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as the result of the use of physical restraint.

It should be noted that nothing in the policy precludes a teacher or other staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm, as noted in MA DOE Regulations 46.05 (1).

THE USE OF ANY VIDEO AND DIGITAL OR TECHNOLOGY THAT CAPTURES AND REPRODUCES IMAGES

Philosophy: The Orange School Committee acknowledges that media documentation can be used for the improvement of teaching and learning, as well as for the maintenance of discipline and security. We also recognize that media documentation can be abused and, therefore, the policies which follow are designed to maximize the benefits and avoid possible misuse.

Buses: Cameras may be used to monitor behavior in school buses. The images from bus cameras may be shared with teachers, parents/guardians, students and other appropriate authorities at the discretion of the building principal with the concurrence of the Superintendent. The images from bus cameras are not to be made available to the general public.

School Buildings and Grounds: Cameras may be used to monitor school buildings and grounds. The images and/or audio from this equipment may be viewed only by the building principal and/or the Superintendent, or by a person appointed by either to view such images and/or audio. At the discretion of the Superintendent, they may be released to appropriate civil authorities.

Teaching Events: Media documentation may be done in classrooms or at other teaching events and, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, such documentation shall be at the request of, or with the consent of, the teacher(s) involved. The viewing of such documentation shall be at the discretion of the teacher(s) involved, and/or the building principal and/or the Superintendent.



Public Events: Parents/caregivers and other persons may be granted permission, explicitly or implicitly, to document concerts, lectures, exhibits and other public events sponsored by the school district. The person in charge of a particular event may, with the concurrence of the building principal and/or the Superintendent, request that documentation not occur. Parents/caregivers and other persons shall have the privilege of media documentation in classrooms only for a specific reason and only with the express consent of the classroom teacher(s) and the building principal.

Restrictions: No images and/or audio documentation, whether made at a teaching event or a public school event can be used for commercial purposes without the express consent of the Superintendent.

Restrooms: No image and/or audio equipment of any kind shall be installed or operated in any school restroom.

USE OF PLAYGROUND

All playground rules are to be observed. Violators will be disciplined accordingly. There is to be no rough or physical play that may endanger a student or others.

No objects that may endanger students (rocks, sticks, snowballs) can be thrown that are not normally associated with structured games.

For safety reasons, only one student is allowed on a swing at a time.

Students are not allowed on the playground area in the winter months without boots.

During lunch recess, students are expected to remain on the playground and are not to enter the building without permission from supervising adults.

Students, upon dismissal, may not loiter on the playground. Students are to go directly home unless parent/caregiver permission to stay has been granted with a note or phone call.

Safe use of the playground equipment will be explained and the rules for safe use must be followed.



PLAYGROUND RULES

Safety and security are essential rules for our school and our playground.

As responsible members of Fisher Hill, all students are expected to adhere to the following rules: our clear expectations for behavior on the playground.

- Running or skipping when moving down or up the path to the playground could cause an injury. Let's be sure to walk and be safe at all times.
- Use appropriate/positive language when speaking to others.
- Swing appropriately on the swings and avoid tanlinging them to prevent injuries.
- Drawing is only allowed on the sidewalk, not the playground equipment.
- Leave the rocks on the ground. They are not for throwing.
- Slide appropriately on the slide to avoid injuries.
- All food items should remain in the cafeteria.
- All students should only leave the playground with the permission of an adult escort.
- No sitting, climbing, walking, or standing on the rock wall.
- Let's keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
- Let's be kind and take turns.
- Let's help keep the playground clean and throw away any trash.
- We will line up when the whistle is blown three times, as recess has now ended.
- Always listen to and follow the directions of the adults monitoring the playground. They are there to ensure our safety and well-being.



SAFE TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM SCHOOL

Riding the Bus : Although state law mandates busing only if the student lives two or more miles from the school or from a current bus stop, the Orange Elementary Schools use a one-mile limit. Appropriate behavior on the bus is a major factor in assuring the safety of all the students. A driver who is trying to solve a behavioral problem cannot give full attention to driving. The basic bus rules of conduct are the following:

- Follow the driver's directions while waiting for the bus; keep back from the street
- Do not push or shove when getting on or off the bus
- Stay seated, don't switch seats and keep the aisles free
- Keep hands and arms inside the bus
- Speak quietly so that the driver can hear traffic sounds
- The use or possession of tobacco products, alcohol and illegal drugs is prohibited
- The possession or use of a weapon is prohibited, as is the use of any object as a weapon
- Fighting and/or verbal abuse will not be tolerated
- No hanging key chains or toys are allowed on backpacks or clothing
- No loose, long clothing

The driver will report violations of the above rules to administration. The administration will determine the appropriate response to a violation. The response will be determined by the nature of the offense(s) and by their frequency. The following are among the principal's options:

- A letter or telephone call to a parent or caregiver
- Suspension of the privilege of riding the bus for one or more days
- The parent (s) or caregiver may be asked to meet with the principal to discuss the matter

If the student is excluded from riding the bus for one or more days, the parents/caregiver become responsible for transporting the student. A student who does not attend school during a bus suspension is considered truant.



All busses are equipped with video cameras and tapes are reviewed by the principals on a random basis, or whenever a driver reports a violation of the rules. Parents/caregivers may be invited to review the tapes, and in some extreme cases the police, but the tapes are not available for general viewing and are not made available to the media. The use of the cameras is to support the safety of our children.

On Walking and Riding a Bicycle to School: Students who walk to school or to a bus stop in areas with sidewalks are required to use the sidewalks, and where there are crosswalks, to cross in the marked areas.

Bicycles ridden to Fisher Hill School are the responsibility of the parents/caregivers and students and it is recommended that they be locked. Bicycles may not be ridden on school grounds. Students should dismount and walk their bikes to the racks.

In line skates, skateboards and sneakers with wheels are prohibited at Fisher Hill School.

A reminder: State law requires that riders 12 years old and younger wear helmets. Failure to wear a helmet will result in the loss of the privilege to ride a bike to and from school.

