



TOPSFIELD
SCHOOLS

HANDBOOK

www.topsfieldschools.org
www.tritownschoolunion.com

2011/2012

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**TOPSFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

All programs, activities, and employment opportunities engaged in by the Topsfield Public Schools are offered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and disability

The Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator for the Topsfield Public Schools is:

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Tri-Town School Union
28 Middleton Road
Boxford, MA 01921
Tel: 978-887-0771
FAX: 978-887-8042
E-mail: bcreeden@tritownschoolunion.com

STEWARD SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS 2011/2012

Mr. Gregg Lindsay	Ms. Brittany Green
Mrs. Tracy Stevenson	Mrs. Lauren Rec
Mrs. Karen Holland	Mrs. Beth Matthews
Mrs. Dawn Watson-Rudnyai	Mrs. Michelle Costa
Mrs. Denise Howard	Mrs. Colleen Ferrarini
Mrs. Kate Dwomoh	

PROCTOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS 2011/2012

Mrs. Catherine Carlson	Mrs. Ann Lang
Mrs. Kara Swenson	Mrs. Sarah O'Leary
Mrs. Joyce Cryan	

FOREWORD

This document represents the rules, regulations and policies adopted by the Topsfield Public Schools. They are a product of School Committee deliberations, state and federal guidelines and the work of our School Councils.

We would ask that parents review this document with your child (children) with particular attention to bus rules, internet use and conduct expectations.

Included at the end of our handbook is the school calendar with some established event dates and assessment schedules for the year. We will be adding additional program data as the academic year progresses.

We hope that this handbook proves to be an informational resource for our students and for our school community.

Sarah O'Leary
Principal, Proctor School

Michelle Costa
Principal, Steward School

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Topsfield Elementary Schools is to provide the academic foundation and the social and emotional support for children to meet the challenges of citizenship expected of life long learners in an increasingly technological and interdependent world.

DISTRICT CORE VALUES

The Core Values of the Topsfield School District include the beliefs that:

1. Respect for oneself, and other children and adults, promotes belonging and is essential to learning.
2. The strongest possible instructional program for children and adults is based on quality research, world-class standards, and high expectations.
3. All children can and will learn when provided equal access to educational opportunities appropriate to their individual needs and capabilities.
4. Life long learning is achieved in partnership with the home, school and community.
5. Our schools are a shared resource for the entire community.

I. TOPSFIELD SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURE

A. SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MEMBER NAMES

Jeanine Cunniff (Chairperson)-978-887-5282
16 Town Lane

Susan Archer (Co-Chairperson)-978-561-1738
24 Parsonage Lane

Rosemarie Lucey- 978-561-1083
54 Brookside Road

Gordon Spater- 978-887-3410
20 Candlewood Drive

Joseph Quigley- 978-887-1356
80 Parsonage Lane

School Committee meeting dates, agendas, minutes, policies, goals and other information are available on-line at: www.tritownschoolunion.com

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

(Under the Educational Reform Act of 1993)

1. Appoint, evaluate, and dismiss the superintendent
2. Approve the appointment of assistant superintendents
3. Review and approve all budget items
4. Development policy and educational goals
5. Establish performance standards for teaching staff
6. Negotiate contracts for all collective bargaining units
7. Negotiate contracts for superintendent, central office administrators, and principals
8. Comply with all laws relative to the operation of the public schools and any regulations of the Board of education authorized in the legislation
9. Review and approve the school council's school improvement plan

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLE

Your School Committee members encourage active participation by parents and citizens in school affairs. The philosophy and quality of our children's education should be a determination of the entire community. While the School Committee acts directly as the policy-making body relative to the general educational policy, it does not wish to operate in a vacuum. It needs the counsel and support of the community and encourages citizen participation.

YOUR SCHOOL COMMITTEE consists of 5 members elected to serve overlapping terms of 3 years. At the end of his/her term, a member wishing to continue in service to the community must seek re-election for another term.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS follow a standard agenda and are conducted in accordance with established parliamentary procedure. Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes, signing of bills and payrolls, and receiving reports from standing committees, the committee proceeds to other items of business including "Remarks from the Public". Under this item, any resident is invited to express his/her viewpoint or ask questions relative to the schools' operations. While this is a special time in the meeting for the public to make remarks, citizens may also participate in discussing other agenda items.

Meetings are generally held once a month at the Proctor School Library as posted at the Topsfield Town Hall. Meetings are also broadcast over Topsfield's cable channel (10) on a tape delayed basis.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT FOR SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT POLICY #90914

The Topsfield School Committee supports the principles and practices of School Based Management. A variety of opportunities for participatory planning and decision making involving professional staff, parents and community members will be supported, such as study groups and district wide task groups.

We shall abide by the law on school councils as stated in Mass. General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C (as added by Section 53 of Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993).

Adopted: March 17, 1994

B. CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTORY

Bernard Creeden Superintendent of Schools	978-887-0771 EXT. 224 bcreeden@tritownschoolunion.com
Steve Clifford Director of Facilities & School Operations	978-887-0771 EXT. 225 sclifford@tritownschoolunion.com
Sharon Lyons Director of Special Education	978-887-4119 slyons@tritownschoolunion.com
Christine Elliott Director of Curriculum	Phone: 978-887-2856 ext. 204 celliott@tritownschoolunion.com
Steve Greenberg Director of Finance and Human Resources	978-887-0771 EXT. 223 sgreenberg@tritownschoolunion.com

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS is appointed by the school committee and acts as its executive officer in the operation of the schools. He/she acts as advisor in keeping the committee informed of the needs and progress of the schools. He/she is available to the committee as a professional resource, and his/her recommendations normally precede committee action on questions relating to selection of instructional materials and development of curriculum. Copies of curriculum guides are available for review at school or in the public libraries. Boxford, Middleton and Topsfield constitute Superintendent Union 58, which jointly employs the elementary school Superintendent, Business Manager, Director of Special Education, Director of Facilities and School Operations, the secretarial staff, and financial accounting support staff.

In addition, the Superintendent has responsibility for the appointment of all staff upon the recommendation of building principals for staff assigned to the school of which they are principal-in-charge. (All system-wide staff is appointed by the Superintendent after consultation from both principals.)

C. TOPSFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Michelle Costa, Principal, Steward School 261 Perkins Row, Topsfield, MA 01983 Office Staff: Cheryl Butt, Janet Sacco School Nurses: Karen Hoyt, R.N., Mellisa West, R.N.	Phone: 978-887-1538 Fax: 978-887-7462 mcosta@topsfildps.org
Sarah O'Leary, Principal, Proctor School 60 Main Street, Topsfield, MA 01983 Office Staff: Helen Dukehart, Susan Sordello School Nurse: Carol Cheever, R.N.	Phone: 978-887-1530 Fax: 978-887-1531 soleary@topsfildps.org

Emily Gatchell, Special Education Liaison

Phone: 978-887-1538
egatchell@topsfieldps.org

Katie Lyons, Pre-School Director

Phone: 978-887-1538
klyons@topsfieldps.org

Susan Bodwell, Food Service Director

Phone: 978-887-1513
sbodwell@tritownschoollunion.com

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND starts at the teacher level. If a parent has a question relating to classroom matters, the classroom teacher should be the first to be consulted. Questions relating to general operations or other areas of activity should be brought to the attention of the building principal.

II.COMMUNITY RELATIONS

It is clearly evident to school personnel that effective and collaborative public relations programs are key to reaching the goals we have for our educational programs. An effective partnership and good communication between parents, teaching staff and administrators are essential ingredients to our success. Concurrently, there are many responsibilities associated in the contact and work with children in our school system. Based on state regulations, a C.O.R.I. check will be required for all parents wishing to volunteer in the schools or as chaperones on field trips. C.O.R.I. forms can be obtained by contacting the school secretary at each of our school buildings.

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

A. SCHOOL COUNCILS

The Topsfield School Committees supports and encourages the intent and purpose of school councils under the Educational Reform Legislation of 1993. The committee believes that parents, teachers, and members of the community, working collaboratively to advise the principal, will enhance the educational needs of all students in Topsfield.

The purposes of the school councils are to:

1. Assist and advise the principal in adopting educational goals for the school.
2. Assist and advise the principal in the identification of the educational needs of the students.
3. Assist and advise the principal in the review of the annual school budget.
4. Assist and advise the principal in the formation of a school improvement plan.

B. SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SPED PAC)

Under Chapter 766, the state mandates that any school district operating a special education program must establish a parent advisory council.

The Tri-town SPED PAC meets regularly with school officials to develop a productive working relationship and to have a voice in the delivery of special education services. The Tri-Town SPED PAC provides support, information sharing, speakers, and access to community and educational resources.

Membership to the Tri-Town SPED PAC is open to any parent in Boxford, Middleton, or Topsfield who has a child receiving or being considered for Chapter 766 services. For more information, please contact Sharon Lyons at 978-887-4119.

BLACKBOARD COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Topsfield uses Blackboard Connect for community outreach and emergency communication. Blackboard Connect is a service that enables the superintendent, principals and other designated users to record, schedule, send and track thousands of voice messages in minutes. With this service we can send calls to faculty, parents/guardians, classes, grades, or a combination of those groups.

In September, families are asked to provide contact information for Blackboard Connect purposes. We can send messages to multiple telephone numbers and e-mails. During the year if your contact information changes, you need to notify the office in order to stay Blackboard Connect. Through Blackboard Connect you will receive no-school notification on snow days, reminders of upcoming events, last minute information about field trips, etc. Blackboard Connect has proven to be an effective way to get important information to the Topsfield Elementary School community.

III. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. If you are interested and able to participate in your child's education you may help at school in the following areas:

- (a) Library Aide (library attendant, cataloging, other voluntary activities)
- (b) Classroom Resource Person (make classroom presentations, make available and show materials suitable for classroom)
- (c) Room Parent
- (d) Chaperone for field trips
- (e) Active Member of Parent Organizations: TESPTO, TEF, Playground Committee, Band Boosters, SPED PAC
- (f) Computer Lab Aide
- (g) Cafeteria and Playground Supervisor (paid position)

If you are involved in school sponsored programs or events it is essential that confidentiality be maintained. To that end, parent volunteers will be asked to sign confidentiality statements validating their sensitivity and responsibility to our students.

By Massachusetts state law, parents wishing to become involved in a volunteering capacity must undergo a C.O.R.I. check. Information concerning the C.O.R.I. process is available in each of our school offices.

2. Steps to mediate incidents (as a school volunteer):

- (a) Contact the Teacher, Principal or the Teacher in Charge
- (b) Ascertain true facts on incidents
 - (1) realize that children sometimes exaggerate or are confused
 - (2) consult directly with persons involved in the incident
 - (3) don't rely on hearsay
 - (4) counteract false and misleading stories of incident
- (c) Support the administration's authority and the resultant resolution efforts involved in any incident.

3. There can be a wide variety of opinion in the way situations or incidents should be handled in school:

- (a) First determine exactly how the situation was handled by school administration
- (b) Register any concerns, complaints or constructive suggestions with the school authorities following the proper channels in the appropriate order as follows, i.e., the teacher, then the principal, then the superintendent and last the school committee.

GIFT GIVING

Topsfield teachers and staff, as well as the School Committee, shall consider the writing of letters of appreciation to staff members to be appropriate and welcome ways of expressing gratitude. Letters of appreciation forwarded to school administration become part of a staff member's file as evidence of exceptional service provided to our school community.

