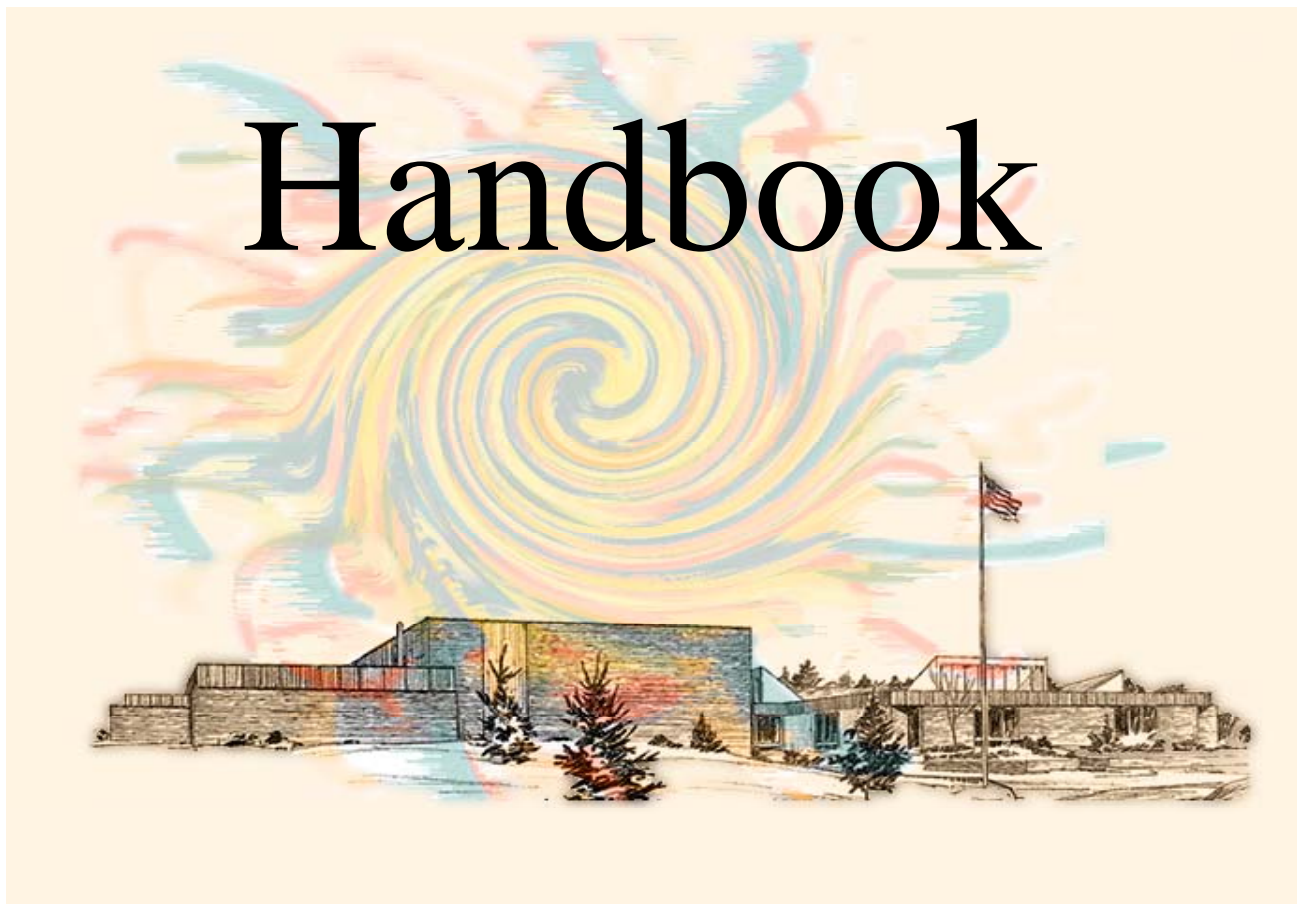


Conant School

*Where the Whole Child
Is the Whole Idea*

Handbook



80 Taylor Road

Acton, Massachusetts 01720

Telephone: 978-266-2550 Fax: 978-266-2509

Website: Conant.ab.mec.edu

Conant School Handbook

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ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Conant School

80 Taylor Road

Acton, Massachusetts 01720

978-266-2550

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to familiarize yourself with the Conant School. What is outlined for you in the following pages helps to underscore our beliefs about learning and child development. The truth is, however, to truly understand who or what the Conant school is, you would have to live with us and work with us around all those issues that go into defining what is best for every child we serve. While we are an “elementary school” there is nothing elementary about what we do. What we believe we offer here is “fundamental” to a lifetime of success for every child.

Our students learn, and learn well, how to read; to write; to speak; to quantify; to experiment; to question and to risk. More importantly, perhaps, they begin to understand that, by and large, they are very fortunate and “to those whom much is given, much is expected”. This sense of community and social responsibility permeates all that we do.

Fundamental to that sense of responsibility is the very atmosphere in which they learn. They are treated by those who guide them with enormous respect, sensitivity and caring. Every member of the staff recognizes that they serve as role models for those they serve. They understand that their approach to students and other adults will be mirrored and reflected by those youngsters for decades to come. That is an awesome responsibility, but one we fully understand and accept.

All this said however, what we ask ourselves at the end of the day is, “Did students leave happy...were they excited about the day...do they look forward to returning tomorrow?” In all my years of experience, a positive response to these questions indicates a job well done.

Immerse yourself in the pages that follow and ask yourself if your child would prosper in the academic and social environment we describe. If so, we would be thrilled to think and work with you over the course of the coming years.

Yours truly,

Philip Benincasa
Principal

PART A: SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

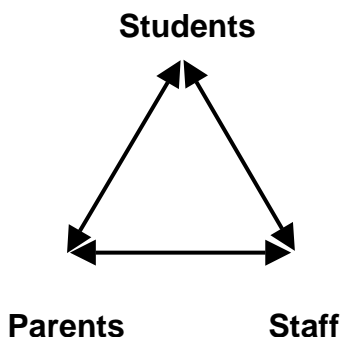
CORE VALUES

The following are the Core Values that guide the students, families, and staff of Conant School. Our behavior towards one another and towards our children should be measured against these Core Values as we strive to demonstrate them in our daily lives.

Core Belief

We believe that in order for learning, teaching, and risk-taking to take place, each person (e.g., student, parent, and staff member) should feel valued and respected.

RESPECT FLOWS IN ALL DIRECTIONS



Behaviors

Each person...

- * Respects diverse learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds
- * Fulfills personal and academic responsibilities
- * Displays courteous behavior
- * Accepts accountability for one's own behavior
- * Resolves conflicts in a respectful manner
- * Fosters an environment that encourages risk-taking

Core Value

We believe each individual is part of a community and should take responsibility for himself/herself and the group in order to contribute to its success.

Behaviors

Each person...

- * Designs a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment
- * Creates a learning environment that promotes cooperative efforts
- * Engages the learner
- * Communicates effectively and regularly

- * Cares for property with sensitivity for the environment and the future
- * Maintains collaboration between home and school

Core Value

We believe lifelong learning is essential. A stimulating and nurturing environment should be provided so that students experience success and feel the challenges and joy associated with learning.

Behaviors

Each person...

- * Guides individuals in defining goals and in developing strategies and skills necessary to experience success while learning
- * Involves children by providing authentic experiences
- * Encourages perseverance while engaged in the learning process
- * Offers a challenging and stimulating curriculum that is enhanced by technology
- * Involves the learner in activities that encourage critical and creative thinking
- * Promotes high academic standards
- * Fosters lifelong learning
- * Celebrates learning

School Philosophy

Where the Whole Child is the Whole Idea

The Conant Elementary School, located at 80 Taylor Road, was constructed in 1971. It is a one-story facility with a contemporary architectural design. The building's twenty classrooms are arranged in clusters of five that open to "pod" areas utilized for large and small group instruction. Conant also has a cafeteria, gymnasium, library/media center, computer lab, and five small rooms used for support services. Approximately 500 students are enrolled in kindergarten through grade six. There are three sections at each grade level, including one all day kindergarten program. Grade 1-6 classes range in size from 22-26.

Our primary assumptions are...

- Every child can learn
- Student learning is cumulative
- Earlier skills are foundational and requisite for later, more complex, higher-level skills and knowledge

Conant's educational focus is on promoting high standards and developing a strong academic program. Teachers explicitly teach topics and skills over a span of several grades. As the students continue to study the topics, they acquire concepts and skills at higher levels with increasingly more challenging literature, textbooks, and materials. Also, we offer many opportunities for students to participate in instructional activities that reflect and support the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*.

Our approach to teaching is based on current research and evidence of best practice. Instructional strategies and materials support our philosophy of engaging the whole child, and many subject areas are integrated into each thematic unit taught. We have designed child-centered classrooms that foster independent learning and address individual learning styles. Enter a classroom and you will see students engaged in the learning process, working cooperatively, communicating effectively, and thinking critically and creatively. This is particularly evident in our investigative approach to math and science. Both disciplines have an emphasis on problem solving, critical thinking, and the development of mathematical and scientific skills. Technology is used as a learning tool throughout the curriculum. It reinforces and enhances all aspects of attaining and applying knowledge. The utilization of computers, both in the classroom and computer lab, assists students in the development of skills and in obtaining valuable information that supports instructional goals. Learning centers provide opportunities for independent exploration and reinforcement of skills, while open carpeted areas allow a comfortable place to share and learn together. The classroom library is an integral part of each room and helps to make reading a part of all that we do.

We believe that listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be developed simultaneously and integrated throughout the curriculum. To accomplish this, our language arts program is literature-based and is designed so that students are directly taught skills and strategies pertaining to oral language, reading, and writing. Language arts skills are integrated throughout all of the science and social studies units. This integration of curriculum helps our students become creative thinkers and make connections between key ideas. Learning is relevant and fun!

Conant takes pride in its diverse and international population. Approximately 25 languages and dialects are represented at the school. Students are educated in an inclusive setting with professional staff and instructional assistants who support students for whom English is a second language. Our goal is to celebrate our diversity and multicultural backgrounds by developing an understanding of, and respect for, others and ourselves.

Several support programs are available to children who need additional services. These programs include reading, counseling, English as a second language, primary and intermediate special needs, applied behavioral analysis, and speech and language. Art, music, and physical education programs are provided for all students. Instrumental music lessons and band are optional for the students in grades five and six, while the entire fifth grade participates in chorus.

Parents/guardians are actively involved in school activities through the Parent-Teacher-Organization (PTO) and as volunteers. Conant is fortunate to have an active PTO that works collaboratively with the staff to implement the school's vision and goals. In addition to multiple fund-raising events, the PTO sponsors many cultural arts programs and activities, including our science and nature program. Our onsite outdoor classroom program integrates lessons and distinct concepts from our science curriculum at each grade level. Trained parent volunteers incorporate the same hands-on teaching philosophy developed for the classroom. New opportunities are available every fall for parents who are interested in working with our technology program. Five parent representatives, elected by Conant's parent/guardian community, are members of our School Council and work with the staff and principal to develop our yearly School Improvement Plan.

The Conant Community prides itself on its core value of promoting mutual trust and respect. All-School Meetings, planned by the Student Council, are focused on ideas related to maintaining this core value and to developing positive character traits. Also, at these meetings, students are recognized for performing acts of kindness toward their peers and adults. Conant is a wonderful learning environment!

STAFF POSITIONS

School Personnel

Principal
Secretary
Kindergarten through Grade 6 Classroom Teachers
Art Teacher
Music Teacher
Physical Education Teacher

Support Personnel

Guidance Counselor
Special Education Teachers
School Nurse
Speech and Language Therapist
Reading/Language Arts, Literacy Specialist

Part Time Positions

English-as-a-Second Language Teacher
Occupational Therapist
Physical Therapist
School Psychologist
Technology Specialist
Teaching Assistants for Reading/Language Arts**
Math Assistants*
Teaching Assistants for Kindergarten
Special Education Assistants
Assistant Secretary
Library/ Media Assistant *
Lunch Recess Monitors**
*PTO funded
** Partially PTO funded

System-wide Specialist

Curriculum Coordinator K-12

SCHOOL HOURS

The Acton Elementary Schools are on an annually rotating schedule.

Early Schedule

8:30 - 2:45
8:30 - 11:15
12:00 - 2:45
8:30 - 12:15

Grades 1 – 6
A.M. Kindergarten
P.M. Kindergarten
Thursdays K - 6

Late Schedule

9:15 - 3:30
9:15 - 12:00
12:45 - 3:30
9:15 - 1:00

Thursdays are early release days and there is no P.M. Kindergarten.

The Conant, McCarthy-Towne and Merriam Schools are on the same schedule and students in these schools ride together on the busses. Gates and Douglas are on the alternate schedule.

