

ROCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

The Rockland Elementary Schools is pleased to present the 2010-2011 Student/Parent Handbook to inform students and parents of the important policies, programs and procedures that are in effect in our school system.

Thank you for reviewing this Handbook and keeping it for future reference. Please contact the school for additional information or explanation of any material in this Handbook.

Best wishes for a successful 2010-2011 school year.

Sincerely,

Rockland Elementary Schools

Mission Statement

***The mission of the Rockland
Public Schools is to ensure that all
students develop the necessary
skills to think critically,
communicate effectively, and act
responsibly in order to attain
their highest potential.***

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Memorial Park School

- Begins for grades 1-5 at **7:45 a.m.**
- Students must **NOT** arrive at school earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- General adult supervision begins at 7:30 a.m.
- Dismissal time is **2:00 p.m.**
- Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m.

Jefferson School

- Begins for grades 1-5 at **7:45 a.m.**
- Students must **NOT** arrive at school earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- General adult supervision begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m.
- Dismissal time is **2:00 p.m.**
- Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m.
- **Kindergarten** begins as follows:
 - A.M. classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 11:30 a.m.
 - P.M. classes begin at 12:30 p.m. and end at 3:00 p.m.

Students will be considered late if they are not in their classrooms by **7:45 a.m.**
There is no afternoon supervision. Parents must pick up their children at **2:00 p.m.**

Esten School

- Begins for grades 1-5 at **7:45 a.m.**
- Students must **NOT** arrive at school earlier than 7:30 a.m.
- General adult supervision begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 2:00 p.m.
- Esten School students enter their classrooms at **7:40 a.m.**
- Dismissal time is **2:00 p.m.**
- Breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is defined as: *A student must be at school or at a school-related activity (e.g., field trip) for at least half the school day to be present.*

All students are expected to be in attendance each day unless they are ill or a family emergency arises. **If a student is absent or tardy, it is important that you call the school at the beginning of the day to report the absence/tardiness.** Please remember that a written note explaining the absence is required when a student returns to school. We realize that there will be instances when your child may be tardy, but please avoid this when possible. **Tardiness interrupts your child's instructional time, as well as the rest of the class. A note should accompany the student explaining the reason for his/her tardiness. A tardy student must report to the office before going to the classroom.**

If a student is absent five (5) consecutive days, a doctor's note is required.

If a student is tardy more than five (5) times per term, then for each day they are tardy beyond this the student will lose one day of recess privileges.

Please avoid taking family vacations during non-scheduled school vacation weeks.

(See page 14 for Rockland Public Schools Attendance Policy.)

Memorial Park ,Jefferson and Esten schools

- Students dismissed before 11:00 a.m. will be considered absent for that day.
- Grades 1-5: Tardy before 11:00 a.m. Absent after 11:00 a.m.
- Kindergarten: Tardy before 10:15 a.m. Absent after 10:15 a.m.

BICYCLES, SCOOTERS, SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLERBLADES

Students in grades K-5 **are not** permitted to ride bicycles, scooters, skateboards and rollerblades to school as agreed to by the School and Police Departments.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

During the first week of school, all students will be given an application for free or reduced meals to be taken home to their parents.

Please remember, we are required to provide every parent the opportunity to apply and all information received is held in strictest confidence. Parents/Guardians may apply at any time during the school year if your financial situation changes.

All families eligible for free and reduced lunch should apply, even if you do not wish to take part in the program. Many of our state and federal grants are based on the percentage of our children eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Our cafeterias operate on a computerized “point of sale” (POS) system which allows parents to prepay for meals. Information on this system will be sent home at the beginning of the year.

See page 11 for charging policy.

CAFETERIA RULES AND PROCEDURES

Students must maintain a calm atmosphere during breakfast and lunch, and must observe the following rules while in the cafeteria:

- 1) No cutting ahead of other students in lines
- 2) No moving of furniture
- 3) Proper manners should be used at all times
- 4) No throwing of food
- 5) Each student is responsible for cleaning his/her own place at the time, properly disposing of rubbish, and returning trays and silverware to the proper place.

Failure to adhere to the above rules may result in serious disciplinary action and removal from the cafeteria.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND/OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Parents must notify the school of any change of address, telephone number or other pertinent information as soon as possible.

When a transfer from our school is anticipated, we would appreciate advance notice so that the student's records may be completed and forwarded to the new school.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Please be advised that the School Department may release directory information about a student to third parties, unless a parent objects in writing, pursuant to the provisions of 603 CMR 23.00, et. seq.

DISCIPLINE

It is necessary that students learn to develop self-discipline in order to further their learning. Please discuss with your children the importance of proper behavior and attitude while in school. Fighting, disrespect toward others, obscene language or destruction of school property will not be tolerated. Students who break rules continuously will be sent to the office and handled accordingly. If problems reoccur, parents will be called to help resolve them.

When necessary, suspension from school will be initiated by the building Principal.

School should be a safe place for all, and in that regard any student found in possession of a dangerous weapon, controlled substance, or who assaults a school staff person physically or verbally may be subject to suspension or expulsion.

DRESS CODE

Student dress should be school appropriate and in good taste. Hats, visors, belly shirts, lounge pajama bottom pants, flip-flops and clothing containing inappropriate messages or language may not be worn. Sneakers are required for all physical education classes. All footwear should have a heel strap for student safety. Shorts and skirts should be long enough so that the fingertips when extended down the leg touch the hem of the skirt or shorts. Shirt straps must be at least two (2) inches in width.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Use of electronic communication devices is prohibited during school hours. The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of electronic devices.

First offense: Item will be held in the office for the day
Second offence: Item will be held for parent retrieval

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICY

We are a school community with rules, obligations and regulations. Please read and discuss with your child this code of discipline.

- I. I will use appropriate language at all times.
 - a. I will speak in a respectful manner to adults and classmates.
 - b. I shall show respect in my written work.

- II. I will act in an appropriate manner at all times.
 - a. I will listen respectfully when others are speaking.
 - b. I will follow the teacher's directions at all times.
 - c. I will keep hands, feet and objects to myself.

- III. I will show respect to the school community.
 - a. I will walk quietly at all times.
 - b. I will use the bathroom appropriately.
 - c. I will care for my books and materials.

- IV. I will use the playground in a safe manner.
 - a. I will use all playground equipment appropriately.
 - b. I will avoid contact games.