Regarding the acceptance of other well intended gifts, teachers and staff members are bound by state statute and regulation (MA General Laws Chapter 268A). In all cases, the cumulative value of any personal gift or donation to staff shall not exceed \$50. Gifts from parents to the classroom for support (i.e. books, school supplies, etc.) will be permitted.

School Committee policy and the State Ethics Commission regulations and advisories to public employees interpreting Massachusetts General Laws (Chapter 268A and 268B) offer us guidance and direction. There have been some recent updates to the Ethics Commission guidelines that are detailed below. The letter and spirit of law, policy and regulations suggest the following:

- The School Committee encourages the writing of letters of appreciation to staff members as a most appropriate way of expressing thanks and encouragement at any time during the year.
- Gifts to benefit classrooms and other school programs rather than individual staff members are appropriate with the understanding, that once given, these gifts become the property of the school and not any individual staff member.
- Gifts for the personal use of a staff member presented by individual families are limited to \$50.00 in an academic year.
- **NEW GUIDELINE:** Gifts by a class as a group gift are to be limited to a value of \$150.00 in an academic year. Such gifts must not list the names of individual students or families who have contributed to the gift.
- Contributions to charitable organizations in the name of a staff member are permitted. Such gifts may be made to our PTOs and/or Educational Foundations in the name of the staff member.

SCHOOL HOURS GRADES K - 6

PROCTOR AND STEWARD

School begins - 8:45 – Students arriving after 8:45 will be marked tardy.

School closes - 3:10 – Students departing earlier than 3:10 will be marked as dismissed.

School closes (early release days) – 12:00 or 1:15

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

1. 3-Full day Kindergarten program - 8:45 - 3:10
Section A: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday
Section B: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
2. Optional 5-Full day tuition-based program- 8:45-3:10

NO SCHOOL SIGNAL

In the event of stormy weather, a joint decision will be made as to closing the elementary schools and Masconomet for the day or to have a delayed opening. The no-school announcement or the delayed opening announcement will be broadcast over WBZ 1030, WBZ TV 4, WCVB, TV 5, WHDH TV 7, WFXT TV 25. Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings and/or report conferences will be cancelled on “no school” days and will be rescheduled by the teacher. There will be no band rehearsals or before school classes on a “delayed opening” school day.

When possible, the Superintendent of Schools will utilize the “Blackboard Connect” system to inform the Topsfield School Community of a school cancellation.

During stormy or extremely cold weather, parents are urged to exercise their own judgment in sending their children to school.

Please DO NOT call the Topsfield Fire or Police Departments or the Topsfield Public Schools for no-school information.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

Should it be necessary to close school for loss of power, heat, or other emergency situations, the principal will attempt to notify as many families as possible. The Blackboard Connect system will be employed should such an instance arise. Such closings have been infrequent. However, it is wise to make specific plans for your child as to what he/she should do if you are not at home at such a time.

At the beginning of each school year, parents are required to provide Emergency Dismissal instructions to the school office. A form will be sent home along with the emergency card. This will help us to ensure that your child is properly cared for in your absence.

In case of early closing of the school session brought about by the weather or other reason, the same radio stations will be requested to broadcast the early dismissal time. In addition, efforts will be made to have this information broadcast on the local access Cable TV channels.

ENROLLMENT

AGE OF ADMISSION - Children entering kindergarten must reach their fifth birthday by September 1st of the year in which they enroll. Registration for kindergarten will be held in December or January. All registrants will be administered a screening test in September. Children entering Grade One without previous successful public school kindergarten experience must reach their sixth birthday by September 1st of the year in which they enroll. School administrators will arrange for evaluation procedures on request, in those instances where parents question the readiness of the child to enter Kindergarten, or to enter Grade One without kindergarten experience.

A child must be resident of the Town of Topsfield to be enrolled as a student. Proof of residency (deed, lease agreement, rental agreement, or notarized letter from owner of the home) will need to be submitted to the school office.

When a child transfers into our school system the grade placement of the previous school system is honored. If a reasonable period of adjustment, testing, and teacher evaluation indicates that the child is incorrectly placed, the child will then be placed at a grade level in which he/she is able to successfully complete the work.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS - The school must be notified immediately of any change of address or phone number, or emergency contact numbers.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SCHOOL SYSTEM - The principal should be notified (by a note or a telephone call to the school) a week in advance of a child's withdrawal from school. The note or call should indicate the last day that the child will be in school and the child's new address. An official transfer will be sent from the school office to the receiving school upon receipt of a signed release form.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is very important. It is necessary for children to receive continuous instruction; every day missed sets children back and creates added pressure. We publish the school calendar well in advance to help you plan family trips so that they coincide with school vacations. We urge that you comply with the school calendar. Since assignments are based upon material which has been previously taught, work must be made up after a child returns and cannot be sent home in advance. When parents voluntarily take their children out of educational programming, upon the child(ren)'s returning to school, the parents have the responsibility to see that the children complete all make-up work in a timely manner.

Regular classroom instruction is the most effective learning situation. Parents should realize that any circumstance that takes a child out of the classroom will have an adverse effect upon the child's educational program. It is for this reason that the system cannot look with approval upon absences for non-medical or non-emergency reasons. In the event of medical or emergency absences, the teachers will work cooperatively with the parents to provide assistance during the absences and after the child's return to school to minimize the educational loss to the student.

Parents are urged to call the school on days of student absence. If no call is received, the school will attempt to call the parent. In addition, a written excuse must be brought to school following each absence or tardiness. A child reporting to school late must stop at the office of the principal to let the secretary and/or principal know of his/her arrival.

Absences for reasons other than medical or family emergency should be avoided.

Massachusetts General Law 76:1-2 defines truancy as unexcused absences totaling more than 7 full days in a 6 month period. After 7 days, parent excused absences are no longer classified as excused. In addition, a tardy or dismissal could be considered a ½ day absence by the state. If a student is absent, tardy or dismissed beyond the law's threshold, parents will receive a written letter from the principal detailing next steps.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Parents are requested to make appointments with physicians, dentists, or for any special lessons, before or after school hours.

STUDENT DISMISSAL

Parents are to send notes in to classroom teachers if a child is to be dismissed during the day. Please give requested dismissal time. **Parents must report to the office** to pick up the child at the designated time. If the child is returning to school the same day, he/she is expected to report to the school office for readmission.

No student will be dismissed from school in the custody of a person other than the parent or guardian of the child. Exceptions will be made only when the parent informs the school in writing that a person other than the parent will call for the child. Proper identification may be requested.

NOTES . . . NOTES . . . NOTES . . . NOTES

When sending notes to school about a child's early dismissal or going to another activity after school, please include the following information:

DATE
CHILD'S NAME/TEACHER'S NAME
TIME OF EARLY DISMISSAL
WHO WILL PICK THE CHILD UP
IF TAKING ANOTHER BUS INDICATE BUS # AND BUS STOP ADDRESS
YOUR SIGNATURE

CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT

Teams at each grade level follow the same basic procedures each spring to create balanced classes for the coming school year, and usually include the current classroom teachers, the guidance counselor, reading specialist, special education staff and the school principal. Some teams include the school nurse or other school staff as appropriate.

The principal of each school building is ultimately responsible for the classroom assignment of children at the beginning of the school year and for children transferring into the school during the school year. In making classroom assignments, the principal, in conjunction with grade level teaching teams, will consider the following:

1. The factors that will provide the most efficient and effective classroom program for all the children at a given grade level and for the school in general.
 - a) class size
 - b) a balance of children with different academic abilities and needs
 - c) appropriate instructional grouping
 - d) appropriate balance of boys and girls
 - e) the social dynamics of the group
 - f) other specifics relative to the effective operation of the school

2. The educational recommendations of the present classroom teacher.

If factors exist that should be considered in making classroom assignments, parents or teachers should bring them to the attention of the school principal in writing by April 1st. Parent input should describe the learning needs of their child. These factors will be considered by the principal in making the final decision on classroom assignment. Requests for placement with a specific teacher are not an appropriate part of the placement process.

Placement letters will be sent to kindergarten students when the office has received the complete registration packet, including a birth certificate. Health records should be submitted by August 15 or the health office must be notified of a scheduled medical appointment to obtain these records prior to this date.

WALKERS AND BIKE RIDERS

Please start your children on their way to school so that their arrival will be no sooner than 10 minutes before school begins. They should also be warned about talking with strangers and accepting rides with anyone.

If regular bus students walk or bicycle to and from school, parents are requested to send a note to that effect. Bike riders need to have a permission slip on file in the school office. This needs to be done on an annual basis. For safety reasons, we require that bike riders wear safety helmets. For security reasons, all bikes must be equipped with a lock.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special needs programs are available to students, who, because of a specific learning problem, are having difficulty achieving in the regular classroom. General screenings are conducted for preschoolers and kindergartners to identify students who may experience difficulties in school. In addition, parents and school personnel may make referrals for evaluation directly to the special education staff for all students preschool age through 6th grade. In this case, the child will be evaluated by a specialist team to determine the nature and degree of the learning problem. Parents are invited to participate actively in the evaluation process.

If, through the evaluation process, a student is deemed to be in need of special assistance, a special school program will be established for that student. Whenever possible, regular classroom programs will be modified to meet the student's needs. Sometimes, the special education staff may only have to consult with the regular education teacher around modifications and strategies that he or she will carry out in the classroom. However, if programs are necessary to support the regular education curriculum, special needs staff will provide direct services in the areas of learning disabilities, speech and language, and/or occupational and physical therapies. Whenever possible, services are provided within the regular education classrooms through an integrated model by professional or paraprofessional staff. Our underlying philosophy is that most children can benefit from an inclusive environment which seeks to integrate children rather than separate them. However, if this model is not appropriate, a "pull-out" model in a specialized setting is utilized. Ongoing communication is maintained between the special education provider and the classroom teacher.

TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAM

The Teacher Assistance Team (TAT), which is a function of regular education, enables general educators to meet as a team to address the progress of individual students. Classroom teachers and other specialists explore options and instructional accommodations within regular programming to help address the students' needs.

RTI

Response to Intervention is a multi-tiered system that identifies students who experience learning difficulties. This is a data-based process that requires frequent progress monitoring at three different levels of intervention. This early intervention system is a structured framework by which educators consider whether a student may eventually need specially designed instruction delivered by special educators. Special education is not considered part of Response to Intervention, but rather is the final step if all attempts at intervention prove to be unsuccessful. Response to intervention may also be referred to as Tiered Instructional Model.

Interventions administered through this process are research-based and students are monitored closely in order to identify *specific* areas of concern or gaps in learning, as well as providing a framework by which educators consider the efficacy of intervention methods, strategies or instructional programs. This individualized instruction and assessment system assists educators in determining intervention intensity and the instructional needs of students who may be struggling, either academically and/or behaviorally or socially. Topsfield staff members embrace Response to Intervention because they recognize the benefits of properly identifying students at an early sign of difficulty in order to support students in their educational experience to promote success and achievement.

CHILD STUDY TEAM

The Child Study Team includes representatives from general education and special education in the exploration and analysis of student progress. Recommendations from this team can include suggestions of further accommodations and potential modifications to a student academic profile.

CHILDREN STAYING AT SCHOOL AFTER HOURS

Occasionally, a teacher or principal may wish to keep a child after school hours for a reasonable time to give special instruction or for correction of behavior. If it is possible to give parents/guardians 24 hours notice, this will be done. The child will always be asked to phone a parent/guardian if he/she will not be home when expected. If parent/guardian cannot be reached, he/she will not be kept at school.