Students arriving on the bus enter the building immediately and go directly to their respective classes to prepare for the day.

Walkers, bike riders, and students who are driven to school before the busses have begun to arrive, should come directly into the building and wait quietly in the lobby until the first bus unloads. They can then proceed to their classrooms. **No student should arrive more than 15 minutes before the official starting time of school.**

Please refer to the section "Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures".

GOVERNING AND ADVISING ORGANIZATIONS

School Committee

The Acton Public School Committee generally meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 P.M. Meetings are held in one of the elementary schools or the R.J. Grey Junior High School library. The meetings are usually televised on the local access cable channel and are open to the public.

Citizens are encouraged to attend School Committee meetings. At the discretion of the chairperson, citizens will be allowed to speak on issues, especially if they have information that will help clarify issues under discussion by the School Committee.

School Council

The Education Reform Act calls for the establishment of a school council at each elementary and secondary school in the Commonwealth. The school council is comprised of parent, teacher, and community representatives and the school Principal.

The purpose of this council is to assist and advise the Principal in

- adopting education goals for the school;
- identifying the educational needs of the students attending the school;
- reviewing the school's annual budget;

- formulating a school improvement plan and participating in its implementation;
- working on other projects as requested by the Principal.

In the spring, parent and teacher representatives are elected to serve for two year staggered terms on the Conant School Council. Decisions are made by consensus. Meetings are spent monitoring the progress of accomplishing the Council's goals and discussing school policy issues which parents, students, or staff have asked the Council to consider because they are not being addressed by other groups in the school.

Task forces, consisting of one council member and other Conant parents/guardians and staff, are used to research and make recommendations to the council on larger issues. The task forces report to the Council, which provides direction and determines when a task force has completed its assigned task.

The Conant School Council, as a mandated and elected body representing parents/guardians and staff, views itself in relation to the School Committee as the appropriate vehicle for communicating the concerns and opinions of the Conant community.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent Teacher Organization

The Conant Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is comprised of all the parents/guardians of Conant School students. The PTO is led by a representative board that consists of six officers, a number of volunteer committee chair people, and a teacher representative. The PTO meets, generally the second Wednesday of each month, alternating between morning and evening meetings. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend.

Fund Raising Projects - The PTO has several fund raising projects each year. The profits from these projects are used to fund assistants used in the classroom and library and on the playground, the parent led nature program, student assemblies, field trips for needy children, games day at the end of the school year, etc. Additional profits may be used to purchase materials and equipment for Conant that the school budget is not able to fund. The ability of the PTO to provide the school and its students with additional benefits depends directly on the success of its fund raising projects.

Volunteers - The Conant parents/guardians add a valuable dimension to the quality of education through their volunteer work. The hours that parents volunteer range from once a year to five hours a day. The help provided ranges from absentee calling to classroom assistance, office work, and fund raising projects.

Any parent/guardian who would like to become involved in some capacity should call the Volunteer Chairperson on the PTO Board. See "Volunteers and Visitors" below. A **CORI Check is required for all volunteer positions.**

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Check

On November 22, 2002, the Senate and House of Representatives passed a new law, Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002 that took effect February 27, 2003. The law requires schools to obtain all available criminal offender record information about any and all volunteers and employees who "may have direct and unmonitored contact with pupils" under the schools' supervision.

For example, parents/guardians who volunteer as field trip chaperones, library or office assistants, or lead nature walks will now have to submit to the "CORI" process before any involvement in the schools. All CORI information is confidential and privacy will be maintained. Only a very few staff will have access to the CORI information which will be stored in a locked, secure site in the Central Office.

CORI forms will be distributed to ALL volunteers through the school office. A form must be completed and submitted in-person (at any of the Acton/Acton Boxborough Regional School offices) with a photo identification. According to the law, the criminal history check must be completed prior to volunteer service. Once the initial "CORI" check is done, it must be completed every three (3) years.

Volunteers with specific questions or concerns are encouraged to contact either the Principal of the School or Deputy Superintendent of Schools, George Frost.

Volunteers and Visitors

Over the years, Conant School has been fortunate to have some of the most dedicated and generous parent/guardian volunteers. We are very grateful for the time and effort put forth by so many members of our Conant community. On any given day, we have at least five or six adults volunteering to make our school an even better place. We are happy that everyone feels welcome at Conant and we want to maintain that feeling. At the same time, we need to make sure that our students feel welcome and safe. New faces can be unsettling to children. **Our school district's visitor sign-in policy allows us to know who is visiting the building at all times. It requires that any person visiting a school during school hours, sign in at the office upon arrival. Visitor and volunteer badges assure students and staff that office personnel know who is in the building.**

Most of the time children are in the supervised company of their classmates. There are times, though, when children walk through the hallways unescorted, such as when they go to the bathroom, to the nurse, to the office, or to their classroom when arriving at school late. It is for these reasons that we need to be certain of the identity of all visitors in our building. For the safety of all children, no parent/adult is permitted to go to a classroom without first obtaining permission from the office.

Many parents/guardians volunteer regularly, even daily, and are known by most of the staff. The sign-in policy may seem to be an inconvenience to them, but we're confident that all can understand why it is important to take this safety precaution and apply the sign-in procedure to all visitors. Before leaving, visitors should turn in their badges and sign out.

We have never encountered a problem with a visitor and don't expect to, but we are committed to doing all we can to ensure that our school is a safe and inviting place to learn.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

School Main Office

The School Main Office serves as the center for a wide range of important activities. It is the communication link between home and school. If you need to leave a message for a staff member, we will connect you to his or her voice mail (or you can access voice mail directly by calling 978-266-2555). The School Main Office number is 978-266-2550. During school hours the office staff answers this phone line.

The secretaries receive bus passes and pickup forms from the classroom teachers and compile a daily list. It is important that these forms be filled out accurately and completely prior to the start of the school day. This will alleviate any confusion during the busy dismissal time. Feel free to contact the office if you have any questions regarding procedures or policies.

Emergency Cards

Two Emergency Cards must be completed for every student at Conant: one for the office and one for the School Nurse. Up-to-date information allows the office to contact parents/guardians in case of an emergency. Therefore, it is **extremely important** to notify the school immediately if there is a change in address or telephone number(s) at home and/or at work. For similar reasons, we also need current addresses and telephone numbers of child-care providers and the person to contact in case of an emergency.

Contact Information

We must be able to contact you (or your designated substitute) during the day. Please notify the school office whenever there is a change in your home, work, or cell phone number.

Truancy and Attendance

In order for children to have a successful learning experience and feel that they are an integral member of the class, it is important that they be present when school is in session. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76I, Section 1 states a student "may be excused up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months." One of the keys to academic improvement is good attendance with consistent participation in school.

Parents and guardians, as well as students, have the responsibility to ensure that attendance at school is regular and timely. Schools are required by law to keep track of attendance and are also required by law to address any problems. This can be done by notifying the parents/guardians of the issue and working together to improve the student's attendance. In extreme instances, it may require the assistance of the Court or Department of Social Services.

If a child is going to be absent, parents/guardians should call the Safe Arrival Phone number (**978/263-2691**) and leave the following information on the machine: the child's name, grade, teacher, reason for absence, and when it is expected that the child will return to school. If no message is received, a Safe Arrival volunteer will call the home. If there is no adult at home, the parents/guardians will be contacted at their place of work to confirm the child's absence.

If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and there is concern about a child's safety, the police department may be called. The Safe Arrival Program is sponsored by our PTO and staffed by parent/guardian volunteers.

Since parents/guardians are asked to contact the school on the day of a child's absence, notes for absences are not required.

Homework for Absent Students

One-day Absence

In the event of a one-day absence due to illness, the teacher will be responsible for insuring that the child makes up essential work for the missed day. Work will be completed when the child returns to school.

Absence for More Than One Day

If the absence is longer than one day, the parent/guardian should contact the teacher directly to make arrangements for making up important work.

Absences Due to Vacation During School Time

Teachers are **not** responsible for providing work in advance to students who miss school due to a vacation taken during school time. Teachers will maintain a collection of assignments done in class during the child's absence and provide a reasonable period of time for the student to complete work missed. Students may not take reading books with them on vacation as we do not have class sets of these and they must be shared. However, they can borrow the book being read in class from the local library if they wish.

MCAS Attendance Policy

David Driscoll, the Commissioner of Education, writes: "The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the Commonwealth's statewide testing program for all public school students, developed in response to the Education Reform Law of 1993. MCAS is based on the rigorous academic learning standards contained in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks." Students in grades 3-6 will be taking different aspects of the MCAS tests during the school year. In the fall, parents/guardians will get more detailed information about the year's specific testing schedule and the subjects being tested at each grade level. **Families should not schedule vacation or non-emergency appointments during the scheduled testing period.**

Tardy Arrival

Children arriving at school after the start of the school day must report to the office so that their presence can be recorded. They should be accompanied by a parent/guardian or have a note from the parent/guardian stating the reason for the tardiness.

Staying After School

No elementary school student is to remain after school, unless the consent of the parent or guardian has been given. It is the responsibility of each teacher to contact parents if a student needs to remain at school beyond the normal school day. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to arrange for their child's transportation home.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Dropping Children Off at School

Please do not drop children off prior to 15 minutes before the official starting time of school. There is no supervision for students before this time. Parents who must leave for work early should arrange for their children to stay with a neighbor until the bus arrives, or drop their children at a classmate's or friend's home where the children could wait together for the bus. Afternoon Kindergarten students should not arrive before the official starting time for their class.

Where Students May be Dropped Off

The main entrance to the school should be used at arrival and dismissal time for bus students only. Parents who drive their children to school should drop them off near the fire hydrant at the entrance to the bus parking lot, at the far end of the circle. Cars may then proceed into the bus lot and drive out the lower entrance and continue straight out the main driveway to Taylor Road, as this section of our driveway is two-way traffic. An alternative drop off would be on Minot Avenue, at the end of the pathway that crosses the playground. Students who use this pathway to the school should enter through the rear door behind the Principal's office. Parents of young children may wish to park in a designated parking space in the circle (do not park in the side lot) and walk their child to the front door.

The area in front of the school, from the hydrant by the bus lot to the end of the circle, is a **NO STOPPING ZONE** for all vehicles, except busses.

Picking Up Children at School

In order to ensure the safety of our children, it is imperative that the school's office know if a child is going to be picked up by a parent or a parent's designee. If you know in advance that you are going to have your child picked up at school, please complete a "Note to School" form and send it to school with your child. These forms are available in the office, in the monthly newsletter, *The Conant Crier*, and on the Conant web site. If someone other than the parent/guardian is picking up the child, include that information in the note. No child will be dismissed to anyone without written permission from the parent/guardian. This form, once completed, provides the school with the information it needs concerning who will be picking up your child and the approximate time of pick up.

Adults picking up children at the end of the day should park in a designated parking space (front circle or behind the school on the basketball court) and enter and exit the building through the rear door by the custodian's office. Do not park in the handicapped parking spaces. Please do not use the main entrance. Upon arrival, please go directly to the front of the cafeteria to wait for the child.

Those students for whom we have received a note are directed to the cafeteria at the end of the day. A teacher on duty in the cafeteria monitors to make sure that no child leaves without an adult, who has signed for the child on the Pick Up List for the day.

Early Dismissal

A written request to have a student excused from school early should be sent with the child on the morning of the dismissal, including the time and reason for leaving (see “Note to the School” forms). Students may not be dismissed from school during the last thirty minutes of the school day, except in cases of emergency. Early dismissal is discouraged, as important classroom activities take place at the end of each day. As classroom time is highly valued, all medical appointments should be made outside of school hours, whenever possible. For purposes of safety, a child will be released only to their parents/guardians unless the school has been notified in writing by the parents/guardians that they have granted permission for someone else to pick up their child. The parent/guardian, or authorized person, **MUST** come to the office to sign out the child and have the student dismissed from the classroom.

Parents/guardians must notify the school office before any student is removed from the school **at any time**. The parent/guardian should also notify daycare providers that the student will not be there due to illness or any other reason. This is important, as daycare providers often call the school worried about missing children. **It is the parent's responsibility to notify the daycare provider when a child is not going to attend.**

Walkers

For the safety of each child, we try to make ourselves aware of the dismissal plans for all of our students. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will compile the names of all students who have written permission to walk home on a regular basis.

All students who bring notes requesting permission to walk home just for a day must present those notes to the classroom teacher before permission is granted. These notes will then be sent to the office to receive final approval and to allow us to keep a record of that day's student walkers.

Sending Notes to School

When sending a note to school about your child, **please write your child's first and last name in the note**. When signing it, please use your first and last name as well. Notes are processed both by the classroom teacher and the office. Sometimes the last name of the student is not the same as the last name of the parent/guardian and it is difficult for the office staff to remember specific parent-child relationships. Including both the first and last name of the child and the parent/guardian is extremely important information for the office staff.