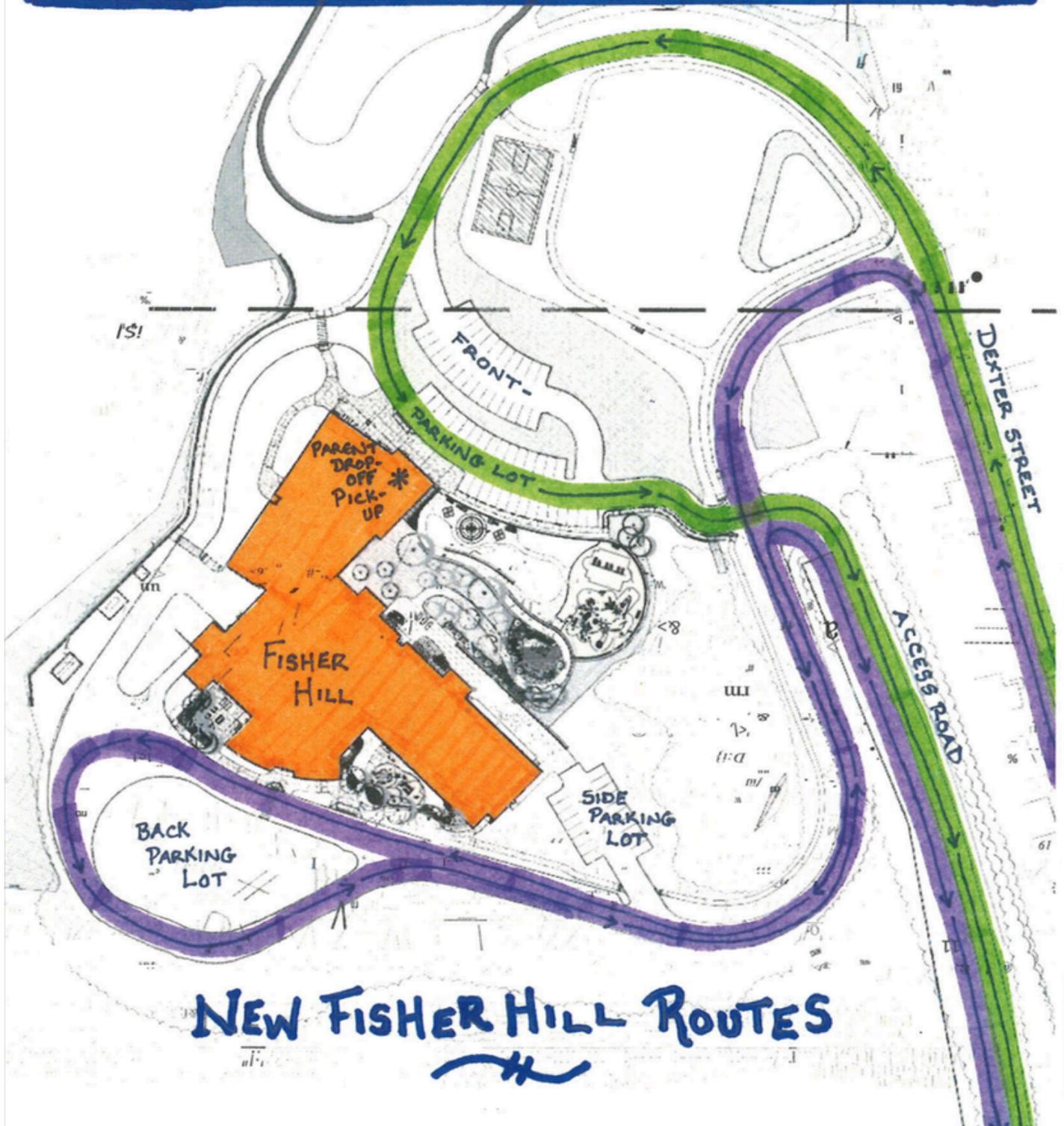
The school is not responsible for the behavior and well-being of students who walk or ride their bikes until they enter the school grounds.



PICK UP AND DROP OFF PROCEDURES

Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up: Access North Main Street. Access Dexter Street. Follow Dexter Street along the "new road" build (like you were going to the old Dexter Park School). Follow the road to the front parking lot of Fisher Hill. Drop-Off and Pick-Up students in the same location as originally planned. Leave the parking lot by crossing the intersection, proceed down the access road, and exit out to North Main Street.

Buses/Van Pool/Kindergarten: Same original route as before. Access North Main Street. Access Dexter Street. Turn left before you get to the "new road" build. Follow the road to the back of Fisher Hill. After Pick-Up/Drop-Off, loop around the back parking lot and follow the road you entered on. Take a right onto the access road and proceed to North Main Street.





SCHOOL BUS INCIDENT REPORTING

The purpose of school bus incident reporting is to inform parents/caregivers of a disciplinary incident involving their child on the school bus, which may have jeopardized the safety and well being of all students and staff.

Parents/caregivers are urged to cooperate with the corrective action initiated by the school district. Bus riding is a privilege, which may be revoked, and parent /caregivers support of appropriate behavior is appreciated.

Bus Infractions:

- Improper boarding/departing procedures
- Possession of dangerous articles
- Failure to remain seated
- Refusing to obey the driver
- Fighting/Pushing/Hitting/Tripping
- Tampering with bus equipment
- Destruction of property
- Student activity in the center aisle while the bus is in motion
- Hanging out window
- Throwing objects in or out of the bus
- Lighting matches/Lighter usage
- Smoking/vaping on the bus
- Spitting/Littering
- Inappropriate language
- Rude or harassing conduct
- Targeting, and other behaviors relating to safety, well-being, or respect for others

Here at OES, we practice progressive discipline. In a case where the infraction is severe in nature, (ie; assault, weapons, drugs, destruction, etc.), the bus company and OES administration reserves the right to warrant an immediate bus restriction/suspension due to urgent safety and security concerns.



SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Finger Tip Length
Shorts / Bottoms

No Inappropriate
Text or Images on
Clothing

No Pajamas or Pajama
Bottoms



No Hats or Hoods

No Exposed Midriffs,
Bare Backs or See
Through Clothing

No Tops without
Shoulder Straps

No Open Toed Shoes or
Sandals Without Back Straps

Student Dress (Mass Law CH. 71, S. 83) Student Right; Personal Dress School officials shall not abridge the rights of students as to personal dress and appearance except if such officials determine that such personal dress and appearance violate reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness. The school can prohibit a manner of dress which constitutes a disruption or distracting to the educational process. The following items are prohibited: sandals without a backstrap, flip flops, hats, hoods, bandanas, shorts not fingertip length, shirts with inappropriate images or sayings, pajamas, pajama bottoms, crop tops, tops without straps, or mesh tops.

It is helpful, particularly in the younger grades, if the students' names are written in or attached to all hats, gloves, coats, boots, lunchboxes and backpacks.

CELL PHONES AND EAR BUDS

Cellphones and ear buds are not to be used during school hours. Failure to follow this rule may result in the following consequences:



1st Offense:

- Staff member collects the phone from the student.
- Staff returns the phone to the student at the end of the school day.

2nd Offense:

- Staff member collects the phone from the student.
- Staff gives the phone to the administrator.
- The administrator returns the phone to the student at the end of the school day.



3rd Offense:

- Staff member collects the phone from the student.
- Staff gives the phone to the administrator.
- Parents/Guardians are contacted and must come to the school to retrieve the phone.

4th Offense:

- Staff member collects the phone from the student.
- Staff gives the phone to the administrator.
- Parents/Guardians are contacted and must come to the school to retrieve the phone.
- The phone is now banned from the school building/campus.



ANTI HARRASSMENT STATEMENT AND PROCEDURES

General Statement-The Orange Elementary Public School district is committed to protecting the rights of all individuals within the school district to work and learn in an environment that is free of harassment.

Harassment on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in any form will not be tolerated. Such harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures, physical contact and the display or circulation of written materials or pictures which are derogatory to either gender, or are derogatory to racial, ethnic or religious groups, or are derogatory to an individual's age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

Definitions of Harassment- Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students that:

- Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or an employee's ability to undertake his/her job responsibilities, or creates an intimidating, hostile, threatening or abusive educational or work environment; or,
- Interferes with a student's academic performance or learning opportunities; or interferes with an employee's work, continued employment or advancement opportunities.

Harassment of any kind, including bullying and teasing, will not be tolerated.



OES BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, AND RETALIATION PLAN DEFINITIONS

Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation are prohibited. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §370 and Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, defines these terms as:

"Bullying", the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

"Cyber-Bullying," bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses ((i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

"Retaliation" is any action taken against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.



Sexual Harassment- The General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 151C, define the term sexual harassment as follows: "Any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis of evaluation of academic achievement; or 2) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment."