If the child is to be picked up after school for transportation home, impress upon him/her that he/she is to wait on the school grounds. Also warn him/her about accepting rides from strangers.

Children should not return to the school buildings after dismissal unless permission is given by school personnel.

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

There are no public telephones in the building. Therefore, the children's use of the school's telephone must be restricted to emergency calls. Please try to make this clear to your children so that they will get into the habit of planning their after school activities with you in advance.

Student cell phone ownership has increased measurably over the past several years. While acknowledging the merits of this technology, students will face the same cell phone restrictions placed on many of us in hospitals or other public settings. All student cell phones should be turned off and placed in their backpacks when entering school grounds. This prohibition is also in force on school bus rides which are an extension of the school day. When trying to contact your child during school hours, please do so by contacting the school office.

Mp3 player, IPOD, radios and other electronic devices, including cell phones, are not allowed in school. These devices interfere with learning. The school can not be responsible for lost or stolen belongings. The first time this rule is broken, you will be given a verbal warning and be asked to put the item away. The second time, you will be given a written warning and the item will be taken away and you may pick it up at the end of the school day. If you continue to bring such items to school, the item will be held in the office and your parent(s) or guardian(s) will have to pick up the item.

At times during the school year, certain technologies may be permitted, such as tablets or electronic readers, for instructional purposes with prior approval from the teacher and/or principal. A permission slip will be sent home to families prior to the device being used at school stating the school is not responsible for the loss or destruction of property.

MONEY IN SCHOOL

Money brought to school for lunch or other school purposes should be turned over to the teacher or other personnel at first opportunity. Money sent with the students should be put in an envelope on which is written the child's name, teacher's name and the purpose for which the money is sent. Children should not bring large sums of money to school.

USE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY IN SCHOOL

Ordinarily, students should bring to school only those items of personal property necessary for completing class assignments successfully. Teachers may grant specific permission for items needed for special projects. Certain items of personal property are not appropriate for use in school, on the playground or on the school buses for academic, safety and security reasons. While it is not possible to make an official or exhaustive list of inappropriate items, the following list will give some indication of categories currently not permitted in school: skateboards, heelies, i-Pods, portable cd players, guns, knives, weapons of any kind, roller blades, video games or other popular toys that could cause distraction. For safety reasons, only Nerf type balls are permitted in kindergarten and grade 1 at Steward School. Administrative concerns regarding this issue will be conveyed to parents as the need arises.

FIRE DRILLS AND SAFETY DRILLS

Fire and safety drills are conducted periodically throughout the year. In an emergency the children are well trained to evacuate the building or go into lockdown in a short time. Usually, it takes less than a minute and a half to into safely secure children in an emergency.

SCHOOL NUTRITION/FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The school nutrition/food service program offers all elementary school children a daily choice of a hot lunch in addition to two sandwich choices and pizza. The charge for an elementary school lunch is \$2.50, which includes a full meal and a choice of skim, low fat, or chocolate milk. Milk and a la carte items are available for purchase if a student does not wish to purchase a full lunch. Milk is \$.60. Free and reduced priced lunches are available if it is determined that a need exists. All students receive an application for free or reduced price lunches within the first two weeks of school. The completed application should be submitted to the principal of your child's school if you are interested. The application process is always confidential and the forms are located on our website at www.topsfieldschools.org.

NUTRIKIDS

Topsfield Schools has recently adopted a new computerized Point of Sale payment system for all school meals purchased in the district's cafeterias. The POS (Purchase of Sale) system allows you to prepay your student's lunch or a la carte purchases. The goal is to not have any money being passed in the lunch line. You can prepay in any amount you choose. The dollar amount will be deposited into your child's debit account and all purchases will be deducted from his/her account when purchases are made. This system will decrease the need for parents to provide cash daily. The first few days the lunch lines may be slower, but as the students familiarize themselves with the system the lines should move much quicker than before.

Every student at Steward and Proctor School has been entered into the computerized system. We strongly suggest parents/guardians deposit money into the student's account.

**Please see prepayment information listed below.

Steward School students will be using an electronic classroom roster at the point of sale for identification. Proctor School students will be issued an ID card or enter a PIN into a key pad. These ID cards will be kept in school.

Monies paid into a student account will be used for all purchases in the cafeteria, i.e. lunch, milk, ala carte items.

If your student has qualified for free or reduced price lunches, this information is securely contained within the system and the meal will be processed just as it is for all other students. There is no need to be concerned for a potentially uncomfortable situation for the student.

If you are concerned about a food allergy that your student has, please notify the cafeteria with this information. A warning will appear on the cashier's screen for a quick review of the items on the student's meal tray.

FEATURES OF THE COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM

Benefits for Parents and Students

- When the account is prepaid you can be sure that your student is only using that money for nutritious lunches.
- Prepaid accounts for all students allow parents to deposit money in their student's account, in any amount, at any time, without concerns about giving their student the exact change every morning.
- For those students receiving free or reduced meals, their meals will be rung up as all the other meals are. No one will know whether they are receiving a free or reduced meal or debiting their account, except for the cashier.
- Lunch lines move faster when meals are prepaid, thus providing students extra time to enjoy their lunch period.
- Parents can pay any amount at any time. All student ID numbers are confidential.
- Prepayment allows for better security rather than cash.
- Once the transaction has been completed, your student will know his/her account balance.

PREPAYMENT OPTIONS

- Prepayment can be done by sending payment to school or by online payment. If sending payment to school we recommend that parents send in checks rather than cash. Please include student's full name and grade on the check in the memo section or envelope so it will be deposited in the correct account. All students will have separate accounts. All monies will be collected in the classroom and sent to the cafeteria to be entered in the student's account.
- Online payment will be available at MyNutrikids.com. Please visit topsfieldschools.org for upcoming information about this program.
- Lunch tickets will no longer be sold.
- Lunch costs \$2.50, milk costs \$.60. Reduced lunches cost \$.40 each.
- Checks are to be made payable to **Town of Topsfield.**

FAQS

1. *Can I pay for my child's meal in advance?*
Yes, it is encouraged. Online prepayment will be the most efficient way but payment may be sent to school with your student which should be sent to the cafeteria before lunch time.
2. *Can I prevent my child from purchasing a la carte items or multiple meals?*
Yes, please contact the director of school nutrition, Susan Bodwell directly to set limits on your child's account. Call 978-887-1513 or email, sbodwell@tritownschoollunion.com.
3. *Can my child just purchase milk?*
Yes. The cost of milk is \$.60. Money should be put into the students account even for milk purchases.
4. *How much do school meals cost?*
The cost of a school lunch is \$2.50. Milk sold separately costs \$.60.

5. *What if my child is absent? What happens to the money in his/her account?*
All money in a student's account stays in their account until he/she uses it.
6. *What is in place to prevent someone else from using my child's account?*
The PIN numbers are linked to the student's pictures within the Nutrikids system. When a student's name or PIN is entered into the computer, the student's picture will appear preventing another student from using someone else's account.

Do not hesitate to contact Susan E. Bodwell, Director of School Nutrition at 978-887-1513 or sbodwell@tritownschoolunion.com with any questions or concerns.

HEALTH SERVICES

1. School Entry Requirements

Immunization: All immunizations must meet Massachusetts Department of Public Health minimum requirements and must be certified in writing by a licensed physician. State law requires the following immunizations of all children entering kindergarten in September 1996 or thereafter:

- DPT (Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus) – 5 doses
- Oral Polio – 4 doses
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) – 2 doses
- Hepatitis B – 3 doses (for children born after 1/1/92)
- Kindergartners are required to have one dose of varicella vaccine or a physician certified reliable history of chicken pox disease
- Td booster for students entering 7th grade, if it has been > 5 years since their dose of DtaP/DTP/DT.
- Exemption for medical or religious reasons requires appropriate documentation. See school nurse

Lead Screening (after 3rd birthday): Required of all students entering kindergarten.

Physical Examinations: Prior to entering kindergarten, 4th grade, 8th grade, and new students entering the Topsfield Public Schools must have written proof of a physical examination performed by their private physician.

THESE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS MUST BE MET BEFORE THE STUDENT IS ALLOWED TO START SCHOOL. YOUR CHILD WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM SCHOOL UNTIL THE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

2. Health Services and Policies

Routine Nursing Services: The Health rooms at Steward and Proctor Schools are located adjacent to the school offices. A school nurse is assigned to each school for the entire school day. On occasion when the nurse is out of the building a nurse will be on call to answer questions and cover emergencies.

Serious Emergencies: The school nurse will take primary responsibility. If the nurse is not in the building, the principal or teacher in charge will assume primary responsibility. First aid will be administered and, if necessary, the student will be transferred by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Every effort will be made to contact the parents. The parent may be requested to call the emergency room to give permission for treatment.

Medication: The school nurse is the only school personnel authorized to administer medication. Whenever possible, the medication schedule should be adjusted to fall outside school hours. A signed medication order by the physician and a signed consent by the parent or guardian are required to dispense medication at school. This includes over-the-counter medications. An authorized adult should deliver the medication to the school nurse. No student should carry medicines on the school bus or in the school building. If a parent prefers, he/she may come to school and administer the medication. During field trips parents of children who require medication must accompany the trip or designate a responsible adult who is able to administer the medication in their absence.

Screening: The following health screenings are administered to all students:

- * VISION screening performed annually in grades K-6
- * HEARING screening performed annually in grades K-6
- * POSTURAL screening performed annually in grades 5&6
- * HEIGHT & WEIGHT measured annually in grades K-6
- * PEDICULOSIS (head lice) screening, as needed, in all grades K-6.
- * BMI (Body Mass Index for Grades 1 and 4)

Topsfield School Health Update: A health update card for each student is sent home by the school at the beginning of each school year. Parents are required to complete this card annually and return it to school. This card is necessary to keep health records current.

The Health update form also includes current emergency information:

- * Home and work telephone numbers for parents/guardians
- * Home and work telephone numbers of other responsible adults that can be contacted in parents'/guardians' absence
- * Names and telephone numbers of child's physician and dentist
- * Health insurance information

3. Illnesses

PARENTS ARE ENCOURAGED NOT TO SEND THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF THEY APPEAR ILL.

A child should remain at home if he or she has any of the following:

- * a severe cold
- * persistent cough
- * sore throat or swollen glands accompanied by a fever
- * an undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
- * earache
- * red eyes or drainage from the eyes
- * vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- * a fever during the past 24 hours

If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified and will be expected to provide transportation for their sick child. Children will not be allowed to leave school alone and should be picked up from the health office.

4. Communicable Diseases

Chicken Pox: Isolation from school for one (1) week following appearance of rash. All eruptions must be dry and scabbed over before child can return to school.

Strep Throat (including Scarlet Fever): Children may return to school after being on adequate antibiotic medication for 24 hours and after being without fever for 24 hours.

Pediculosis (Head Lice): If a child is found to be infested with lice, he/she will be sent home for treatment with a medicated shampoo. All nits must be removed from the child's hair. The child may return to school with a parent/guardian and will be checked by the school nurse before being allowed to return to the classroom. If a parent/guardian discovers head lice on their child, please notify the school nurse so appropriate precautions can be taken to prevent their spread to classmates.