If your child will be taking a different bus at the end of the day, the office must receive a completed *Elementary Bus Pass* form at the beginning of the day (see “Transportation”).

Delivering Messages or Items

...To Your Child

As a parent/guardian you know how difficult it can be to capture and maintain the attention of young children. Part of what makes children so magical is that their minds are completely open to marvel at and take in all that surrounds them. However, this is also what causes them to be so easily distracted.

Elementary classrooms buzz with activity. They are places where learning and discovery come alive. To an observer it may seem that a visitor dropping in would probably go unnoticed. But, it is amazing how quickly twenty-five children can switch gears and focus on something new and different...like the visitor. If a stranger can elicit a response like this, you can imagine the excitement that the little ones feel when a little piece of home walks through their classroom door. Suddenly the phonics lesson about “ch” doesn’t seem so engaging.

So what’s a person to do? Sometimes parents/guardians have to get a message to their child or to a teacher, and then there are those lunch boxes, permission slips, book reports, etc. that were left on the kitchen table. If a parent/guardian needs to deliver an item or message to a child, the best thing to do is to come in or call the school office. If the parent needs to speak with the child, our secretary will call him/her using the intercom. This minimizes the amount of classroom distraction and is greatly appreciated by the teachers.

...To Staff Members

If you need to speak with a teacher, the nurse, or the principal, send in a note with your child requesting an appointment, leave a message with our secretary on voice mail, or drop a note in the appropriate office mailbox. Teachers often spend before school, recess and specialist times in meetings and conferences, or are busy with classroom preparations. It is difficult for them to turn visitors away when they drop by at these times, but it is usually necessary. Ongoing communication between home and school is essential. By honoring these requests, parents can help to keep the lines open.

“No School” Announcements and Cancellations

It is the general policy of the School Committee to cancel school only in the case of extreme weather conditions or emergencies. Parents/guardians are urged, therefore, to use their own judgment concerning their child’s attendance at school on stormy days. Do not call the Acton Fire or Police departments to determine whether or not schools have been canceled. This practice seriously interferes with the respective departments’ notification of emergencies and ability to respond in a timely fashion. Please do not count on being able to reach the school by phone on stormy days as the lines are generally busy.

Whenever the weather looks bad, parents/guardians are urged to watch TV news or listen carefully to the radio to determine whether school will be closed or there will be a delayed opening. Check the school system’s web site (ab.mec.edu) for cancellation information and to sign up for the AB Emergency Notification mailing list. If the weather is threatening, and parents/guardians will not be home that day, they should make arrangements for their children in the event that school closes early. Please send a note to school with the child that morning with this information.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor school cancellations.

Early School Dismissal Due to Weather or Emergency

In the event that school is dismissed prior to the regular dismissal time due to emergency conditions (i.e., weather, heat, or electrical problems), we must know the destination of your child. **An *Emergency Dismissal Form* is sent home at the beginning of the school year with each child.** This form is kept on file in the office. **Please review and discuss with your child where he/she should go if you are not home.** Please update any changes in this plan that may occur. This plan will be implemented in the event of an emergency closing, **(which is one hour or more before the normal dismissal time).** The greatest concern is for the safety of the children. No child should go home to an empty house or be locked out of his/her home. Unless there is another arrangement on file, students will be sent home or to their regular daycare provider. Please do not count on being able to reach school by telephone on a day such as this. The school lines are usually quite busy.

The school is NOT able to notify parents.

Fifteen Minute Early School Dismissal Due to Weather

Students are sometimes dismissed 15-30 minutes early on days when driving is bad due to snow or ice. This is to allow the buses to travel with caution. Although most children arrive home at approximately the same time as usual, those riding on the first few buses that leave the school may arrive a bit earlier than usual. Therefore, on stormy days, those adults (parent, nanny, sitter) who are generally home to meet the child, **should make plans necessary in order to be at the house at least 30 minutes earlier than the child's usual arrival time.**

Delayed Openings

When there is a snowstorm, Acton Public Schools often have a delayed opening, rather than cancel school. Delayed openings are necessary in order to allow our staff the time necessary to get to school safely. **If you bring your child to school on the day of a delayed start, the earliest that your child should be dropped off is 15 minutes before the NEW starting time of school.**

This is necessary for the safety of the children. The school may be locked, and the staff is not available to supervise your child earlier than 15 minutes before the delayed starting time.

Lunch, recess, special classes and dismissal times remain the same regardless of the starting time of school. There will be no instrumental music lessons or band rehearsal on days with delayed openings.

"No School" Signals

School cancellations are broadcast on

6:00 A.M.

RADIO

WBZ (1030 AM) Boston

WHDH (850 AM) Boston

WRKO (680 AM)

WROR (105.7 FM)

WEIM (1280 AM) Fitchburg

TELEVISION

Channel 4

Channel 5

Channel 6

Cable- Channel 61

FIRE SIGNAL

6:30 A.M.	2 - 2 - 2 - 2	No School Regional District (ALL DAY Grades 7 - 12)
7:00 A.M.	2 - 2 - 2 - 2	No School ALL Schools (ALL DAY Grades K - 12)

Parents/guardians are urged **NOT** to call the Acton Police or Fire Department to determine whether or not schools have been canceled. This practice has, in the past, seriously interfered with the respective departments notification of emergencies and ability to respond in a timely fashion.

Classroom Emergency Phone Chain

The phone chain is designed to communicate a no-school or delayed start of school message **when no announcement is made by TV** or fire whistle, usually because the announcement pertains to only one school within the district. It can also be used to facilitate communications among parents in a particular classroom.

WHEN YOU RECEIVE A CALL:

1. Locate your name on the class list and call the next name in your chain.
2. If you reach an answering machine, leave the message and call the next name in the chain until you reach a real person.
3. If the person does not speak English, ask to speak to the child and then call the next family for them.
4. If you are the last person in the chain, call your room coordinator and inform her that the chain has been completed.

This phone chain is not used for emergency dismissal since it contains only home phone numbers and many parents are not at home during the day.

Reporting Student Progress

Pupil progress is reported at parent conferences held in the fall, as well as Progress Reports sent home at various times during the school year (see School Calendar for dates). During the conferences, information related to the children's school experience and progress is discussed. In addition to providing the parent/guardian with an opportunity to learn about the child's progress, these conferences give the teacher an opportunity to learn more about the child. Both parents/guardians are encouraged to attend if at all possible. Parents/guardians should not feel that they are limited to the scheduled dates for conferences and progress reports, but should feel free to get in touch with their child's teacher to arrange for a conference at any time there is a question or concern. Teachers will also request meetings with parents/guardians as the need arises.

TEACHER CONFERENCES

The following are suggestions for making the most of these meetings.

1. Talk with your child ahead of time. Let him/her know that you and the teacher are having this meeting to ensure a positive and productive year. Talk about academic and social issues. Knowing how things are going out at recess is as much of a concern as his/her favorite subject in the classroom.
2. If you have concerns or questions about your child's performance in a specific area, bring some of your child's work to the conference. It is beneficial to both parties to have samples of schoolwork to examine together. Concrete examples reduce the need for guesswork.
3. Due to the number of scheduled conferences, meeting time is limited. To make the most of your time, let the teacher know in advance about specific concerns or points you wish to discuss. This will enable him/her to gather student work and any other pertinent information ahead of time.
4. Please be prompt. Since conferences are scheduled back to back it is not possible to extend the meeting beyond the designated time.
5. Keep the focus on *your* child. Compare his/her work month to month instead of comparing it to other children's. Understand that the teachers evaluate students against themselves and the grade level standards. It wouldn't be appropriate for them to comment on how your child compares with his/her classmates.
6. Remember that you are in a partnership with the teacher and that you both want what is best for your child. When devising an action plan do not hesitate to make suggestions as well as listen to them. Share the plan with your child. It's important for him/her to see you and the teacher as part of the same team.
7. Leave the conference on a positive note. If you feel more time is needed to discuss an issue, schedule another appointment.
8. Be prepared to report plenty of positive feedback to your child, as well as future goals.

Placement of Students

The placement of children in classes each year is one of our most important decisions. In making this decision the professional staff considers all possible relevant information so that the greatest possible learning for each child will result.

In order to make the most of children's learning potential, it is essential that balanced classes be assembled which reflect what teachers know about the conditions under which each child best functions.

There are some important considerations in the placement process. First of all, we must have equitable numbers of children in each class. In addition, we feel it is desirable for a child to be in a class that reflects a wide range of abilities, as well as a good mixture of sexes and personality characteristics. Other important factors considered are the special needs of students, peer relationships, and teacher and special support staff recommendations.

Student placement teams are comprised of the classroom teachers at the given grade level, the guidance counselor, special educator, literacy specialist and the principal.

A student information form is distributed to parents/guardians in the spring. This allows parents/guardians to record information they would like the team to consider in the placement process. Completion of this form is optional. **The school does not accept requests for specific teachers.**

Notification of Placement

Due to the number of students both leaving and entering our school during the summer months, decisions on placement are not finalized until the end of August. This policy is in effect in all five elementary schools. In order to maintain the heterogeneous nature of each class, changes sometimes need to be made in the tentative placements that were prepared in the late spring. There are usually several moves both in and out of the system that impact these decisions.

The final class lists, indicating student's name, teacher and room number assignment, are posted on the windows next to the main entrance of the school during the week that immediately precedes the first week of school. Notification of student placement by mail is provided only for children new to the school and for incoming Kindergarten students.

Grade Level Placement and Promotion Policy

Placement of students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 is governed by the Acton Public Schools' Kindergarten entry age policy. All other decisions regarding the placement of students, including promotion, retention and initial grade level placement for new students, is the responsibility of the school principal. Students are promoted on the basis of careful study and an analysis of what is best for each individual. Promotion is seen as highly desirable for most children, but we recognize the school's right and responsibility to withhold promotion for certain children.

The decision about promotion or retention is based on the consensus of all relevant school personnel (teachers, guidance counselor, principal, and any other personnel working with the child). These decisions are based on careful study and evaluation of the following data: child's chronological age, physical size and social maturity, academic achievement, and the child's affective behavior in school. Input from parents/guardians is very important and highly desirable.

The question about promotion is one that can be raised by either school officials or parents/guardians. The question should be raised in the early spring.

Grade Level Organization

The Conant School consists primarily of self-contained classrooms in Kindergarten through grade 5. Under this organizational plan, students receive instruction from their assigned classroom teachers in all academic areas. On an individual, and/or small group basis, students leave the classroom for special help or may be assisted within the classroom by one of our many support personnel, as the need arises.

The sixth grade is departmentalized for math, language arts and reading, in preparation for the junior high school experience. Social Studies is taught by the homeroom teacher, and each of the three teachers is responsible for one science unit. Children are assigned to one

of three homerooms where they begin and end their day. During the day, they move as a homeroom group among the three teachers for their academic classes.

Homework Policy

Homework is an extension of the activities begun in school by the students under the guidance of their teachers and continued at home. Working together, the home and the school can guide the students as they discover knowledge and achieve independence.

Growth and development is a gradual process that varies with each individual. Therefore, the amount of time that might be spent on homework will vary from one project to another and will increase as students develop competence and as they move through the grades. As a general rule, you may expect homework to be assigned Monday through Thursday.

Kindergarten: 20 minutes of reading and conversation

Grade 1: *20 minutes of reading and 10 minutes additional homework

Grade 2: *20 minutes of reading and 15 minutes additional homework

Grade 3: *20 minutes of reading and 25 minutes additional homework

Grade 4: *20 minutes of reading and 45 minutes additional homework

Grade 5: *30 minutes of reading and 60 minutes additional homework

Grade 6: *30 minutes of reading and 80 minutes additional homework

*These times include focused independent reading of self-selected or teacher-selected material and long term project work in grades 2-6.

Homework is not assigned on Fridays or over vacation periods.

Assignments vary during the week. Some will require more time than others. The ranges of time indicated above take into consideration the variance of learning styles in each classroom. In second grade, for example, we expect the majority of children to complete the assignment in approximately 20 minutes. For those children who work more slowly, it is our recommendation that they spend no more than 45 focused minutes on the assignments. After 45 minutes, the parent/guardian should sign the homework paper indicating to the teacher that it presented some difficulty to the child.

If your child is unable to do an assignment because he/she does not know how, please review the directions to make sure that they are understood and provide assistance with the directions as needed. If the child continues to have difficulty because he/she does not understand the concept, please attach a note to the assignment for the teacher. Although homework is intended to reinforce known skills, it also serves as a measure of how well the students understand the concept just taught. It may be that many children are having trouble with a new concept and more time needs to be spent on this in the classroom. If your child is consistently having a difficult time finishing homework assignments in the allocated time, please notify your child's teacher. Homework may need to be modified for certain children. Teachers are very willing to modify assignments if they are made aware of the problem. A simple note on your child's homework paper is often sufficient.