This definition is understood to include, but not be limited to, unwanted sexual attention in the form of verbal comments, touching, off-color humor, or sexually explicit photographs, drawings or graffiti.

Sexual harassment, or the existence of a sexually hostile environment, is to be determined from the viewpoint of a reasonable person in the alleged victim's situation.

In both Federal law (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972) and State law (Chapter 76, section 5, a.k.a. Chapter 622) sexual harassment is included as an act of sex discrimination and made subject to civil penalties. This policy statement of the Orange Elementary Schools is intended to be in compliance with these Federal and State laws.

Sexual harassment can occur adult to student, student to adult, adult-to-adult, student-to-student, male to female, female to male, female-to-female and/or male-to-male. Sexual harassment can be based on gender or sexual orientation or identity.

Examples:

- Telling sexual jokes or stories
- Making sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or appearance
- Repeatedly asking out a person who is not interested
- Telling lies, spreading rumors, or gossiping about any person's sexual life
- Whistling, catcalls, making kissing sounds, smacking lips
- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving sex, gender or sexual orientation
- Following a person or blocking a person's path



- Drawing or displaying sexually explicit or suggestive posters, cartoons, pictures, calendars, designs on clothing, or other similar materials
- Staring or leering with sexual overtones, making sexual gestures with hands or body movements
- Giving unwanted gifts of a personal or suggestive nature
- Unwanted touching of people, their hair, or their clothing
- Unwanted hugging, kissing, pinching, patting, or stroking
- Assault, attempted rape, or rape

Responses to Claim of Sexual Harassment-

STUDENTS who allege harassment by OTHER STUDENTS are encouraged to immediately indicate to the harasser that his or her behavior is unwanted and unacceptable. If the student, because of fear of reprisal or for any other reason, is unable to address the alleged harasser, or if the behavior does not cease, then the student is encouraged to report the incident or incidents to any staff member. The staff member may assist the student in resolving the problem and/or, if necessary, may assist the student in sharing the incident with a principal, counselor or another staff member of the student's choice.

The primary goal in responding to claims is to secure an altered behavior on the part of the person or persons who have harassed another. The staff member to whom a student goes will assist the student to articulate what has happened and, in person or by letter, to inform the harasser that the attention is unwanted and unacceptable. The staff member will determine that the harasser understands the complaint and that there is good intent to cease the unacceptable behavior.

Confidentiality for all parties involved is of high importance and information gathered shall be shared only when it is necessary to the successful resolution of the situation. Copies of the substance of an oral communication between harassed and harasser, or the letter, if that form be used, together with a resume of the incident and its resolution may, when warranted, be sent to the building principal, the superintendent and to the parents or caregiver of the students involved.

A student who, having been counseled, continues to behave in violation of this policy, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.



Any STUDENT who feels that they have been sexually harassed by a TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER is encouraged to immediately share their concern with a teacher, counselor, or principal. If first shared with a teacher or counselor, that person will assist the student in sharing the incident with the principal who will, in turn, inform the superintendent. The superintendent and/or principal will conduct an investigation and, if warranted, will chair a discussion of the incident which includes the person to whom the report was first made, the alleged harasser, the parents or caregiver of the student who alleges harassment and, if appropriate and if the parents or caregiver consent, the student who has made the claim.

If the complaint is satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, a brief record of the complaint and its resolution shall be provided in writing to the student and his or her parents or caregiver and to the person against whom the complaint was made, the building principal and the superintendent.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, the person against whom the claim is made will be provided a hearing.

In conclusion, school records are personal and the Federal Freedom of Information Act of 1974 must be complied with, as well as the State Law.

Please refer to details in the policy manual on line at www.orange-elem.org.

Harassment Based on Race, Color, National Origin, Religion or Disability

Harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity and transgender, sexual orientation or disability is unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct relating to the characteristics of a person's race, color, national origin, religion, or disability that:

- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational or work performance; or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.



Examples of harassment based on race or color:

- Using nicknames that emphasize racial stereotypes
- Graffiti containing racially offensive language
- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving race or color
- Racial slurs, negative stereotypes, and hostile acts which are based upon another's race or color
- Written or graphic material containing racial comments or stereotypes which is posted or circulated and which is aimed at degrading members of specific racial or ethnic groups
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, race or color

Examples of harassment based on national origin or religion:

- Comments on a manner of speaking or proficiency with the English language
- Negative comments regarding surnames, customs, and/or language
- Graffiti containing offensive language which is derogatory to others because of their national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Threatening or intimidating conduct directed at another because of the other's national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Jokes or rumors based upon an individual's national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Written or graphic material containing comments or stereotypes which is posted or circulated and which is aimed at degrading individuals or member of specific ethnic or religious groups
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, national origin, ethnicity, or religion

Disability harassment includes harassment based on a person's disabling mental and/or physical condition and includes any unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition.

Examples of harassment based on disability:

- Imitating manner of speech or movement
- Interfering with necessary equipment



- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving physical and/or mental disability
- Threatening or intimidating conduct directed at another because of the other's physical and/or mental disability
- Jokes or rumors based on an individual's physical and/or mental disability
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, an individual's physical and/or mental disability
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property which is motivated by an individual's physical and/or mental disability

The above reference descriptions of inappropriate conduct represent examples, and are not intended to serve as an all-inclusive list.

If you are unsure as to whether you have been a victim of any form of harassment, or if you have knowledge of an incident of harassment, you must contact your school principal, or Director of Pupil Services, or other appropriate school staff member with any questions that you may have. Because what may be acceptable behavior to one individual may not be acceptable to others, all employees and other members of the school community should aspire to the highest standards of respectful, appropriate and professional behavior. For example, ethnic or racial jokes and remarks or sexually oriented gestures or pictures are often offensive to others, and thus should not occur within the Orange Public Schools. The members of the school community include the School Committee, School Councils, Administration, faculty, staff, students, parents/caregivers, volunteers and authorized visitors, contractors or vendors while they are engaged in school-related activities.

Responsibilities and Procedures (harassment)-Individuals that believe they have been harassed should bring the matter to the attention of an administrator so that appropriate action may be taken at once. (The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible in handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.)



PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

Reporting Complaints-Any member of the school community who believes that s/he has been the victim of harassment (as defined above) by an administrator, teacher, pupil, visitor, or other personnel of the Orange Public Schools, or who has knowledge of any of the above, must report the alleged acts as soon as possible. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report.

A harassment complaint may be made to the principal or his/her designee. If the complaint involves a staff member, the complainant should file their report with either the building principal or the superintendent of schools.

Upon receiving a complaint, whoever receives it, will immediately notify the building principal, who will oversee an investigation and who will serve as the complaint hearing officer. The building principal or designee will address the concern in a timely manner. Within ten (10) working days, the principal will forward all formal complaints to the superintendent of schools.

Investigation- The principal, or designee, will consider every report of harassment seriously and will investigate all reports in a timely manner. The Director of Pupil Services will assist the school hearing officer, as needed, in the investigative procedures and identification and delivery of all necessary services to concerned individuals.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any other individuals who may have knowledge of the alleged incidents(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the principal or designee should consider the surrounding circumstances, any relevant documents, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the relationships between the parties involved. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this procedure requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. Special care will be taken to make sure that the person(s) accused of harassment has full and fair opportunity to explain his/her side of the story.