Student Allergy Policy

The Topsfield Public Schools recognize the increasing prevalence of student allergies and the life-threatening nature of allergies for many students. The school district administration shall develop and implement a protocol to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students, to educate all members of the school community on management of student allergies, and to plan for the needs of students with allergies. Further, the protocol will aim to provide age-appropriate procedures and to assist children in assuming more individual responsibility for their health and safety as they grow older. The schools will work with allergic students and their parent/guardians to address the students' emotional and social needs in addition to their health needs. The protocol will include the following:

A. Education and training: The District will provide education and training to all appropriate personnel on management of student allergies. The training will address prevention efforts, information about common allergens, recognition of signs of an allergic reaction, and the emergency response plan.

B. Individualized planning and accommodations: An Individual Health Care Plan and Allergy Action Plan that address management of anaphylaxis will be developed for each student with an allergy. A copy of the Allergy Action Plan will be provided to the classroom teacher and substitutes for all preschool to grade six students. The protocol will address how information about student allergies will be provided to other personnel, such as specialists, as needed. The implementation of the District protocol and of the individualized plan for each allergic student requires a team approach and cooperation among administrators, teachers and other staff members, parent/guardians, and the student as appropriate.

C. Classroom management procedures: Appropriate accommodations will be made in the classroom, including designation of the classroom as "allergen-free," as necessary. Procedures will address education of parent/guardians and students and planning for special events involving food. The protocol will allow for age-appropriate classroom rules. For preschool to grade six students, the classroom teacher, in collaboration with the nurse and with input from the parent/guardians of the food-allergic child, will develop a classroom-specific protocol regarding the management of food in the classroom. All school administrators will facilitate and support the accommodations when required for individual classrooms, team classrooms, specialist classrooms, and common areas.

D. Common use areas: The protocol will address foods used in common areas and cleaning of those areas, including use of those areas by groups other than students.

E. Kitchen and cafeteria procedures: The food service staff must make reasonable efforts to ensure that all food items offered to a student with life-threatening allergies are free of suspected allergens. Kitchen and dining room practices will be aimed at minimizing the cross contamination of foods. Dining room procedures must address proper oversight and cleaning of allergen-free tables.

F. Transportation procedures: School buses and vans must have a working means of two-way communication and a plan to check the communication system periodically. Bus and van drivers must have an emergency response plan. Parent/guardians of students with life-threatening allergies will be encouraged to inform bus and van drivers about student allergies. The eating and sharing of food will be prohibited on routine transportation routes unless medically indicated for a student.

G. Field trip procedures: Planning for field trips will include plans to implement a student's Allergy Action Plan, plans for carrying an Epi-pen as needed, and plans for emergency response such as identification of the nearest medical facility. The school nurse or a trained professional designated by the school nurse will attend field trips including a student with a life-threatening allergy in the event that a parent/guardian or their designee cannot attend.

H. Emergency response procedures: All staff members supervising students with life-threatening allergies must have a means of communication to call for assistance. The school nurse or another school staff member trained to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210 must be available in each school facility during the school day. The protocol must provide for the management of anaphylaxis in individuals with unknown allergies, including an authorization for administration of epinephrine by the school nurse signed by the school physician.

I. Procedures for handling epinephrine: Each school must maintain a current supply of epinephrine by auto-injector (Epi-pens) and must comply with all Department of Public Health regulations for administration, storage, and record keeping concerning epinephrine. The school nurse shall register with the Department of Public Health and shall train other school personnel to administer epinephrine in accordance with 105 CMR 210. All staff members will be informed of the location of the Epi-pens.

VISITORS

ENTERING THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Operators driving to the school for any purpose should be aware of posted parking rules and areas in order to allow buses to arrive and depart with safety. Operators are asked to drive slowly and exercise extreme caution. A speed of 10 mph is the established limit. Drivers are expected to follow the instructions of staff members who are on duty during arrival and dismissal times. Drivers are not to pass school buses with red lights flashing. All vehicle operators are expected to observe state restrictions on engine idling (5 minutes).

ACCESSING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

In the interest of student and employee safety, access to school buildings between the hours of 9:00AM and 3:00PM will be through an office "buzz-in" system. Parents and other visitors will be directed to an access point, upon which they will be admitted by office personnel after visual screening. Given the concerns of the modern world, we subscribe to this additional safety measure for your children's sake.

For safety purposes, any non-school personnel must sign in and report their presence to the principal's office upon arrival. If you have an important message or something to deliver to your child during the school day, please leave it with the school secretary. In this way, disruptions to children's learning are kept to a minimum.

Visits to schools by parents and by other citizens are encouraged. To ensure that parents have the opportunity to visit their child's instructional program, be non-disruptive for all students and provide for the safety of the children, the following conditions are to be observed:

1. The principal shall maintain a logbook in the office for visitors and volunteers to sign in, indicating name, purpose, date and time. All visitors shall sign in. Each visitor will be given a badge to wear while they are in the building. In the case of special days and blanket invitations parents should sign a guest list in the individual classroom.
2. A parent or citizen who wishes to visit classrooms while instruction is in progress should give the principal 24-hour notice of such intended visit, except on such days as blanket invitations have been extended to parents for special visitation days. If the planned visit is at an inappropriate time, the visit should be rescheduled to a time mutually agreeable to the visitor, the teacher, and the principal. In the event a person arrives at school for a visit without advance notice, whether he or she will be permitted a visit in the school or the classroom shall be at the discretion of the principal after consultation with the teacher.
3. A parent or citizen upon arrival for a classroom visit should sign a logbook for visitors in the office prior to going to the classroom. All visitors should wear badges available in the office. If the visitor may be unknown to the teacher, the principal or his representative should accompany the visitor to the classroom. Children should not accompany the adult visitor.
4. While visiting in the classroom a visitor should not in any way interrupt the class or the teacher. If the visitor desires to ask questions or confer with the teacher, he/she should contact the teacher at a later time for an appointment.
5. In order not to interfere with the education of the students or the school program, the principal and/or administrator of special education in the case of special education classrooms, shall have the right to restrict the number of visitors to a classroom. Visits by a parent to a classroom for reasons other than for special programs or in response to blanket invitations, generally shall be limited to forty five minutes in length and to one such visit per month.
6. When a visitor leaves the classroom, he or she shall return directly to the office before leaving the building and record the time of departure in the logbook.
7. The principal shall have authority to exclude from the school premises any person he or she has reason to believe is disrupting the educational program of the children, or the teachers.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Formal conferences will be arranged twice a year in connection with the issuance of report cards. However, parents are urged to maintain close contact with the school. Visitors to the school or classroom are welcome. Conferences in addition to the report card conferences can be initiated by parent or teacher whenever there is a concern about a student's school progress. Parents are urged to bring their concerns to the appropriate school personnel as soon as any concerns develop. Such concerns should be brought first to the attention of the staff member most directly involved.

LOST AND FOUND

Elementary children frequently lose many items – glasses, clothing, gloves, etc. Most of these are found and placed in the “Lost and Found” in your child’s school. When you notice that something has been lost, be sure that your child checks with “Lost and Found”. **We suggest that all clothing be marked with the child’s name.** Each year many articles are never claimed! These items are periodically donated to charity.

CARE OF MATERIALS

Children are responsible for the care and return of schoolbooks and materials used at home. It is recommended that children have a specific place at home for keeping their school materials and doing their homework. It is expected that lost or damaged books will be paid for so that replacement can be obtained.

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

Animals may not be brought into the classroom for any purpose. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health strongly discourages the practice of keeping animals in schools because of potential allergies, bites, and spread of disease.

PUPIL INSURANCE PROGRAM

Parents will receive instruction on how to access the pupil insurance program via the internet.

This coverage is offered to parents as a service. Given the benefits, the premium is the lowest available. Please study the coverage and the conditions described in the brochure when distributed. Note especially the exclusion that indicates covered medical expenses shall not include any charge or medical expenses to the extent that they are compensable under any hospital surgical, medical service plan or policy or motor vehicle policy.

However, deductible and charges by practitioners which might not be fully paid by health programs (private duty nurse charges, non-surgical medical treatment, and charges by practitioners in excess of allowances) are reimbursable under the student insurance plan. Therefore, the combination of the school insurance with a family plan would give very comprehensive coverage. If there were not other coverage, the school plan would provide an excellent opportunity for inexpensive protection.

Some parents may wish to extend this same insurance to cover all accidents during the year in any activity and at any time of the day or night. The cost for this extended twenty-four hour coverage will be identified in a September circular.

REGULATIONS

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

In conference with State Department of Education and the U.S. Office of Education and the U.S. Office of Education requirements, parents are notified annually of the provisions of Massachusetts Legislation, Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, and Federal Legislation, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Acts of 1973. These acts prohibit discrimination in public schools.

Chapter 622 states: "No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin."

Title IX reads as follows: "No person in the United States, shall be on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, or be so treated on the basis of sex under most education programs or activities receiving Federal assistance."

Section 504 States: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, shall, solely by reason for his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

These laws make it clear that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to members of both sexes, or minority groups, and to qualified handicapped individuals. No school may exclude a child from any course activity, service or resource available in that public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or handicap.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding Chapter 622, Title IX, or Section 504, and how they affect your children, please do not hesitate to contact your local principal or the Title IX, Chapter 504 Coordinator, Bernard Creeden, Office of the Superintendent, 887-0771. Copies of the State Law and the regulations can be obtained from the Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity, 350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts (617-388-3300). Copies of the Federal Law and the regulations can be obtained from the Office of Civil Rights, H.E.W., R.K.O. Building, Government Center, Bullfinch Plaza, Boston, MA 02114. They are also available for your inspection in the principal's office of your school.

STUDENT RECORD REGULATIONS

In conformance with regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, we provide the following information:

The student record regulations were developed to insure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of students records. A complete copy is available in each school office. The student record consists of transcripts and a temporary record. The transcripts include such data as address, birth dates, grade level completed, and grades received.

The transcript must be maintained for sixty years. The temporary record will be destroyed five years after the student transfers, withdraws from the system, or goes on to the Masconomet Regional School. This statement should be considered as your official notice that the temporary record for your child will be destroyed five years after the circumstances noted above.

Access to student records will be limited to authorized school personnel and to the parent involved. Access of the parent to the record will be made available within two days of request. Upon request, authorized school personnel will interpret the contents of the record. Access of third parties is limited to court orders, certain data for the Department of Education, for research purposes, or in connection with the core evaluation of certain special needs students.

The parent has the right to add information, comments, data or other relevant written materials to the student records. The parent also has the right of appeal from decisions regarding the provisions of the regulations. A decision of a principal may be appealed in writing to the Superintendent. A decision of the Superintendent may be appealed in writing to the Chairperson of the School Committee. The School Committee will conduct a hearing within four (4) weeks of notification.

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records and gives the parent, guardian, graduate, or student the right to: (1) inspect and review his/her child's educational records; (2) make copies of these records; (3) receive a list of individuals having access to those records; (4) ask for an explanation of any item in the records; (5) ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's rights; and (6) a hearing on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment. If there are questions please contact, Bernard F. Creeden, Title IX Coordinator for the Topsfield Public Schools at 978-887-0771.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT STUDENT INFORMATION PROCESS
Mass General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H

Section 34H section B of Massachusetts General Law requires the non-custodial parent to submit a written request to the principal annually. The request shall include:

1. A certified copy of the Probate Court's order or judgment relative to the custody of the child indicating that the requesting parent:
 - a. has not sought or been denied shared legal custody as defined in Section 31 of Chapter 208 based on a threat to the safety of the child or custodial parent, and
 - b. is entitled to unsupervised visitation with the child

OR

A certified copy of an order by a Probate and Family Court judge specifically ordering that this information be made available to the parent requesting it. The order must certify on its face that:

- a. it is being made after a review of the record, if any, of the judgment of custody and the criminal history of the petitioner
- b. provision of the requested information has not been determined to pose a safety risk to the custodial parent or to any child in the custodial parent's custody, and
- c. it is in the best interest of the child that such information be provided to the petitioner.