- V. I will work to the best of my ability at all times.
 - a. I will be responsible for completing my school work assignments.
 - b. I will be responsible for completing and returning my homework assignments.
 - c. I will work collaboratively with my classmates.
 - d. I will work independently .

- VI. a. All bullying is strictly prohibited. Please refer to the District Bullying Policy on Page 29-30.

The elementary school policies concerning student behavior will be consistent with the Rockland Public Schools' discipline procedures.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Please schedule your child's doctor and dentist appointments after school hours. If this is not possible, a note from home with the time and reason for the early dismissal is required. Parents/Guardians must sign their child out at the main office. It is also imperative that you inform the school if your child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent. **For the student's safety, the teacher will not release the student unless instructed by the office.**

FIRE DRILLS/EVACUATION DRILLS

Fire drills/evacuation drills are necessary for the safety of the students, staff and faculty. Everyone must know the specific directions for reaching a point of safety. Specific information for fire drills is posted in each room.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a privilege. A student may not be allowed to go on a field trip if behavior is a concern. The Principal may allow the student to participate if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Students on field trips are not permitted to visit gift shops. All chaperones must first submit to a CORI check two weeks prior to the trip.

GUM CHEWING

Gum chewing is not permitted in the school building at any time, even as part of recess or lunch. There may be special times, such as MCAS testing, when gum chewing is permitted.

INAPPROPRIATE ARTICLES

Inappropriate articles such as knives, toys, fireworks, water guns, electronic games, dolls, skateboards, scooters, sporting equipment, etc. are not allowed at school. Possession of a knife or object that could be used as a weapon may result in suspension or police action at the discretion of the Principal.

MEDICATION POLICY

School nurses may dispense medication that has been prescribed by a doctor. However, a consent form signed by the parent/guardian, a signed medication order from the doctor (this form may be obtained from the school nurse), and the medication in the original container from the pharmacy is required. Medicines must be delivered to the nurse by the parent/guardian.

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter will be given to every student to take home, which will include the school menu, as well as inform you of important dates, events, and early dismissals.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Parent Notification

Our elementary schools receive Title I funds and are subject to the following regulations:

Districts that receive Title I, Part A funds are required to notify the parents of students attending any school that received funds and the district will provide the parent on request (and in a timely manner) information regarding **the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teacher(s)**, including, at a minimum, the following:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under an emergency license or waiver through which the state qualification or licensing criteria has been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field or discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

In addition, schools that receive Title I funding shall provide each individual parent *timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.*

“NO SCHOOL OR DELAYED OPENING” PROCEDURES

“No School” announcements, including two hour delayed openings, will be made over the Boston TV stations and the following radio stations:

WATD 95.9 FM	WPLM 1390 AM
WBZ 1030 AM	WRKO 680 AM
WBET 1460 AM	

Please do **not** call the police or fire stations for this information. This unnecessarily ties up emergency lines. You may call 781-878-1540 or 781-878-3893 for NO SCHOOL information.

Whenever possible, all parents/guardians will be notified by phone using *Connect-Ed*.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are encouraged and welcomed as a part of the school community. Please contact your child’s teacher or building Principal if you are interested in volunteer work at school. C.O.R.I. forms must be filled out before volunteering in the Rockland Public Schools.

Each family is encouraged to become involved in the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at their neighborhood school. Please make every effort to becoming an active participant in your child’s education by joining the PAC. All parents are invited to attend monthly PAC meetings. Notices of these meetings will be included in the monthly newsletter.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOTAPE

To celebrate school spirit and the learning process, photographs and videotapes are used to display pictures/videos throughout the building and in local cable, local newspaper articles and the websites listed on the Release Form. Parents must complete and return the district’s Media Release Form located on the back page of this handbook.

PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICES

Each school has a School Psychologist who provides support services for students experiencing school and family-related problems. In addition, the School Psychologist works with parents, teachers and other staff to provide solutions to student-related issues.

RECESS

Recess is held daily during the school year. Students should dress appropriate for the weather, as students will be outside if the temperature is above 25°. Rough play, including fighting and tackling, is unacceptable. Recess play equipment is provided. **No contact sports are allowed.**

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards and Progress Reports are sent home periodically to keep parents informed of their child's progress. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

Nursing services are available during the school day. First aid is provided for injuries and sudden illnesses that occur during school hours. Any care beyond first aid will not be given at school and is the responsibility of the parent. Parents will be requested to provide transportation if necessary.

In instances when a parent is not at home during school hours, it is imperative that they designate a relative or friend to care for the student. We request that the emergency designee be no more than 10 minutes from school.

Vision and hearing screening is done in all grades during the school year.

State law requires that all students be properly immunized.

Although daily attendance is desirable an ill child should never be sent to school.

Some reasons for recommending that a student not be in school are elevated temperature, nausea, and vomiting or unexplained rash. A child should remain home until symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please notify school officials in the event your child has any special health problems.

SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted on school grounds at any time, including in parked vehicles.

STUDENT INFORMATION

During the first week of school, your child's teacher will be sending home three information cards: two Student Information Cards and one Emergency Information Card for you to complete. Please complete the information promptly. A record of this information is kept in the school office in the event of an emergency. **Please make sure all telephone numbers and addresses are accurate and clearly written.** Remember to put the name and phone number of the person to be contacted in case you cannot be reached. **Please notify the school if you change your address or telephone number during the school year.** It is very important that our records be kept up to date. **Please update the school on any custody changes or restraining orders. THIS INFORMATION IS HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.**

STUDENT USE OF THE TELEPHONE

Students will be allowed to use the office telephone only in the event of an emergency. All plans and arrangements for after school activities should be made in advance. Students with cell phones should not use them to call home. All calls must go through the office.

Students will not be allowed to call home for lunch money or forgotten homework.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

A suspension is when a student is excluded from school and school-related activities for not more than ten (10) school days. After each suspension, a student must have his/her parent/guardian come to the office to confer with the Principal before he/she may return to class. The following actions may be a cause for suspension.

