

# Abington Public Schools Grades Pre K – 6 Handbook For Parents and Students

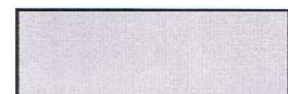


Dear Parents,

Abington Elementary Student Hand

The Abington administration and staff welcome you to Abington Public Schools. We are pleased to offer your child a variety of opportunities all provided at the highest professional level. We take great pride in our traditional heritage and special pride in our Vision Statement and District and School Goals for the future.

Abington Elementary Student Ha



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**Goals and Objectives**

STUDENT

To improve student performan

Abington Elementary Student Ha

SCHOOL COM

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Abington High School	7:25 a.m. - 1:57 p.m.
Abington Jr. High School	7:25 a.m. - 1:45 p. m.
Center School	

8:15 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.  
Woodsdale School  
8:45 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.

Early Childhood Center  
PreSchool & Kindergarten  
9:10 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.  
12:35 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.  
Grades 1 and 2  
9:10 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

### **Screening**

A pre-school screening program for 3, 4, and 5 year olds, as mandated by Chapter 766, will be conducted each spring. This program is designed to identify children with learning problems. This screening is not a complete diagnostic assessment; however, it is used by teachers and administrators for educational purposes. Parents can expect to receive the screening results sometime in April. The results will be very general and significant only in the few instances where a child will need additional evaluation.

### **School Entrance Requirements**

Children are eligible to enter kindergarten in September if they attain their fifth birthday anniversary on or before August 31 of that school year. Children are eligible to enter Grade 1 in September if they attain their sixth birthday anniversary on or before August 31 of that school year.

### **Registration**

Registration for children who are entering kindergarten or grade 1 in September will be conducted in conjunction with the pre-school screening during the early spring. The following materials are required in accordance with Massachusetts Law and must be completed prior to any child entering school in September for the first time:

1. Health History
2. Birth Certificate
3. Physical Examination must be no sooner than September 1<sup>st</sup> of year prior to student entering kindergarten or grade 1.
4. Certificate of immunization against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, (series of 5); measles, mumps, rubella, (series of 2); poliomyelitis, (series of 4); hepatitis B (series of 3); varicella vaccine or physician's documentation that the child has had chicken pox illness, proof of current lead level testing, and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.
5. Proof of residency will be required.

### **Visitors**

The staff and administration of the Abington Public Schools welcome parents to play an active role in the life of the schools. Every effort is made to provide an atmosphere in the schools in which parents and other visitors feel comfortable. Security measures will require that all visitors sign in and report to the office. Knowing who is in the building is important primarily for safety reasons, but disruption of classrooms and of the learning process also becomes a factor when visitors are seen roaming the corridors or entering classrooms unannounced. Video surveillance cameras may be in use and visitors may be asked for positive photo identification.

### **Dress Code**

The appearance of any student is primarily the responsibility of the student and his/her parents or guardians. No style or type of clothing can be worn that distracts or endangers the health, safety, welfare of the school community, limits participation in any activity or disrupts an environment conducive to the educational process. Students will comply with reasonable request of any staff member regarding hats, student dress and/or inadequate clothing. The wearing of hats or caps within the school building is prohibited without special permission.

### **Attendance**

Learning needs to be valued as an ongoing process that requires the daily interaction of students with their peers and teachers. Student absences do affect the learning process. While a student may make up the paper work missed, he/she can never duplicate the learning experiences lost by that day's absence.

**Students are expected to be in school every day. Parents must notify the school if the child is to be absent, tardy or dismissed. A written note must be submitted for each absence stating the date and reason for the absence.**

Tardiness is highly disruptive. Except in extenuating circumstances, students are expected to be on time for school. A student who is tardy must submit a note for the tardiness unless the school has been notified by telephone. Chronic absences, tardiness and dismissals will be carefully monitored by the principal. In extreme cases, the school security officer will be notified.

Students being dismissed must have written notification submitted to the office. The time and reason for the dismissal should be included with the name of the person with whom the child will be dismissed.

If a student is dismissed prior to completing three school hours, the student will be marked absent for the day.

### **Attendance on Stormy Days**

As an alternative to closing school for a full day, the Abington School Committee has in place a 90-minute delayed opening schedule. This schedule may be used on bad weather days when it appears as if the weather and/or road conditions will improve enough in the early morning to allow schools to open. If the decision is made to delay the opening of school by 90 minutes or to cancel school, the message will be broadcast over Radio Stations WBZ, WBET, WJDA, WHDH, WPLM, WATD and WRKO after 6:00 a.m.

**Please do not telephone and tie up necessary school, police or fire phone lines.**

**90 Minute Delayed Opening Schedule**

	<b>Classes Start</b>	<b>Classes Dismissed</b>
Abington High School	8:55 a.m.	1:57 p.m.
Frolio Jr. High School	8:55 a.m.	1:45 p.m.
Center	9:45 a.m.	2:20 p.m.
Woodsdale School	10:15 a.m.	2:50 p.m.
* Early Childhood Center	10:40 a.m.	3:15 p.m.

*No morning pre-school or kindergarten sessions.*

**Supervision Procedures**

There is no regular supervision provided on the elementary school grounds for grades 3 through 6 prior to twenty-five minutes before the start of school. There is no supervision provided for grades K-2 before school. Therefore, the schools cannot assume responsibility for children who arrive prior to that time. Normally, children will be allowed to enter school buildings not earlier than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the start of the school day. However, during inclement weather or on extremely cold days, children will be allowed to enter school buildings when the buses are on site.

No children are allowed in the building unless under supervision of the classroom teacher or other school personnel. Pupils are to leave the building and school grounds promptly at the close of school unless engaged in school supervised activities.

**Telephone Use**

Students will be permitted to use the telephones in the office only in case of an emergency. No calls will be allowed for forgotten books, assignments, lunch money, lunch, instruments, etc.

**Incidental Expenses**

During the course of the school year, there are several expenses for items and activities which are optional.

School pictures of students are taken but their purchase is voluntary.

School lunches or milk, juice and ice cream are available in all schools. Children may bring their lunch from home and buy milk. Free and reduced lunch applications are distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year. In the event the economic circumstances of household change during the year, application or re-application for free or reduced lunches may be made.

Kindergarten snacks are provided on a daily basis for the kindergarten pupils. It consists of a small snack plus milk or juice. The price and method of payment on a yearly basis will be explained by the kindergarten teachers.

Student accident insurance: Applications will be made available to all students at the beginning of the school year. The cost is set by the insurance company and varies from year to year.

**Standardized Testing**

The following standardized tests are administered to elementary students:

Massachusetts Grade 3, 4, 5 & 6  
Comprehensive Assessment System

Achievement Test - grades and years of testing to be determined by administration

Individual assessments by specialists will be performed as needed throughout the year with prior permission of parents. All test information is open to parents and may be requested at any time.

**Health Services**

The health office is available to students during the school day. A registered nurse is available for health counseling, emergency health services when a student is ill, and for intervention regarding any student's health concerns.

When a student becomes ill, s/he should obtain permission from a teacher and go to the health office. If the nurse is not in the building, students should report to the office first. If a student is sufficiently ill, the parent or guardian will be notified, and the student dismissed to the parent/guardian or designated adult.

Parents/guardians should notify the school nurse of all extended illnesses so that the nurse can be the medical liaison between the home and school and make any necessary accommodations. Students should present a certificate from their physician after recovery from a communicable disease before re-entering school. Students may also be required to present a doctor's certificate after an absence of five or more consecutive days occasioned by illness.

State law requires all students to have current immunizations to be able to attend school. Parents of any student who do not have the required immunization will be notified of the situation and the student will be excluded from school and school activities until the immunizations are obtained. We request that any time a child receives immunizations from a source outside school, parents provide the school health office with a copy of the immunizations from the physician.

Accident reports are filed by the staff member and are submitted to the office when an accident occurs requiring medical attention. If a student is injured after school on school grounds, the accident should be reported to the nurse as soon as possible after the accident.

### **Medication Policies**

*Medication should be given at home whenever possible. In the event medication needs to be given during the school time, a signed parent consent form must be completed. Any medication to be given more than ten (10) school days must have a signed physician order form. All medication must be brought by the parent or guardian to the health office. The medication must be in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled bottle.*

**No student is allowed to carry any medication with them during school hours or functions.** This includes prescription and over the counter medicines. In the event a parent wants a child to receive Tylenol/ibuprofen, etc. for pain, headaches, etc. a consent form must be signed for the nurse to administer these medications. Any student found to be carrying any medication (prescription and/or over the counter) will be subject to the Student Behavior Code.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills at regular intervals are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. The teacher in the classroom will give the students instruction.

### **School Evacuation Plans**

Each elementary school has an evacuation policy to take effect if the need arises for an emergency evacuation. This policy will be sent home each fall to be reviewed by parents with their children.

### **Electronic Equipment**

Electronic devices such as radios and electronic games can disrupt normal school activities and can distract both students and teachers. Such devices are not allowed in school, on school property or on the school bus.

Cell phones/pagers can also be detrimental to the school environment and therefore, parents are discouraged from allowing their children to bring cell phones/pagers to school. However, where there are extenuating circumstances regarding the walk to and from school or to and from the bus stop, parents may contact the principal.

The school can not be held responsible for the disappearance of or damage to electronic equipment brought to school.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **MANDATED TOWN-PAID TRANSPORTATION**

Under Massachusetts General Laws, transportation at town expense shall be furnished to all Abington pupils grades K-6 who live two miles or more from the school they attend. Transportation at town expense is based solely on the student's home address and is only for transportation between the student's home bus stop and the school he/she attends. Additionally, transportation shall be provided at town expense for children whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) requires such transportation or whose physical condition makes such transportation necessary as stated in an (IEP).