AND

2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent certifying that the judgment or order remains in effect and that no temporary or permanent protective order restricting access to the custodial parent or to any child in the custodial parent's custody is in effect.

In each subsequent year, the parent eligible for information pursuant to this section shall indicate in the annual request that he/she continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with his/her child and to be eligible for the receipt of the information pursuant to this section. The school shall immediately inform the custodial parent of the receipt of the request. The notification shall also inform the custodial parent that information requested pursuant to this section shall be provided to the requesting parent after 21 days unless the custodial parent provides to the principal of the school documentation of any court order which prohibits contact with the child or prohibits the distribution of the information referred to in this section or which is a temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody from abuse by the requesting parent.

STANDARDIZED TESTING POLICY

The Standardized Testing Program for the 2011/2012 academic year will consist of various components of the Massachusetts Comprehension Assessment System (MCAS) in grades 3, 4, 5, and 6. This new configuration more closely aligns our state frameworks to the federal standards found in the No Child Left Behind statute.

STANDARDIZED TESTING SCHEDULE (2011/2012)

MCAS Grade 3 – MCAS Reading Test – March 20th – April 2nd (2 sessions)
MCAS Math– May 7th- May 22nd (2 sessions)

MCAS Grade 4–6 ELA – Long Composition – March 20th
ELA – Long Composition (Make-up date) – March 29th
ELA – Reading- March 21st- April 2nd (2 sessions)
Mathematics – May 7th- May 22nd (2 sessions)

MCAS Grade 5 – Science/Technology/Engineering – May 8th – May 22nd (2 sessions)

MEPA K – Grade 5 – March 5 - 16

HOMEWORK POLICY

The development of good habits of home study is a requisite for the competent elementary school student. A consistent implementation of the homework policy will aid in the development of these good habits and will assist students, parents, and teachers toward a better understanding of and a more positive attitude toward the system's expectations.

The amounts set forth below are recommendations. Children work at different rates and can concentrate for varied amounts of time. It is to be expected that assignments will take some children longer than others to complete.

ELEMENTARY HOMEWORK GUIDELINES GRADES K - 6

1. Incomplete class assignments can be assigned to be completed at home.
2. Homework assignments may include make-up work due to illness.
3. Reinforcement or enrichment work may be given to meet the individual needs of a child.
4. Special projects or reports will be assigned during the school year to enhance research skills and develop individual responsibility.
5. Reading for pleasure may be a frequent assignment at any grade and should be assumed when other work is not given.
6. Depending upon the grade level and type of assignment, varying parent/guardian involvement may be necessary.
7. The purpose of the homework should be clearly understood by the student.

HOMWORK SUGGESTED TIME GUIDELINES

The following time guidelines are suggested for each grade, allowing for flexibility based on teacher judgment and on the needs of individual students:

Kindergarten:

Selected assignments may be given to encourage an individual student's growth, independence and responsibility. At home, read-aloud time of 15 minutes nightly is recommended.

Grades 1 and 2:

Homework assignments will be given to the student at the discretion of the teacher. At home read-aloud time of 15-20 minutes nightly is recommended. Nightly weekday study time is approximately 15-20 minutes.

Grades 3 - 6:

The practice of regular homework assignments should be initiated in Grade 3. Regular homework assignments should be assigned on a weekly basis according to the following guidelines:

Grade 3: - September - December - two to three assignments of approximately 20 minutes total
January - June - three to four assignments of approximately 20-30 minutes total
Daily reading for pleasure in addition to assigned homework is encouraged

Grade 4 - four assignments of approximately 40 minutes daily

Grade 5 - four assignments of approximately 50 minutes daily

Grade 6 - four assignments of approximately 60 minutes daily

Daily reading for pleasure for 30 minutes total in addition to assigned homework is encouraged.

Students in grades 2 - 6 should keep an assignment notebook.

Projects and long-term assignments may be incorporated as part of regular homework assignments and occasionally may require additional time.

Student's Role Related to Home Assignments

Students are expected to:

1. write down all assignments when given and know what is expected of them.
2. complete the homework assignment to their best ability.
3. return homework to school on the assigned due date.

Study Habits

Study habits are formed early. The establishment of regular "study time" on weekday nights can be beneficial. During these times, children could:

- read silently, read aloud, or be read to by someone else. (If time is not set aside for reading at home, many children do not find the time to read).
- work on a specific assignment for reinforcement or enrichment.
- play a learning game or tell about a school activity.
- prepare for a test or presentation.
- explore a topic of personal interest.

If a specific homework assignment is not given, children could always use their "study time" for a quiet learning activity such as reading.

PROGRESS REPORTS - GRADES K - 6

There is a general agreement among educators and parents that close cooperation and communication between home and school enhance the social and academic development of a child. The purpose of the progress report system, both through conferences and written reports, is to provide a basis for effective parent and teacher communication.

The parents of an elementary school child are the most significant influence in his/her life. Most of the early learning and development are a direct result of experiences in the home and community. Attitudes toward school and self-concept are also based, in part, on these early experiences. The premise of this progress report is based on the belief that the school must be in close contact with parents and welcomes their involvement in the school life of the child.

The Topsfield Progress Report System has undergone extensive re-evaluation over the past several years. Our goal has been to align each of our grade level reports with evolving state and federal standards. A goal at the primary level is to provide an appropriate vehicle of communication for our developmental programs and to provide a report in which students' personal and social growth as well as academic growth is adequately addressed. Curriculum objectives and expectations on this parental report, therefore, are devised to match our developmental approach.

The upper level report builds on the primary system and reflects the increasing rigor found in the grades 4 through 6 curricula. Student effort, personal development, general attitude, study habits, and conduct are also given relevance in the context of the report.

CURRICULUM

MUSIC

Music instruction is conducted by a certified music specialist. Instrumental lessons are offered to students in grades four through six. These lessons are paid for by the parents.

Band groups meet regularly under the direction of the instrumental music instructor. An annual fee is charged which includes instrumental music lessons and participation in the band. Opportunities for instrument rentals will also be available for an additional charge, paid directly to the rental company.

ART

The art program is conducted by a certified art specialist. The teacher introduces formal instruction in all media. Freedom of expression is encouraged after the child has learned the use of the materials.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Each child receives formal physical education instruction. These classes are under the direction of a specialist. The physical education program calls for physical fitness testing annually. This will be done in the spring. The offering of a wide variety of individual and team activities is aimed at the total development of each student. In addition to the physical education component, students also receive instruction in health and wellness from these educators.

Appropriate dress for physical activities includes sneakers and comfortable clothing. Children may be excused from physical education only by a letter from a doctor.

CURRICULUM GUIDES

Staff committees have developed comprehensive curriculum guides in all academic areas. These are revised on a regular cycle. Curriculum maps are available for review on the Topsfield Schools website at www.topsfieldschools.org.

Music, Art, Computer, and Library activities are planned to coordinate with specific curricula at all grade levels.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Frequent communication between parent and teacher is a vital component of the educational process. While general awareness of a school's instructional program is accomplished through vehicles such as parent seminars, conference appointments permit private, in-depth discussions of a student's needs and accomplishments. Parents are urged to take full advantage of these opportunities and to also schedule appointments with the teacher during other after school time whenever the needs arises.

The remaining afternoons are scheduled to accommodate staff development activities. On-going staff development is an important component of our educational system. Extensive recent educational research continues to identify successful instructional practices. New basics, such as critical thinking skills and communication skills, are finding their way into the curriculum as the result of changing needs and expectations of higher education, society, and the work place. A need has emerged for a balanced curriculum, relying somewhat less upon information dissemination and more upon enabling students to observe, perform, and communicate within a discipline. These and other factors necessitate providing adequate opportunity for teachers and administrators to participate in a variety of prescheduled activities to address the challenges of an evolving curriculum. Some staff development offerings involve a commitment throughout the school year from participating teachers. Others are of shorter duration dealing with very focused instructional areas. Specific initiatives are identified in both the Steward and Proctor School's School Improvement Plans.

Additional programs are currently being organized. Teachers may also, with administrative approval, utilize staff development time to develop instruction modules in an area in which they have a particular interest or need.

Professional development is not restricted to these afternoons. Continual encouragement is provided for staff to attend conferences and to visit other successful programs. The input and subsequent sharing those results is vital to assuring that the education provided students is current, appropriate, and effectively delivered.

PUPIL DISCIPLINE

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Topsfield Public School Code of Conduct serves to support our goals and our mission to provide a safe and educationally stimulating environment for all students. Students should come to school ready to learn with a clear understanding of what is acceptable behavior in a school setting. The common threads of our rules are respect for all people (students, teachers, staff, visitors, guests, etc.), safety (social, emotional, physical) and responsibility for one's actions. The goal of the discipline system is to foster children's understanding of how their behavior affects the entire school community so they will be able to responsibly direct their own behavior in positive ways both in and out of school.

Minor infractions are handled by classroom teachers. Often times a teacher will make a verbal reprimand, contact parents or assign a teacher detention. Teachers will refer more serious infractions or persistent infractions to an administrator. Most behavioral issues are handled by staff, which makes contact with parents when necessary. The principal becomes involved if the issue persists, or it is a serious problem. Parents may receive an "Office Visit Report" apprising them of the problem, or a phone call may be made. Students give input to the teacher or the principal about what consequence there will be for the behavior. If you have questions about issues reported by your children, please contact the teacher.

The principal assigns disciplinary consequences for infractions which occur outside the class setting, chronic problems in the classroom or misbehavior which is a serious breach of our code, especially student misbehavior involving safety issues or threats. Assigning office detention and/or suspension is the responsibility of the principal. Expulsion procedures are the responsibility of the principal, superintendent and/or School Committee in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.

Consequences are designed to encourage students' social development and sense of personal responsibility. They are educational rather than punitive. The following Code of Conduct should guide both students' and adults' interactions with others in the school community.

	Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Be Safe
School - Wide	Treat others the way you want to be treated	Put forth your best effort Cooperate with others Report problems to adults promptly	Honor personal space Use equipment, furniture and materials as intended Follow rules
Buses	Use school language Greet and thank the bus driver Use an indoor voice Keep hands and feet to yourself	Cooperate with adults Enter and exit bus promptly Keep bus clean Report problems to adult promptly Follow the driver's rules	Honor personal space Stay seated with back against the seat Keep aisle clear Keep belongings and hands inside the bus Give those ahead of you time to get on or off the bus
Arrival/ Dismissal	Use a quiet voice Follow adult directions Remove hats when in school	Be on time Take care of your belongings Stand quietly in line	Keep your backpack on until you reach your destination Always watch for traffic Keep hands and feet to self Walk quietly in line
Playground	Cooperate with others Keep distance from building Respectful silence when re-entering the building Follow adult direction	Cooperate with adults Report problems to adults promptly Follow game rules Return equipment Enter with a quiet voice	No unwelcomed physical contact Use equipment properly Remain visible to staff Get permission to leave playground Dress for the weather Leave nature where it belongs
Learning Spaces	Cooperate with others Show pride Use quiet voice Treat others the way you want to be treated Raise hand to share Be an active listener Honor personal space	Be prompt, prepared and ready to learn Give best effort	Honor personal space Use equipment, furniture and materials as they are intended Move with thought and care Keep room clean
Hallways	Be silent Keep your place in line Allow others to pass through the line Honor personal space	Take direct route Keep hallways clear Take care of your belongings	Keep hands and feet to self Walk facing forward, single file, on the right side of hall Use locker as instructed
Bathroom	Wait your turn patiently and quietly Use a quiet voice	Keep bathrooms clean Flush the toilet Turn off the faucet Keep your visit brief	Wash your hands Keep hands and feet to self Report problems to a teacher
Cafeteria	Use an indoor voice Use "Please", "Thank you", and "Excuse me" Listen carefully for directions Help others	Leave your area clean Make healthy choices Use your time to eat lunch Eat your own lunch and use your own money	Walk quietly and carefully Keep hands and feet to self Ask permission before leaving Follow the allergy procedures Report spills to adults Wash hands or use Purell upon entering
Assemblies and Field Trips	Look and listen to all presenters and participants Display good audience behavior Show pride Thank host	Cooperate with adults Listen and follow adult directions Follow rule of the place you are visiting Make good choices about where and whom to sit with	Stay with your assigned group

Details of the Code of Conduct

Students must respond appropriately and respectfully to all school staff, including substitute teachers, bus drivers, playground and instructional assistants, lunch monitors, custodians, crossing guards and parent volunteers.