- Possession of a dangerous weapon.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Destruction of school property or property belonging to a staff person or a student.
- Fighting.
- Insolence or disrespect for authority.
- Possession of a controlled substance.
- Assault of a staff member
- Any other conduct, which, in the judgment of the Principal, seriously interferes with the educational process.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PROCESS

If it is considered necessary to suspend or expel a pupil, the following procedures shall be followed with the understanding that a student facing suspension or expulsion has the following Due Process rights:

- The student shall be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the story.
- The student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against him/her.
- If the student denies the charges, the student shall be given an explanation for the evidence the authorities have.
- The parent or guardian shall be notified in writing within 24 hours of the suspension or expulsion. This notice will clearly state the reason and length for the suspension or expulsion. The parent will be notified of the procedure and the date the student should return to school.
- A brief note outlining the action taken and the process followed should be on file.
- No suspension will exceed ten (10) school days.

TRANSPORTATION

Students in grades 1 through 5 who live one and one-half miles or more from the school are eligible for transportation. All kindergarten students, regardless of distance from the school, will have transportation. After school begins, it may be necessary to change some stops, but parents will be notified if a change affects their children. Behavior of students on school buses is a safety concern and rules for behavior will be enforced. **RIDING THE SCHOOL BUS IS A PRIVILEGE AND CONVENIENCE THAT MAY BE TERMINATED FOR IMPROPER CONDUCT. Because our buses are full, children cannot use another bus to go to a friend's house. Only bus-eligible students may ride the bus.**

GENERAL RULES FOR STUDENTS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. Students **MUST** obey the driver promptly and willingly for the safety of all passengers.
2. Students **MUST** be at the bus stop and ready to board when the bus arrives.
3. Students **MUST NOT** stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
4. Students **MUST** conduct themselves in an acceptable manner.
5. Students **MUST** remain seated while the bus is moving, or if delayed on the

road.

6. Students may **NOT** operate the bus door or tamper with the Emergency Door.
7. No student shall at any time put his/her hands, head or arms out of the windows whether the bus is in motion or standing still.
8. Students **MUST NOT** damage or deface any part of the bus and should help in keeping the bus clean.
9. Students referred to the Principal for misbehavior on the bus MAY forfeit the right to ride on the school bus.
10. Students with a knife or any item that could be used as a weapon will be suspended from the bus for a period of time to be determined by the Principal.
11. No eating or drinking on the bus.
12. No touching/poking/hitting/kicking.
13. No inappropriate language will be tolerated.

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION: CHARGING OF SCHOOL LUNCH AND/OR MILK

Rockland Public Schools is pleased to extend the courtesy of allowing a student to charge a lunch and/or milk

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this regulation is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this policy are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
- To establish age appropriate procedures.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Food Service Department: The food service department will be responsible for maintaining charge records, notifying the school district of outstanding balances, and forwarding written and/or voice notification home to parents.

The School Department: The school department will be responsible for following through on any sanctions imposed on those owing money.

The Parent/Guardian: The parent/guardian will be responsible for making immediate payment.

III. ADMINISTRATION:

1. All students will be allowed to charge a maximum of five dollars (\$5.00)
 - a. Charged meals will include only menu items part of the reimbursable meal. No snacks.
 - b. After the \$5.00 limit has been exceeded, the student will be given a designated menu alternative. Payment for menu alternatives will also be due. No snacks may be purchased until the bill has been paid.
2. These meals will be rung in the register as a “PAID” meal (in order for the district to receive federal reimbursement.)
3. After the second offense (or after the nominal amount exceeds \$5.00), the school district will be directed to send parent/guardian written or voice notification of debt.
4. In the middle of May, all charging will be cut off:
 - a. Parents/Guardians will be sent a written request for “Payment In Full”. (The deposit requests will be mailed home.)
 - b. All charges not paid before the end of the school year will be carried forward in the next school year.
 - c. Seniors must pay all charges before receiving their cap and gown (diploma)
5. No ala carte items may be charged.
6. Students transferring from the Rockland Public Schools or the Holy Family School to another district are responsible for the payment of any balances before the school records will be sent.

7. If a financial hardship is suspected anytime during the school year, families will be encouraged to apply for free/reduced meals.
8. Balances remaining on Food Service accounts at the end of the school year or when a child moves from the district are not refundable. Parents should plan accordingly. The funds may be carried over to the next school year or to another family member.

ELEMENTARY HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

GRADES 1-5

Homework in the Rockland Elementary Schools should be used as a tool to reinforce skills or concepts that have been introduced in class. It is of the utmost importance that both the home and the school create environments in which the learning process is a positive experience for each student and becomes a lifelong objective.

Reading is an ongoing assignment. We encourage children to read at least 15 minutes every night. It must be pointed out that projects, reading, studying for tests, etc., are considered to be homework.

Research shows, that handled properly, homework helps a child develop emotional and behavioral skills needed in the adult world. These skills foster the following attributes: *Responsibility, Independence, Perseverance, Time Management, Initiative, Self-Reliance, and Resourcefulness.*

We encourage parent involvement, but the final responsibility for completing assignments rests with the child.

1. Homework should be relevant and an extension of classroom learning activities.
2. Subject matter that is totally new to students should not be given as homework.
3. All written homework will be checked and evaluated by teachers. Math assignments will be corrected in class so that students can see their errors.
4. Parents should check that their children are completing homework assignments. Parents may help but should not correct the homework.
5. Homework assignments may be given over weekends, holidays or vacation periods.
6. Homework should not be given as punishment under any circumstances.
7. It is recommended that a specific time period and study area be established for homework.

SUGGESTED LENGTH AND FREQUENCY OF ASSIGNMENTS

Grades 1 & 2: Meaningful short assignments as necessary, but not to exceed 15-20 minutes in length per night.

Grade 3: Meaningful assignments up to thirty-minute length per night.

Grade 4: Meaningful assignments up to forty-five minutes in length per night.

Grade 5: English & Math – an average of 3-5 assignments/week
Reading, Science & Social Studies – an average of 2-4 assignments/week

Approved by Rockland School Committee February 28, 1994

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR GRADES 1 – 8

One of the most common causes of poor student achievement is excessive absence from school. Absenteeism **must** be considered a serious matter for all students at any grade level, regardless of ability. Absences can only be approved when a child is ill or involved in an emergency necessitating his or her absence.

The laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts clearly explain the responsibility of the parent and school administrators regarding pupil attendance and what the school department must do to enforce the laws of student attendance. *Chapter 76, section 1, 2 of the General Laws of Education Relating to School Committees.*

1. Chapter 76, section 1 Regulation of School Attendance

“...The superintendent or teachers insofar as authorized by him or the school committee, may excuse cases necessary absence for the other causes not exceeding seven (7) sessions or fourteen (14) half-day sessions in any period of six (6) months...”

2. Chapter 76, section 2 Duties of Parent; Penalty

“...Every person in control of a child described in the preceding section shall cause him to attend school as therein required, and, if he fails to do so for seven (7) days sessions or fourteen (14) half-day sessions within any period of six (6) months...”

Therefore, any pupil returning to school after being absent one or more days **must** present a note from his/her parents or guardian giving the date and reason for the absence. Failure to present a note within five (5) school days of an absence may result in notification of the proper agencies. Any student who is on restricted physical activity must present a doctor's certificate stating the cause for such restrictions and the length of the restriction.

A student may be excused from physical activity for a limited amount of time after the parent has consulted with the school nurse.

Any absences from school in excess of fourteen (14) days are considered unexcused absences and can only be considered excused absences under the following circumstances:

1. Student returns to school with a certified medical note, e.g., from a physician or hospital stating a medical cause for absence.
2. Death in family.
3. Observance of a religious holiday.
4. Mandated court appearance.

Failure to comply with the fourteen (14) day rule will jeopardize a student's promotion. It will be the student's responsibility to make up any school work missed during an absence.

The school will, after the fifth (5th) unexcused absence, notify the parents in writing of absences.

Any student found to be truant from school will receive any consequences as outlined in the Student Handbook in regard to truancy, including parental notification. Any student found to be truant from school will have his/her name referred to the Rockland Public Schools' truant officer for further action, including possible court referral.

It is recommended that *Perfect Attendance Awards* be given out at the end of each school year. Perfect attendance will include no tardiness and no early releases from school.

Approved by School Committee 8/18/97
Revised 10/30/06

RETENTION POLICY FOR GRADES 1 – 8

1. A student must attend at least 85% of the enrolled days within each grading period in order to receive passing report card grades. Any excused absences will be considered per the Attendance Policy.
2. No student may be retained without a review by the Child Study Team*. The parent will be informed of the child's status prior to the Child Study Team meeting, but preferably not later than the second week in February.
3. At the close of the school year, a student who was previously discussed at a Child Study Team meeting may be retained or promoted.
4. It will be the responsibility of the building Principal to request, no later than February 15th, a preliminary list of at-risk students who are being considered for retention.
5. The Child Study Team will make a recommendation regarding the promotional status of a student to the building Principal.

6. (Middle School) Any student who fails more than one academic subject in a school year may be retained at grade level. Promotion to the next grade level may be accomplished if the following criteria are met.
7. (Middle School) If the student has not failed more than two (2) academic subjects and has not received a final grade below 60, the student would be required to attend a summer school program for remediation. Successful completion of the summer school for each course enrolled would result in the student's promotion to the next grade. Courses in Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science will be offered in the Rockland Summer School Program for Middle School students.
8. (Middle School) Any student who failed three (3) or more academic subjects will be retained at grade level at the recommendation of the Child Study Team. The educational program of the student will be determined by the Child Study Team.
9. Any student considered for non-promotion who is promoted will be considered a student at-risk and will be monitored by the Child Study Team.
10. The building Principal will have the final authority regarding the retention of students in his/her building.
11. Parents or guardians of students may appeal the decision of grade level retention to the building Principal **within five (5) school days of being informed.**
12. If not satisfied with the decision of the building Principal, **the parent may appeal to the Superintendent within two (2) school days of the Principal's decision.**
13. If not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent, **the parent may appeal to the School Committee within two (2) days of the Superintendent's decision.**
- 14. If the parent does not appeal or attend a scheduled meeting, their rights will be deemed waived.**
15. If a student is retained in grade, that student will not be assigned to the same teacher or team for the following school year.

*The Child Study Team shall consist of the parents, building Principal, guidance and adjustment counselors, school psychologist, teachers of the student, any agencies working with the student.

Approved by School Committee 8/18/97

HARASSMENT POLICY

I. INTRODUCTION

It is the goal of the Rockland Public Schools to provide equal employment opportunities for all employees, to prevent any unlawful discrimination or harassment of any individual working at or attending our schools, and to provide a mechanism by which individuals can bring any concerns about discrimination or harassment to our attention.

We expect all individuals to treat each other with dignity and respect. We are committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment in which staff and students are all treated with respect. The Rockland Public Schools will not condone or tolerate any discrimination, or different treatment, of or among staff or students based upon characteristics which include but are not limited to:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex (including sexual orientation)
- Race
- National Origin
- Creed
- Color

Not only does the Rockland Public Schools prohibit discriminatory treatment of its staff and students by supervisors and administrators, we also will not tolerate discriminatory treatment among staff or among students, including harassment.

II. HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION

Harassment, including sexual harassment, in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden and violates Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1972, G.L. c.151B, and c.278§3A of the Acts of 1996. The Rockland Public Schools will not tolerate retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to our attention. Retaliation is strictly forbidden, and if any individual is found to have retaliated against any individual or filing a complaint and/or cooperating in the investigation of any complaint, such action shall be grounds for separate discipline.

Harassment includes verbal or physical conduct which may or does offend, denigrate, or belittle any individual because of, or due to, any of the characteristics described above. Such conduct includes pictures, jokes, comments, innuendoes, graffiti, or any other behavior which creates an environment which is offensive and impairs the ability of the employees to work, and students to learn.

Allegations of harassment will be promptly investigated. Such investigation may include discussions with involved parties, identification and questioning of witnesses, and other

appropriate actions. If it is determined that harassment has occurred, administrative action will be taken to ensure that it is not repeated. This action may include, among others, counseling, training, apology, warnings, transfers, probation, suspension, expulsion, and discharge.

III. DEFINITION OF 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.

In Massachusetts, the legal definition for sexual harassment is this:

“sexual harassment” means sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions;

-or-

b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, or sexually offensive work environment.

Under these definitions, direct or implied requests by a supervisor for sexual favors in exchange for actual or promised job benefits such as favorable reviews, salary increases, promotions, increased benefits, or continued employment constitutes sexual harassment.