Students should be reminded that time must be planned for completing long-term assignments. Procrastination results in an excessive amount of time needed on a given night for completing the work.

Homework is expected to meet certain standards. On occasion a child may be asked to redo a poorly done assignment or one that does not meet the established standard. Check with your child's teacher for the standards for that class.

Parents/Guardians should support students by

- Providing the appropriate time for the completion of homework
- Providing a quiet workspace and tools for the child to complete assignments
- Clarifying directions as needed
- Encouraging independent work
- Making sure that the child does the work---don't do the work for them

(See page 11 for information regarding homework missed as a result of vacations taken during school time.)

Testing Program

In accordance with state law, the Conant school administers the MCAS Third Grade Reading and Math tests in the spring to all third graders and the MCAS tests of English Language and Literature and Math to fourth graders. Fifth graders take the MCAS English Language and Literature, Math, Science and Technology/Engineering, and Social Science tests, and sixth graders take the MCAS English Language and Literature and Math tests. A diagnostic reading test is also administered to all students in grades 3-6 to identify students in need of additional reading support.

Student Records

State regulations governing student records are briefly summarized below. These regulations are available at the school for review.

A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. The temporary record includes all information that is relevant to the educational needs of the student and is kept by the school. A student's parent or guardian, or a student who is at least 14 years old or has entered the ninth grade (an eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the student's record upon request to the school Principal. The record must be made available to the parent, guardian, or eligible student no later than two consecutive workdays after the request is made, unless the parent, guardian, or eligible student consents to a delay.

Confidentiality of Records

No individual or organization other than the parent, guardian, eligible student, or school personnel working directly with the student is allowed access to a student's record without specific written consent of the parent or eligible student, except in limited instances as specified by the state and federal regulations governing student records.

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 34, a parent who does not have physical custody of his/her child must provide certain written information to the Principal in order to access the child's student records. A description of the information that the non-custodial parent must submit can be obtained from our school office or from the Director of Pupil Services (978-264-4700, ext. 3265).

Amendments/Deletions from Records

The parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student record, to request that information contained in the record be amended or deleted, and to have a conference with the school Principal for the purpose of objecting to information on the record. Within a week of such a conference, the Principal must render a decision in writing on the objection. If the parent, guardian, or eligible student is not satisfied with the Principal's decision, he or she may appeal such decision to the Superintendent and ultimately to the School Committee.

Release of Directory Information

Each year, the Conant PTO creates a Student Telephone Directory. This directory is intended for use by Conant families only. We encourage students to call each other for play dates, homework assignments, or friendship. Inclusion in the directory is voluntary. A form to include pertinent information is sent home early in the school year.

Transfer of Student Records

In order to transfer your child's records to another school, a signed "Student Release Record Form" (available in the school office) must be signed by a parent or guardian.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record shall be destroyed no later than five years after the student leaves the school system. A student transcript may be destroyed no sooner than 60 years after the student leaves the school system. A school Principal or his or her designee may destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information contained in the temporary record during the time the student is enrolled in the school system, provided the parent, guardian, or eligible student has been notified in writing and given the opportunity to inspect and copy any of the information prior to its destruction.

Lunch and Milk Programs

On a daily basis students may purchase nutritious meals. Hot lunches are served at school every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Monthly school lunch menus are sent home at the beginning of each month. Lunch tickets can be purchased for the week or month. Forms are available in *The Conant Crier*, the office and on the Conant Web site. White, chocolate, 2%, and nonfat milk are also available. Ice cream and cookies are often sold separately. Every effort is made to insure that a child has eaten lunch (either a school lunch or one brought from home) before he/she is allowed to purchase a dessert. Children who have lost or forgotten their lunch or lunch money may borrow money from the lunchroom monitor. This loan must be repaid the following day. We have a limited amount of money to loan and nonpayment of loans will preclude us from lending money to other students in need. Students are not allowed to purchase extra desserts until their loan is paid.

Free or reduced cost lunches are provided for students of families who qualify. Application forms, which are kept strictly confidential, are available in the School Office. Students who bring their lunch from home can purchase milk. Ice cream is served on selected days. Students are encouraged to purchase lunch tickets in advance. Lunch prices currently are \$2.00.

Telephone and Fax Use

The telephone in the office is to be used only for school-related business. Students will not be allowed to make social calls. Permission must be granted by the teacher, as well as by the school secretary, in order for a student to use the school telephone. In order to promote growing independence and appropriate sense of responsibility, students in grades 4-6 are discouraged from calling home for forgotten homework, band instruments, sneakers, or bus passes. Homework cannot be received by FAX and only emergency changes for bus passes can be accepted.

Field Trips

Conant's field trips are planned to reinforce various areas of study. They provide an experience not possible within the regular classroom, provide cultural enrichment, and take advantage of many excellent resources outside the classroom. Field trips have the potential of being valuable learning experiences for our youngsters.

Because field trips are built in as part of our curriculum, each trip is considered to be the lesson plan for the day. All children are expected to participate. If parents/guardians choose not to have their child participate, they must realize that it is not possible for us to provide alternate plans for their child. If a child does not participate in the field trip and comes to school, he/she will be placed in another classroom, generally at another grade level since classes at each grade usually attend field trips together. The child will do the work given to the students in that class.

Parents/guardians pay the cost of their children's transportation and any other costs, such as entrance fees and lunch. The entrance fee at museums is usually lowered considerably for school groups. It is school policy that children are not to visit gift shops on field trips; therefore, they should not bring spending money for souvenirs or candy.

Our PTO has set aside a small fund to pay field trip costs for those students who might otherwise be financially unable to participate. For information please contact your child's classroom teacher.

In order to attend the field trip, and **prior** to any field trip, each student must bring in a permission slip signed by his/her parent or guardian.

Children are chaperoned on field trips by teachers, parents/guardians, and student teachers. As a general rule the ratio in the lower grades is 1 to 4/5 and in the upper grades it is 1 to 6, although this may vary depending on the nature of the trip. Parent chaperones are required to have submitted a CORI and must be approved as a chaperone in accordance with the *Conant Chaperone Guidelines*.

The grade level teacher(s) or principal for reasons of safety or supervision concerns may cancel field trips. Fees will be refunded whenever possible.

Field Trip Policy and Emergency Medication

Parents/guardians of known bee sting reactors and children with allergic conditions requiring emergency medication are encouraged to familiarize their children with the use of the EpiPen kits and the self-injection procedure and/or other emergency procedures. On field trips and

other occasions when the class will be away from school, it is strongly suggested that the child who cannot self-inject be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Religious Holidays

The school accommodates individual differences in religious observances. Thus, if a student is affected by a religious holiday, that student will not be expected to complete daily homework assigned the evening before, or the day of, the religious holiday. Assignments and tests should be made up in a time span that is reasonable to both students and teachers; typically for every day of a religious holiday there should be an opportunity for at least one make-up day. In addition, teachers will not give tests or introduce new concepts on the religious holiday itself. However, long-term assignments may be expected to be due the day before, or the day after, the religious holiday.

Religion and Prayer in School

As part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, there are guidelines regarding the rights of students to pray in public schools. As stated by the Secretary of Education "...the First Amendment forbids religious activity that is sponsored by the government but protects religious activity that is initiated by private individuals."

The law further states "...school officials may not compel students to participate in prayer or other religious activities. Nor may teachers, school administrators and other school employees, when acting in their official capacities as representatives of the state, encourage or discourage prayer, or participate in such activities with students. If a school has a 'minute of silence' or other quiet periods during the school day, students are free to pray silently, or not to pray. Teachers and other school employees may neither encourage nor discourage students from praying during such times."

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are placed in a specially designated area. Children are encouraged to label clothing and personal property with their names written in a clear and visible manner. Periodically, all items in the lost and found that are unclaimed are donated to a local charity. Please be sure that students have easily found hooks on their jackets and coats so that outdoor clothing can be hung neatly in classroom closets.

Books and School Property

Books are loaned to the student with the understanding that if they are lost or damaged, the student will be responsible for the replacement costs.

School Recess

Elementary recess, a twenty-five minute period of activity free from rough play, is scheduled each day shortly after lunch. It is conducted under supervision in the schoolyard. Additional recess is at the discretion of the teacher. Students should be suitably dressed for outdoor play. Recess is held indoors when there is inclement weather (i.e., snow, rain, or temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit) or if playground is icy or muddy.

Clothing

Students should be dressed appropriately for weather conditions. The children are outside, not only going to and from school, but also during the daily twenty-five minute recess. In winter children should wear the following:

- Jacket or coat, appropriate for the weather, with easy to operate closures.
- Boots and snow or ski pants, not just for snow but also for warmth.
Students in grades K-3 without boots and snow pants must remain on the plowed section of the playground. Students in Grades 4-6 must wear boots and snow pants to play in the snow. Otherwise, they must remain on the plowed section.
- Hat or hood, as considerable body heat is lost through the head.
- Mittens or gloves, preferably attached to sleeves or cuffs for the younger children.
- Slacks worn under dresses and skirts to keep girls' legs warm.
- Tights for girls, long socks or thermal pants under slacks for girls and boys, to ward off the winter cold.

Other:

- Sneakers are to be worn for all activities taking place in the gym.
- You will be notified of Nature Walk dates. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Light rain and snow usually do not deter our walks. It is a good idea to wear boots for winter and spring walks.

Excusing a Child From Recess

Children are expected to arrive at school adequately dressed for the weather. This includes warm clothing, hats, mittens, and boots and snow pants during snowy weather. In general, all children are expected to go outdoors for recess. It is school policy to allow a child to remain indoors for only one day following an absence. For longer periods the school nurse must receive a written note from the child's doctor. If a child is still ill and unable to participate fully in all activities, he or she should be kept at home.

Excusing a Child From Physical Education Class

Students may be excused from physical education classes for a period of one week at the discretion of the nurse based on a written request from the parent/guardian. If the child is to be excused for a longer period of time, a doctor's letter is required stating the reasons for the student's inability to take part in the program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The health and safety of Conant students is one of the highest priorities for faculty, students, and parents/guardians.

Safety

In order for children's school experience to be a safe one, parents should:

- Teach children their name, address, and telephone number.
- Teach children to use good discretion in accepting rides.
- Keep their dogs away from school grounds and bus stops.

Remember the following is a safety rule. **Do not attempt to pass a school bus that is loading or unloading children. You must stop and wait for the bus driver to turn off the lights and withdraw the sign. There is a \$200 fine for passing a school bus while its lights are flashing and its stop sign is displayed.** *This includes the buses parked in front of the school while dropping off or picking up students.* The safety of the children and all pedestrians is the heart of these traffic rules.

Bicycles and Walkers

At the beginning of each school year all elementary students are assigned to a bus. Parents/guardians of students in grades 4-6 who wish to allow their children the option of walking or riding a bicycle must provide written notice to the school.

Nurse

There is a full-time registered nurse on our staff.

When to Notify the Nurse

The school nurse is concerned about the health of all students and staff. Please contact the nurse when your child has any communicable disease or any condition that requires special follow-up. **See Appendix 5 for Immunization Policy.**

Medication Policy (Revised April 1998 - Currently Under Revision - Check with Nurse for Updates)

Whenever possible, prescription medication should be administered at home. When a physician specifies that medication be administered during the school day, the nurse should be contacted, and the following guidelines will be used to supervise the administration of medication in school:

1. A responsible adult should bring all medication to the Health Office at the beginning of the day. The medication needs to be signed, dated and gives the nurse permission to administer the medication. Send only a **30-day supply** (30 school days).
2. **The medication must be in the original container, with a prescription label** that includes the following information: child's full name, name of medication, prescription number, dosage, and time to be administered.

3. Emergency medication will be administered when ordered by the family physician or the school physician.

Protocol Medications

1. Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen
2. Topical Medication: Caladryl, Bacitracin
3. Benadryl and Epinephrine (Emergency use only.)

Please sign the designated area on the back of your child's emergency card if you wish to authorize the administration of protocol medication (throughout the year) by the nurse.

Accident and Illness

A sick or injured student will not be dismissed from school until it is cleared through the Health Office.

In an emergency every attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian or his/her designee. The designees should be listed on the emergency card. Please list three people with local addresses to contact. In cases where parents or their designees cannot be contacted, the school's administrator and/or nurse will take whatever emergency action is deemed necessary.

It is expected that parents will keep a child at home if he or she shows signs of illness (i.e., fever, cough, chills, sore throat, earache).

Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulation requires that in the event that a student contracts chicken pox, she/he may not return to school until the sixth day after the rash began or when all the blisters are dried up and crusted over.