### **NON MANDATED FEE-BASED TRANSPORTATION**

The Fee-Based Transportation System provides an option for arranging bus service for students Grades K-6 who live less than 2 miles from their school and for all students Grades 7-12. There is a provision for a fee waiver. The "Fee Waiver Application Form" must be completed and submitted by July 1 to the Superintendent's Office. This form is available in both the Principal's Office and the Superintendent's Office. Eligibility is subject to the income guidelines and verification. Ridership is not guaranteed, as it is dependent on sufficient funding and available seating.

### **TWO MILE LIMIT**

The two-mile measurement is the shortest vehicular route between the nearest walkway or driveway to the student's residence to the nearest walkway or gateway leading to the

front door of the school. If the mileage is in dispute, a “Distance Appeal Form” must be completed and submitted by July 1 to the School Department. This form is available in both the Principal’s Office and Superintendent’s Office. The distance will be rechecked and a decision made. This decision shall be final. Appeals not properly submitted by July 1 will not be honored. Please note that the shortest vehicular route may change from year to year as new streets open to traffic; therefore, the shortest vehicular route will be based on streets existing as of July 1 of each year. Mileage will NOT be calculated to or from a daycare provider.

### **STREET LIST**

A list of eligible and ineligible streets will be posted at each elementary school and on the Abington Public Schools web site, [www.abington.k12.ma.us](http://www.abington.k12.ma.us)

### **APPLICATION, FEES, & DUE DATE**

- During the month of April students will receive a Transportation Packet containing rules and regulations, frequently asked questions, and all pertinent forms.
- **The fee is \$245 per student with a \$490 family cap.** The fee is refundable **only** if the child is not assigned a seat. Aside from this exception, and because buses must be contracted in advance, the fee is nonrefundable and refunds will not be prorated in any manner or for any reason. The seat purchased is not transferable to another route.
- **The application and payment in full must be submitted by July 1.** This payment insures that your child is included on the bus list as routes are developed during the summer. Applications and payments received after July 1 will be considered late and will be honored only if space is available and if there is an existing stop on the route.
- Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications for children whose parents/guardians are experiencing an emergency situation will be accepted and processed during the school year. Applications submitted under this provision must be accompanied by a written explanation of the nature of the emergency and any supportive documentation requested by the school department. A committee comprised of the Chairman of the School Committee, Superintendent of Schools and a Principal will review, act on such emergency requests and, if approved, set a prorated fee.

### **NEW RESIDENTS**

Subject to the availability of seats and an existing bus stop, applications and fees for children of new residents will be processed at the time of registration.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

In mid August bus passes will be mailed directly to the households of all mandated and enrolled riders. Beginning the first day of school, each bus student is required to carry

the bus pass. Not doing so could result in exclusion from the bus. We suggest attaching the pass to the backpack. This will keep the pass handy and allow the student to display it without delay. Lost passes will be replaced for a \$5.00 fee.

### **BUS STOPS AND ROUTING**

Students K-12 are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pick-up and/or delivery. The School Department will establish common neighborhood bus stops. Timing and routing does not allow for additional bus stops even if the bus passes your residence. Bus stops will be published in the local newspaper approximately two weeks prior to the opening of school. As it is unknown how many buses will be funded, the length of bus routes may be adversely affected. All efforts will be made to schedule bus routes so that no child is riding for more than one hour per trip.

### **SAFETY**

Safety is a responsibility that is shared between the home and the school district. While the law requires the School Department to furnish a defined level of transportation, it does not relieve parents/guardians of students from the responsibility of supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to escort the child to and from the bus stop where there are no sidewalks, where sidewalks are only on one side, where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street, and where there are either traffic or commuter rail concerns.

### **BUS WAIVERS**

A parent or guardian may request a stop other than the assigned home bus stop by completing a “Bus Waiver Form.” Approval of the request is subject to the following criteria:

- The alternate stop must be on a route scheduled for the child’s assigned school.
- Seating is available.
- The requested stop is to be the permanent daily pick-up and drop-off point.
- For ECC students, the request must conform to K-2 Transportation Guidelines.

<b><u>RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL BUS USE</u></b>
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### **BUS CONDUCT**

In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the School Committee shall require the child to conduct himself/herself in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior as stated in the student

handbook. Bus drivers have the authority and the responsibility to maintain good order while operating the bus. Additionally, bus drivers are instructed to inform the building principal about any student misconduct that creates an annoyance or distraction while driving. The building principal will inform the parents/guardians of the misconduct and request their cooperation in monitoring the child's behavior. Any student who becomes a disciplinary problem on the school bus may have riding privileges suspended on a temporary or permanent basis. In such cases, the parents/guardians of the child involved become responsible for seeing that the child gets to and from school safely. There will be no refunds resulting from disciplinary action.

### **SCHOOL BUS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Please refer to the student handbook. It should be noted here that the courts have held that the right of a student to transportation is a qualified right, one that is dependent upon good behavior. In a case where a student seriously or continuously breaks the rules, the parents/guardians will be notified of the misbehavior. Depending on the seriousness of the infraction(s), the student's right to school bus transportation may be suspended or terminated at any time. Any infraction of the School Bus Rules and Regulations that is reported to the school authorities will be investigated before any disciplinary action is taken, and if there is a basis for the report, the student will be given notice of the charges against him/her. If the student denies the charges, an explanation of the evidence the School Department has and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story will be afforded the student in accordance with the due process procedures stated in the student handbook.

The following regulations will apply to all students who utilize bus transportation:

1. Be at your bus stop five minutes before your regular pick-up time.
2. While waiting for the bus, do not run, push or play games.
3. Bus riders should not move towards the bus until the bus has come to a complete stop.
4. Do not push or shove on entering or leaving the bus.
5. Take your seat promptly on entering the bus and remain in it until you arrive at your destination. Do not throw anything on the bus or out the window. There will be no standing or saving of seats on the bus.
6. Do not use profane, loud or boisterous talk or make other noises that might distract the driver.
7. Pupils shall be courteous at all times to the driver, fellow pupils and passers-by.
8. Treat bus equipment well. Damage to equipment will be paid for by the offender.
9. Smoking or lighting of matches is prohibited.
10. Leave the bus promptly upon arrival at your destination.

11. In crossing a highway, do so only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross. Pass ten feet in front of the bus and look for traffic in both directions before proceeding.
12. Pupils must have written permission to leave the bus other than at home or at school.
13. In case of an emergency, children are to remain on the bus unless requested to leave by the bus driver and only under his/her direction.
14. No eating or drinking on the bus.
15. Electronic devices such as radios, walkmans and electronic games are not allowed on the school bus. Cell phones and pagers must be turned off.

The principal may deprive pupils of riding the bus if there are violations of these rules or if pupils engage in any other action which jeopardizes the health and safety of those riding the bus. In all cases, a report must be made by the principal to the parents of the child involved and to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools where an appeal can be made.

### **OTHER REQUESTS, INQUIRIES OR CONCERNS**

All other requests, inquiries, or concerns must be made in writing and submitted to either the Principal's Office or to the Superintendent's Office for processing. Note: Submit all discipline issues to the Principal.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Please note that the above rules apply not only when children are in school or on school buses, but also, where applicable, on field trips or any other related school activity. A child may lose the right of going on a field trip, at the discretion of the principal, if the student's behavior warrants such a measure, or if the permission slip has not been properly submitted. Lunch, admission fees, and extra spending money will be the parents' responsibility.

## **K – 2 TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR FEE BASED TRANSPORTATION**

All eligible K-2 bus students are expected to ride the bus to which they are assigned both to and from school and to be picked up and dropped off at their assigned bus stops. Pupils will be asked to walk to a common bus stop. In that situation the child should be accompanied to the stop by a parent or guardian. The safety responsibility for escorting a child to and from the bus stop shall rest with the parents or guardians of the youngster involved.

Parents or guardians of students are responsible for supervision until such time as the child boards the bus in the morning and after the child leaves the bus at the end of the school

day. Once the child boards the bus – and only at that time – does he or she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the child is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. It is also expected that all pupils will be at the stop FIVE minutes before the bus arrives. Bus drivers have been instructed NOT TO STOP if no child is waiting. For safety reasons, it is most important that a parent or guardian be at the bus stop to receive the homecoming child.

As always, safety is of primary importance. At the bus stops and on the school bus pupils are expected to be bell behaved and cooperative at all times. A pupil who repeatedly misbehaves or who by his/her actions pose a threat to the safety of others on the bus may be suspended, and if such behavior continues, bus privileges could be removed for a longer period of time.

1. Pupils will be picked up and dropped off at daycare upon approval of this waiver by the Building Administrator. ***Approval is subject to these arrangements being permanent, prearranged, the same for all days, and the availability of seating.*** Approval is also subject to the daycare being located on an established route. Routes are established based on home addresses. The availability of seats will be determined only after accommodating the addresses serviced by the route. Students whose residences are serviced by the route will always have priority to daycare accommodations. ***If you live 2 or more miles from school, you will not be assessed a transportation fee to and from your home address. However, if you request a transportation waiver, you will be assessed the transportation fee of \$245.00 per student with a \$490.00 family cap.***
2. Pupils will be picked up and dropped off at one consistent stop Monday through Friday. Designated stops will be determined based on location of students. Group stops will be utilized. The responsibility of escorting a child across the street when sidewalks are only on one side and/or where the bus stop is on the opposite side of the street shall rest with the parents or guardians of the youngster involved.
3. You may request another established bus stop, other than to your house, upon approval of a transportation waiver and upon receipt of the transportation fee provided that:
  - The stop is on a route scheduled for your child's school
  - The arrangement is permanent and the same for all days
  - There is space available on the bus
4. Also for kindergarten students:
  - Balancing of class size is the first priority for am/pm sessions assignments for kindergarten students.