In the event that students are involved in allegations as victim, perpetrator, or witnesses, the principal will notify the parents/caregivers of the allegations in a timely manner using appropriate discretion in the notification.



Whenever possible, the principal will complete the investigation and report within ten (10) school days after the complaint has been filed indicating whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual or not. There will be no reprisal against the person filing the complaint whether or not the complaint is sustained. If the allegations are sustained, the principal, or in a case against an employee, the Superintendent (or designee) must take immediate corrective and/or disciplinary action to resolve the situation. Such action may include, but is not limited to, requiring an apology, direction to stop the offensive behavior, counseling or education, warning, suspension, exclusion, transfer, expulsion, or discharge.

Anyone who is disciplined under this procedure will have the right to appeal to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) working days of receipt of the concluding report.

Alleged abuse by a parent, caregiver, school staff, or other caretaker will be reported to the Department of Social Services according to school policy and procedure. If allegations warrant, the local law enforcement agency will be notified.

Confidentiality-The Orange Elementary Public Schools recognize that both the complainant and the alleged harasser have strong interests in maintaining the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and all witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate.

Provision against retaliation-Retaliation against a complainant or witnesses will not be tolerated. The Orange Elementary Public Schools will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school community member who retaliates against:

- Any person who reports alleged harassment
- Any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of harassment
- Any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing related to an allegation of harassment

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.



Dissemination of procedure -This procedure will be included in all handbooks (faculty and student) and will be made available in all main offices. Faculty members, parents/caregivers and students will be informed of this procedure annually. Faculty members will be trained in the identification and prevention of all of the type of harassment discussed in this document.

Please refer to details in the policy manual on line at www.orange-elem.org

USE OF THE INTERNET

Philosophy - It is the intention of the Orange School Committee to provide all students with the opportunity to understand and to use computers and to access the educational resources available through the computer Internet. The Committee recognizes that some materials available on the internet are clearly not appropriate for elementary school children and that additional material may be considered inappropriate by some parents/caregivers. The policies, which follow, are designed to facilitate the best use of computers and of the internet, to avoid that use which is inappropriate or illegal, and to invite the support of parents and caregivers in achieving these goals.

All access to the internet must be in support of the educational objectives of the Orange Elementary Schools.

Teachers and staff members will assist students to use the Internet in ways that are appropriate to our educational mission. However, the Committee disclaims that it is impossible to prevent inappropriate use by every student at all times.

Uses considered inappropriate include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of inappropriate language, e.g. vulgarities
- Illegal activities, including the violation of copyright protections
- Claiming the work of others as one's own
- Revealing one's personal address or phone, or that of another person
- Sharing one's personal account with another, or leaving it open and unattended
- Using an account which belongs to another
- The unauthorized infiltration of another computer system
- The sending of materials or messages likely to be offensive to the recipient(s).



CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DANGEROUS WEAPONS, ASSAULT, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

The Orange Elementary Schools prohibit the use of any alcoholic or tobacco products, drugs or dangerous weapons within the school buildings, on the school grounds, on school busses, at any off-campus athletic, educational or social event sponsored by the school. Massachusetts' law prohibits smoking in or on any school property. This includes the parking lots in all schools.

The possession of dangerous weapons, or the use of any item as a weapon, is prohibited on school grounds and school busses, and in school buildings and this prohibition applies to both students and staff and includes off-campus athletic or educational events. All types of toy weapons are also prohibited on school property. Any physical assault upon any staff member, professional or support staff or other children is prohibited.

The possession, consumption and/or distribution of an alcoholic beverage on the school grounds or school busses or in school buildings is prohibited and this prohibition applies to both students and staff and applies also to off-campus athletic or educational events.

Violation of any of these prohibitions by a student will result in an immediate conference between the principal and the parent(s) or caregiver(s) who will determine together the appropriate response, which may include one or more of the following:

- In-school counseling
- Outside drug or alcohol counseling / treatment
- Suspension from school
- Notification of the police

The Educational Reform Act of 1993 contains provisions, which may apply, and, as required, the provisions are printed here.

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94 C including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.



(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, at his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b) provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that, in his/her opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a fact determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the superintendent of the sending school shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the pupil's expulsion.



FOOD, HEALTH, AND SUPPORT SERVICES

FOOD SERVICES

Children need healthy meals to learn. The Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) which are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Service. The USDA maintains, and frequently updates, rules and regulations on nutritional standards and meal pattern requirements for NSLP & SBP that we must meet every day.

Universal Free Schools Meals

Universal free school meals for all students is now permanent in Massachusetts! To qualify for a free school meal, at all school levels, students must take a Complete Reimbursable Meal' that meets all nutritional requirements. Otherwise, a la carte prices apply. You can view your student's transaction history for Free through your account on MySchoolBucks.com

Reimbursable Meals

A Reimbursable Breakfast occurs when a student selects 3 items from the offered selection of whole grains, milk, and fruits, and where at least one of the three items selected is a ½ cup of fruit. 1 Milk is included with a Reimbursable Breakfast but is not required to be selected. Additional milks are considered 'A La Carte' and are charged accordingly. Each Student is allowed 1 Reimbursable Breakfast per day, a second breakfast or additional 'entree item' is considered 'A La Carte' and is charged accordingly. Some examples of a reimbursable breakfast are...

1. a small bowl of cereal, graham crackers, an apple, a 100% fruit juice, and 1 milk
2. a granola bar, a 100% fruit juice, and a box of raisins
3. a strawberry cup, a fresh orange, and a milk
4. a large muffin and a 100% fruit juice



Every day for lunch we offer students a whole grain, a meat/meat alternate (plant/animal-based protein), a 1% or skim milk, and unlimited fruits and vegetables. Students may choose to take all 5 components offered for a Reimbursable Lunch, but at minimum they must select at least 3 where 1 component is a ½ cup of fruit or vegetable. 1 Milk is included with a Reimbursable Lunch but is not required to be selected. Additional milks are considered 'A La Carte' and are charged accordingly. Each Student is allowed 1 Reimbursable Lunch per day, a second lunch or 'additional entree item' is considered 'A La Carte' and is charged accordingly. Some examples of a reimbursable lunch are...

1. a grilled chicken filet, steamed brown rice, roasted squash, fresh apple slices, and a milk
2. a slice of pizza and a strawberry cup
3. corn & black bean salad, a fresh orange, and a milk
4. a single yogurt, granola, and blueberry parfait

Lunch Menus & Nutrition Information

For all levels, parents, guardians, and students can access daily interactive menus on the school website. Each lunch or breakfast menu item includes full nutritional information, including allergens. An 'A La Carte' price list is also posted on your school's website and may be subject to change annually.

Payments

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 recommends prepaying for any a la carte purchase through an account at MySchoolBucks.com. The money placed on your students MySchoolBucks.com account will be accessible at both Orange Elementary School and Ralph C. Mahar Regional school. MySchoolBucks.com, accepts credit card payments, each student has an individual account, and parents/guardians may make a deposit that applies to as many of their children as they like. Each deposit requires \$3.25 program fee that goes to our third party vendor, Heartland. While a contactless check out system through [MySchoolBucks.com](https://www.myschoolbucks.com) is our preferred method of payment, we do also accept personal checks and cash on site in our schools and cafeteria's.