Fever

Fevers are generally a sign of illness or infection. Your child should stay home if his/her temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or above. The child should not return to school until his/her temperature has been normal (98-99 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least 24 hours.

Cold, Cough and Sore Throat

Most children can attend school with cold symptoms as long as they do not have a fever. If your child has a cold with a fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, he/she should be kept at home and your healthcare provider should be consulted. Your child should also stay at home if he/she has a greenish nasal discharge or cough production. A sore throat with a fever, swollen glands, headache, stomachache, or rash may indicate strep. You should consult your child's doctor for evaluation. **If a child has scarlet fever, strep throat, or any strep infection, he/she may return to school twenty-four hours after medication has started.**

Stomach Ache, Vomiting, Diarrhea

A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept at home until symptoms have resolved--for at least 12 hours. Your child also needs to be able to eat and drink normally before returning. Consult your doctor if you suspect dehydration.

Red Eye

Your child should stay home if he/she has red eyes that itch and/or have a crusty discharge. Consult your doctor for evaluation of possible conjunctivitis. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.

Pain

Earache - consult your doctor if your child complains of ear pain.

Toothache - consult your dentist.

Headache - if headaches are frequent, you should consult your doctor.

Dehydration, fatigue, and stress can cause a headache.

Rash

A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to medication, plants, or chemicals such as soaps or detergents. If your child has an unusual rash or if it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor.

Lice

Acton policy requires that students be excluded from school if head lice are found. They may return to school only after treatment as recommended by your physician and only if all lice or eggs have been removed. The child should report to the Health Office upon reentry.

Universal Precautions for School Settings

It is imperative for the health of our students and staff that all blood drips and spills be treated as potentially dangerous. The HIV virus is transmitted by blood and other body fluids. The Hepatitis B virus can live dried on a surface for up to one week and has the same mode of transmission. Each staff member has a packet containing latex gloves, gauze pads, and a copy of the "Universal Precautions for School Settings". The precautions are posted in a visible place in each classroom and office, and the glove/gauze packet are hung or taped nearby so that they are readily available to students and staff.

You are encouraged to take a few moments to read the "Universal Precautions for School Settings" notice and stress to your child the importance of practicing them.

If you have any questions, please contact the school's nurse.

Physical Screening Examinations

The nurse gives hearing and vision tests yearly to every student, and notices are sent to parents in those situations where there is a need for examination by a qualified physician. These tests are basic screening exams and should not be considered substitutes for complete hearing and vision tests. The school nurse and the physical education teacher will do postural screening exams for fifth and sixth graders.

The students will be notified in advance so that they can wear appropriate clothing. Referrals will be made if discrepancies are noted.

School Insurance

All children attending public schools in Acton should be covered by accident insurance. Information is distributed in the early Fall each year concerning an inexpensive plan offered through the school for those families who do not already carry insurance coverage or who wish to have additional insurance.

Fire Drills/Alarms

1. At the sound of the fire alarm, all students are to stop talking and follow the instructions of the supervising teacher. Orderly, single lines should be maintained while proceeding to a designated safe location. No talking is allowed at any time during the drill.
2. Teachers should:
 - a. Establish order at the sound of the alarm,
 - b. Close windows and doors,
 - c. Exit quickly and proceed to their assigned location,
 - d. Check attendance when at assigned areas,
 - e. Report any missing student to the Principal or teacher on duty.
3. Custodians and principal should:
 - a. Check bathrooms and direct unattended students to the nearest exit,
 - b. Check fire doors,
 - c. Determine the cause of the alarm and report it to the fire officer.
4. Teachers not in their classrooms at the time of the fire alarms should meet their classes at the assigned location and relieve the supervisor until the termination of the drill. All other specialists should assist classroom teachers where and when necessary. Specialists should exit the building along with the students in their rooms at the sound of the fire alarm and proceed to their assigned location.
5. All personnel, except the custodians and the Principal, must evacuate the building at the sound of the alarm.
6. A copy of the **FIRE DRILL EXIT PLAN** has been developed for the school and is posted in each classroom. In addition, a copy of the plan is attached to each teacher's plan book.

Students do not re-enter the building until notified by the Principal.

Emergency Procedures

The school district has adopted an Emergency Response Plan to address a range of emergency situations. The plan is available in the school office.

Acceptable Use Policy for Computers, Internet and Other Technologies

The Acton Public Schools has "Acceptable Use Guidelines" for computers and the Internet. It is important for students to be familiar with these guidelines to ensure their understanding of the safe and appropriate uses of technology. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss the contents of this policy with their children. In addition, faculty will review it with their students at the beginning of each school year to establish standards for use and to reemphasize safety guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns about the "Acceptable Use Guidelines", please contact your elementary school Principal. The following are the "Acceptable Use Guidelines".

1. Acceptable Use

At school, I may use computers and the Internet to research, to learn, and to communicate with others. I agree to follow the rules of appropriate behavior while on the Internet. I will follow these rules:

- I will not copy material and say that I wrote it myself.
- I will only use web sites that are suitable for children.

2. Privileges

Being able to use the Internet is a privilege, and my teachers and Principal are the decision makers when it comes to whether I may use it. If my behavior on the computer or Internet is not appropriate, I may lose this privilege.

3. Etiquette

I am expected to follow the rules for appropriate behavior on the Internet. Some, but not all, of those rules are listed below:

- Be polite when writing a message.
- Use appropriate language.
- Remember that e-mail is not private.
- Remember, what I write may be seen by others.
- Information that I get from the Internet is for me to use, but I do not own it, and I did not write it. I must identify where I found it.

4. Online Safety

I will follow these Internet safety rules:

- I will not give out personal information about myself or others (e.g., home address, telephone number, parents' work addresses, or parents' work telephone numbers) to anyone on the Internet.
- If I find anything on the Internet that makes me uncomfortable or nervous, I will get an adult to help me immediately.
- If I get a message that is mean or frightening, I will tell a responsible adult.
- The Acton Public School System is not responsible for the truth or quality of the information that I find on the Internet.

5. Security

I will only use the Internet when a teacher or responsible adult is present.

6. Vandalism

- I will not cause any damage to computers or change how they are set up.
- Passwords given to me are for my use only. I will not give them to anyone else.
- I will not use anyone else's password.

Not following these guidelines will result in the loss of my privilege to use the Internet, and perhaps the computers themselves.

PART B: RULES AND CONSEQUENCES

Conant Behavior Priorities

The Conant Community prides itself on its core value of promoting mutual trust and respect. We strive to provide a caring environment for all students, and the development of each child's self-esteem is one of our top priorities. Every effort is made to help students build self-esteem, along with self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Toward this end, our discipline policy emphasizes acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviors and minimizing attention to negative or unacceptable behaviors. The consequences for negative behaviors are clearly communicated to students through the student handbook ***Bear Necessities*** (see Part C of this book). Rules are also posted in the classroom and cafeteria.

Demonstrating appropriate or inappropriate behavior is a choice each child makes. If a child chooses to violate a rule, it is a choice made with the full knowledge that he or she has also chosen the appropriate consequence.

Good behavior and caring are contagious. Our children at Conant are generally well behaved, well mannered and caring toward one another. Students and adults at Conant work together to make our school a safe and an enjoyable place to learn, as well as a place where they feel good about themselves.

Behaviors Resulting in Serious Consequences

In order to establish and maintain a positive learning environment, we expect behaviors that reflect mutual respect, cooperation, and tolerance. Students are not to engage in actions that infringe upon the rights of others. Behaviors that threaten the safety, property, or self-esteem of others are subject to serious disciplinary action.

Physical aggression of any kind is not acceptable. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- fighting
- tripping
- hitting
- pushing
- kicking
- throwing objects

Since we believe that students and adults need to feel valued and respected, we will not tolerate any expression of disrespect through words, facial expressions or gestures.

This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- “put downs” related to race, ability, or appearance
- name calling
- threats
- harassment

(See Appendix 2 for the pertinent Massachusetts law.)

Bomb Threats

Under Massachusetts General Law 269-14, making a bomb threat can result in a \$10,000 dollar fine and/or be further punishable by law. Any student involved in making a false threat will be suspended from school for 10 days, fined, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Anyone with information involving these incidents should report it to the school office.

Dangerous Weapons

Possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon in the building, on the school bus, or on the grounds of an elementary or secondary school, including while in attendance at a school-sponsored or related event, is a crime punishable by a fine of more than \$1000 dollars or further punishable by law. Possession of any weapon in school will minimally warrant a student's suspension from school, and the student may be subject to expulsion and possible legal action. **(See Appendix 1 for the pertinent Massachusetts law.)**

Harassment

This may include, but is not limited to, threatening language or behavior, assault, inappropriate touching, intentionally impeding movement, or continuing comments, gestures, or written communications of a suggestive or derogatory nature, including sexual harassment. **(See Appendix 3 for the pertinent Massachusetts law.)**

Verbal or written use of inappropriate language (swearing) or obscene gestures is strictly forbidden.

Disruption of School

Acts intended to interrupt or impede the normal operation of school are considered disruptive.

False Fire Alarms

Under Massachusetts General Law 269-13, pulling a false fire alarm can bring a \$500 fine and be further punishable by law. Any student pulling a false fire alarm may be suspended from school for 10 days, fined, and may be punished to the fullest extent of the law. Anyone with information involving these incidents should report it to the school office.

Forgery

Any intentional use of a forged document, altering a document, or tampering with school records is considered forgery. This includes, but is not limited to, altering report cards, signing a parent's name or initials to school required notes, forging or altering dismissal forms, etc.

Stealing

Stealing is defined as "theft of personal or school property, receiving stolen items, or possession of stolen items."

Vandalism

Vandalism is defined as "willful, malicious, or careless actions leading to the destruction of, or damage to, school or personal property."

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

In addition to the formal laws, policies and rules, the following behavioral expectations will be reinforced and modeled by staff and parents. We ask parents/guardians to participate in supporting our expectations by reviewing them with their children.

Respect

- All members of the Conant community will demonstrate and reinforce behavior that is respectful of and caring to others.
- Students will demonstrate respect for the learning time of other students.
- All communication is to be respectful in tone of voice, choice of words, body language, and actions.
- All members of the Conant community will demonstrate and reinforce behavior that is respectful of the natural and physical environment, as well as all public and personal material.
- Individuality and diversity of skills, physical abilities, interests, culture, looks, and learning style will be respectfully acknowledged, supported, and celebrated.
- All students will respond to all requests by adults. If a student feels that the request is not fair, he/she can request to speak to the adult who made the request or to the Principal.

Pride and Responsibility

- School staff and parents/guardians will take responsibility for adhering to and consistently reinforcing behavioral expectations.
- Members of the Conant community will accept responsibility for their behavior and work performance.
- Conant staff will display, commend, and honor individual and group accomplishments within individual classrooms, the school as a whole, and the wider Acton community.
- Students will take developmentally appropriate responsibility for remembering needed supplies, assignments, and materials for each school day.

Trust

- Staff will annually review Conant's behavioral expectations so they are clearly understood by staff, parents/guardians, and students. In this way, students will know expectations ahead of time and can trust that enforcement will be consistently administered throughout the school.

- All Conant personnel and parents/guardians will maintain the highest degree of confidentiality possible when dealing with personal information about students or their families.

Safety and Health

- Conant's personnel and parents/guardians will monitor and intervene in students' activities and behavior to ensure that they are physically safe.

All Conant community members will do the following:

- Walk in the school building, to and from buses, and in all other appropriate settings,
- Refrain from engaging in potentially dangerous activities, such as hanging from the ramp banister, playing tackle football, swinging backpacks, crowding in small spaces,
- Avoid hitting, touching, pushing, or physically endangering themselves or others in any manner.

Conant personnel and parents/guardians will also actively monitor and intervene in any actions that are deemed emotionally injurious to others.

All Conant community members will do the following:

- Include all students in group activities (refrain from exclusion of specific students),
- Refuse to engage in any form of harassment,
- Refrain from teasing, threatening, mocking, mimicking, and using put-downs,
- Avoid using statements or practices that could be considered discriminatory or prejudicial.

General School Rules

We expect that the school rules at Conant will be adhered to in a consistent manner. We try to respond to misbehavior in a caring, fair, prompt, and consistent fashion. Logical consequences are consistently applied throughout the year in an attempt to discourage recurrence of inappropriate behavior.

1. Students must come to school on time every school day.
2. Students' behavior must support learning; students cannot interrupt the learning of others in class.
3. Students must address teachers respectfully at all times.
4. Students must come to school prepared with materials and assigned homework.
5. Students should help keep the school clean. All litter should be placed in trash barrels located inside and outside the school.
6. Students are expected to help take care of school property (i.e., books, furniture, equipment, windows, and school grounds). Writing on or damaging property is prohibited.
7. Students are to respect the property and rights of others.
8. Students should be courteous and kind to others at all times.
9. Students must be truthful in all of their communications.
10. Students must follow the directions of adults in authority at all times.
11. Profane or obscene language will not be tolerated.
12. Theft will not be tolerated.
13. Fighting is not acceptable at any time.