- If you are assigned an AM session, your waiver can only be waived to another AM session address.
- If you assigned a PM session, your waiver you can only be waived to another PM session address.
- In each case, availability of bus seats will be determined only after accommodating the addresses serviced by routes.
- Students whose residences are serviced by the route will always have priority to daycare accommodations.
- Kindergarten am/pm assignments are based on the home address. Students will only be transported to another address within that same assigned session subject to the above criteria.

### **BICYCLES/ROLLERBLADES/SCOOTERS**

Students in Grades 3-6 may ride their bicycles, rollerblades, and scooters to school if they have obtained written permission from their parents. These notes will remain on file in the school office.

Massachusetts Law requires all children under the age of thirteen to wear a safety helmet when riding their bicycles.

Students are expected to wear protective equipment (elbow pads, wrist pads, kneepads and a helmet) when rollerblading and riding scooters.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR CODE**

### **Introduction**

A student behavior code is an essential component in any school. Pupils, parents and the professional staff need to know what to expect with regards to acceptable pupil behavior and appropriate student discipline. As we all know, pupil discipline is necessary in the process of education. It is the essential condition that allows a student to make orderly progress towards constructive learning. The controlling and disciplining of a pupil should have a constructive effect upon a student and, hopefully produce positive results. The following guidelines are suggested in assisting parents and teachers regarding the development and maintenance of appropriate and acceptable pupil behavior.

1. Define and explain the appropriate behavior for the child/pupil.
2. Define the limits of pupil behavior and be sure that the child understands them.
3. Discuss and explain a child's inappropriate behavior with him/her privately whenever possible.
4. Be positive, constructive, fair and, above all, consistent in dealing with the child.
5. Maintain the dignity of the child.

### **Student Behavior Code**

Each student will be expected to display appropriate behavior in school at all times.

Students have the responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that demonstrates a respect for all individuals, their rights, and their property. This behavior is expected at school events, school-sponsored trips, walking to and from school, and those times when school buses or other school provided transportation is used. Video surveillance cameras may be in use in and around school buildings.

### **Disciplinary Procedure**

If a child has poor behavior, s/he should be reported to the school principal who will confer with the student and parents, if necessary. The school principal, or his/her designee, will have the option of taking any of the following courses of action after a hearing has been provided the student:

1. Loss of recess privileges
2. Writing a note of apology to the offended party.
3. Writing a letter of explanation to his/her parents.
4. Loss of participation in special school activities, such as field trips, attending programs after-school activities, etc. only with principal's permission.
5. Detain pupils after school for twenty-five minutes after notifying parents.
6. Infractions of the discipline code may be reflected on the report card.
7. School suspension according to the procedures established by the Abington School Committee.

### **Playground Rules**

1. Pupils cannot participate in any activity that will be dangerous to themselves or to others.
2. No roller skates of any kind, skateboards, hard balls, bats, or hockey sticks, are allowed on the playground.
3. Audio devices are not allowed in school or on the playground.
4. Unless excused by teacher, nurse, or principal, every child is to participate in recess periods and to remain outside for the entire recess period.
5. No child may re-enter the building without permission from an adult on duty.
6. Children must remain within the play area at all times.
7. Fighting for any reason is not allowed.
8. Any activity, which may be dangerous to others, is not allowed (throwing stones, snowballs, sticks, wood chips, tackling, punching, etc.).
9. Children are expected to be courteous and to follow the direction of adults on duty (Teachers, aides).
10. No gum chewing is allowed on school property at any time.

### **Rules for using the swings:**

1. One child to a swing.
2. No standing on or jumping off a swing.
3. Allow other children to use the swing if they are waiting to do so.
4. All pupils waiting to ride a swing must stand away from the arc of the swing in action.

### **Rules for using the slides:**

1. One person on the slide at a time.
2. No fooling, pushing or shoving on any part of the slide.
3. Do not climb or run up the slide.
4. No jumping off a slide.

### **Cafeteria Rules**

All pupils are escorted to the cafeteria by their classroom teacher or designee. All eating of meals is to be done in the cafeteria and nowhere else, unless otherwise instructed by the principal.

While in the cafeteria, pupils are expected to use appropriate manners when addressing each other as well as all adults who have a responsibility in this facility at lunchtime. Only quiet talk will be permitted in the cafeteria. Fooling of any kind, loud boisterous behavior or any inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Pupils who cannot conduct themselves accordingly may lose cafeteria privileges or be otherwise disciplined.

### **Corridor Passing**

For the safety and orderliness of our students, teachers or aides will ensure that when pupils are entering or leaving the building they should remain in their respective lines with a minimum of talking. Pupils should never exceed a walking pace. Pupils will be instructed as to the procedure to be followed. Teachers will be at their classroom entrance at all times when children are entering classrooms or other instructional areas.

### **Language/Social Conduct**

Appropriate language and social conduct are always the standard. Any verbal abuse, name-calling, or swearing is not accepted at any time.

### **Search and Seizure**

If a student is suspected of violating school rules or state law, s/he may be subject to reasonable search and seizure by a school official, including the search of his/her desk and/or personal effects.

### **Hazing**

Hazing is prohibited. Any student who feels s/he is being hazed should report immediately to a staff member. Hazing is in violation of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19. Anyone who is aware of hazing and/or is at the scene where hazing takes place is required to report the crime to a school official. Any student who is involved in hazing will be subject to suspension.

### **Freedom from Discrimination or Sexual Harassment**

The Abington Elementary Schools are committed to maintain a safe, secure and productive environment for everyone. Students are expected to treat all members of the school community with dignity and respect. It is the policy of the Abington Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, or handicap in its educational programs, services, activities, or employment practices as required by Chapter 151B of the General Laws, Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971; Title IX of the State 1972 Educational Amendments; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Violations of civil rights will not be tolerated.

Each person has the right to be free from derogatory or degrading remarks or actions which cause humiliation. All forms of "put-downs", sexual comments or harassment, or physically intrusive or violent behavior are unacceptable. They detract from a supportive, caring educational environment which we try to promote in our schools.

### **Unacceptable Behavior Which Merits Corrective Action**

- A. Categories
  - 1. Violence
  - 2. Vandalism
  - 3. Disruption
  - 4. Disrespect
- B. Unacceptable Behavior
  - 1. Fighting and rough playing
  - 2. Possessing or using a weapon at school including but not limited to a toy
  - 3. Using an object as a means of physical abuse
  - 4. Vandalizing or stealing another's property at school or en route to and from school
  - 5. Stealing or damaging school property
  - 6. Verbally or physically abusing, insulting, or threatening any individual
  - 7. Cursing, swearing, making obscene gestures or remarks
  - 8. Disrupting the teaching/learning process.
  - 9. Cheating
  - 10. Entering or leaving the building or classroom without permission (except in a situation of emergency or threatening emergency)

- 11. Being in unauthorized areas
- 12. Acting in a way that endangers the health or safety of students or other members of the school community
- 13. Eating in unauthorized areas
- 14. Chewing gum
- 15. Continuing to violate any school rules
- 16. Use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- 17. Smoking

Violations of these rules will result in a corrective action by the teacher and/or Principal.

### **Suspension**

The principal may suspend a student who is guilty of serious disobedience or misconduct for a period of up to ten (10) school days. The suspension may be as a disciplinary measure or as a prelude to expulsion or expulsion procedures.

### **The suspension procedure will be:**

- 1. A student reported by a faculty member for an infraction of a regulation that could call for suspension is given a hearing by the principal.
- 2. At the hearing, the student is orally informed of the infraction, told by whom it was reported, and allowed to speak in his/her own defense.
- 3. If there is any question on the part of the student about the infraction, a meeting of the student, the faculty member reporting the infraction, and the principal is arranged.
- 4. If a student is suspended, he/she is informed of the reasons for the suspension, number of days and dates of suspension, and what day (date) he/she may return to school.
- 5. Parents of the student being suspended are notified by telephone, when possible, of the suspension.
- 6. A letter is sent to the parents notifying them of the suspension, reasons for the suspension, dates of suspension, and date student may return to school.
- 7. Parents are requested to contact the school before the student returns from suspension.
- 8. Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of or using a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to a gun, knife, facsimile, replica or toy; or controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94-C of the Education Reform Act of 1993, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school district by the School Committee.
- 9. 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 district by the School Committee.

10. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph 8 or 9 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.

### **Suspension of Special Needs Students**

Students with special needs have certain additional rights as defined under the Massachusetts Chapter 766 regulations issued by the State Department of Education. Each special needs student is required to have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that specifies educational services for the student. The IEP also determines whether or not the student can be expected to meet the regular disciplinary code of the school or whether a modified disciplinary code is required to meet his/her needs.

If the student is approaching ten cumulative suspension days during a school year, the Special Needs Team must reconvene to determine if the infraction is related to the student's area of disability and/or the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. If the Team concludes that the student's misconduct is related to an inappropriate IEP, or is the result of an IEP that was not fully implemented, the IEP will be revised to better meet the student's needs and no further suspensions will occur at that time. Upon parental approval of the revised IEP, the student will be placed immediately in the new program.

If the team concludes that the student's misconduct was not due to any of these conditions and a period of exclusion from school is deemed necessary, an amendment to the IEP will be developed to provide for the delivery of special education services during the period of exclusion. In addition, the IEP will be modified to include a long-term plan to assure the student's continued attendance in an educational program. This alternative must be approved by both the Department of Education and the parents. If approved, the amended plan will be implemented immediately.