Special Dietary Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), P.L. 110-325 amended the Federal definition of disability, broadening it to cover additional individuals. A “person with a disability” means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more “Major Life Activities” and/or “Major Bodily Functions”, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. Some food allergies are classified as a disability while others require special dietary accommodations. The Nine Major Allergens Include: Milk, Eggs, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Wheat, Soybeans, Sesame, Fish, and Shellfish. If your student requires a meal accommodation due to a disability, such as a food allergy, please be sure to complete the Meal Modification Request Form found on our website. This form should be signed by a licensed physician, or a State recognized medical authority and returned to your school’s nurse who will then communicate it to the food services department.

Civil Rights in the USDA

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of these protected classes: race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age. Massachusetts state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of the federal protected classes, but also includes religious creed, gender identity, mental illness, genetics, active military, criminal record, and ancestry. Any person alleging discrimination based on a protected class, in regard to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), has the right to file a complaint within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. Complaints can be accepted verbally, in writing, anonymously, and from third party representatives to the Food Service Director.

The School Nutrition Team looks forward to providing your student with a delicious and nutritious meal. If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback please reach out to your Food Service Director at:

Katrina Bressani
R.C. Mahar Regional School District
Orange Elementary School
P.O. Box 680
507 South Main Street
Orange, MA 01364
Office Phone: 978-544-2542, then press 8
kbressani@rcmahar.org

For more information on our district’s wellness policy, click [here](#).

READING SUPPORT

All schools provide students with extra reading support when needed. This may be in the form of in-class small group support or, at times, pull out-support. School personnel will notify parents/caregivers if their child will be receiving any special reading services.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL)

The Orange Elementary Schools offers English Language Learner (ELL) services to any qualifying student in grades Pre K through Grade Six. Upon enrollment in the Orange Elementary Schools, families complete a home language survey according to Federal law. If the language survey indicates that students have a native language other than English, then students are screened using the State approved language screener. Should the screening indicate the need for ELL services, then such services will be provided in accordance with State guidelines by a licensed ELL teacher. In addition, all ELL students will receive their general education and, if applicable, special education services in a sheltered English immersion (SEI) setting. All core academic teachers who provide educational services to ELL students are required by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to be Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsed.

Students enrolled in the ELL program are required by State law to participate in ACCESS testing annually in grade Kindergarten through Grade 12. While families may choose to opt their child(ren) out of ELL programming, students are still mandated to participate in annual ACCESS testing. In addition to annual ACCESS results, families will also receive periodic progress monitoring of their child(ren)'s progress in gaining English proficiency, such progress monitoring is distributed with students' report cards.

All ELL students are required to participate in MCAS testing, except for the English Language Arts (ELA) MCAS for the first year they are enrolled in Massachusetts schools.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Children in need of special education services are provided these services under the state law. The Director of Special Education is charged with overall responsibility of this complex program. Special Education services do not "label" youngsters who are participants. These children now are receiving much the same services as before but are identified only as receiving those services on the basis of how much of their school day is spent with paraprofessional educator supports, small group work, or in a separate program. Inclusion settings with typical and identified students are available at each grade level.



"Child in need of special education" is a child who has been determined to need special education in accordance with the provisions of 321.0, or has been referred to a program described in 502.7 (home or hospital program). Such determination or referral shall be based upon a finding that a child, because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties or attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional or physical factors, cerebral dysfunctions, perceptual factors, or other specific learning impairments, or any combination thereof, is unable to progress effectively in a regular education program and requires special education. Pursuant to M.G.L. c71B, 1, no child shall be determined to be a school age child with special needs solely because the child's behavior violates the school's disciplinary code. Children of ages three and four shall qualify as children in need of special education if, because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties or attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional or physical factors, cerebral dysfunctions, perceptual factors, or other specific learning impairments, or any combination thereof, they would be unable to progress effectively in a developmentally appropriate education program and would require special education.

If you have a child who you feel is in need of special education services, but is not receiving them, you are asked to contact either the Director of Special Education (978 544-2542 x 265) or the principal of the building.

A pre-referral team will then begin to discuss potential modifications to the child's educational program. If, after a time, a student is still experiencing difficulty, a referral for an evaluation may be made, with you as the parent/caregiver becoming a part of the evaluation team.



SECTION 504

Section 504 is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination based on a disability. A person may be considered disabled under the definition of Section 504 if the individual:

- Has a mental illness or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

If a student experiences educational difficulties, a School Based Student Support Team meets to discuss the concerns and suggest intervention strategies to help correct the difficulties. If the strategies are unsuccessful, the team can make a referral for evaluation.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Orange Elementary Schools is offering two programs designed to foster the language and social development among 3 to 5 year old children. The programs provide in-school services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and preschool evaluations for children in need of early intervention and integration into the school based setting.

The number of children serviced varies from year to year depending on funds available. If you are interested in these programs you need to contact Ainsley Jackson, Early Childhood Education Coordinator at 987-544-0018.

HEALTH SERVICES

MassHealth MUNICIPAL MEDICAID PROGRAM

The Orange Elementary Schools have entered into an agreement with the Division of Medical Assistance, the agency that administers the MassHealth program in Massachusetts, to help coordinate health care services for students enrolled in MassHealth. This allows us to work directly with each child's doctor, and other medical providers, to meet the child's health care needs.



Any information the Orange Elementary Schools receive from your child's doctor or other health care provider will be kept in a health file separate from their regular student record. It will only be accessible to you, as the child's parent or caregiver, and school personnel directly involved in the delivery of healthcare services to your child.

In order for the Orange Elementary Schools to effectively communicate with healthcare providers, parents/caregivers will be asked to sign a release of information form. It will allow the school nurse to discuss with the doctor necessary and important medical information, such as the results of health screenings for vision and hearing, the need for certain immunizations, or other health care concerns that may arise. If we have concerns about your child's health, or we believe your child needs further health care services from his / her doctor or health care maintenance organization, we will contact you before we contact or make a referral to your child's doctor, except in cases of emergency.

SCHOOL PHYSICIAN

Parents/caregivers usually have the family physician give their kindergarten student the required physical examination before entering school. Physical examinations are required before entering the second grade and fifth grade. The School Physician is annually retained by the School Committee as a consultant for handling situations which require expert medical opinion.

SCHOOL NURSE

The school nurse is familiar to the students because it is usually this person they see for minor injury on the playground or in school. Besides rendering such services, the school nurse is a very important resource for both parents/caregivers and school personnel. The school nurse is also very much involved with public relations because of the many sensitive areas that might be involved. For example, the school nurse advises parents/caregivers when their child(ren) must be excluded for head lice (pediculosis).



The nurse is responsible for all vision and hearing testing, weighing and measuring with follow-up regarding defects or abnormalities needing correction. A special screening is provided for all students in Grade 5 and 6 for the early identification of scoliosis (a spine curvature situation that is often correctable if treated early).

The school nurse also keeps the health records up to date so that they provide meaningful data to personnel interested in the student.

Medication: Must be prescribed by a physician and dispensed by the school nurse.

YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH

Students who become ill in school will be cared for until the caregiver or caregiver substitute can be notified. In case of accident "First Aid" will be given. "First Aid is the immediate and temporary care given before the services of a physician can be secured." Although the school will provide proper care of children in case of accident or sickness, the responsibility for the treatment of the child by a physician rests with the parents/caregivers. The school's obligation extends to placing the sick or injured in the care of the parent/caregiver or parent /caregiver substitute who will be asked to furnish the transportation of the sick or injured child.