14. When attending assemblies, students must display courteous behavior and treat all performers with respect.
15. Gum chewing is not allowed in or around the school.
16. Students must walk in the school at all times in order to promote safety and control.
17. Illegal substances and weapons of any kind are prohibited.
18. Students are expected to take home all school notices to their parents or guardians.

Bathroom Rules

1. School bathrooms are to be treated as private bathrooms would be treated at home.
2. Bathrooms should only be used when students are granted permission. Individual privacy in bathrooms needs to be honored.
3. The cleaning of paintbrushes or other working tools in bathrooms is **not** allowed at any time. They must be cleaned in classroom or custodial sinks.

Cafeteria Rules

1. Students need to speak in conversational voices.
2. Students need to use good manners and be polite.
3. Students need to clean their space after eating.
4. Students need to follow directions of lunchroom monitors and staff.

Indoor Recess Rules

1. Students will stay in their assigned room and obtain permission before leaving the room.
2. Students may take part in any game or activity that can be played safely and with a minimum of noise and confusion. Such activities include:
 - games from the indoor recess box
 - classroom board games
 - sitting and talking quietly with friends
 - school work
 - drawing
 - reading
 - eating snacks
3. Each student is expected to clean up after recess (i.e. games, toys, and snacks).

Unacceptable Behavior during Indoor Recess

The following behavior is not allowed:

- running
- climbing on desks
- throwing objects of any kind
- gum chewing
- pushing, shoving, or causing disturbances
- use of improper language

Outdoor Recess Rules

1. Students are to attend outdoor recess. In only a few instances should a student be given permission to remain inside for recess. No student should be left unsupervised.
2. Students need to stay in their assigned recess areas.
3. All students must have equal opportunity to participate in any recess activity. All activities must remain open to all students for the first ten minutes of recess.
4. No student may leave the playground area without permission of the recess monitor on duty. In case of an injury or problem, the student must immediately notify the recess monitor in order to obtain assistance and/or permission to leave the

playground. Once inside, the student will report to the nurse/office. Upon returning outside, the student will report to the recess monitor.

5. A student wishing to use the bathroom should get permission from the recess monitor and then notify him/her upon return outside.
6. Recess is over when the monitor rings the bell. Classroom teachers should be present to assist as students return to their rooms.

Expectations

1. Students will show good sportsmanship and demonstrate fairness to each other.
2. Students are to follow the directions of the playground supervisors.
3. Lines to and from the playground are to be orderly and quiet.
4. Student activities need to be safe and pose no danger to themselves, others, the structures, or grounds.

Unacceptable Behavior

The following behaviors are not allowed:

- teasing
- name calling
- fighting
- improper language.

The following activities are not allowed:

- wrestling, pushing, kicking, and rough play
- gum chewing
- throwing balls to injure others
- playing with hard balls
- playing tackle football
- slide tackling
- playing tag on the play structure
- standing on slides or rings
- throwing rocks, sticks, sand, gravel, or snowballs
- tree climbing
- wandering into the swamp or street
- climbing on outside railings or automobiles
- tripping, intentional shoving, pushing, checking, or elbowing and unnecessary roughness

In an effort to ensure a proper understanding of the school rules, the Conant School staff will explain them and the consequences of infractions of these rules in a clear and specific manner. Expectations will be repeated often, especially at the beginning of the year. School and individual classroom expectations and consequences are designed to be reasonable and age appropriate. The staff wants to foster an "I know you can do it" attitude. We want our students to realize that they have choices to make and that they are responsible for their actions. We appreciate your support and ask you to review the rules with your children.

CONSEQUENCES

Schools have broad discretion to discipline students and are not limited to correcting students solely for conduct that occurs on school property or at a school function. Consequences may include the following: verbal warnings, removal from the setting where the behavior occurred, notes of apology, written behavioral change plans called *Think Sheets*, consultation with the principal or guidance counselor, "time outs", loss of recess privilege, office detention, in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension. For serious violations, such as those covered under **Appendix 1**, expulsion and legal action may occur.

In cases of out-of-class "time outs" or "in-school suspensions", students will be provided with a quiet workspace where they can work on class assignments provided by their teacher or the guidance counselor. Parents/guardians will be notified about recess detentions through the *Conant Ticket*. Students will bring the ticket form home to be signed by a parent/guardian and are responsible for bringing it back signed. Failure to do so will result in further loss of recess privileges. No detentions will be held before or after school unless this has been arranged with the parent/guardian. Suspensions and expulsions will involve notification by both phone and formal letter. Readmission meetings are required following a suspension with the student, parent/guardian and principal.

Discipline of Special Education Students

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws, known as Chapter 766, requires that additional provisions be made for students who have been found by an evaluation team to have special needs, and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and related regulations provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. A brief overview of these rights is provided below.

In general, special education students may be excluded from their program, just as any other student can be, for up to ten (10) school days per year. However, when a special education student is excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) days in the school year, the student's special education Team must develop a functional behavioral assessment plan. In many instances, the Team may be required to determine whether the student's behavior was related to his/her disability (a "manifestation determination").

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was related to the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons or drugs) until the Team develops and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent(s) to the new IEP.

In the event a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon at school or at a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a

student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent/guardian disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a decision regarding the location of the 45 day interim alternative educational placement, the person has a right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for special education students can be obtained from the Chairperson of Special Education at 978-264-4700, ext. 3265.

Student and/or Parent/Guardian Right of Appeal (Due Process)

Students and/or parents/guardians have a right to appeal the consequences for the student's misbehavior. They may request an opportunity to present their point of view or to justify their actions. The consequences of the alleged student behavior will be suspended until the case is reviewed. If the student or parent/guardian feels that the student's consequence has been applied unfairly, the following steps should be taken:

1. The student is first advised to seek a meeting with the person(s) involved, to see if an informal resolution can be achieved.
2. If the matter is not resolved at the first step, then an appeal may be made to the Principal. The Principal may seek to resolve the matter informally, and/or conduct a more formal hearing. Such a hearing is chaired by the Principal and normally includes each of the parties involved.
3. If the issue is not resolved at the second step, then an appeal may be made to the Superintendent of Schools. In such cases, a hearing is held with the Superintendent and all persons involved.
4. If the issue is not resolved at the third step, then an appeal may be made to the School Committee. In such cases, a hearing is held with the School Committee and all persons involved.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Bus routes are published in the *Beacon*, our local newspaper, the last week in August. Students may only ride the bus to which they have been assigned. Bus changes are not permitted without permission.

If a child is not going home on his/her regular bus at the end of the day, the school must receive an accurately completed bus pass request form signed by the parent/guardian to that effect in the morning. Blank request forms are available in the school office and on the Conant web site (conant.ab.mec.edu).

Student School Bus Behavior Regulations

Students are expected to behave in an orderly manner while riding the bus and during loading and unloading procedures. The bus driver shall be in complete charge of the bus and its passengers at all times and shall ensure the safety and well-being of all students who ride the school buses.

Students shall observe the following rules and safety procedures and are encouraged to wear seat belts.

1. The driver's instructions shall be followed at all times.
2. Students will only ride their assigned bus to and from the assigned stops. Drivers will not allow unauthorized students to board the bus.
3. State law prohibits lighting of matches or smoking on the bus.
4. Parents of the student(s) must assume liability for any bus vandalism involved.
5. Pushing or shoving is not allowed at the bus stop.
6. Students should line up single file to board the bus. They should not run toward the bus to board it or run as it is preparing to stop. Students should wait until the bus has stopped completely before approaching the door.
7. Students should find a vacant seat quickly and sit down.
8. Students must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
9. Students should keep their hands and feet to themselves and not disturb others.
10. Students should not shout or make distracting noises. They should speak quietly to others around them. Neither profanity nor obscenity will be accepted aboard the bus.
11. Students should not change seats or leave their seats unless instructed to do so by the bus driver.
12. Pushing or shoving while getting off the bus is not allowed. Students need to leave their seats quickly and quietly.
13. Upon departing the bus, students must walk away from it. They should not walk along the side of the bus.
14. If they need to cross the street after getting off the bus, they should cross in front of the bus, far enough ahead, so that the students and the driver can see each other. They should look both ways before crossing the street for their own safety.
15. Consumption of food or beverage is not permitted on the bus.
16. The emergency door at the rear of the bus is to be used as an exit only in case of an emergency.
17. Throwing objects on or around the bus or at the bus stop is not permitted.
18. Objects that may create a hazard on the bus will not be permitted (i.e., sharp objects, animals, or excessively large items that cannot be transported safely or that cause an inconvenience to other passengers due to insufficient seating space.) The Bus Transportation Office reserves the right to make this determination.

Students' Rights

1. Students will be given the opportunity to express their views to their respective Principal prior to any disciplinary action being taken because of a formal complaint from a bus driver.
2. Students will be transported until such time that disciplinary action is taken.
3. Students will be transported to their designated destination. No arbitrary decision can be made by the driver to discharge a student at a location other than the student's authorized destination.

Disciplinary Action

Bus drivers have been instructed to prepare formal reports in case of student misconduct aboard the bus. The following procedure will be followed after the report has been received by the building Principal.

1. First Offense - Principal speaks to the student and a first notice is sent home to parents. In addition, the Principal will either speak with the parent or send a letter home (which requires written acknowledgment of receipt) explaining the situation and the potential consequences of a subsequent offense. In serious incidents, the Principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.
2. Second Offense - Principal speaks to student and a second notice is sent home. Principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.
3. Subsequent Offenses - Principal speaks to student, a notice is sent home and this shall result in an automatic one week (1) suspension of bus privileges. The Principal shall continue to work with the parents and student when subsequent offenses occur.
4. Violation of State Laws (e.g., smoking or lighting of matches) will result in an automatic one week (1) suspension of bus privileges.
5. The Principal will determine the length of time of suspension of bus privileges in all cases, based on the seriousness of the offense. In the case of an offense where an automatic one week (1) suspension is required, he or she may decide to lengthen the suspension.

Elementary Bus Pass Procedure

Changing Buses - No student is allowed to ride another bus without an authorized **BUS PASS**, properly filled out by the parent. Bus Pass Forms can be obtained at the school office at any time. When changes are approved, students are notified.

One-Day Bus Passes: One-day bus passes will be issued to elementary students in grades 1-6 only under the following conditions:

1. When buses are not full, a one-day pass will be issued for any purpose, provided the parent or guardian notifies the child's school in writing on the appropriate form. Forms are available at all elementary school offices.
2. One-day bus passes will not be issued to Kindergarten children, except in a case of an emergency determined by the Principal.

Permanent Bus Passes

Permanent bus passes will be issued only to students who will be attending daycare services on a regular weekly schedule. Parents or guardians must submit a written form indicating their child's schedule so that special arrangements can be made for bus transportation. These forms may be obtained at the elementary school offices or Transportation Office in the R.J. Grey Junior High School. Permanent bus pass forms should be submitted to the child's school of attendance prior to the start of school in September, if possible, or as soon as a regular schedule of day care is set up for their child.

PART C: STUDENT HANDBOOK

Bear Necessities

This part of the handbook summarizes the expectations and school policies in language that is intended to be “child friendly”. Parents/Guardians should review this section with their child. Teachers will also review it with their classes during the first week of school.

CONANT AT A GLANCE FOR STUDENTS

LEARNING THE ROPES

School Supplies

You’ll need to have pencils, pens, markers or crayons, erasers, rulers, notebooks and a book bag that is large enough to accommodate books and folders to bring to school. It’s usually a good idea to wait until you hear from your teacher before getting too many supplies. Lists of needed supplies for the next school year are sent home with the June report card.

Lunch and Snacks

We have three lunch periods. Each lasts about 25 minutes and includes two grades. You can buy hot lunches, milk and ice cream.

- Prices will be announced each year.
- Please don’t bring drinks in glass bottles; they can break and the glass can hurt someone.
- If you forget your lunch, you may ask to borrow lunch money from the lunchroom monitors, but you must pay it back the following day.
- When the weather is good, students in grades four through six are often allowed to go outside for a mini-recess once they’ve finished eating lunch.
- **Snacks** - Students should bring a nutritious snack to school each day.

Recess

During good weather, you will have a 25-minute outdoor recess each day (except Thursday because of early release). We have lots of play equipment and plenty of space for games like tag, jump rope or kick ball. If the weather isn’t cooperating and it’s raining, snowing or very cold (below 20 degrees Fahrenheit), or the playground is icy or muddy, you’ll have indoor recess instead. You can play quiet games, read, talk quietly to friends, do homework or draw. Remembering to take turns and inviting others to play makes recess fun for everyone!