### **Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as a long term or permanent dismissal. Generally, expulsion is the very last measure. It will be reserved for instances of serious infractions or cases of chronic behavior for which there is little hope for improvement under school conditions and, because of which, the welfare of other students is seriously endangered.

Other than in cases covered by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H and 37H 1/2, the School Committee shall not expel a student for alleged misconduct without following prescribed due process procedures.

To support a recommendation for an expulsion by the Abington School Committee, the Superintendent will present to the Committee a comprehensive written report of the offenses committed and measures taken by the staff to correct the student's conduct. The Committee will ascertain whether the parent(s)/ guardian(s)' cooperation has been sought and obtained in the corrective efforts; and whether they have been notified of their right to be present at the meeting during which the expulsion of their child is to be considered.

At the time an expulsion is imposed, the Committee will set the duration of the expulsion. School Committee action will be necessary for any possible re-admission of an expelled student.

### **Liability**

Students are personally liable or responsible for actions which result in the loss or damage of property of others or the school, and for behavior which interferes with the rights and education of other students. Any student experiencing or witnessing such violation of rights or property is requested to report those incidents to a member of the faculty or administration. There is also a fee for lost or damaged materials or textbooks.

## **PUPIL PROGRESS**

### **Reporting Pupil Progress**

A pupil's progress and achievement is reported to the parents through the use of formal and informal conferences as well as through written reports. Parents are encouraged to contact the schools as often as they deem necessary. Simply call the school and leave a message for the teacher or support person to call you, indicating which times would be best. This method is preferable to stopping by before or after school, since the teacher may have made plans already for use of that time.

### **Mid-Term Reports**

Mid-Term reports are to be sent out at the mid- point of each marking period to keep parents informed of their child's general progress. These reports are sent home to be signed and returned to the school.

### **Report Cards**

A pupil report card regarding a child's school performance is given to parents of students in grades 1-6 at the end of each marking period. Kindergarten report cards are sent home twice a year.

### **Procedure Utilized For Students Experiencing**

## **Difficulties**

When a student is identified by a teacher or a parent as experiencing difficulty, all efforts are made to meet the child's needs within the regular education program. The principal has established a Teacher Assistance Team to ensure that these efforts are made. A referral to the Teacher Assistance Team is made by the classroom teacher. If parents have concerns about their son/daughter's school progress, they can request that the teacher make a referral to the Teacher Assistance Team.

Efforts that are made include the following:

- Modifications of the curriculum, teaching strategies, teaching environments, and/or materials.
- The use of support services, and consultative services and the involvement of the regular faculty.

The Teacher Assistance Team meets on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The specific goals are oriented to a positive change in the child's performance.

## **Referral to Special Education**

Children are referred for an evaluation for Special Education when appropriate. A child may be referred by any of the following to the Administrator of Special Education for an evaluation:

A parent, a school official (including a teacher), a judicial officer, social worker, family physician, a child, or any other person may request a specified person to refer.

There are a number of determining factors to ensure that children are referred to the Administrator of Special Education. A determination of whether to pursue pre-referral actions (such as Teacher Assistance Team) or to refer for an evaluation is made by the building principal. The parents are notified promptly and in writing if a condition below exists, if a referral is being made, and of their right to make such a referral.

- Any child who at mid-year presents a substantial risk of non-promotion (failing in two or more non-elective subjects).
- Any child who fails to be promoted at the end of the year.
- Any child who has been suspended for more than 5 school days in any quarter or excluded from school.
- Any child who has been absent without medical excuse more than 15 school days in any quarter.
- Any child ages 16 through 21 who is planning to leave school without a high school diploma.

If a child, returning to school after illness with the mumps, measles, chicken pox, encephalitis or other high fever, or after cerebral injuries involving loss of consciousness, demonstrates a substantial negative change in alertness within two weeks, that child is referred.

## **Promotion and Retention**

1. Full promotion is granted to those pupils who successfully complete the basic work of the year at grade level.
2. Retention in Kindergarten will be based on pupil performance and teacher recommendation. Teachers will communicate often with parents in regard to those children who might benefit from retention. It is advisable that parents honor the recommendations of the teachers and support staff.
3. Children in grades 1 and 2 who are not proficient in reading and/or mathematics will be considered for retention.
4. Children in grades 3-6 who have failed in two of the following major subjects as indicated on their report card will be considered for retention:
  - English/Language Arts
  - Mathematics
  - Reading
5. There may be instances when individual situations will require consultation with the Principal and teachers.
6. Probable retention should be indicated on the third Mid-Term Report and officially confirmed by a letter to the parent before the end of that school year.

## **Grade Placement of Students**

Many factors are considered in student placement such as the social, emotional, and academic well being of the child.

Parental input will become part of the placement process. Parents will be provided with an opportunity to discuss class placement with the Principal in the early spring.

Using this input the placement decision for each child is determined by a team of teachers with additional input from specialists.

Due to fluctuation in class composition, it may become necessary for the Principal to adjust class placement.

Class placements into grades one to six will be posted at each school one-week prior to the opening of the new school year. Kindergarten parents will receive individual letters.

It is the School Committee's policy to balance class sizes to the extent possible among the elementary schools, therefore, it may be necessary to make transfers during the summer up to the first day of school.

## **HOMWORK POLICY**

Homework is any assigned activity done outside of school, which relates to any phase of learning. It can be an enrichment, a refinement, or a reinforcement of learning activities. It is hoped that the guidelines, which follow, will assist

teachers assigning homework and aid parents in understanding homework assignments.

### **Purpose of Homework**

1. To supplement and reinforce school learning by providing further practice and application.
2. To stimulate initiative, independence, responsibility, and self-direction.
3. To enrich the child's school experiences.
4. To foster the growth of permanent lifetime interests in learning.
5. To teach ability to budget time and organize one's materials.
6. To provide opportunities to use skills/knowledge learned in school in creative ways outside of school.

### **Role of Teacher**

- to design homework to accomplish a specific purpose clearly related to the curriculum for the grade level
- to assign the homework carefully making sure the assignment is clear
- assess homework consistently and provide feedback to students about their success on homework
- to assist the pupils in learning how to study
- to communicate with pupil and parent when problems concerning homework arise
- to vary types of assignments so as to hold the child's interest and to meet different needs
- to insist on high standards of work done on home assignments, especially in terms of neatness and accuracy
- to individualize homework assignments to the extent possible. Some students may be able to do more and some less within the established time guidelines
- to post homework assignments so they can be clearly visible and available to students during the day
- to establish guidelines for students to follow in completing long term assignments

### **Role of Student**

- to be responsible for the completion and return of assignments on the date due.
- to confer with parents and/or teachers if assignments are not clear or too difficult

### **Role of Parent**

- to establish the importance of homework and to encourage the child to accept the responsibility for completing home assignments.
- to assist the child when the teacher and parent have conferred, and agreed that this assistance would be helpful
- to notify the teacher if an unforeseen occurrence prevents the child from completing an assignment. An unforeseen occurrence may include a variety of circumstances such as trauma or illness.

- to insist on high standards of work on home assignments by providing a quiet and distraction free location and by eliminating television, radio, stereo and telephone. Parents should supervise but pupils should complete the assignments independently.
- to monitor the time utilized by their children to complete homework assignments. Too little or too much time spent on homework on a regular basis (see guidelines) should be a cause of concern and should be communicated to the teacher.
- to assign their own reading, writing or academic task when their children do not bring home a school assignment. This will promote the habit of doing homework on a regular basis whether or not the child brings a homework assignment from school.

### **Homework Guidelines**

**Kindergarten** Up to 10 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher.

**Grade 1** Up to 10 to 20 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher.

**Grade 2** Up to 20 to 30 minutes, up to 4 times per week, at the discretion of the teacher.

**Grade 3** Up to 30 minutes, 4 times per week

**Grade 4** Up to 40 minutes, 4 times a week

**Grade 5** Up to 50 minutes, 4 - 5 times a week

**Grade 6** Up to 60 minutes, 4 - 5 times a week

Homework at grade K-4 should not normally be given over weekends, holidays, or vacations except for occasional long-term assignments or make-ups due to absence. Long term assignments are those that are due to be passed in some time in the future. A book report, for example, which was assigned in September and due to be passed in by October 15th, is considered a long-term assignment. Long term assignments may involve a number of steps so that in the event the entire assignment has not been completed, credit may be given for the portion of the assignment which was submitted.

Make-up work due to illness or non-scheduled vacations will be assigned at the teacher's discretion.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Most of the information in student files is a duplication of materials given to the child and his/her parents such as report cards, progress reports, standardized test information,

etc. Parents of Abington students are welcome to review records as maintained by our schools.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate.

Parents or eligible students may ask the School to amend a record they believe is inaccurate. They should write the School principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment.

Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or

therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance

committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605

A parent has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent no later than two (2) days after the request, unless the parent consents to the delay.

Parents have the right to receive copies of any record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

Parents may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

### **PPRA Notice and Consent/Opt-Out for Specific Activities**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. & 1232h, requires the Abington Public Schools to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following areas (“protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent’s;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing survey”), and certain physical exams and screenings. If you wish to review any of the survey instruments or instructional materials used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey throughout the school year or have your child opt out of participation, please submit a written request to the building principal by September 15. The school hereby notifies parents/guardians that unless a written request is received in the office of the principal, the school will assume the right to administer any survey and/or instructional material used in connection with any protected information or marketing survey it deems appropriate.