The emergency information provided by the home will be the primary source of information for the action taken. It is very important that the student's parent or guardian fill out an Emergency Information form completely for each child in the family and keep it up to date regarding changes in address home, cell, and work phone numbers, etc. Please include cell phone and work numbers.



REMINDER

All children aged 0-18 are eligible for free or reduced-cost health coverage. MassHealth is available to those who meet the income guidelines, and for those who don't, the Children's Medical Security Plan is available. Information about these plans is available from Healthy Connections at 978 249-5634. It is important to obtain health coverage before an accident or illness occurs.

COMMON COLD

The first three days of a cold are the most infectious period. To prevent the spread of germs, the child should be kept at home until his explosive cough, sneezing and watery nasal discharge have begun to wane.

SOILING AND WETTING

Occasionally, children do have soiling and wetting accidents. For preschool procedures concerning this issue, please refer to the Early Childhood Handbook. In grades K-6, if your child soils or wets, and is unable to clean and change themselves, it is expected that you will come and pick him/her up, clean and change him/her and return him/her back to school provided it is before 1:30 in the afternoon. After 1:30, they may remain at home.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Minimum Quarantine for the Following Diseases:

Chicken Pox - One week from the appearance of eruptions and until all lesions are dried.

Scarlet Fever - May return to school 24 hours after start of antibiotic, provided therapy will continue for at least 10 days. When returning to school after having one of the above diseases, it would be advisable to have the school nurse check the child.

HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)

Each year we feel it necessary to remind parents/caregivers of the problem the schools have with Head Lice (Pediculosis). Any child's hair, no matter how many times it is washed, can pick up this common pest from someone else's person or clothing. Unfortunately, the schools are often a place where an infestation can occur because of the large number of children together in one place.



If you find evidence of head lice, please notify the school immediately so that we can have the school nurse check the child's classmates to see if pediculosis has spread. The treatment for head lice is:

1. Check all other members of family for signs.
2. Shampoo hair vigorously for 5 to 15 minutes (depending on amount of hair) with either Kwell Shampoo (RX)*, A-22 Rinse, Pyrinate Liquid Rinse, Cuprex Rinse.
3. Rinse hair thoroughly.
4. Dry with towel.
5. Comb with a fine steel comb to get any remaining nits.
6. Also Be Sure To:
 - Wash all clothing and place in the dryer on a hot setting.
 - Iron clothes with a hot iron.
 - Disinfect any toilet articles such as comb.
 - Air out hats, pillow, etc., and brush thoroughly.
 - Place all stuffed toys in a securely tied plastic bag for 2 weeks.
 - Clean upholstered furniture with appropriate disinfectant

Should you require further information, we recommend you contact your family physician.

*RX preparations listed above are not available at your pharmacy without a prescription; ask your family doctor for a prescription.

Based on the latest recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), students diagnosed with head lice will not be restricted from attending school. If nits or live lice are discovered at school, the nurse will notify parents/caregivers of findings and discuss an appropriate treatment plan.



IMMUNIZATION OF STUDENTS

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school system, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent/caregiver stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent/caregiver.

STUDENT RECORDS

603 CMR 23.00: Department of Education Student Records

In September 1995, the Commonwealth issued regulations consistent with the Education Reform Act and federal law, which were promulgated to insure parent/caregiver and student's rights of confidentiality, inspection amendment, and destruction of student records. Basically these regulations are:

- Provides specific rights to students who are either 14 or are entering ninth grade whichever occurs first.
- Below that age the rights are the parents/caregivers.
- Between the age of 14-18 both the student and parent/caregiver can exercise the rights.
- Beyond age 18, the student has these rights alone but, if the student wishes to expressly deny the parent's/caregiver's rights, they must do so in writing.

The student's records are now open to the parent/caregiver or student in entirety and access by others to the record is severely limited. The record or parts of it may be challenged and/or amended. There is also an elaborate appeals procedure should the parent/caregiver or student object to content within the record.

If a student seeks or intends to transfer to another school, the authorized school personnel of that school may have access to such student's record without the consent of the eligible student or parent/caregiver.

Copies of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent/caregiver and student rights are available from the schools at the parent's/caregiver's request.

As of 1998, Massachusetts Law (General Laws, Ch. 71, Section 34H) specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents/caregivers who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the school principal.



APPENDIX A (DISCIPLINE CONTINUED)

TERMS USED IN THIS POLICY

Behavior Intervention Plan: An individualized student plan that describes problematic behavior and provides a prescriptive menu of incentives and consequences based on the function of the behaviors to replace the problematic behavior with appropriate behavior.

Safe and Supportive School Environments: Includes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design.

Student Interventions: Disciplinary responses to violations in the Code of Conduct that do not involve removal from class or suspensions, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, behavioral contracts and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Principal: The instructional leader or headmaster of a public school, or his or her designee, for purposes of school disciplinary matters.

Parent: A student's father, mother, or legal caregiver, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or legal guardian/caregiver.

Superintendent: The chief executive officer employed by a school committee or board of trustees to administer a school system, charter school, or virtual school pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §§59, 59A, 89, or 94, or his or her designee appointed for purposes of conducting a student disciplinary hearing.

Temporary Removal from Class: Removal of the student from his/her assigned classroom to a comparable educational program within the school building for up to one (1) school day. Beyond one (1) school day, removal constitutes an in-house suspension.

In-House Suspension: Removal of the student from the regular classroom activities, but not the school premises. In school suspensions of ten (10) or fewer days consecutively or cumulatively is not considered a "short-term suspension." In house suspensions of more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days will be considered a "long-term suspension" for due process purposes. Students must be able to make progress in school including doing work, taking tests/quizzes, receive information about long term assignments and other similar classroom activities during the in-house suspension period.



Short Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for:
Elementary 1-3 school days*

Short term suspensions resulting in ten (10) or more days of suspension, cumulatively, for multiple disciplinary purposes in any school year will be considered a long term suspension for due process purposes.

*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out of school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Long Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and/or regular classroom activities for:
Elementary 3-6 school days*

Long term suspensions may be served in school.

*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out of school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Emergency Suspension: A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following a suspendable offense where continued presence in the school building posing a danger to persons or property and materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and in the principal's judgment there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such cases, the principal must immediately notify the superintendent or designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student. A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Indefinite Suspension: Exclusion from a school for a period of time from ten (10) to ninety (90) school days due to a felony charge and a determination that continued presence will have a substantial detrimental effect on school's general welfare. The suspension shall continue pending adjudication of the case. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.



Expulsion: Removal of the student from the school premises, regular classroom activities and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days or permanently. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.

Alternative School Transfer: (Secondary Only) Decision made by the Superintendent or designee following a district process documenting repeated violations or a single episode of severity causing a threat to the safety of others.

School Wide Educational Service Plan: A document developed by the principal which includes a list of educational services available to students who are suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. Such a plan will detail the events and activities which represent the student's opportunity to continue to receive educational services and make progress while out on discipline.

DUE PROCESS

IN HOUSE SUSPENSION OF TEN (10) OR LESS CONSECUTIVE OR CUMULATIVE DAYS

At a hearing at which an in-house suspension is to be imposed, the principal/designee must:

- a) Advise the student of the disciplinary offense(s) charged and the basis for the charge.
- b) Provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charge or explain the circumstances. If charges are substantiated then the student is informed of the length of the in-house suspension.
- c) Make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally on the same day the decision for an in-house suspension is imposed of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension.
- d) Invite the parents to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, as well as strategies for student engagement and responses to the behavior. The meeting shall be scheduled on the date of suspension, if possible, or soon thereafter. Two (2) attempts to contact the parents must be documented under such circumstances.