The legal definition of sexual harassment is broad and, in addition to the above examples, other sexually oriented conduct, whether it is intended or not, that is unwelcome and has the effect of creating a workplace environment that is hostile, offensive, intimidating, or humiliating to male or female workers may also constitute sexual harassment.

While it is not possible to list all those additional circumstances that may constitute sexual harassment, the following are some examples of conduct which, if unwelcome, may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

Unwelcome sexual advances – whether they involve physical touching or not;

Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one’s sexual life; comment on an individual’s body, comment about an individual’s sexual activity, deficiencies, or prowess;

Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons;

Unwelcome leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments;

Inquiries into one's sexual experiences; and

Discussion of one's sexual activities.

All employees and students should take special note that, as stated above, retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment, and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint, is unlawful and will not be tolerated by this organization.

IV. COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

If any of our employees or students believes that he or she has been subject to sexual harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint with our organization. This may be done in writing or orally.

If you would like to file a complaint, you may do so by contacting any administrator or the Superintendent's office (781) 878-3893. The Superintendent's office and administrators are also available to discuss any concerns you may have and to provide information to you about our policy on sexual harassment and our complaint process.

V. SEXUAL HARASSMENT INVESTIGATION

When we receive the complaint, we will promptly investigate the allegation in a fair and expeditious manner. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Our investigation will include a private interview with the person filing the complaint and with witnesses. We will also interview the person alleged to have committed sexual harassment. When we have completed our investigation, we will, to the extent appropriate, inform the person filing the complaint and the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the results of that investigation.

If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct, and where it is appropriate we will also impose disciplinary action. Disciplinary action could include a range of consequences from verbal or written reprimand to suspension or termination.

VI. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC – 180 days; MCAD – 6 months).

1. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)
1 Congress Street – 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 565-3200
2. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)
Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place – Room 601
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-3990

Approved by Rockland School Committee
December 9, 1996

CRIMINAL HARASSMENT

Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2000 added a new law, namely section 43A of Chapter 265 of the General Laws, which makes it a crime, subject to fine and imprisonment, for an individual to engage in certain conduct which is referred to as “criminal harassment,” that is conduct of a willful and malicious nature “which seriously alarms” a person and which causes “substantial emotional distress.” Section 43A of Chapter 265 provides that such conduct includes, among other things, “acts conducted by mail or by use of telephonic or telecommunication device including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications or facsimile communications.”

EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1993

The Rockland School Committee is subject to the provisions of Sections 37 H and 37 H 1/2 of Chapter 71 of the General Laws. The relevant provisions of Section 37 H of Chapter 71 read as follows:

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

however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

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

THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 37H¹/₂ OF CHAPTER 71 OF THE GENERAL LAWS

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

- (1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later

than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion. Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

PROHIBITION OF THE PRACTICE OF HAZING

The Rockland School Committee is subject to the provisions of Section 17, 18, and 19 of Chapter 269 of the General Laws, the provisions of which read in their entirety as follows:

Section 17

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term hazing as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime, shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine or not more than one thousand dollars.

Section 19

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of postsecondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of postsecondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations and to notify each full-time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general and such institution which fails to make such reports.

ROCKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS' STUDENT TECHNOLOGY & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE POLICY

The Rockland Public Schools believe technology offers valuable, diverse, and unique resources to teachers and students that promote educational excellence. Rockland is committed to helping students use educational technology as an effective educational tool and to meet state and national educational standards.

Technology and electronic communication device (ECD) users are responsible for appropriate behavior and acceptable use when accessing technology in the schools. General school rules for conduct and communication apply to Internet use and the use of any ECD. This includes, but is not limited to computers, scanners, still and video cameras, cell phones, GPS units, ProScopes, SmartBoards, LCD projectors, PDAs, and all electronic devices. Use of technology shall be considered a privilege, not a right of each individual. Failure of a user to follow acceptable use standards may result in termination of technology privileges, appropriate disciplinary action as stated in school policies, and possible notification to law enforcement. The Rockland Public School District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted within or through the school system.

Use of technology and ECDs within the district should be used solely for educational purposes. It is important to recognize that traditional instructional resources and library materials can be screened with reasonable selection criteria. Technology that links to any public file server provides access to material that may not be considered educationally sound in the context of the school setting. Rockland Public Schools has taken precautions to restrict access to unacceptable information. However, it is important to understand that no solution is 100% perfect, and at times educational sites may be inadvertently blocked. Conversely, inappropriate sites may be unblocked. Students will be provided with guidance and instruction in the appropriate use of technology resources including the Internet.

Students must obtain permission from a staff member each and every time they use technology equipment. Student use of technology will be permitted upon verification of the signing of the school's student handbook. The principal or designee will maintain signature records, and will be responsible for enforcing the Technology/Electronic Communication Device Policy.

Technology Terms and Conditions

1. User Personal Safety includes, but is not limited to:

- Users will not post personal information about themselves or others. Personal information includes, but is not limited to the following: name, address, profiles, telephone, date of birth, pictures, etc.
- Users will never arrange for meetings with anyone they have met online without the knowledge of the school and permission of a parent/guardian.
- Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or administrator any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Users will not harass another person or engage in personal attacks, including those prejudicial or discriminatory in nature.

2. Respecting Technology Equipment:

- Users will exercise caution when handling technology devices.
- Users will follow guidelines for proper usage of equipment.
- Users will not use another person's computer resources without authorization.

3. RPS System Security:

- Users should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from gaining access to their account(s). (Example: private passwords) All users are responsible for their individual account(s).
- If an individual suspects a possible security breach, the user will immediately contact the building principal.
- Users will not disseminate passwords, codes, telephone numbers, account numbers, grades, or other individuals' documents to unauthorized persons.
- The Rockland Public Schools' network and related technologies are the property of the school department and its storage systems, subject to inspection by administration at any time. Users should not have a privacy expectation in the contents of their personal files on the district network including all ECDs.
- Rockland Public Schools reserves the right to monitor any Internet or ECD activities occurring on school equipment or accounts.

4. Illegal Activities:

- Users will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the RPS system(s), or to go beyond their authorized access.
- Users will not deliberately attempt to disrupt the performance of any computer system or destroy data via a virus or any other means.
- Users will not use the RPS system to engage in any illegal act.

5. Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement:

- Users will respect the rights of all copyright owners, recognizing that infringement occurs when a person reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. Students should check with teachers and support staff regarding laws.
- Users will not plagiarize; therefore, they should cite all quotes, references, and sources. Acknowledging the source of a copyrighted material does not substitute for obtaining reproduction rights.
- Users may reproduce copyrighted works within the limits of fair use, and using proper citation. Fair use is explained at: <http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html>

6. Technology Etiquette:

- *Technology Etiquette* includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - Be polite! Do not get abusive in your messages to others.
 - Exercise caution when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications, a joke or statement may be misunderstood.
 - Show consideration and respect for others at all times.
 - Be respectful of the rights of other network users and do not violate their privacy.
 - Be aware of the intent and function of an individual or group before sending a message.
- *Inappropriate Language* includes, but is not limited to:
 - Posting of public and private messages on web pages, PDAs, cell phones, and other devices.
 - Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, offensive, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
 - Users will not participate in hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, and other harmful or inappropriate behaviors.
- *Respect for Privacy* includes, but is not limited to:
 - Users will not forward or post a message that was sent to them privately without the consent of the person who sent it.
 - Users will not post private information about another person.
 - Users will not interfere with other users ECD work or files.

7. Inappropriate Access to Material includes, but is not limited to:

- User will not use district technology to access material that is
 - profane or obscene (pornography),
 - advocates illegal or violent activities, or
 - advocates discrimination towards other individuals or groups.
- If a user inadvertently accesses inappropriate material, he/she should immediately notify his/her teacher or administrator, thereby avoiding an allegation of intentional violation of the *Technology/Electronic Communication Device Policy*.

8. Respecting Resource Limits:

- Users will use technology specifically for educational or career development activities.
- Users will not download large files or software programs without the authorization of the systems administrator. Software, particularly if it is offered as “free”, comes with undetectable spyware and advertising that can disable a computer or an entire system.
- Users will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming” (sending unnecessary messages to a large number of people).
- Users will not create a website using district technology. Exception: A website created under the direct supervision of a teacher as part of a school-related project.
- Users may not use the network for personal and commercial purposes, such as, but not limited to, offering or purchasing goods and/or services for personal use.
- Users will not alter in any way the configuration of a computer or network without permission of authorized staff.
- Users will not intentionally waste resources, such as paper, ink cartridges, ribbons, storage space, diskettes, batteries, etc.

9. Appropriate/Inappropriate Use of Educational Technology:

- Users will not use any district technology to play games that have been downloaded onto a technology device, or that are played on the Internet. Assigned, teacher approved interactive tools, which are directly related to the curriculum, are permitted.
- Users will not use the Internet or other technology media to access chat rooms or any type of instant messaging.
- Users will not access personal accounts including, but not limited to email, music, banking, shopping and other personal accounts.
- Users will not access the Internet or other technology media for financial or commercial gain. Ex. gambling, E-Bay
- Users’ activities, projects, or materials developed with technology and ECDs of the Rockland Public Schools must reflect our educational standards and policies. This includes, but is not limited to web page designs, PowerPoint presentations, radio broadcasts, etc.
- Users will not impersonate other individuals real or fictional.

10. District Limitation of Liability:

- The Rockland Public Schools makes no expressed or implied guarantees that the activities or services provided by district technology or ECDs will be error-free or without defect. The RPS district will not be responsible for any damages to users including, but not limited to loss of data, interruptions of service, personal or psychological damages, or financial losses. The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of content obtained through our network or stored on our systems. Finally, the district will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations incurred from use of our ECDs or any components of our technology system.

Approved by Rockland School Committee April 10, 2006

ROCKLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Rockland School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the courses of curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If the planned curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

- (1) exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
- (2) inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the materials at the school, and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written report to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each principal by September 1 of each year.

Approved by Rockland School Committee June 23, 1997

BOMB THREATS POLICY

Reports of bombs or explosives in the school building are a nuisance, costly, and cause loss of valuable school time. Despite the fact that most such threats are hoaxes, such reports cannot be ignored. The welfare and safety of students and staff requires planned and prompt action whenever reports are received.

The administration has in its possession and is prepared to implement regulations and procedures related to bomb reports that protect the students and staff from harm; that stipulates prevention or reduced frequency of false threats; that promotes and supports effective and cooperative efforts of other governmental agencies in the apprehension of those responsible for threats.

The staff and students are to be aware of the procedure expected in situations requiring the emergency evacuations of the school building. Further, the staff and students are to be made aware of the regulations concerning making up of time missed because of such emergency evacuation.

The School Committee expects everyone to be aware of the serious legal violations associated with hoax bomb reports, and the intent of the Committee to seek full police investigations and convictions under the law.

The administration is authorized and directed to develop and implement, with the help of appropriate public agencies and staff, emergency evacuation procedures, hoax prevention activities, and time make-up practices. Students, parents, and staff will be made aware of regulations and procedures established.

For purposes of clarification, the term “bomb threat” shall mean a condition of threat judged to be so by the principal or his designee after careful and systematic evaluation of the school environment together with analysis of messages received that relate to possible threats of bombing at the school.

Approved by Rockland School Committee June 10, 2001

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Rockland Public Schools recognizes that bullying and intimidation have a negative effect on school climate. Students who are intimidated and fearful cannot give their education the single-minded attention they need for success. Bullying can also lead to more serious violence. Every student has the right to an education and to be safe in and around school.

1. **Definition of bullying.** Bullying is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a student being "picked on." Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks; gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.
2. **Bullying is prohibited.** The Rockland Public Schools and staff shall not tolerate any bullying on school grounds or at any school activity on or off campus.
3. **Staff Intervention.** The school expects all staff members who observe, suspect, or become aware of an act of bullying to immediately notify the Principal and to take appropriate steps to intervene--unless intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. If the bullying persists, the School Principal will conduct an investigation leading to possible intervention/disciplinary action.
4. **Students and parents shall report bullying.** The system expects students and parents who become aware of an act of bullying to report it to the School Principal for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another for reporting bullying will be subject to the consequences listed below in paragraph 6.
5. **Investigation procedures.** Upon learning about a bullying incident, the Principal or designee shall contact the parents of both the aggressor and the victim, interview both students, and thoroughly investigate. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents, and school staff; review of school records; and identification of parent and family issues.
6. **Consequences/Intervention.** Consequences for students who bully others shall depend on the results of the investigation and may include counseling; a parent conference; detention; suspension and/or expulsion; or involuntary transfer to another district school. Depending on the severity of the incident, the Principal may also take appropriate steps to ensure student safety. These may include implementing a safety plan; separating and supervising the students involved; providing staff support for students as necessary; reporting incidents to law enforcement if appropriate; and developing a supervision plan with the parents.