### **Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records**

The Student Record Regulations adopted by the Board of Education apply to all public elementary and secondary schools in Massachusetts. (They also apply to private day and residential schools that have state approval to provide publicly-funded special education services.) The regulations are designed to insure parents’ and students’ rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in carrying out their responsibilities under state and federal law.

The regulations apply to all information kept by a school or school district on a student in a way that the student may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into two parts: the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student’s educational progress.

This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school district for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student.

This may include such things as standardized test results; class rank; school sponsored extracurricular activities; evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; disciplinary records; and other information. The temporary record is destroyed within seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of the major provisions of the Student Record Regulations concerning the rights of parents and eligible students. Under the regulations, “eligible students” are at least 14 years old or have entered the ninth grade; they may exercise these rights just as their parents may:

#### **Amendment of Record**

Parents have the right to add relevant comments, information or other written materials to the student record. Parents

have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent has the right to a conference with the Principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the Principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent is not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

#### **Record Request from Non-Custodial Parents**

Abington Public Schools procedures regarding requests for student records from the non-custodial parent are in accordance with state law on student record access for non-custodial parents. As set forth in the amended regulation, non-custodial parents are eligible to obtain access to their children’s student records *unless* the school or district has been given documentation that:

- 1) the non-custodial parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or
- 2) the non-custodial parent has been denied visitation or have been ordered to supervised visitation, or
- 3) the non-custodial parent’s access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the order or any subsequent court order specifically allows access to student record information.

#### **Confidentiality of Record**

Except for school personnel, parents and certain other exceptions named in the state regulations, no individual or organization is allowed access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent.

Teachers have a moral responsibility to protect the well being of their students. For this reason, students should be aware that some information they share with school personnel cannot remain confidential. This includes any information which is reported to a staff member which could result in personal harm to the student such as abuse or neglect, drug use, suicide, etc.

#### **Release of Student Names**

Department of Education policy allows the school to release a student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, without the consent of the eligible student or parent. If, for any reason parents do not wish to have this information released, simply inform the Principal in writing.

#### **Directory Information Notice**

Abington Public Schools has designated certain information contained in the education records of its students as directory information for purposes of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Student Record Regulations at 603 CME 23.00 et seq. The following information regarding students is considered directory information: (1) name, (2) address, (3) telephone number, (4) date and place of birth, (5) major field of study, (6) participation in officially recognized activities and sports, (7) weight and height of members of athletic teams, (8) dates of attendance, (9) degrees, honors, and awards received, (10) post high school plans of the student.

Directory information may be disclosed for any purpose in its discretion, without the consent of a parent of a student or an eligible student. Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of the above information as directory information. In that case, this information will not be disclosed except with the consent of a parent or student, or as otherwise allowed by FERPA and 603 CME 23.00 et seq. Any parent or student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file written notification to this effect with the office of the principal, on or before September 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year.

In the event a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither a parent of a student or eligible student objects to the release of the directory information designated.

### **Transfer to Other Schools**

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given to parents that the Abington Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent.

### **Destruction of Records**

Five years after graduation from the Abington Public Schools or upon leaving the Abington School District, everything is removed from the student files with the exception of the "permanent record" which includes only the student's vital statistics, course record and grades. State law mandates that this basic information be kept by the school for 60 years.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **User Agreement for Computers, Networks and the Internet**

Computer technology can improve education. Computers, software, networks and the Internet are available in the Abington Public Schools for teaching, learning, personal productivity, professional development and administration. If you use the computer resources of the Abington Public Schools, you must have these purposes firmly in mind. You also have a set of responsibilities, which you must agree to before you can use the school's computers. These responsibilities are:

When I use a stand-alone computer:

1. I will use the computer for academic purposes;
2. I will use only those programs and files that I have permission to use;
3. I understand that only the professional staff can install software;
4. I will uphold software copyrights and licenses.

When I use a computer on a network:

1. I will respect everyone's right to secure and private storage on the file server;
2. I will respect everyone's right to work on the network without disruption;
3. I understand the importance of the network to the school community so I will not alter the workstation desktop or the network system software;

When I use the Internet:

1. I will respect the right of all users on the Internet to conduct their activities without any disruption from any other user;
2. I understand that state and federal laws apply to the transmission and reception of some materials over the Internet;
3. I understand that when I am on the Internet I am a guest of a host computer system and I will conduct myself appropriately.

### **Disclaimer of Liability:**

The Abington Public Schools make no warranties of any kind for the service they provide. The Abington Public Schools will not be responsible for any damages you may suffer. Use of any information and software obtained through the Internet is at your own risk. The Abington Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. In addition, it cannot guarantee the efficacy of any firewall or "blocking" software that it might use.

## **COMPUTER, NETWORK, INTERNET and E-MAIL AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR STUDENTS OF THE ABINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Internet is a vast, global network linking computers at universities, schools, science labs, and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums, as well as through electronic mail. In addition, many files of educational value are available for downloading. Because of its enormous size, the Internet's potential is without boundaries. It is possible to speak with prominent scientists, world leaders, and close friends. With such great potential for education also comes the potential for abuse. It is the purpose of the guidelines to make sure that all who use the Abington Public Schools' Computer Network, which includes Internet access and electronic mail capability, use this resource in an appropriate manner.

The Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, which includes Internet access and electronic mail capability, voice mail, telephones, fax machines, etc., exists solely for educational purposes, which are defined as classroom activities, career and professional development and high quality self-discovery activities of an educational nature. Although limited personal use of these systems is authorized, provided it does not interfere with any students' work of the business of the Abington Public Schools, the user acknowledges that they have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of these systems or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information on these systems. The Abington Public Schools' computer network is not to be considered a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services

Members of the Abington Public Schools' community are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network may reach larger audiences than face-to-face conversations or telephone discussions. General school rules for behavior, as stated in student handbooks, and communications apply. Access to network services will be provided to those who act in a considerate and responsible manner. Discipline will be imposed pursuant to the student disciplinary code as set forth in the school's student handbook.

The Abington Public Schools believes that the benefits to students from access to information resources and opportunity for collaboration available through the Internet exceed the potential disadvantages. However, the parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. Parents or guardians should be aware that their child's level of access to the Internet will depend on that child's grade level. The following is a description of the manner in which the Abington Public Schools intends to incorporate network use and Internet access in the schools:

- a. Grades kindergarten through two. During school time, teachers of students in grades kin-

dergarten through two will guide them toward appropriate materials. Internet access at these grade levels will be limited to teacher-directed and teacher-demonstrated use.

- b. Grades three through eight. Students at these grade levels may have the opportunity to conduct research via the Internet in the classroom, only during directly supervised instruction.
- c. Grades nine through twelve. Students in grades nine through twelve may be given individual access passwords and may have the opportunity to access the Internet and conduct independent research on the Internet, both during classroom instruction and outside of classroom instruction.

The Abington Public Schools will make every reasonable effort to minimize the risk that users will encounter objectionable material on the Internet. However, there is no absolute guarantee that this will not happen. Through the use of suitable technological safeguards, education, supervision, and responsible use, the Abington Public Schools believes that the Internet can be used safely and effectively.

In order for a member of the Abington Public Schools' community to use the computer network, s/he must read the following rules and sign the version of the User Contract appropriate to the user's grade level. Students in grades kindergarten through two are not required to sign the User Contract because they will not be accessing the Internet or using e-mail individually. For users under the age of 18, the User Contract must be signed by a parent or guardian.

The Abington Public Schools use a filter to restrict minors' access to materials that might be harmful to them. The employment of this filter and this Acceptable Use Policy ensure that the Abington Public Schools meet the requirements of the Children's Internet Protections Act.

#### Rules:

1. **NETWORK ACCESS IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT.** The use of the network must be consistent with, and directly related to, the educational objectives of the Abington Public Schools. A violation of the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in suspension or termination of network access privileges (other than directly supervised access during classroom instruction) and may also result in other disciplinary action consistent with the disciplinary policies of the Abington Public Schools and could also result in criminal prosecution where applicable. The Abington Public Schools will cooperate fully with law enforcement

officials in any investigation relating to misuse of the Abington Public Schools' computer network.

2. Violation of this Acceptable Use Policy include, but are not limited to, the following conduct:
  - a. Intentionally placing unlawful or inappropriate information on a system
  - b. Using profane, vulgar, threatening, defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise objectionable or criminal language in a public or private message.
  - c. Sending messages or posting information that would likely result in the loss of a recipient's work or system.
  - d. Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, subscribing to "listserves" or "newsgroups" without prior permission, or using the Internet access for any other personal use, without prior permission.
  - e. Participating in other types of use which could cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.
  - f. Using the network in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening material and spreading of computer viruses.
  - g. Accessing or transmitting materials that are obscene, sexually explicit, or without redeeming educational value.
  - h. Accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet.
  - i. Revealing one's own personal address or telephone number without authorization.
  - j. Revealing one's password to anyone else, using anyone else's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network.
  - k. Attempting to gain unauthorized access to system programs or computer equipment, including attempts to override, or to encourage others to override, any firewalls established on the network.
  - l. Attempting to harm, modify or destroy data of another user.
  - m. Exhibiting any other action whatsoever which would in any way subject the user or the Abington Public Schools to any civil or criminal action.
  - n. Discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in e-mail communications.
  - o. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology network to buy, sell or advertise anything.
  - p. Accessing unauthorized discussion groups or "chat rooms."
  - q. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology for gambling.
  - r. Using the Abington Public Schools' technology network for political campaigning purposes, including attempt to influence ballot questions or to promote or oppose a candidate for public office.
  - s. Failing to log off the computer network at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of system administrator.
  - t. Using the computer network for recreational purposes or activities relating to personal hobbies.
3. The Abington Public Schools assumes no responsibility for:
  - a. any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs.
  - b. any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the system for the purchase of products or services.
  - c. any cost, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of these guidelines.
  - d. any information or materials that are transferred through the network.
4. The Abington Public Schools makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The Abington Public Schools shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.
5. All messages and information created, sent or retrieved on the network are the property of the Abington Public Schools. Electronic mail messages and other use of electronic resources by students and staff are also the property of the Abington Public Schools and should not be considered confidential. While the Abington Public Schools does not plan to review cache files or back-up files on a regular basis, it reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business for purposes including, but not limited to, ensuring proper use of resources and conducting routine network maintenance. Where appropriate, communications including text and images may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver. The user, also, understands that use of the Abington Public School

technology will not use code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communications on any of the systems unless authorized by Abington Public Schools.