Following the decision to impose an in-house suspension, the principal/designee must send written notice to the parents and invite the parents to meet if the parents were unavailable for a meeting after oral notice. This notice must be forwarded by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

During in-house suspensions, the student must be able to make progress in school, is able to do his/her work, take tests, quizzes, receive information about assigned long-term assignments and other similar classroom activities.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (SHORT/LONG TERM)

Prior to the suspension, the principal or designee must:

Provide written notice to the parent in plain language English and home language that states:

- (a) All charges;
- (b) Basis for the charges
- (c) The reason for the potential exclusion; and
- (d) Provides an opportunity for a “meeting” or “hearing” with the principal and the date, time and location of the meeting/hearing where parents are given the opportunity to discuss the student’s conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.
- (e) The right to interpreter services at the meeting, if relevant, and
- (f) If long-term suspension is a possibility, then notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent as an appeal if the principal does suspend the student for longer than ten (10) consecutive days.
- (g) If long term suspension is a possibility, notice must also include the following:

Prior to the hearing, the student/parent is afforded the opportunity review the student record and documents on which Principal/designee may rely.

The student has the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person and his/her own expense.

- The student has the right to produce witnesses and to present the student’s explanation of the incident. Student witnesses / victims do not have to be summoned if the Principal/designee specifically rules, orally or in writing, at the hearing that identification of the student witness, or the presence of a known witness / victim at the hearing, would endanger his or her physical safety or cause intimidation. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a caregiver if under 18 years of age.
- Student has the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a caregiver if under 18 years of age.
- The student has the right to request that the hearing be recorded and to receive a copy of the audio recording if an audio recording is requested by the principal.



Parental participation and evidence to secure is required –The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The regulations continue that “reasonable efforts” are made with written notice AND two (2) attempts to contact the parents. Written notice includes hand-delivery, certified mail, first class mail or email to an address provided by the parent.

In all cases of out of school suspensions for PreK-Grade 3, the principal/designee must send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent/Designee explaining the reasons for an out of school suspension BEFORE the suspension takes place.

AFTER THE MEETING/HEARING:

Determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense. If so, determine after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, the remedy or consequence to be imposed, in place of or in addition to a suspension.

Send the written determination to the student and parents by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal/designees and the parents.

Prepare a written determination that:

- Identifies the disciplinary offense, the date of and participants at the hearing.
- Sets out the key facts and conclusion reached by the principal/designee.
- Identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, and the date of return to school.
- In the case of a long term suspension, informs of the right to appeal the principal/designees’ decision to the superintendent/designee, which shall be in plain language in English and the primary language of the home and contains the process for appealing the decision

EMERGENCY SUSPENSIONS

A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following the date of the emergency suspension if the student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property or material and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal’s / designees judgment, there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption.



Principal/designee must immediately notify the Superintendent/designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student. During the two (2) day emergency suspension, the principal/designee must make reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and parents of the emergency suspension, the reason for the removal, and must also notify them of the process in oral and written form and in the primary language of the home if not English.

The notice must include the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up work assignments or other school work, as needed, to make academic progress during the period of removal. This notice must be forwarded by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing, with the principal, consistent with the hearing for a short/long term suspension.

Provide the parents an opportunity to attend the hearing before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal/designees, student, and parent.

Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day consistent with the decision issued for a short/long term suspension.

APPEALS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Long term suspensions (more than 10 consecutive or cumulative days) may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee upon the filing of a written appeal by the parent or student. The following appeals process must be followed:

- Student or parents must file a written notice with the Superintendent/designee within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long term suspension subject to an extension of the filing, upon agreement with the Superintendent/designee for up to a total of seven (7) calendar days.
- Long term suspension remains in effect unless and until the Superintendent/designee decides to reverse the principal's decision.
- The Superintendent/designee must send written notice to the parent of the date, time and location of the hearing and must make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing process.



- Students shall have all the right afforded the student at the principal / designees hearing for long-term suspension.
- Hearing shall be held within three (3) school days of the request subject to an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days.
- A tape recording of the appeal at the Superintendent/designee level must be made and a copy must be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The Superintendent / designees written decision must be made within five (5) calendar days. If it is determined the offense was committed, the decision must state the consequence, which may be the same or lesser than the principal/designee but shall not be greater than that that imposed by the principal/designee.
- The Superintendent's /designee's decision is final.



DISCIPLINING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (MASS LAW)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

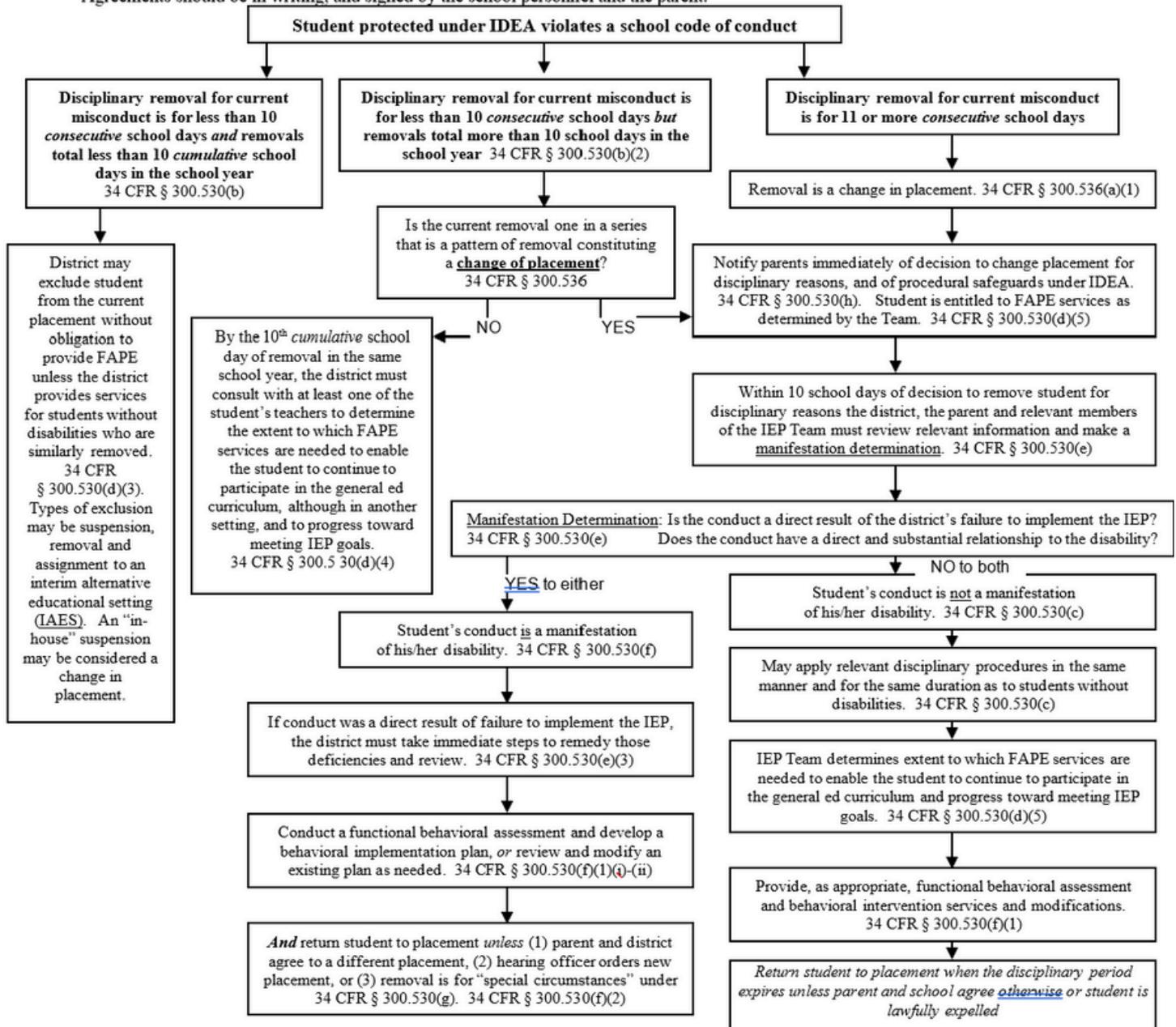
For a discipline flow chart, see next page.