Lost and Found

If you find you've lost your backpack, mittens, jacket, etc., DON'T PANIC. There is a lost and found container in the cafeteria that is usually filled with lost items. Ask your teacher if you may check the lost and found container as soon as you realize something is missing.

Also, please put your name on all of your belongings. They can be returned to you more easily that way and may never have to end up in the lost and found container.

Homework

Homework is an important part of your schoolwork. Homework is assigned to help you learn and should be taken seriously. (See our Homework Policy for more details.)

Guidance and Counseling

The counselor's job is to help a student feel good about himself or herself as a student, a friend and as a person. The counselor is available when you are upset or unhappy. She can help you work out a problem, make a decision, sort out your feelings, or she can just be a good listener. She can also help you resolve conflicts with friends or classmates. The counselor's office is located in the Main Office.

Visits to the Nurse's Office

If you get hurt or sick at school, tell your teacher. He or she will send you to the office. Tell the school secretary that you'd like to see the nurse. If the nurse feels you should go home, she will call someone to come and pick you up.

Use of the School Telephone, Fax and Copy Machine

The office telephone may be used for emergencies. Please ask the school secretary for permission to use it. The office phone is not available for use within 30 minutes of dismissal time. The Fax machine is not available for student or parent use. You may ask the secretary to copy materials that you may have lost or forgotten. There is a 25 cent charge per copy.

Evacuation Drills

We hope we will never have a fire at Conant, but we all need to know how to get out of our building quickly and safely, just in case. In the beginning of the year, your teacher will show you the exit closest to your classroom and go over evacuation drill rules with you. During an evacuation drill, remember to walk quietly and listen for directions. We also have other emergency drills that are practiced during the year.

“Warm Fuzzies”

What's a “warm fuzzy”? It's something you do for another person to show him or her that you care. The following are a few “warm fuzzies” Conant students say they like to give and receive:

- laugh at a friend's jokes...even if they aren't the greatest!
- give compliments

- hang around with someone new at school...chances are they could use a friend!
- share your toys
- say "Good morning" with a smile
- don't forget "please" and "thank you"
- hold the door for someone
- treat others as you would like to be treated
- ask a friend to sit with you at lunch, and play with him or her at recess

Try these out and see what happens! You just might make some new friends and make some old ones very happy.

Making Sure No One Feels Left Out

Parties and Sleepovers - Have you ever felt left out? It's a pretty rotten feeling, isn't it? To avoid hurting others' feelings, students are not allowed to hand out invitations to parties or sleepovers at school unless ALL the students in the class are invited. Call your friends or write to them at home instead. You can get their addresses and telephone numbers from our Student Directory.

Clubs that exclude any child are not allowed at school.

GETTING ALONG TOGETHER

Maintaining a Safe and Respectful Environment

We want everybody who comes into our school to feel people are going to treat them with respect, forgive them for the mistakes they make, and feel safe, no matter where they are. We know that you will feel safe, forgiven and respected when the teachers are nearby, but it is important for you to feel the same way when there are no teachers or staff in the area. In order for that to happen, students need to accept responsibility for helping to maintain a safe and respectful environment. Therefore, our students have written and signed the following Conant School Constitution and recommit to it each year.

We, the united students of **Conant School**
in order to establish a more
Respectful Environment,
have created this constitution of
RESPECT.

We will do our best to live up to the following:

- listen to others
- share
- tell the truth
- include others
- keep promises
- be sensitive to other's needs
- understand our differences and our feelings
- not tease or laugh at others
- not touch other's property without permission
- help others when in need

It is **YOUR RIGHT** to feel safe, welcomed, and respected when you come to
Conant School.

It is everyone's **RESPONSIBILITY** to make it happen.

Resolving Conflicts - CAPS

Our students also learn how to use CAPS, a conflict resolution strategy, to help them resolve conflicts with their friends or classmates. The CAPS steps are the following:

- C** - Chill out, Calm down, Cool off
- A** - Agree to solve the problem
- P** - Point of view: Each person tells his/her point of view.
 - tell the truth
 - say how you feel
 - listen to each other
- S** - Solve it:
 - brainstorm solutions
 - choose one you both agree with
 - do it!
 - feel proud that you worked it out!

If this does not work, ask an adult to help you.

Making Conant a caring place for you and helping you to learn to understand others and to build your self-esteem is very important to the school staff. To achieve this, everyone has to do his/her part. The results of helpful or positive behavior may be praise or other rewards, both in your classroom and throughout the school. Stickers, certificates, popcorn parties and extra recesses are just a few of the treats students might receive!

Principal's Book and All School Meeting Recognition

In an effort to recognize and reward positive behaviors reflecting the core values of the Conant community, all staff members are encouraged to send children to the office who have displayed such behaviors so that they can record their names and deeds in the **Principal's Book**. At All School Meeting the names of the students recorded in the book are read aloud, and the Conant School Community gives the students a big round of applause!

Rules and Consequences

There are consequences for negative behaviors. They are explained here and posted in the classroom and cafeteria. Please know the rules, and remember that good behavior and caring are contagious. Help make our school a safe place where all of us can feel good about ourselves!

Appropriate Behavior (Yes, these are the Rules.)

- Treat adults and other children with respect at all times.
- At assemblies, polite and courteous behaviors are **MUSTS**. Do not boo or whistle; you could hurt someone's feelings. Sit where your teacher directs you. In the cafeteria no more than four to a table or eight to a double table is allowed. Enjoy the show and treat the performers as you would want to be treated...applaud!
- Show that you care about the feelings of others. Use only friendly and helpful words.

- Use pleasant, indoor voices in all areas within the building.
- WALK, walk, walk in the building, and when entering or leaving the building. Running is only allowed on the playground and in the gym (with the teacher's permission).
- Use the stairs. Ramps are reserved for use by those with handicaps.
- Stay on school grounds. Students may not leave the school or school grounds unless accompanied by teachers or their parents.
- Treat your school with care. Conant is a beautiful place, and we need your help to keep it this way. Place all litter (even if it isn't yours) in wastebaskets. Feet belong on the floor not on the furniture or walls.
- Decals and stickers are fun to use on your own belongings, but do not belong on items used by everyone (i.e., desks, school books, walls). All writing should be done on paper and whiteboards.
- It is not a good idea to bring expensive or hard to replace toys to school. Accidents do happen, and the school cannot be not responsible for loss or damage to your toys.
- Spray water containers are not allowed at school. On hot days the recess monitors often have a spray container with water and will spray the back of your neck if you ask.
- Radios and walkmen are only allowed in school for special class projects or parties, and then, only with advance permission of the principal.
- Number 15 of the "General School Rules" states that there is no gum chewing in or around school. Water bottles for drinking and hand held fans are limited to your classroom, but only if your teacher gives permission. There is a drinking fountain in every classroom for your use.
- The only items that may be sold at school are those for sale at the School Store.
- No candy, toys, student made items, etc. are to be sold by any student on school property or on school buses.
- Classroom behavior plans, including class rules, consequences and rewards are posted in many classrooms. Behavioral contracts may be developed for individual students as needed.

Behaviors Resulting in Serious Consequences

- Our school does not tolerate any form or threat of violence. Real, toy or facsimiles of weapons are not allowed for any reason. Student drawings or writing containing violent content or weapons are also not prohibited. All threats of violence will be taken very seriously and the police may be notified if any threat involves the mention of a weapon or killing.
- Physical aggression of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - fighting
 - hitting
 - kicking
 - pushing
 - tripping
 - throwing objects
- Since we believe that everyone must feel valued and respected, any expression of disrespect through words or gestures will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to the following:
 - put downs related to race, ability, or appearance
 - name calling
 - threats
 - harassment

(See the Non-discrimination Notice at the end of this handbook in *Appendix 2*.)

Serious consequences

Serious consequences for the behaviors listed above may include, but are not be limited to the following: removal from the setting where the behavior occurred, "Time Out" in the office, completion of a *Think Sheet* form, an office or recess detention, meeting with the principal or guidance counselor, parent conference, a *Conant Ticket* to be signed by a parent/ guardian, a homework assignment to be signed by the parent/guardian, and an in-school or out-of school suspension for one or more days. For extremely serious incidents, expulsion and/or legal action may be necessary.

- Verbal or written use of inappropriate language (swearing), obscene gestures, or possession of pornographic material is strictly forbidden and may result in suspension from school or an out-of-class "Time Out" for the remainder of the day.*
- A serious violation of school rules, or other behavior which affects the physical or emotional well-being of our students, may result in suspension from school or an out-of-class "Time Out" for the remainder of the day.*

* In cases of out-of-class "Time-Outs", students will be provided with a quiet work space in the office area where they can work on class assignments provided by their teacher or guidance counselor. For those lasting more than half of the school day, parents/guardians will be contacted, if possible, and given the option of taking the student home, but the suspension will take effect immediately because of the severe nature of the violation.

Classroom Behavior

You will spend a lot of time in your classroom, so help make it a nice place to be!

- Rules concerning respectful behavior apply at all times, both in and outside of the school building.
- Your classmates have a right to work without being disturbed, and so do you. Respect each other's rights.
- Pick up after yourself, and be a helper to your classmates and teachers.
- Be a good friend by being kind and considerate.
- Borrow books, pencils, etc. only with permission, and when you do take good care of other's property.
- Only doors are to be used when leaving your classroom. The windows are for light and ventilation; they are not exits.
- Please open and close doors quietly with your hands, not your feet!
- Use classroom furniture for its intended purpose.
- Heater vents must be kept clear at all times for safety and comfort.
- The thermostat and classroom phones are for teacher use only.
- Ball-playing is limited to the gym and playground!

Bathrooms

Be respectful of others by keeping the bathroom neat and clean.

- FLUSH the toilet and urinal after every use.
- Use paper towels for drying hands and then throw the used paper into the trash can. Do not flush paper towels.
- Bathrooms aren't for fooling around or playing. Go in and come out as quickly and quietly as possible.
- Respect the privacy of others, and don't bother or embarrass other students.
- Leave the lights on for others.
- Bathrooms near the gym are for kindergarten through third grade student's use ONLY.

Hallways

- WALK to and from your bus and in the hallways. Walk directly to where you are going and right back again.
- Artwork displayed in the hallways was created by you, your friends and fellow students. View it and enjoy it, but please don't touch it.
- When your class is passing to a special class, lunch or recess, please do so in an orderly fashion.
- Hands and feet should be kept to yourself while in line or everywhere else in school and on the playground.
- You need to be quieter in hallways than in your classroom so you do not disturb others.
- Pencils or pens should be left in the classroom. If needed, they will be available at your destination.
- Open and close doors quietly with your hands.
- Be courteous and hold the door for others.
- Keep water fountains clean.
- The main lobby couch is for sitting only.

Cafeteria

You must eat lunch every day. If you are not eating lunch, you will not be allowed to stay in the cafeteria. You will be asked to go to the nurse. She will contact your parents and talk with them about the importance of you eating a good lunch every day.

When you get to the cafeteria, you should go directly to the kitchen line if you are buying lunch or milk. While in the cafeteria, you may sit at any table and enjoy lunch with your friends. Up to four students may sit at the small tables, and up to eight at the double ones.

- Talk in a quiet voice to the people at your table.
- You can not save seats or places in line for your friends.
- Running is not allowed! You need to walk at all times.
- Show respect for other student's rights by keeping your hands, feet and objects to yourself. Feet belong on the floor, not on the chairs.
- Use good table manners by eating food, not playing with it.

- You need to remain at your table until you are finished eating. Walking around while eating is not allowed.
- Be sure your table is clean before you leave the cafeteria.
- To leave the cafeteria during lunch, you must first get permission from a lunchroom monitor.
- The stage is off-limits during lunch time.

Cafeteria Stop Light

When you enter the cafeteria, you will see the stoplight located in the right corner by the stage. Its lights are used during lunch to let the classes know whether they are getting too noisy. When the green light is on, you may continue to chat and enjoy yourselves. If it switches to yellow, it is a warning that lunch is getting too noisy. If the light turns red, all movement and talking must stop immediately.

Recess

Our play areas have a variety of surfaces and equipment on which you can play. During recess, you can relax, run around and play with your friends. There are several students out there with you, so remember to PLAY SAFELY.

The following equipment is NOT allowed on the playground:

- hard balls and bats
- hockey sticks
- roller skates
- bicycles
- skateboards

- All equipment should be used properly.
- Ball playing must be away from the building.
- Playing is limited to the designated play areas. Do NOT play in or on the following:
 - woods
 - brook
 - parking lot
 - bicycle racks
 - snow banks, ice or puddles
 - classroom doorways and window areas
 - Picnic Hill, the hill between the school and Taylor Road*
 - the ball field below the parking lot*
- Enjoy the trees and flowers, but don't climb on or pick them.
- Contact (tackle) sports are not allowed.
- Throwing sand or rocks is not allowed.
- Do not touch or play with any animals that may come onto the playground.*
- You may reenter the building during recess ONLY with the permission of the recess monitor on duty.