6. The Abington Public Schools strongly condemns the illegal distribution (otherwise known as pirating) of software. Any users caught transferring such files through the network, and any whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In such event, the user's network access will be limited to directly supervised use during classroom instruction. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.
7. Because of size, many kinds of materials eventually find their way to the network. If a user finds materials that are inappropriate while using the Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, s/he shall refrain from downloading this material and shall not identify or share the material. It should be understood that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal and punishable by fine or imprisonment.
8. Should a user, while using the Abington Public Schools' Technology Network, encounter any material that s/he feels may constitute a threat against the safety of fellow students, staff members or the property of the Abington Public Schools, that user is obligated to report his/her discovery of such material to a teacher or to his/her principal.
9. The Abington Public Schools' administration reserves the right to amend this policy at any time without prior notice. Users will be notified in writing of any amendments to this policy.

*Amended by the Abington School Committee on April 12, 2005*

### **Computer Donation Policy Guidelines**

Because Federal legislation requires donated computers to be less than two years old, most will likely be satisfactory for many school uses. The specifications schools decide to require may be different for different types of uses. Schools require the following preferred characteristics for the donated computers.

Sufficient processor power and memory for current versions of multi-tasking operating systems software (Mac OS 7.6 or Windows 95 or higher) and Internet browsers:

- Ethernet network connectivity
- CD-ROM and, optionally, audio (including speakers)

Meeting these specifications will ensure that the donated computer can: 1) be easily connected to the school's network and the Internet, 2) load software now usually distributed on CD-ROMS, and 3) run current educational software as well as Internet browsers and e-mail.

### **Photographing or Video Taping of Students**

The Abington Public School District has on occasion, the need to use photographs or videotape of various school activities and classes. The District at times has photographs in local newspapers and provides video programming designed for instructional and informational purposes which appears on cable or broadcast stations. The District hereby notifies parents/guardians that unless a written objection is received in the office of the principal by September 15<sup>th</sup> of the school year the District will assume the right to use photographs or video tape in which students may appear or be heard. The District will continue to notify parents or guardians when special needs classes are involved.

### **Videotaping of School Events for Resale**

Any person wishing to make original videotapes or other recordings of school events for the purpose of reselling copies of the original are required to meet the following guidelines:

1. Sign a legal application and general release for each event recorded. The release shall indemnify the Abington Public Schools from any and all liability pertaining to or arising out of any videotaping.
2. Pay the Abington Public Schools a \$25.00 per event application fee. Fees shall be deposited in either the Athletic Revolving Fund or the Co-curricular Revolving Fund.
3. Donate a complimentary copy of the recording to the Abington Public Schools.
4. Application is to be made to the building principal who has the authority to approve/disapprove. He/she may waive the application fee if the resale is intended as a fund-raiser for the benefit of the Abington Public Schools.
5. All scheduling and arrangements for the videotaping are subject to the approval of the building principal.
6. An announcement shall be made at the beginning of any event being videotaped that this recording is taking place.

### **Visitors to the Schools Guidelines for the Press and Media**

1. Consistent with this policy, the School Committee and faculty encourage members of the press and media to visit the schools.

2. All guests and visitors, including members of the press and media, must register in the school office. Identification badges may be required.
3. The principal will cooperate with and assist members of the press and media who wish to interview or photograph students or staff. In order not to interfere with the education of students:
  - A. The principal may make available a room or space where students/staff who wish to talk with reporters may do so.
  - B. The Principal may require reasonable lead-time to make arrangements.
4. We require that members of the press or media identify themselves as such to students and/or staff. Students and/or staff are free to respond, or not respond, as they choose. Parental permission must be given if student pictures are to be used for publication or if quotations are attributed to students who are minors.

### **Equal Education Opportunities Act - 622B**

Chapter 622 applies to equal education opportunities for all students of public schools. Every course taught must present fairly the culture, history, and contributions of people from different races, nationalities, sexes, religions and colors. The content and objectives of all courses, the books used, and the materials and teaching methods used should show people from all backgrounds in a variety of positive roles. All academic courses as well as vocational are now open to all students regardless of race, color, sex, religion or national origin. (Examples: shop, drafting, home economics, cosmetology.) In addition to academic and vocational courses, physical education classes must also meet these standards. This means that gym classes must be integrated in the area of extra-curricular athletics, all students must have the opportunity to try out for all teams. Schools must insure that activities which are composed solely or predominantly of members of one sex must receive support services, such as practice schedules, facilities, travel, and publicity comparable to similar activities composed of members of the opposite sex.

Occupational information shall include representative of both sexes and of minority group members in a broad variety of occupational roles. Schools shall not permit materials to be used to recruit students for employment including training, that contain a preference for individuals of a particular race, color, sex, national origin or religion.

### **Title IX**

It is the policy of the Abington School Department not to discriminate on the basis of sex in the educational programs or activities which it operates. The School Department is required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of

1972 and the implementing regulation not to discriminate on the basis of sex. This requirement not to discriminate extends to employment by the School Department. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX regarding activities relating to insuring non-discrimination in the admission and treatment of students, curriculum and course offerings, student policies, services and employment policies and practices may be directed to:

Dr. Dympna Thomas  
 Assistant Superintendent for Pupil  
 Personnel  
 Services and Special Education  
 Early Childhood Center  
 Ralph Hamlin Lane  
 Abington, MA 02351  
 Tel. (781) 982-2175

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

"No otherwise qualified handicapped individual. . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Inquiries regarding compliance should also be referred to Joanne Haley Sullivan at the address and telephone number listed previously.

### **Grievance Procedure Under Title IX and Chapter 622 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Any school employee, parent, student or interested party may file a grievance if that person feels discriminated against, denied a benefit, or excluded from participation in any educational program or activity on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, or handicap. The following four-step structured grievance procedures have been adopted to protect the rights of all persons protected by these regulations. The grievances will be heard at each step as soon as possible.

#### **Step 1 Parents, Students and Interested Parties**

At the school building level, complaints are to be heard by the building principal. If the parent, student or interested party is not satisfied with the decision of the principal, s/he can continue the grievance procedure to Step 2.

#### **Employees**

At the school building level, complaints are to be heard by the employee's immediate superior and building principal. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the im-

mediate superior and principal, s/he can continue the grievance procedure to Step 2.

**Step 2 Parents, Students and Interested Parties**

At this level, the grievance is to be heard by Dr. Dympna Thomas, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services. If the parent, student or interested party is not satisfied with the decision, s/he can continue the grievance procedure to Step 3.

**Employees**

At this level, the grievance is to be heard by Dr. Dympna Thomas, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision, s/he can continue the grievance procedure to Step 3.

**Step 3 Parents, Students, Employees, and Interested Parties**

At the School Committee level, the grievance is to be heard by the Superintendent and the Abington School Committee. If the parent, student, interested party or employee is not satisfied with the decision of the Abington School Committee, s/he can continue the grievance procedure to Step 4.

**Step 4 Parents, Students, Employees, and Interested Parties**

At the Office of Civil Rights level, the parent, interested party or employee can contact the following agency for appropriate follow-up grievance procedures:

Regional Office of Civil Rights,  
Region I  
RKO General Building,  
Government Center  
Boston, MA 02114

If you have any questions regarding Title IX, Chapter 622 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or wish to peruse the full text of the regulations, do not hesitate to contact:

Dr. Dympna Thomas  
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil  
Personnel Services  
Tel. (781) 982-2175

Copies of the law can be obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20201

**Abington Public Schools  
Policy for McKinney-Vento Homeless  
Education Assistance Act**

To the extent practical and as required by law, Abington Public Schools will work with homeless students and their

families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.
9. Unaccompanied youth.

The superintendent has designated the Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services to be Abington Public Schools' liaison for homeless students and their families. To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. Abington Public Schools' liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unac-

accompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute. Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison will assist in this process. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

Abington Public Schools' liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

Approved by the  
Abington School Committee  
On April 12, 2005

## **Abington Public Schools Policies and Procedures Related to Student Drug/Alcohol Involvement**

### **I. Expression of Purpose and Policy**

The need for a drug/alcohol policy in the Abington Public Schools is an obvious one. In essence, the School Committee is charged with the responsibility of providing guidelines for student behavior under Massachusetts General Law.

Once defined, the School System must guarantee that the policies involved be promulgated to all segments of the community, i.e., students, parents, staff, and administrators and that they be based on the premise that there is a proper

balance between the concern for the individual child and the overall welfare of the general school population.

Most importantly, there is the necessity for an appropriate response to the sensitive matter of drug/alcohol use and abuse by students. It is the turmoil of today's society which breeds such a condition and it must be offset by a realistic and honest approach by school officials which will afford hope and facilitate programming to those students most in need.