Discipline of Special Education Students Under IDEA 2004

20 U.S.C. § 1415(k) and 34 CFR §§ 300.530-300.536

- This chart should be read in conjunction with discipline procedures in state law, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H & 37H1/2, and district-wide and school-wide student codes of conduct.
- Protections in the IDEA apply to students who have been found eligible for special education and to students for whom the school is deemed to have knowledge that the child might have a disability (i.e., students who have not yet been found eligible but the school had a basis of knowledge of a disability, including students who have been referred for initial evaluation). 34 CFR § 300.354
- Beginning on the 11th school day of a student's disciplinary removal during the school year, and if removal is a change in placement, the student must be provided free appropriate public education (FAPE) services during the period of removal to allow him/her to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and progress towards IEP goals, even if in a different setting. 34 CFR § 300.530(b) & (d).
- If the conduct that the student is being disciplined for involves the "special circumstances" of weapons, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or serious bodily injury, school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, regardless of the manifestation determination. 34 CFR § 300.530(g). The IEP Team must determine the IAES.
- Although the following flowchart lays out the steps that a school district must take when disciplining a student with a disability, it is important to remember that at any point the parent and school district can agree to change a student's placement for disciplinary reasons. Agreements should be in writing, and signed by the school personnel and the parent.

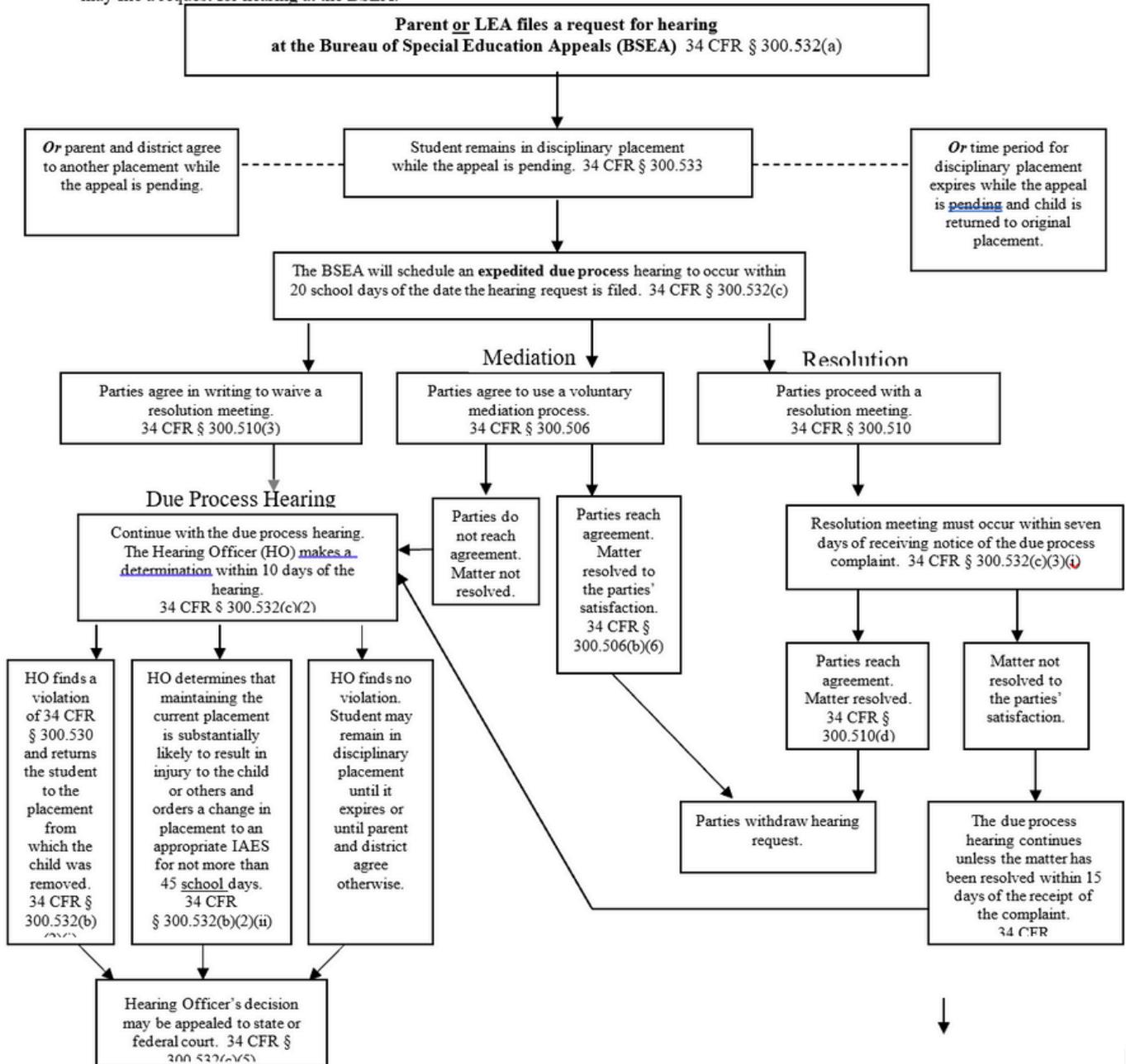




Appeals Process for Disciplinary Placement Decisions for Students with Disabilities Under IDEA 2004: 20 U.S.C. § 1415(k) and 34 CFR §§ 300.532-300.533

Who may file an appeal of a disciplinary decision?

- A parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding the child's disciplinary placement, or the manifestation determination, may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA). Reasons for appeal may include but are not limited to disagreement with the student's removal to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES), disagreement regarding the manifestation determination, disagreement regarding the determination of whether the removal is a change of placement, disagreement regarding the educational services the student receives during the period of removal, and disagreement regarding the functional behavioral assessment and/or implementation of a behavioral intervention plan. 34 CFR §§ 300.530-300.531.
- An LEA that believes that maintaining the student's current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or others may file a request for hearing at the BSEA.





Student Discipline under IDEA

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

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

Prior knowledge is defined by the District as follows:

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

The District does not assert IDEA protection if any of the circumstances listed below has occurred:

District exception to prior knowledge:

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



No Prior Knowledge:

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