Approved by Rockland School Committee 10/28/02

PARENTAL CONSENT AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

I/We, the undersigned father, mother, guardian (circle legal relationship to student, e.g., "parent," "guardian ") of _____ (insert name of student) ("my child"), a minor, do hereby consent to child's participation in voluntary athletic or extra-curricular programs of the Rockland Public Schools.

I/We also agree to forever RELEASE the Town of Rockland, a municipal corporation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and/or the Rockland Public Schools, the School Committee, and all their employees, officers, agents, board members, volunteers, and any and all individuals and organizations assisting or participating in voluntary athletic, volunteer assistance, or recreation programs of the Town of Rockland or Rockland Public Schools ("the Releasees") from any and all claims, actions, rights of action and causes of action, damages, costs, loss of services, expenses, compensation, and attorneys' fees that may have arisen in the past, or may arise in the future, directly or indirectly, from known and unknown personal injuries to me or my child or property damage resulting from my or my child's participation in the said Town of Rockland and/or Rockland Public School's voluntary athletic or extra-curricular programs which I/we may now or hereafter have as the individual or as the parent(s) or guardian(s) of said minor child and which said minor child has or hereafter may acquire, either before or after reaching majority.

I/We also promise, to INDEMNIFY, REIMBURSE, DEFEND, and HOLD HARMLESS the Releasees against any and all legal claims and proceedings of any description that may have been asserted in the past, or may be asserted in the future, directly or indirectly, including damages, costs and attorneys' fees, arising from personal injuries to me or my child or property damage resulting from me or my child's participation in the Town of Rockland and/or Rockland Public Schools' voluntary athletic, or extra-curricular programs or administration of first aid.

I/We further affirm that I/we have read this Parental Consent, Release from Liability and Indemnity Agreement, and that I/we understand the contents of this Agreement. I/We understand that my or my child's participation in these programs is voluntary and that my child and I/we are free to choose not to participate in said programs. By signing this Agreement, I/we further affirm that I/we have decided to allow me or my child to participate in the Town of Rockland and/or Rockland Public Schools' athletic or extra-curricular programs with full knowledge that the Releasees will not be liable to anyone for personal injuries and property damage my child or I/we may suffer in voluntary Town of Rockland and/or Rockland Public School athletic, volunteer assistance, or recreation programs.

Signed: _____

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of

Student/Participant

Approved by Rockland School Committee May 27, 2003

SYNOPSIS OF FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS AND DISTRICT COORDINATOR INFORMATION

SYNOPSIS OF LAWS:

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Coordinator: Mr. John Retchless

Statute prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color or national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. This statute ensures that individuals are not excluded from participation in programs or activities receiving federal funds (or the benefits of) on account of their membership in one of these protected categories (42 USC §2000D). This statute has been interpreted to prohibit the denial of equal access to education because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English.

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 Coordinator: Mr. Doric Scarpelli

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 provides that no individual may be discriminated against on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Title IX requires that schools adopt and publish a policy against sex discrimination and have grievance procedures through which students can complain of alleged sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. State law requires Massachusetts employers to have a policy against sexual harassment. (M.G.L. Ch. 151B, §3A)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Coordinator: Mr. John Retchless

Section 504 provides that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability shall solely by reason of his/her disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The regulations implementing Section 504 require that public schools provide a free appropriate public education to each qualified handicapped person who is in the recipient's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's handicap. (34 CFR 104.33)

Americans with Disabilities 1990

Coordinator: Mr. Doric Scarpelli

The regulations implementing the ADA provide that: "A public entity that employs 50 or more persons shall designate at least one employee to coordinator its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under this part, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance with this part or alleging any actions that would be prohibited by this part. The public entity must make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee or employees designated pursuant to this paragraph." (34 CFR 35.107(a))

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES LAWS:

Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 Coordinator: Mr. John Retchless

This federal statute prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunities to an individual based on certain protected classifications including national origin. It specifically prohibits denying equal educational opportunities by failing to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs. (20 USC §1203(f))

Mass. General Laws Ch. 76, §5 (also known as Chapter 622)

Coordinator: Mr. Doric Scarpelli

This state law provides that “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, national origin, or sexual orientation.”

Title I of the Elem. & Secondary Education Act of 1965 Director: Mr. John Retchless

Title I is designed to help disadvantaged children meet challenging content and student performance standards. Staff should know that special education students are not deemed ineligible for Title I services simply because they receive special education services. Also, school districts must ensure that Title I funds are not being misused (e.g. referring a limited English proficient student to a Title I program in order to meet the student’s language needs rather than providing an ESL program/class).

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Chapter 688 (transition planning)

Coordinator: Ms. Kathryn Salem

School districts file a Chapter 688 referral for students with severe disabilities who will need continued services and supports after their eligibility for special education ceases. School districts must make Chapter 688 referrals at least 2 years before the student is expected to graduate from school or turn 22 years of age. This allows time to determine the student’s eligibility for adult services and for agencies to include the anticipated cost of services for the student in its budget request that it submits to the state legislature each year.

Rockland Public Schools, 34 MacKinlay Way, Rockland, MA 02370, 781-878-3893

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as prescribed in this handbook. State and federal special education laws prescribe additional requirements concerning the discipline of students with special needs.

Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) school days in any school year, this constitutes a “change of placement.” A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. These include, but are not limited to:

The student's Team will convene to determine whether the student's misconduct that led to the change in placement was a manifestation of his/her disability. If the misconduct was a manifestation, the school will conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavior intervention plan, provided that the school did not already conduct such an assessment before the behavior that resulted in the discipline. If such an assessment was already conducted, the behavior intervention plan will be reviewed and modified as necessary. Additionally, if the behavior was a manifestation, the student will return to the placement from which he/she was removed, unless the school and the parent agree otherwise.

If the behavior was not a manifestation, the school may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to the extent they would be applied to a student not eligible for special education, except that a student eligible for special education who is removed from his/her current educational placement is entitled to continue receiving educational services to enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP.