While it is incumbent for school officials to cooperate with local and state law enforcement authorities in such matters, it is equally important that the School System be prepared to develop an approach which should be preventative in nature. Certainly, the School System should encourage such activities as:

- In-service education for the professional staff
- The establishment of a positive health education curriculum which would include an understanding of all aspects of the drug/alcohol problem.
- The encouragement of the use of related referral service within the community.
- The development of a student's self-concept concentrating on the necessity of self-discipline to attain physical and mental well being.
- The encouragement of students to initiate requests for assistance.

## **II. Administrative Procedures**

### **A. Role of the School Committee**

In matters of student drug involvement, as in all other issues, the established policies will allow for a proper review of the circumstances relating to each individual case.

The School Committee expects that incidence of student drug/alcohol involvement will be resolved.

In cases of flagrant violations of School Committee policies or when there is a refusal by a student to cooperate with school officials, the Principal may recommend to the Superintendent that the case be presented to the School Committee for its review and appropriate action.

### **B. Role of the Superintendent**

As the executive officer of the school system, the Superintendent shall disseminate to the community and the professional staff, all School Committee policies pertaining to student drug/alcohol involvement and/or drug/alcohol education programs.

In addition, the Superintendent will maintain an awareness of all cases of drug/alcohol involvement within the schools

and shall serve as a source of pertinent information to the School Committee.

### C. Role of the Principal

In all matters pertaining to the management of the school, the Principal assumes full responsibility. Consequently, in each case of student drug/alcohol involvement which is brought to his/her attention, the Principal must bear the responsibility for determining its proper disposition.

### D. Role of the Staff

Teachers, as well as other staff members, may be the first to recognize significant changes in student behavior or appearance. It is their responsibility to share their concerns with the Principal. The role of the staff is crucial to any program dealing with drug/alcohol involvement by students since they are on the front line of daily activities.

### E. Role of the Student

Students should exert every effort to assist their fellow students by seeking help for them through one of the various sources available. They should do so with the knowledge their gesture would express a concern for the general welfare of the school and most importantly for the specific welfare of the student or students involved.

## III. Definition of Terms

### A. Controlled Drugs

May be defined as a prescribed medication taken by a student for the purpose of maintaining his physical or emotional health.

In each instance where controlled drugs are necessary for a prolonged period of time, the student's parents must request the physician to submit an appropriate letter to the Principal indicating the illness involved, the drug prescribed, the dosage requirements, the duration of treatment and emergency requirements. All controlled drugs are to be left with and taken in the presence of the school nurse or before a person designated by the Principal, whenever possible.

### B. Illegal Drugs

May be defined as alcohol, those included in Massachusetts General Law 94C, and any substance that can significantly alter the physical or mental abilities of a person.

Common examples of illegal drugs would be:

Cannabis - Marijuana, Tetrahydrocannabinol, Hashish and Hash Oil

Stimulants - Alcohol, Barbiturates, Methaqualone, and Tranquilizers, etc.

Hallucinogens - LSD, Mescaline, Peyote, Phencyclidine, STP, and Psilocybin, etc.

Inhalants - Nitrous Oxide, Butyl Nitrite, Amyl Nitrate, etc.

Narcotics - Opium, Morphine, Codeine, Heroin, and Methadone, etc.

It should be noted that there are additional illegal drugs that are not included in this listing.

## IV. Procedures for Responsible Action-Students Suspected of Drug/Alcohol Use and/or Involvement

Aware of the existence of drug involvement in our society, the School Committee in Abington has adopted the following policy related to students suspected of drug/alcohol use and/or involvement:

1. The teacher can accomplish much through the performance of normal classroom responsibilities. The systematic everyday observation of students allows the teacher to be alert for unusual behavior.
2. It is important that the teacher not categorize a child as a drug/alcohol user, but rather recognize that unusual behavior may result from a number of physical inconsistencies which could be caused by any one of a number of circumstances.
3. Once a teacher becomes concerned about a student's behavior, the teacher should immediately share this concern with the Principal of the building and should provide assistance to the student, if necessary.
4. The Principal may solicit the advice and counsel of appropriate staff members such as the school nurse, guidance counselors, the special needs counselor and outside referral sources in determining the course of action which is most appropriate to each individual case. The Principal has the responsibility to remain alert to the results of all such consultations.
5. The Superintendent of Schools should be notified of all cases relating to drug/alcohol abuse. It is the intent of the school to notify the parent of a problem as soon as possible.
6. If necessary, the school will respond to an emergency situation with dispatch and take immediate measures to protect the student's safety through calls to the family physician or hospital units. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.
7. Drug/alcohol involvement will not be viewed as an excuse for violation of school rules and will result in disciplinary measures being taken consistent with the student handbook.
8. Parents are strongly encouraged to seek rehabilitation for the child. School authorities will be ready to assist in the process. Parents are urged to communicate with school authorities regarding this rehabilitation.
9. Inspection of student desks and lockers and their contents is a right and responsibility of the School Com-

mittee under Chapter 71, Section 37 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. Searches of student desks and lockers are usually conducted on an individual basis, but if evidence exists which indicates widespread sale or possession, a general inspection of the school may be authorized.

10. In the case of persons outside of the school community who are observed on school property selling or distributing drugs/alcohol, every effort will be made to assist the law enforcement agents in the apprehension of such persons.
11. The Principal and his staff will notify and assist law enforcement agents in the apprehension of individual(s) involved in drug/alcohol use.
12. The sale, distribution or use of drugs/alcohol on school property is both a criminal offense, subject to legal prosecution and a violation of school regulations subject to appropriate disciplinary measures.

### **Relative to Sex Education**

The program of studies in health education for students in grades 5 and 6 is part of a comprehensive health education curriculum, which has been developed by our professional staff under the guidance of the community health education advisory council. The overall goal of the course at each grade level is to continue efforts begun in the earlier grades to promote the health and well being of our students and to help them to make wise and informed decisions.

Sex education is part of the health education curriculum in grades 5 and 6 including such topics as the changes that take place during puberty; the male and female reproductive systems; the process of fertilization; sexual harassment; and the symptoms and treatments of HIV/AIDS. The instructional materials we use for the course include a curriculum package and videos as well as visuals and a variety of handouts. If you would like to review these materials at school, you may do so by calling the principal of the school your child attends.

During the course, students will be able to ask questions, which will be answered factually and in an age-appropriate manner. Each student's privacy will be respected and no one will be put on the spot to ask or answer questions or reveal personal information. Material will be presented in a balanced, factual way that makes clear that people may have strong religious and moral beliefs related to the subject matter, and that those beliefs must be respected.

Under Massachusetts law and School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. To receive an exemption, simply send a letter to the principal requesting an exemption for your child. No student who is exempted from this portion of the

curriculum will be penalized. We will provide an alternative assignment to students who are exempted.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child has a positive and educationally enriching experience this school year. If you have any questions about sex education or any other matter concerning your child's education, please call the principal of the school your child attends.

These policies and procedures have been developed by a special committee comprised of students, school staff members, clergy, parents and community representatives. They have been reviewed for content by legal counsel before their approval by the Abington School Committee and they are compatible with general school policies and as such, will be reviewed periodically.

### **Memorandum of Understanding** **Between the Abington School Department** **and the Abington Police Department**

This memorandum of Understanding is established between the Abington Public Schools and the Abington Police Department regarding the establishment of a protocol for the reporting and coordination of response to incidents of violence or other illegal activity within Abington Public Schools. The Abington Public Schools and the Abington Police Department agree to coordinate their response to violence or other illegal activity by students and non-students which occur on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events. Through collaboration the two departments can ensure safe and secure school and community environments designed to maximize effective teaching and learning.

To ensure a safe educational environment, this collaborative effort between school administration and law enforcement supports "zero tolerance" for drugs, alcohol, weapons, hate crimes and violence within and on the grounds of the Abington Public Schools. Non students involved in such acts on school premises or at school events are to be reported in the same manner as students are reported. Non students include administrators, teachers, professional staff, support staff, clerical and custodial staff, security personnel, bus drivers, visitors and trespassers.

Although it will continue to be the sole prerogative of school officials to impose disciplinary sanctions for infractions of school rules and policies, it is the responsibility of school authorities to notify the Abington Police Department when any criminal activity is detected or suspected on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. It is the responsibility of the Abington Police Department to respond when drugs, alcohol or weapons are found on school property or when a student is suspected of or charged with

criminally chargeable offenses under Massachusetts General Laws.

M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H requires each school district to have a written Code of Conduct reflected in student handbooks stating the standards and procedures to assume building security and safety of students and school personnel, and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or civil rights violations. Reference to this Memorandum shall be made in these handbooks.

This Memorandum of Understanding is voluntarily entered into with the consent of both parties and is an internal document between the parties and does not confer any rights, privileges or obligations nor is it enforceable as against the parties hereto in any court, administrative hearing, or other forum. Any written or oral communication between the parties of the Memorandum of Understanding will be protected by all laws relating to privacy and confidentiality. This Memorandum of Understanding is in addition to, and does not supplant, policies of the Abington Public Schools with regard to disciplinary procedures and codes of student conduct which are now or may be formulated and published in student handbooks.

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby understand and consent to the following terms, conditions and operating procedures:

1. The Abington Public Schools will employ a Supervisor of Security (and Custodial Services). The Supervisor of Security will report to the Superintendent of Schools and/or his/her designees.
2. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee are responsible for reporting the acts specified below. The Police Chief will designate an officer (or officers) to coordinate all reported criminal acts.
3. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee shall without undo delay report to the Abington Police Department any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school sponsored or school related function, if such incident involves any of the mandatory reportable acts set forth below. It is understood that it will not constitute an undo delay if the Abington Police Department is notified once a school administrator has cause to believe an allegation, and/or has knowledge that a mandatory act was committed or is about to be committed. This reporting shall be accomplished by contacting the

Abington Police Department using the 9-1-1 system, by calling the department's business phone line, by police radio if issued to a school department employee, or directly to a police officer if nearby.