* See *Playground Severe Consequence*.

Consequences of Not Following Playground Rules

Consequence #1: TIME OUT for 10 minutes. Student will either stand with recess Monitor OR stand against school or stonewall.

Consequence #2: TIME OUT for the remainder of recess.

Playground Severe Consequence Recess detention spent in the office for the remainder of recess and next day's recess, plus a homework assignment to be signed by parent(s).

Respect for Monitors

The same level of respect shown to your teachers and fellow students should be shown toward all staff, including our monitors. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, students may receive a verbal warning, be issued a *Conant Ticket*, complete a behavioral *Think Sheet*, be sent to the office to see the principal or guidance counselor or be subject to the more serious discipline consequences described under **Serious Consequences**.

Winter Rules

- Boots and snow pants are required for K-3 students to play in the snow. Otherwise, K-3 students must stay in the plowed areas.
- Snowballs may be made in, and thrown from, the stonewall enclosure ONLY. They may be thrown ONLY toward the woods - never at anyone. (See *Severe Playground Consequence*.)
- Kicking or throwing snow is not allowed.
- Snow is to remain outside! Shake snow off your pants and boots before entering the building.

Indoor Recess

During bad weather, recess will be held indoors. Remember that even though you're having recess, not all classes are, so be considerate.

- You must remain in your classroom unless you have permission from the recess monitor to be elsewhere.
- Participate in quiet activities such as board games, reading, drawing, talking quietly with a friend, doing homework or doing extra credit work.
- During indoor recess you may not play with balls, throw objects, raise your voice or yell, run in the classroom, or go to the library or cafeteria.
- Rules concerning respectful behavior apply at all times, both inside and outside of the

school building.

Walkers and Bike Riders

Taylor Road, from the corner of Minot Avenue to the school, is off-limits to walkers and bike riders. It is too narrow and dangerous. Walk or bike to school down the path from Minot Avenue.

When you arrive at school, park your bike in the bike rack, and come DIRECTLY into the building. Do not play on the playground or in front of the building. If you are early, wait quietly in the lobby until the first bus unloads.

Consequences of Not Following rules for *Walker and Bike Riders*

Consequence #1: Copy the rules and consequences and have them signed by parents.

Consequence #2: Recess detention(s). Parents will be contacted and told that a third offense will result in the loss of walking or bike riding privileges.

Consequence #3: Loss of walking or bike riding privileges

Being a Good Bus Rider

A bus is a large and powerful vehicle, and driving a bus takes skill and concentration. It is extremely important that you be on your best behavior while getting on, riding and getting off the bus. The bus driver is in complete charge of the bus and its passengers at all times and is responsible for ensuring the safety of everyone who rides in the bus.

Bus Rules

The following safety rules must be followed at all times to ensure the safety of all who ride in the bus.

- Always follow the driver's instructions.
- Do not push or shove at the bus stop.
- DON'T run up to the bus while it is still moving. WAIT until it has stopped before approaching it. Line up single file to board the bus.
- Find a seat and sit down quickly. Do not change or leave your seat unless the driver requests that you do so. You must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Take a moment to BUCKLE UP FOR SAFETY. To work properly, your seat belt must be adjusted to fit you.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself, and do not disturb others.
- Speak in a normal voice while riding in the bus. Yelling, making distracting sounds and swearing are not allowed.

- Be sure to wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before leaving your seat. Do not push or shove when getting off the bus.
- After getting off the bus, walk away from it. Don't walk down the side or behind the bus where the driver can't see you.
- If you have to cross the street after you get off the bus, **CROSS IN FRONT OF THE BUS**, far enough ahead so that you and the bus driver can see each other. For your own safety, always look both ways before crossing.
- Students may only ride to and from authorized stops. The bus driver is not allowed to carry unauthorized students on the bus.
- Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus.
- Open windows only with the permission of the bus driver.
- The emergency door at the rear of the bus is just that, **FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY**.
- Don't throw things while waiting at the bus stop or while on the bus.
- It is against state law to smoke or light matches on the bus.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for any damage done to a bus by their child.
- You may not bring things on the bus that could be dangerous or distracting, such as sharp objects, animals or very large items that cannot be transported safely or take up a seat needed for other riders. The Bus Transportation Office is responsible for making this determination.

Winter Bus Safety

Driving a school bus is a major responsibility, especially during slippery weather or winter driving conditions. Help the bus driver get you to school safely by being on your best behavior and following the safety rules listed below:

- Find a safe, plowed, flat area that is back from the street to wait at your bus stop. If your bus stop seems dangerous, have your **PARENTS/GUARDIANS** arrange with the bus driver for a safer place to wait.
- Do not climb or slide down snow banks or run in your bus stop area.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before boarding. Slippery roads could cause the bus to skid.
- Walk to the bus to board.
- Before crossing the street, look both ways and wait for cars to stop completely.

- Cross at a plowed driveway. Do not climb over a snow bank to cross a street. You could easily slip into the road.
- Do not throw snowballs at any vehicles. A surprised driver might go off the road.
- Do not take any snow on the bus.

Student Bus Riders' Rights

Before any disciplinary action is taken because of a formal complaint from a bus driver, the student will have a chance to explain what happened to the school principal.

Students will continue to be transported on the bus until a formal decision regarding disciplinary action is taken. A bus driver cannot decide to put a student off the bus anywhere but at his or her authorized stop.

Consequences of Not Following Bus Rules

If a student does not follow the bus rules, the bus driver will prepare a written report explaining the situation and give it to the principal. After the principal gets a copy of that report, the following will happen:

Consequence #1: The principal will talk to the student and a notice will be sent home to his/her parents/guardians. The principal will also send a written letter home that explains the situation and consequences if the misbehavior occurs again. The parent(s)/guardians(s) must sign and return the letter. In serious incidents, the principal may choose to suspend bus privileges.

Consequence #2: The principal will speak to the student and a second notice will be sent home. The principal may choose to suspend bus privileges.

Consequence #3: The third and/or following misbehaviors will result in a notice being sent home and an automatic one-week suspension from bus privileges. The principal will continue to work with the parents/guardians and student if subsequent offenses occur.

Violation of State Laws: Smoking or lighting matches on the bus will result in an automatic one-week suspension of bus privileges.

The principal will determine the length of a bus privilege suspension in all cases, based on the seriousness of the misbehavior. In the case of an automatic one-week suspension, the principal may decide to lengthen it if he/she chooses.

PART D: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SCHOOL POLICIES AND DISCIPLINE (INCLUDING REGULATIONS ON STUDENT HANDBOOKS, WEAPONS, SMOKING, EXPULSION)

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H

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

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

In each school building containing grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to the conduct of students. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in the disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including but not limited to those outlined in this section.

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

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff in school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said

hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal, may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- (e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such a student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H as amended by Section 36 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993 (The Education Reform Act), and further amended by Section 1 of Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993.

APPENDIX 2: NOTICE ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources or referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts are hereby notified that these institutions do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or handicap in admission or access to or treatment or employment in its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts' compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504 or Chapter 622 is directed to contact Nancy M. Kolb, Director of Pupil Services, 16 Charter Road, Acton, MA, telephone # 978-264-4700, who has been designated by the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts to coordinate the Districts' efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA and Chapter 622, or write to:

Office for Civil Rights
John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse
Room 222
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109

TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following is the procedure by which student and employee complaints alleging any action prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may be resolved.

Any student or employee who believes that he or she has a legitimate complaint alleging any action prohibited by Title IX is urged to bring it to the School Districts attention through this grievance procedure. Any such grievance should be initiated within 15 days of the incident giving rise to it. The student or employee should follow Step I as follows:

STEP I - Contact the Director of Personnel or the Director of Pupil Services who will attempt to resolve the grievance in a fair and timely manner. Should the attempt to resolve the issue at Step I fail, the grievance may be advanced to Step II within 5 days of the Step I response.

STEP II - The Director of Personnel or the Director of Pupil Services shall forward the grievance and his/her findings, together with any additional information provided by the student or employee, in writing, to the Superintendent. Normally within seven days, the Superintendent will make a final decision, based on all available information, and will forward his or her final written decision to the grievant, normally within 45 days of the original written grievance.

Appointment of Compliance Officer

The Director of Personnel is appointed the School's Compliance Officer.

APPENDIX 3: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The school district is committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment compromises professional relationships and undermines the quality of the education environment. Sexual harassment is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the school systems.

The condoning of sexual harassment or the retaliation against an individual because he or she complains of sexual harassment or because he or she assists in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment is also prohibited.

A. Sexual Harassment

Employees, volunteers, contractors and students are prohibited from making Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors and from engaging in any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when those advances, requests or conduct have a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the education of a student or the working environment of any employee of the school by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational or working environment. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to, leering, pinching, grabbing, suggestive verbal comments, off-color jokes, and pressure for sexual activity.

B. Sexual Conduct Toward Students

It is also a violation of the school district policy for any school employee, volunteer or contractor to make any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature toward a student, whether or not unwelcome.

It is the policy of the School Committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. Those steps or procedures are designed to correct, remedy and discipline violations of the policy.

COMPLAINT AND INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

If any student, employee, volunteer or contractor believes that he/she has been subjected to any form of sexual harassment, the individual should report the incident as promptly as possible (but no later than six months from the time of the incident). A student should report the matter to a teacher or administrator with whom the student feels comfortable. An employee or volunteer should report the matter to the immediate supervisor or another administrator. A contractor should report to an administrator. The report should be written down immediately.

A complaint of sexual harassment by a student, or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or teacher. The report should be in writing. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. Either party may discuss the issue directly with the Superintendent. The Title 9/622 Coordinator or

Superintendent's designee will thereafter investigate the complaint and present findings to the Superintendent and the complainant within 15 days of receipt of the written complaint.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent within five days. The appeal should contain the specific reason why the complainant is dissatisfied with the response. The nature of the complaint, the parties involved, and the relief sought should also be delineated in the appeal. The Superintendent will consider the appeal and respond to the complainant after receipt of the appeal, normally within 15 days of receipt.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any employee, volunteer, contractor or student found to have engaged in any form of sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. In the case of a student, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion from school. In the case of an employee, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or dismissal. In the case of a volunteer or contractor, his/her services may be terminated.

Victims of sexual harassment are encouraged to find relief and closure through counseling service provided by the school district. Individuals who have been found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be required to seek counseling and provide documentation of involvement in a therapeutic intervention program as part of the disciplinary action.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H

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

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

APPENDIX 4: SEX EDUCATION PARENT NOTIFICATION POLICY

Pursuant to Chapter 291 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the School Committees direct the Superintendent to ensure timely parental/guardian notification of any curriculum used in the Acton Public or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools that primarily involves human sexuality issues or human sexual education.

This policy allows parents/guardians the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion or completely from the curriculum being offered. The Committees want to encourage the flow information while recognizing the rights of parents.

The following courses contain sexuality issues or human sexual education:

- Bio Forum
- Senior Seminar
- Health/Fitness
- Biology

Parents who have questions should contact the school nurse or Health Educator Coordinator to review the material.

SEX EDUCATION PARENT NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

1. Central Office Administrators/Principals will notify parents in writing, through newsletters and posting, in advance, so that parents may review the materials that will be used. Parents should call the school nurse or Health Educator Director in order to review the material.
2. Parents must write a letter to their child's Principal exempting them from participation.
3. No child exempted shall be penalized.
4. The school will determine which alternative experience will be offered.
5. Any appeal of decisions made should follow the Acton and Acton-Boxborough appeals' process.

APPENDIX 5: IMMUNIZATION POLICY RELATING TO NEW STUDENTS

The School Committees support the Massachusetts School Immunization Law, Chapter 76, Section 15 which states, "No child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physicians' certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, and poliomyelitis and such other communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health.

Adopted: July 24, 1997

APPENDIX 6: TRUANCY AND ATTENDANCE: PARENT INFORMATION

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

The following is a summary of some of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to attendance.

School Attendance

Chapter 76, section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school. A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months. In addition to this law, each school may have its own attendance policy with which parents and guardians should be familiar.

Who is a Supervisor of Attendance?

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

What is a CHINS?

A "CHINS" (Child in Need of Services) petition may be filed in court by a supervisor of attendance if a child between the ages of six and sixteen persistently violates lawful and reasonable regulations of his or her school. The Court's authority pursuant to a CHINS petition includes the power to place a child in the custody of the state agency known as the Department of Social Services.

What is a 51A?

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

Parent Responsibility

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

Inducing Absences

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