In special circumstances, the school may move students to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior that led to the removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. These special circumstances are when:

A student carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; or, has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal statute which prohibits a qualified individual with a disability from being excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance because of his/her disability. 29 U.S.C. &794 and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. 104 et seq. School personnel may not suspend a student on a 504 plan for more than ten (10) school days without first conducting a manifestation determination.

POLICY ON THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AS PER SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

It is the policy of the Rockland Public Schools not to discriminate against any otherwise qualified individual with disability, solely by reason of his/her disability, in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, any program or activity sponsored by this school district.

Inquiries regarding compliance with this policy should be directed to the Section 504 Coordinator of the Rockland Public Schools, Superintendent's Office, 34 MacKinlay Way, Rockland, Massachusetts 02370. Telephone: 781-878-3893.

Approved by Rockland School Committee May 11, 1998

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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

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

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

- 2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate.

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

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

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

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

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

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

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES POLICY

To the extent practical and as required by law, the Rockland Public Schools will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

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

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

The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

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

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

Approved by Rockland School Committee February 23, 2004

C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENT POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rockland Public Schools to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (C.O.R.I.) from the criminal history systems board of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer. State law requires that school districts obtain C.O.R.I. data for employees of taxicab companies that have contracted with the schools to provide transportation to pupils.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the criminal history systems board on all employees, individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees, and volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, during their term of employment or volunteer service.

The Superintendent, Principal or their certified designees may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy.

Pursuant to a Department of Education C.O.R.I. Law Advisory dated February 17, 2003, "Direct and unmonitored contact with children' means contact with a child when no other C.O.R.I. cleared employee of the school or district is present. A person having only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact with children in commonly used areas of the school grounds, such as hallways, shall not be considered to have the potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children. These excluded areas do not include bathrooms and other isolated areas (not commonly utilized and separated by sight or sound from other staff) that are accessible to students."

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign a request form authorizing receipt by the district of all available C.O.R.I. data from the criminal history systems board. In the event that a current employee has questions concerning the signing of the request form, he/she may meet with the Principal or Superintendent; however, failure to sign the C.O.R.I. request form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed request forms must be kept in secure files. The School Committee, Superintendent, Principals or their designees certified to obtain information under this policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of school information for any purpose other than to further the protection of school children.

C.O.R.I. is not subject to the public records law and must be kept in a secure location, separate from personnel files and may be retained for not more than three years. C.O.R.I. may be shared with the individual to whom it pertains, upon his or her request and in the event of an inaccurate report the individual should contact the Criminal History System Board.

Access to C.O.R.I. material must be restricted to those individuals certified to receive such information. In the case of prospective employees or volunteers, C.O.R.I. material should be obtained only where the Superintendent has determined that the applicant is qualified and may forthwith be recommended for employment or volunteer duties.

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision made pursuant to Chapter 385 of the Acts of 2002. The employer may consider the following factors when reviewing C.O.R.I.: the type and nature of the offense; the date of the offense and whether the individual has been subsequently arrested, as well as any other factors the employer deems relevant.

The Superintendent shall ensure that on the application for employment and/or volunteer form there shall be a statement that as a condition of employment or volunteer service the school district is required by law to obtain Criminal Offender Record Information for any employee, individual who regularly provides school related transportation, or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Current employees, persons regularly providing school related transportation, and volunteers shall also be informed in writing by the Superintendent prior to the periodic obtaining of their Criminal Offender Record Information.

The Superintendent shall amend employment applications to include questions concerning criminal records which the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination has determined may be legally asked of prospective employees. Any employment application which seeks information concerning prior arrests or convictions of the applicant shall include the following statement: "An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commissioner of probation may answer 'no record' with respect to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests, criminal court appearances or convictions. An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the commissioner of probation may answer 'no record' to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests or criminal court appearances. In addition, any applicant for employment may answer 'no record' with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of

service which did not result in a complaint transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution.”

Records sealed pursuant to law shall not operate to disqualify a person in any examination, appointment or application for public service on behalf of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof.

The Superintendent shall revise contracts with special education schools and other providers to require a signed statement that the provider has met all the legal requirements of the state where it is located relative to criminal background checks for employees and others having direct and unmonitored contact with children.

As soon as possible after the district obtains the certification from the criminal history systems board to receive C.O.R.I. data, the Superintendent shall obtain such data for any person then providing volunteer service, as a continued service.

Approved by Rockland School Committee January 26, 2004

EDUCATIONAL INTEGRITY POLICY

Society is profoundly affected by the level of honesty of its citizens; therefore, maintaining the educational integrity of both students and staff is an important goal of the Rockland Public Schools. Cheating in any form is dishonest and erodes the trust among parents, students, and teachers. It is a serious breach of ethics and values and will not be tolerated.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, crib notes, copying homework, computer piracy, and looking at another person’s test. Ultimately, however, teachers will set the tone of what is expected and what will not be tolerated in their classrooms. If cheating does occur, it will be dealt with swiftly and confidentially. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, parents and administrators may be involved as determined by the teacher. Consequences may range from receiving a zero on a test, paper, or project, to receiving a zero for a full marking term or even being suspended from school.

Maintaining the highest ethical standards in teaching and learning in the Rockland Public Schools requires the understanding and cooperative efforts of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. By committing ourselves to the values of honesty and good character and working together in the best interests of our children and their future, we will ensure the highest standards of educational integrity for the Rockland Public Schools.

Approved by the Rockland School Committee November 23, 1992

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S CLASSROOM TEACHER.



The Rockland Elementary Schools require that all parents/guardians of students of the Rockland Public Schools sign the statement below acknowledging receipt of this Handbook and return it to your child's school.

As a parent/guardian of a student within the Rockland Public Schools, I acknowledge receipt of the 2009/2010 Student/Parent Handbook.

(Student's Name)

(Date)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(School)



MEDIA RELEASE FORM

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We request your permission to have your child photographed and/or videotaped in the classroom or at various functions during the school year, including general crowd shots, for local cable and newspaper use and on the district's website, PAC websites and Rockland Education Foundation. Some photographs may be used for publicity or to model different aspects of the education program.

I give my permission for my child, _____, to be photographed and/or videotaped.

I **do not** give permission for my child, _____, to be photographed or videotaped.

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)