Why? Using respectful, polite language is a sign of respect. Disrespect disrupts the learning of all students and may endanger your safety and the safety of others. Please refer to Massachusetts General Law, Article 37H, p. 19.

What happens? You may receive disciplinary action from the teacher and the principal.

All physical and verbal attacks are forbidden, including fighting (real or play-acting), all forms of bullying, harassment, swearing and obscenities. (Refer to M.G.L)

Why? Harassment can be verbal or physical. Every student must be safe from intimidation, bullying or harm.

What happens? You will be sent to the principal. Parents will be notified. When appropriate, police may be called and you may be suspended or expelled from school.

You must come to school dressed in a neat and school appropriate manner.

Why? Learning to dress appropriately is an essential life skill.

What happens? An appropriate article of clothing will be provided for your use that day or your parents can bring a change of clothes.

You are expected to remove your hat when entering the school building.

Why? Hats are distracting to an educational environment.

What happens? You will be asked to put your hat away. Repeat offenders will have their hats taken away.

You are expected to behave in an orderly, respectful manner while riding on the school bus.

Why? The safety of all is of primary importance.

What happens? Riding the school bus is a privilege. Any student who damages any part of the bus or interferes with the driver's ability to operate the bus safely or harasses another student on the bus will have the privilege suspended and will make restitution for the damage.

You are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior in the cafeteria. All school rules and expectations remain in effect during lunch.

Why? The safety of all is of primary importance

What happens? You will be warned verbally, and if the behavior continues, you may be assigned a separate seat or alternate setting for a period of time.

You are expected to follow playground rules.

Why? Rules prevent conflict and to keep all children safe.

What happens? You will sit out part of recess or miss recess. Principal and parents will be notified if your behavior continues. We will maintain a zero tolerance policy toward hurting. If you hurt another, you will be sent to the principal.

You may not take anything that belongs to someone else.

Why? Stealing is illegal. Trusting one another and respecting each other's property is important.

What happens? You may be required to have your parents come to school for a conference with your teacher and/or principal. The stolen item must be returned or replaced.

You may not damage school property or the property of any other person. You may not write on walls, desks, books, lockers, bathroom stalls, etc.

Why? School property belongs to all of us and should last for a long time. You do not have the right to harm anything that belongs to another person.

What happens? You will repair or pay for the damage. Your parents will be notified. When appropriate, police may be called and you may be suspended or expelled from school.

Mp3 player, IPOD, radios and other electronic devices are not allowed in school.

Why? They interfere with learning. The school can not be responsible for lost or stolen belongings.

What happens? The first time, you will be given a verbal warning and be asked to put the item away. The second time, you will be given a written warning and the item will be taken away and you may pick it up at the end of the school day. If you continue to bring such items to school, the item will be held in the office and your parent(s) or guardian(s) will have to pick up the item.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Why? Doing your own work and being honest are essential life skills.

What happens? Your work will not be accepted by your teacher.

You may not leave the school grounds during the day without permission.

Why? The school is responsible for taking care of you during the school day. It is important for us to know where you are during school hours.

What happens? You and your parents will be required to meet with the principal.

You may not ride bikes, skateboards, roller blades, scooters or the like on school property.

Why? It is dangerous to other students.

What happens? The first time, you will be given a verbal warning and be asked to walk your bike, skateboard, etc. The second time, you will be given a written warning and be asked to walk your bike, skateboard, etc. If you continue to ride your bike, skateboard, etc on school property, your privilege to ride such things will be suspended.

All Massachusetts public schools are substance-free facilities by law. Examples include: tobacco products, drugs, and alcohol. In additions, you may not bring dangerous items including but not limited to knives, hand guns, slingshots, matches, fireworks, etc.

Why? It is dangerous and against the law.

What happens? The object(s) will be taken away and you will be sent to the principal. Your parents and the appropriate authorities will be notified. You may be suspended or expelled.

DEFINITIONS OF INFRACTIONS

INSUBORDINATION OR DEFIANCE: "refusal to follow reasonable directions by teacher and/or staff member; being uncooperative to the point of creating a disruptive environment that will not be tolerated".

VANDALISM: "the intentional, willful, and malicious or wanton destruction of private or public property in which a person paints, marks, scratches, etches, or otherwise defaces, removes or destroys property."

FIGHTING: "harming and/or attempting to inflict physical injury on a person".

THREAT OF PERSONAL INJURY OR HARASSMENT: "taunting, teasing, tormenting and/or agitating of an individual to the point of interfering with his/her rights. These are threats of verbal and/or physical abuse".

INFRINGEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS: "complaints of civil rights violations may take the form of references or gestures related to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, and/or sexual orientation".

PROFANE, DEROGATORY, OBSCENE LANGUAGE & GESTURES.

POSSESSION OR SELLING OF FIRECRACKERS, STINK BOMBS, PARTY SNAPPERS OR OTHER SUCH DEVICES.

PULLING FIRE ALARM.

HARASSMENT

The Topsfield Public Schools are committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment. Harassment by administrators, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Topsfield Public Schools require all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect for their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Topsfield Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the district includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

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

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter;
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student;
- Communications such as jokes, comments, innuendoes, notes, text messages, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct which offends or shows disrespect to others;
- Posting of any of the above anywhere on the Internet.

By law, what constitutes harassment is determined from the perspective of a reasonable person with the characteristic on which the harassment is based. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may reasonably be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, individuals should consider how their words and actions might reasonably be viewed by other individuals. It is also important for individuals to make it clear to others when a particular behavior or communication is unwelcome, intimidating, hostile or offensive.

Sexual Harassment: While all types of harassment are prohibited, sexual harassment requires particular attention. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Acceptance of or submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or education.
2. The individual's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting an employee or as a basis for educational, disciplinary, or other decisions affecting a student.
3. Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties, education or participation in extra-curricular activities.

INVESTIGATION

Any individual, who believes he/she has been harassed or who has witnessed or learned about the harassment of another person in the school environment, should inform the appropriate building Principal as soon as possible. If the individual does not wish to discuss the issue with him/her, or if he/she does not address the problem in an effective manner, the individual should inform the Superintendent of Schools/Title IX Coordinator who can be reached at 28 Middleton Road, Boxford, (978) 887-0771 ext.224.

The Topsfield Elementary Schools will promptly investigate every complaint of harassment. If it determines that harassment has occurred, it will take appropriate action to end the harassment and to ensure that it is not repeated. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law and under applicable collective bargaining agreements.

In certain cases, the harassment of a student may constitute child abuse under state law. The Topsfield Elementary Schools will comply with all legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and will report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate authorities.

RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Topsfield Elementary Schools.

Retaliation against a student because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Persons who engage in harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination or other sanctions as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

CLOSURE OF A COMPLAINT

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant in writing of the results and file a report with the Coordinator for Title IX/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Chapter 622. (Superintendent of Schools).

The Topsfield Elementary Schools urges all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of harassment to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue. The state agency responsible for enforcing laws prohibiting harassment is the Office of Civil Rights which is located at the J. W. McCormick Building, Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109. The agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting harassment in the employment context is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which is located at the John F. Kennedy Building, Room 275, Government Center, Boston, MA 02203, (617) 565-3200. The agency responsible for enforcing the federal law prohibiting harassment on the basis of sex is the Office for Civil Rights within the United States Department of Education, which is located at J. W. McCormick Building, Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02109.

DEFINITIONS OF CONSEQUENCES

Office Detention: Principals have the discretion to allocate a thirty minute detention (3:15-3:45) when deemed necessary.

Internal Suspension: Internal suspension involves the exclusion of the student from regularly scheduled classes and activities during the school day and places the student in supervised areas within the school setting.

External Suspension: External suspension involves the exclusion of the student from the school setting for a period of up to ten (10) days.

Long Term Suspension: Long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school setting for a period in excess of ten (10) days.

Expulsion: Permanent removal from the school population.

BULLIES: HOW TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The Topsfield Elementary Schools has prepared a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in response to the new Massachusetts Law. The adopted plan is posted for viewing on the Tri-Town School Union Website. www.tritownschoollunion.com

The Topsfield Public Schools will implement the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* during the 2011-2012 school year. The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* is a schoolwide program designed to prevent or reduce bullying throughout the school setting. The multi-component approach involves individuals, classrooms, entire schools, as well as parents and communities, to successfully address bullying in schools.

Outcomes of the Program

Statistics show how successful implementation of the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* can reduce school bullying. Outcomes have included:

- Fifty percent or more reductions in student reports of being bullied and bullying others. Peer and teacher ratings of bullying problems have yielded similar results.
- Significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as school bullying, vandalism, school violence, fighting, theft, and truancy.
- Significant improvements in the classroom social climate as reflected in students' reports of improved order and discipline, more positive social relationships, and more positive attitudes toward schoolwork and school.
- Greater support for students who are bullied, and stronger, more effective interventions for students who bully.

Parents, please share the following information with your children. Being a bully is not permitted in our schools. Sometimes bullies say mean things by teasing, calling kids or their friends and family nasty names. Sometimes bullies do mean things like hitting, pushing, making rude gestures or touching kids in a way that they don't want.

If you think someone is being a bully to you or to one of your friends, tell them to stop and then walk away. If the bully won't stop, tell one of the adults in school who will try to solve the problem. Many concerns can be quickly resolved by an adult or the Principal. Sometimes, concerns are more serious and there may be some discipline for the bully and parents may be called. The bully is not allowed, however, to try to get back at you for reporting your concerns to an adult. If that happens, tell an adult again right away. It is important to us that our elementary schools are safe and caring places for all our students and that everyone acts in a courteous and respectful way towards each other.

Anti bullying policies and practices are regularly reviewed. Currently, the "Second Step" program is practiced in grades 2 and 3 at Steward School and Steps to Respect has been adopted for grades 4, 5 and 6 at Proctor School. Both research based programs are authored by the Committee for Children and have been proven to productively support students in the areas of social behavior and tolerance.