A **mandatory** reportable act shall include:

- a) a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 269, § 10;
  - b) any indecent or sexual assault;
  - c) any instance of substance abuse, including the possession of alcohol, and the possession of any controlled substance as defined in Massachusetts General Laws c. 94C including but not limited to marijuana, cocaine and heroin;
  - d) any assault and battery which results in bodily injury;
  - e) any violation of a temporary or permanent restraining order;
  - f) any so-called "hate crime," meaning for purposes of this section, any violation of Massachusetts General Laws c. 265, §§ 37 or 39;
  - g) any substantial destruction of property or theft; *and*
  - h) any threat to commit a crime against the person or property of another
4. All school department personnel, including but not limited to, administrators, teachers, professional staff, support staff, clerical and custodial staff, security personnel and bus drivers, shall immediately report to their direct supervisors (which shall cause the police department to be notified) and are also authorized, if they want to, to report to the Abington Police Department, if there is an imminent threat, any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function, if such incident involves any mandatory act specified above.
  5. Said supervisor shall immediately report such incident to the principal. Any principal who receives such a report and who has reasonable cause to believe the allegations shall file a written report with the superintendent of said school district on the same school day. The Superintendent shall file copies of said official reports, as soon as reasonably possible, with

the local chief of police and, where required by law, the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. When reports are forwarded to the Abington Police Department, the police will provide a follow-up response to the Superintendent of Schools.

6. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee and the school principal or his/her designee may report to the Abington Police Department any incident on school premises, including in or around a school bus, or at a school sponsored or school related function, if such incident involves any of the following discretionary reportable acts:

A **discretionary** reportable act shall include:

- 1) Any student's violation of a state criminal statute which warrants reporting but is not a mandatory reportable act as described above; and
  - 2) Finding any student, regardless of age, who is reasonably believed to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
7. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has committed a mandatory reportable act or a discretionary reportable act, as defined above, shall if practicable, take (or cause to be taken) the student to the Principal or his/her designee. The Principal/designee shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence. In the case of a mandatory reportable act, all evidence of the crime, and the scene itself, when appropriate, shall be secured in place until the arrival of a police officer from the Abington Police Department. The officer will work with school employees to limit disruptions to others, in attendance at a school or other location, while maintaining a crime scene for an investigation that will proceed.
  8. The Principal/designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the nature of the offense and inform the student and his/her parent or guardian that certain offenses must be reported to the police. The Principal/designee may offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee's report. The Principal/Superintendent shall in the case of a mandatory reportable act, and may in the case of a discretionary reportable act, without undo delay notify the local police department of the presence of contraband and the ex-

istence of any physical evidence. All contraband (drug, alcohol, firearms, and dangerous weapons) shall be immediately surrendered to the police department.

9. Upon notification from the Principal/Superintendent or his/her designee or any school department employee (*only as outlined in section #4*), police shall respond without undo delay in cases of mandatory reportable acts and may respond in other cases. Police shall investigate such cases and, where appropriate, refer such cases to the District Attorney's Office.
10. In addition, the Principal/Superintendent will comply with Massachusetts General Laws c. 71, § 37L requiring that an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time be reported in writing to the Chief of Police. This report must be filed in any case involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled.
11. The Abington School Department will maintain files for all school reports submitted to the department and appropriate records for all school incidents including acts or suspected acts of violence. The Abington Police Department will maintain appropriate records for all incidents/activities that it investigates.
12. The Superintendent of Schools, Chief of Police, Supervisory of Security and other designated school administrators and police officers will meet to collaborate on the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and establish communication lines to support a safe, secure school and community. They will then continue meeting on at least an annual basis.
13. Abington Police Department will continue to provide police services to the Abington Public Schools with a high priority response to reported crimes in progress in and around school facilities. The Abington Police Department will also maintain visibility of uniformed Abington Police Officers, manpower permitting, when requested by the School Department at arrival and dismissal of students at targeted locations.
14. The Abington Police Department and the Supervisor of Security will respond to and be responsible for all reports of missing or ab-

ducted children. Parents will be notified by the appropriate authorities.

15. The Supervisor of Security, after consultation with school officials, will plan with the Abington Police Department for safety and security of certain extra-curricular activities involving Abington students, and held on property owned and controlled by the Town of Abington, including school buildings and athletic fields.
16. Nothing in this Agreement shall supersede or contravene any school or police department administrative procedures or any collective bargaining agreement.

Amended by the Abington School Committee and the Abington Police Department:  
February 15, 2005

### **Abington Public Schools' Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

#### **Preamble**

The Abington Public Schools are committed to providing for the physical health and well-being of students they serve. As such, we recognize:

Children need access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Good health fosters student attendance and academic achievement;

Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive caloric intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States. Major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

According to the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA), 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes. Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid.

Community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.

Therefore, the Abington Public Schools are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect students' health, well being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. As such, the Wellness Policy commits to the following:

- The Abington Public Schools will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- A qualified child nutrition professional (School Food Service Director) will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all Abington Public Schools will participate in the available federal school meal programs.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.
- The Abington Public Schools will create, strengthen, or work within existing school councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies.

#### **I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served**

##### **School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives.
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

**Free and Reduced-Priced Meals:** Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals, regardless of income and promote the availability of school meals to all students.

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff:** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the Abington Public Schools' responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in-schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

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

**Foods and Beverages Sold Individually:** (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.) The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in-schools.

**Beverages:**

- **Meets Guidelines:** water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages
- **Does Not Meet Guidelines:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sport drinks, iced teas; fruit-based drinks that

contain less than 50% real fruit juice or contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.

**Foods**

**A food item sold individually:**

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

**Portion Sizes:**

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

- One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
- One ounce for cookies;
- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; milk and 100% juice.
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals.

Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

### **Fundraising Activities:**

The participation of the community of Abington is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies. To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, in-school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only food that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. To the extent possible, schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. Fundraising events that support student health by using non-food items or activities are encouraged. In the event that a particular school chooses to have a fundraising activity that involves food, the following criteria need to be met.

- a. No school based marketing of the food fundraiser will be allowed during the school day unless it meets the nutrition standards for meals and beverages sold individually.
- b. All materials for the fundraiser (for example, flyers, order forms, etc.) will be distributed at the end of the day.
- c. Food sold for fundraising purposes during the school day will be monitored by the School Food Service Director to ensure compliance with the nutritional standards as set by this policy.
- d. School activities that occur after the normal school day will be exempt from this policy.

**Snacks** will make a positive contribution to developing diet and healthy living habits, also keeping mindful of any allergy-related issues in the building or classroom. Snacks will emphasize fruits, vegetables and bottled water. These snacks will also include healthy low fat (63.5%)/ low calorie (100) snacks including: milk, yogurt; low calorie / low fat chips, pretzels, crackers, cookies, pastries; fruit, 100% fruit juice; nuts, and seeds. Snacks will not be candy, gum, sodas or high sugar snacks. Exceptions to the snack policy will be during testing periods or any medical or special needs considerations. At the elementary level, there will be one snack time per day (ten minutes) within classroom but not at or near lunch times.

**Celebrations** -Celebrations/school events, at the elementary level, will follow healthy food guidelines. Parents will be encouraged to provide appropriate healthy snacks. Distribution of non-food items will be encouraged. Healthy snack lists will be made available to families at the beginning of the school year to assist them in their food choices.

**Holiday School Events** will follow the healthy foods guidelines.

**Rewards/Punishments:** Food and physical activity will not be used as rewards or punishment.

**Lunches/snacks brought from home** should be based around healthy food pyramid guidelines. Parents will be encouraged to send foods that are healthy and nutritious. Schools will make healthy food lists available to parents at the beginning of the school year.

## **II. Nutrition/Physical Activity Promotion and Nutritious Food Marketing**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** The Abington Public Schools' health curriculum aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Nutrition education is offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program.

## **III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

### **Physical Activity and a Healthy School Environment**

Physical education classes should be the environment that emphasizes the development of physical fitness and the acquisition of motor skills through active participation and practice.

Physical activity involves bodily movement that results in an expenditure of energy of at least a moderate intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit for students.

Students will be encouraged to accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity on all or most days of the week. This can be accomplished through several sessions of activity in and out of school each day.

### **Recommendations for Physical Education**

A certified physical education teacher should teach all physical education classes.

Physical education classes should offer a sequential course of study with a focus on students' developing motor skills, movement forms, and health-related fitness.

An adequate amount of time should be provided for physical education classes, and students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Physical education classes should provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students.

Physical education classes should prohibit the use of physical activity as punishment, or the withholding of participation in physical education class as punishment.

### **Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.**

Students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class in order to embrace physical activity as a personal behavior and encourage lifetime physical activity.

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities.
- Daily recess will be provided for all elementary school students.
- Intramural and extracurricular physical activity programs to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students will be offered where possible.
- Community members and organizations will be encouraged to use the schools' physical activity facilities outside of the school day to provide programs that support physical activity and nutrition for students.

## **IV. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring and Review.** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent or designee.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies and any other applicable state or federal policies, within-school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Assistant Superintendent for Budget and Finance.

The Director of Wellness Programs PreK-12 will monitor compliance within the physical activity and nutrition portions of the policy.

Every three years, the Abington Public Schools will review the wellness policy and revise as necessary.

*Approved by the Abington School Committee  
June 13, 2006*