Parents may also want to consult a free resource called the Education.com Special Edition on bullying at School and Online. This resource helps parents take an active role in addressing bullying at school and online. It includes articles, video clips, online workshops community forums and quick-fact lists, all available free of charge at <http://www.education.com/special-edition/bullying/>. A highlight of the content is a list of ten actions parents can take to help reduce bullying.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents' cooperation with the school staff in the development of good habits on the part of our students when boarding, riding, and leaving buses will help to maintain the high level of bus service in Topsfield. Pupils whose conduct on the buses or at the bus stops jeopardizes the welfare and safety of others may be deprived of the privilege of transportation by school bus. Parents should contact their respective school principal to address issues and concerns regarding student or driver behavior.

Pupils are expected to be at their bus stop a few minutes before the scheduled arrival of the bus.

Pupils generally will be transported only to and from school on the assigned bus. Parents should not plan on using the school bus to transport children to birthday parties, scout meetings, or other such activities.

BUS CONDUCT BUS RIDER CONTRACT

Remember, it is a privilege to ride the school bus! If you are not well behaved and courteous and if you endanger the health and safety of other students, this privilege will be taken away from you. The bus driver shall be considered to have the same authority as a teacher in the classroom.

The bus is an extension of the classroom and will be treated as such in terms of expectation of appropriate student choices. As with all situations involving concerning behaviors, principals will communicate to all parties that an issue has been dealt with and resolved.

A bus driver will file an incident report for any incident he/she witnesses. Should an incident occur on your child's bus, and the bus driver is unaware of the incident, or has been made aware of but did not witness the incident, please call the principal of your child's school to report it.

Regulations

1. Students shall always cooperate with the Bus Driver for the safety of all concerned.
2. Animals shall not be transported on the bus.
3. Hazardous materials shall not be transported and/or permitted on the bus. Items include matches, lighters, knives, firearms, fireworks, or any flammable liquids.
4. Students shall be picked up and unloaded only at regularly scheduled bus stops.
5. Students shall observe and respect the rights and safety of others.

Rules - Level 1

Students:

1. Shall arrive at the bus stop five (5) minutes before the scheduled pickup time.
2. Shall remain well back from the roadway while waiting for the bus.
3. Shall enter the bus in an orderly fashion and proceed directly to a seat. The student will remain seated until the destination is reached. The student shall not change seats at another stop unless the driver gives prior approval.

Disciplinary Action - Level 1

1. The bus driver will give a recorded oral warning to the student.

Rules – Level 2

Students:

1. Shall not throw things in the bus or out the windows while on the bus.
2. Shall keep their hands, arms, and heads inside the bus.
3. Shall correct any offense in level 1.
4. Shall not eat or drink on the bus.
5. Shall not use profane language or inappropriate gestures.
6. Shall not litter on the bus.

Disciplinary Action - Level 2

1. The driver will submit a written description of the violation to the principal of the student's school.
2. Notification will be provided by the school to the parents of the offending student.
3. The student shall receive an oral reprimand.

Rules - Level 3

Students:

1. Shall not touch safety equipment on the bus, including the emergency doors and windows.
2. Shall not damage or deface bus property.
3. Shall not use tobacco products on the bus.
4. Shall not fight or strike another person while on the bus, including the bus driver.
5. Shall correct inappropriate behavior identified from prior levels.
6. Shall not carry matches, lighters, flammable liquids, or fireworks on the bus.

Disciplinary Action - Level 3

1. Parents will be notified of the student's revoked riding privileges for five (5) school days. Transportation shall be the responsibility of the offending student's family.
2. Repeat offenders of any Level 3 infractions will receive a double sentence (ten days) for their second violation. On their third repetition the student will be referred to Level 4.

Rules - Level 4

Students:

1. Shall not use any illegal substance while on the bus. (Alcohol or drugs)
2. Shall correct inappropriate behavior identified from prior levels.
3. Shall not carry firearms or knives on the bus.
4. Shall not sexually harass any other student on the bus.

Disciplinary Action - Level 4

1. Parents shall be notified that the student's riding privileges will be suspended for the remainder of the current school quarter and the following quarter (this includes the last quarter of the year carrying over to the first quarter of the new school year).
2. Repeat offenders of Level 4 offenses will have their riding privileges permanently terminated.

BUS CONDUCT REPORT		STUDENT'S NAME _____	CLASS/GRADE _____
DATE OF INCIDENT _____		<input type="checkbox"/> 1ST NOTICE <input type="checkbox"/> 2ND NOTICE <input type="checkbox"/> 3RD NOTICE	
BUS NO. _____	TRIP NO. _____	DRIVER'S NAME _____	
NOTICE TO PARENTS			
1. The purpose of this report is to inform you of a disciplinary incident involving the student on the school bus. 2. You are urged to both appreciate the action taken by the driver and to cooperate with the corrective action initiated today.			
DRIVER'S REPORT:			
<input type="checkbox"/> VIOLATION OF SAFETY PROCEDURES	<input type="checkbox"/> EXCESSIVE MISCHIEF	<input type="checkbox"/> EATING DRINKING-LITTERING	
<input type="checkbox"/> DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY	<input type="checkbox"/> WHITING	<input type="checkbox"/> RUDE-DISOURTEOUS ANNOYING	
<input type="checkbox"/> FIGHTING-PUSHING-TRIPPING	<input type="checkbox"/> SMOKING	<input type="checkbox"/> UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE	
_____ _____ _____			
PRELIMINARY ACTION:		PRESENT ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	
<input type="checkbox"/> CHECKED STUDENT'S FOLDER	<input type="checkbox"/> HELD CONFERENCE WITH STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT REGRETFUL, COOPERATIVE	<input type="checkbox"/> PLACED ON PROBATION
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSULTED COUNSELOR	<input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONED PARENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RECURRENCES WILL BE REPORTED	<input type="checkbox"/> SUSPENDED
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> DENIED BUS PRIVILEGE UNTIL _____	<input type="checkbox"/> REFERRED TO: _____
_____ _____ _____		_____ _____ _____	
Driver's Signature: _____		Administrator's Signature: _____	
		Date: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> If a check is entered in this box, Parent please sign and return:			
PARENTS' COPY - WHITE		OFFICE COPY - BLUE	
		TRANSPORTATION COPY - PINK	
		DRIVER'S COPY - YELLOW	

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND STUDENT RIGHTS

The following policies speak to more serious infractions as identified in the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. This statute presents the role of the school principal in discipline policy, identifies serious behavioral concerns in a school setting and defines the procedural rights of students.

1. Teachers shall maintain discipline by proper methods considered appropriate to a reasonable adult and consult with the principal in regard to special cases. Corporal punishment is prohibited by statute. Suspension of a pupil for sufficient disciplinary infractions may be imposed by the principal. The principal shall have the authority to suspend from school for no more than five (5) days any student whose conduct is such as to be detrimental to the good order of the school, or whose parents willfully neglect or refuse to cooperate with the principal or the teachers in carrying out the regulations of the school. Such suspension is to be immediately reported in writing to the Superintendent and parents or guardian of the pupil.

2. Before a student is suspended, except in the situation described below in paragraph 7, he/she shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him/her, and if he/she denies them, an explanation of the evidence the principal has and an opportunity to present his/her side of the story.

3. There need be no delay between the time notice is given and the time of the hearing. The principal may informally discuss the alleged misconduct with the student shortly after it has occurred. The student must be first told of what he/she is accused of doing and what the basis of the accusation is in order that he/she may be able to explain his/her versions of the facts at the discussion. This requirement of effective notice (oral or written) and informal hearing permitting the student to give his/her version of the events will provide a meaningful hedge

against erroneous action. It will alert the principal to the existence of disputes about facts and arguments about cause and effect. The principal may then determine himself/herself to summon the accuser, permit cross-examination and allow the student to present his/her own witness. In more difficult cases, the principal may even permit counsel.

4. In connection with short suspensions (five day maximum suspension or less) the student shall not have the right at hearings to secure counsel, confront and cross examine witnesses supporting the charge, or to call his own witnesses to verify his version of the incident.

5. The parents shall be given a written statement immediately following any hearing which results in suspension.

6. Any suspensions shall be reported immediately in writing to the superintendent.

7. In the special case where the presence of a student at school presents a continuing danger to person or property, or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process, he/she may be immediately removed from school. The necessary notice and rudimentary hearing shall follow his removal from school as soon as possible. The guidelines set forth in the above paragraphs (except as to time of notice and hearing) are equally applicable to proposed suspensions under this paragraph 7.

8. No student shall be suspended for more than five days or permanently excluded from school except by order of the School Committee following due notice and the opportunity for a hearing.

The following section conforms to Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993, the Educational Reform Act. The provisions contained in this policy reflect the wording and intent of the statute.

1a. Any student who is found on school premises or school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to: marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from school or school district by the Principal.

1b. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a firearm will incur a minimum one-year expulsion, subject to modification by the Superintendent/Principal on a case by case basis (per the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act, Section 14601).

1c. Any student who assaults a Principal, Assistant Principal, teacher, aide, tutor, monitor or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from school or school district by the Principal.

2. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (1a, 1b, or 1c) above shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing, provided, however, the student may have representation along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal. The student's parent or guardian may be present at the hearing.

After said hearing, a Principal may, at his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either of paragraphs (1a, 1b, or 1c) above. The Principal will advise the student and parent or guardian of his/her decision regarding expulsion or suspension within one school day following the hearing.

3. Following an expulsion of a student under the provisions of this policy, the Principal will file a written report with the Superintendent which provides a full description of the reasons for the expulsion including dates of the incident, date of the hearing and date of the expulsion.

4. Any student who has been expelled from the school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student will have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the 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 provision of this policy.

5. 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 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 to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISCIPLINE POLICY

The IEP Team for every special education student determines whether a student's disabling condition(s) interferes with his/her ability to meet the regular discipline code and if not, what modification of the code is required. If a modified discipline code is necessary, it is described in the Individual Education Program (IEP).

In the event that a special education student is suspended for more than ten (10) days in a school year, the IEP Team reconvenes to examine the IEP implementation and placement. Suspension is defined as any action which results in the removal of a student from the program prescribed in his/her IEP. This term includes "in-school suspension" as well as any exclusion from transportation services, which prohibits the student's participation in his/her prescribed program.

The suspension policy is:

If the TEAM determines that the student's misconduct is related to a disability, an inappropriate Special Education Placement, or an IEP not fully implemented; the student is not suspended and the Plan is modified with the help of parents or special education personnel and school officials. Following parental approval, the student's amended or new Individual Education Program is implemented.

If the TEAM concludes that the student's misconduct is not a result of a disability or the result of an inappropriate special education placement and that the original IEP was fully implemented:

- a. An amendment to the IEP is developed and implemented to assure the student's access to special education services during the suspension
- b. The original IEP is modified to meet long-term plans (including discipline code expectations) designed to assure the student's continued participation in an educational program.

If suspension results in absence for more than ten (10) days in the school year, immediate written notification of the suspension and a request for approval of an alternative plan must be submitted to the Division of Special Education with a copy sent to the student's parents. Parents have the right to accept or reject this component of the IEP.

INTERNET USE POLICY

PURPOSE

The Topsfield School System is pleased to offer its students access to the school's computer network, including access to the Internet. Access to the school's network will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards. Students will also be exposed to advertisements of various kinds.

The Topsfield Schools believe that there is educational value in the Internet, and recognize the potential support to our curriculum. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through discussion forums and electronic mail. Many educationally valuable files may be downloaded from the Internet. Because of its enormous size and resources, the Internet's educational potential is boundless. Because of its broad reach, however, the Internet also contains the potential for misuse. These guidelines are intended to help ensure that students use this valuable resource in a safe and appropriate manner.

Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or offensive. While our goal is to provide Internet access to promote educationally supportive materials and sites, students will have access to other information as well. The benefits of student access to the Internet far exceed any disadvantages. Topsfield Schools will make every effort to ensure that students use the Internet properly. Students using the Internet are expected to conduct themselves responsibly. Furthermore, these technologies are expensive to purchase, to install and to maintain. As property of the Topsfield Schools all technology must be handled carefully as to benefit all users.

INTERNET ACCESS IS A PRIVILEGE

For all users, Internet access through the Topsfield Public Schools is a privilege, not a right. A student's access may be cancelled by school officials if this privilege is misused. Revocation of computer access privileges may be necessary. Inappropriate conduct as applied to Internet access will be subject to disciplinary action, as outlined in the Topsfield Schools Student Handbook.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all uses of the Internet are consistent with the educational goals of the Topsfield Schools.

UNACCEPTABLE USES

All Internet users will be expected to understand that the following uses of the Topsfield Schools Internet access are unacceptable:

- Using the Internet for illegal purposes or in support of illegal purposes.
- Posting or divulging any private or personal information about yourself or another person (this includes the student's location).
- Attempting to log on through another person's e-mail account or to access another person's files.
- Accessing or transmitting obscene or pornographic material. This includes the use of obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- Posting chain-letters or engaging in sending annoying messages to large numbers of people. (Spamming)
- Using the school network to retrieve, transmit or make available to others a message that is inconsistent with the educational purposes of the Internet.
- Engaging in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.

- Harassing another person by sending unwanted e-mails.
- Posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- Using the network in a fashion inconsistent with the directions from teachers and other staff and generally accepted network etiquette.
- Plagiarism. Plagiarism means the taking of material created by others and presenting it as if it were one's own.
- Infringing copyrights. Copyright infringement occurs when a person inappropriately reproduces or transmits material that is protected by copyright. For example, most software is protected by copyright and may not be copied without permission of the copyright owner.
- Any use for political or commercial purposes that are not directly related to the educational purposes or Topsfield Public Schools.
- Any use that disrupts the educational goals of Topsfield Schools.
- Entering a social chat room for any reason.
- Any downloading of large or harmful files.
- Sharing a personal password or account with anyone.
- Downloading freeware, shareware or other software which affects the system software of a computer.
- Disrupting the hard drive set-up of a computer, including changing desktop or hard drive folder names, colors or contents.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Access of material that has been deemed inappropriate for educational use by Topsfield Schools' faculty or staff is strictly prohibited. If users encounter such material by accident, they should quit the application immediately. Students should report the incident directly to a teacher. Students will not have the opportunity to simply "surf" the Internet or browse among World Wide Web pages. Students will use the Internet for a specific educational purpose during lab time or for a class assignment.

REPRODUCTION OF STUDENT IMAGES AND EVENTS ON THE INTERNET

As the internet expands into areas of social networking, it has become increasingly difficult for schools to continue their vigilance as overseers of student safety. Facebook and My Space to name two popular sites can now reproduce images and events within minutes of their occurrences. They are becoming increasingly popular with both students and adults as avenues of expression and communication. There are numerous challenges for our school environment as it applies to social networking sites. The posting of student images as a means to capture a school function (i.e. school plays, presentations, field trips, etc.) can be unsettling to a number of our families for any number of reasons. Some of those reasons can be directly related to student safety.

Rather than restrict the use of technology at school events, we would ask that the use of video and photographic equipment be applied with a sensitivity to the needs of all of our students and their families. As such, we would ask that parents and friends refrain from posting student events and activities on social networking sites. With everyone's cooperation we can maintain the ability to capture the valued memories of our students without compromising the school district's ability to maintain their safety.

ACCESS TO STUDENT'S FILES

All student files, including e-mail files and other Internet files and usage may be monitored by faculty for educational and administrative purposes, including the need to ensure that these Guidelines are being followed. Also, faculty may be asked to provide access to student files and records to law enforcement authorities. Students should not assume the uses of Topsfield Schools Internet access will be private.

PERSONAL SAFETY

The Internet is accessible to the public. Unfortunately, this includes people who want to make contact with students for inappropriate purposes. Topsfield Schools cannot screen the Internet for such inappropriate uses. Students must be cautious and prudent about supplying personal information and arranging any kind of meetings. Students should promptly inform their teacher or school administrator of any on-line communication that the student feels is threatening, harassing or otherwise inappropriate.

SYSTEM SECURITY AD RESOURCE LIMITS

Students are expected to follow procedures and guidelines that are issued in order to ensure the security of the Topsfield School's computer system and to respect its resource limits. These include any downloading guidelines and virus protection procedures that may be issued.

No student should bring a disk from home and utilize it in a school computer without permission from the Technology staff.

Software installation of any kind, with the exception of that done by the Technology Staff, on school computers will be strictly prohibited.

Students will not be allowed to use the district's computer resources to create their own web page unless it is in conjunction with a class assignment.

CHANGES IN POLICY

Topsfield Schools reserves the right to change and amend this policy at any time

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

The Topsfield Public Schools disclaim all liability for the content of material that a student may access on the Internet, for any damages suffered in the course of or as a result of the student's Internet use, and for any other consequences for a student's Internet use.

** Pieces of this policy were gleaned, with permission, from the Lexington Public Schools' Internet Use Policy.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOURTH EDITION RE: COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE INVOLVING SCHOOLS, POLICE & DISTRICT ATTORNEY

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Topsfield Public Schools, the Topsfield Police Department, and the Essex County District Attorney's Office agree to coordinate their response to violent, delinquent, or criminal acts by students and to alcohol and other drug use, which occur on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events. To ensure a safe educational environment, this collaborative effort between school administration and law enforcement supports "zero tolerance" for drugs, alcohol, weapons and violence. Non-students involved in such acts on school premises or at a school event are to be reported as students are.

It continues to remain the sole prerogative of school officials to impose discipline for infractions of school rules and

policies. In cases where the school has reported an incident to the police, as described below, the school agrees to notify the police department before suspending a student under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H1/2.

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

II. OBJECTIVES

A. To develop and implement a process for school officials and local police to coordinate a response to criminal/delinquent behavior and to refer appropriate first time or early offenders, ages 7 - 17, to the Essex County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program. The Juvenile Diversion Program is an alternative to the county system. Participating youth are required to attend counseling/education programs, perform community service and in some cases pay restitution. Youth who successfully complete the Juvenile Diversion Program will have no court record.

B. To work with a Substance Abuse Advisory Committee, which should include representatives for the school-age population, local police, clergy, parents, teachers, school administrators, community agency representatives and the District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Coordinator, and which should make recommendations to the appropriate school officials and parent groups concerning more effective ways to promote an awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol use and abuse and sound preventative measures.

III. PROCEDURES

While acknowledging that school officials are not agents of the police or Commonwealth and the Commonwealth and police are not agents of the school, the school and police should develop policies and protocols for coordinated efforts.

A. The Superintendent of Schools and the school Principal are responsible for reporting acts. The Police Chief shall designate an officer (or officers) to coordinate and potentially investigate all reported criminal acts.

A mandatory reportable act shall include:

- 1) Any serious incident of assaultive behavior, destruction of property, or theft;
- 2) Violation of a restraining order;
- 3) Possession of a dangerous weapon;
- 4) Finding any student who is in actual or constructive possession of what is reasonably believed to be a controlled substance as defined by state law, except that possession of drugs pursuant to a valid prescription is a discretionary reportable act; and
- 5) Having a reasonable belief that any student has sold or offered to sell or otherwise distributed a drug which is believed to be a controlled substance under the law.

A discretionary reportable act shall include:

- 1) Any student's violation of a state criminal statute which warrants reporting but is not as serious as a mandatory reportable act; and

2) Finding any student, regardless of age, who is reasonably believed to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

B. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has committed a mandatory reportable act or a discretionary reportable act, as defined above, shall take (or cause to be taken) the student to the Principal or Superintendent. The Principal/Superintendent shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence. The Superintendent shall establish guidelines for teachers and employees which define those violations of state criminal law which warrant reporting as a discretionary reportable act.

C. The Principal/Superintendent shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the nature of the offense and inform them that certain offenses must be reported to the police. The Principal/Superintendent may offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee's report. The Principal/Superintendent shall in the case of a mandatory reportable act, and may in the case of a discretionary reportable act, notify the police of the incident and the existence of any physical evidence. All contraband (drug, alcohol, firearms, and dangerous weapons) shall be immediately surrendered to the appropriate police department.

In addition, the Principal/Superintendent will comply with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37L requiring that an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time be reported in writing to the Chief of Police. This report must be filed in any case involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled.

D. School personnel are permitted to search a student's clothing, personal possessions, or locker at the direction of the Principal/Superintendent if there is a reasonable basis for believing that the student is concealing material the possession of which is prohibited by federal, state, or local law, or the provisions of the School Discipline Code. However, if the Principal/Superintendent believes, prior to the search, that the student's act should be reported to the police, they should inform the police that the school intends to conduct the search.

The Principal/Superintendent shall inform students in writing at the beginning of each school year of this practice. The Principal/Superintendent should keep a record of such searches detailing time, place, reasons and witnesses.

E. Upon notification from the Principal/Superintendent, police shall respond in cases of mandatory reportable acts and may respond in other cases.

F. Juvenile offenders who meet the eligibility criteria for the Essex County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program may be admitted to that program in lieu of prosecution. The Juvenile Diversion/Juvenile Justice Coordinator together with police and the Assistant District Attorney will decide which candidates should be offered the Juvenile Diversion Program. Cases that are not appropriate for Juvenile Diversion will be prosecuted through the Juvenile Justice System.

G. For those student offenders who have reached their seventeenth birthday, the police and the assistant district attorney will decide which adult cases to prosecute in the criminal court.

JUVENILE DIVERSION PROGRAM

District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett Juvenile Diversion Program is an innovative model which works with certain first time juvenile offenders and their families by offering an alternative to the Juvenile Court System. The Juvenile Diversion Program is based on the widely accepted belief that not all cases are best handled through a formal delinquency complaint and court hearing. The Juvenile Diversion Program provides first-time, nonviolent offenders the opportunity to receive services in lieu of going through the traditional court process.

Cases are referred to the Juvenile Diversion Program before a delinquency complaint issues from the court. An Assistant District Attorney and a Juvenile Justice Coordinator review each case in accord with written standards to determine which cases are appropriate for diversion. If the juvenile is appropriate for the program, the Juvenile Justice Coordinator will meet with the juvenile and his/her parents and execute a signed agreement for their participation in the program. If the juvenile chooses not to participate in the program, the case will be referred for issuance of a complaint and the usual court process will begin.

Once accepted into the program, the juvenile participates in appropriate counseling/education and community service projects. In cases involving property damage, the juvenile may also be made responsible for restitution. If the youth successfully completes the program, the District Attorney will not prosecute the case, and the juvenile will not have a court record. If the juvenile does not successfully complete the program or voluntarily withdraws from the program, the case will go forward in court.

The Juvenile Diversion Program has successfully served Essex County since 1981. We have learned that because of the program, police are more willing to refer juveniles who traditionally would have been released without any remedial attention, or, if brought to court, would have had their cases disposed without supervision or counseling. An effective program can assist the family in resolving issues which are at the core of the juvenile's delinquent behavior. A diversion program benefits society by dealing early and intensively with juvenile delinquent behavior and reconnecting the juvenile to his/her community.