

Athol-Royalston Regional  
School District  
Elementary Handbook

Dear students and parents of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District,

It is the hope and expectation of the District that all students have a welcoming, safe, positive, and productive 2016-2017 school year. In an effort to meet this goal, each school has developed a student handbook that provides all members of each school community with information regarding policies, procedures, and services. Handbooks are reviewed yearly by school councils and are ultimately approved by the Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee. It is the District's view that information and expectations outlined in this handbook will foster the appropriate school environment for students and their families, as well as teachers and administrators. Please be familiar with the information provided in this handbook, use it as a reference, and contact the building principal if you have any questions regarding its contents.

At the request of a parent or student whose primary language is not English, a translated student handbook or student code of conduct will be made available by the District.

Sincerely,  
The A.R.R.S.D. Administrative Team

**CENTRAL OFFICE:** 1062 Pleasant Street, Athol, MA 01331 978-249-2400 fax 978-249-2402

**ATHOL COMMUNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** 1064 Pleasant Street, Athol, MA 01331  
- 978-249-2406 fax

**ROYALSTON COMMUNITY** 96 Winchendon Road, Royalston, MA 01368 - 978-249-2900 fax  
249-4110

**OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION** 2326 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331- 978-249-2403 - fax  
249-7210

District Website:      <http://www.arrsd.org/>

School Committee Members and Contact information are available on the website

#### District Mission Statement

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District is committed to providing a challenging educational experience that inspires students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become responsible citizens in the global community.

#### District Vision

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District in partnership with the community provides a safe, innovative, and vibrant learning environment for all students. We foster academic excellence by implementing best practices, improving facilities, appreciating diversity, and requiring accountability. Our graduates are life-long learners and discerning users of technology who exercise social and civic responsibility and adapt to an ever-changing world.

#### Non-Discrimination

Athol-Royalston Regional School District has a non-tolerance for any form of harassment or discrimination based upon race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion.

#### Core Values-

#### Contact information

#### ACES School Vision (to be developed in August)

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**SCHOOL INFORMATION and PROCEDURES**

**ABSENCES/ ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

**Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Our school learning day begins at 8:30 AM and ends at 3:05PM. Children should plan to arrive between 8:15-8:30. If your child arrives late to school, s/he should check into the main office prior to going directly to class. If your child is sick or going to be absent from school, please call the school by 8:45AM. As a school community, we look forward to building learning experiences with your child and do not want them to miss any opportunities that will make them successful. However, if your child is unable to arrive to school on time, a meeting may be requested by the principal to develop an attendance plan that will help them be successful.

**Absences**

Please let us at school know if your child will be absent due to illness or other reasons as soon as possible in the morning. As a school, we want every opportunity for your child to be met with success; we will pay close attention to attendance and have every expectation that all students attend school on a regular and consistent basis. After 7 absences families may be required to attend a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) meeting at the school with the goal of working collaboratively with the school to improve on a child's consistent attendance and to develop an attendance contract. Please be advised that if the child's attendance at school does not improve, the school may be required further involvement of the District Attorney's Office. Please contact the Principal, in advance, to notify the school of any planned absence. Students are responsible for completing all owed work following an absence. We value your child's education and if a student accumulates **7 unexcused absences in a six month period** (See MGL Ch. 76, S. 2) a meeting will be setup with the principal to develop a plan to get the student to school consistently. Your child's success is important to us and we want them to share in the experiences throughout the whole school day.

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 1B, Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by the Principal when a student has at least five (5) days in which the student missed two or more periods unexcused in a school year, or who has missed five (5) or more school days unexcused in a school year so that the Principal and parents can meet to develop an action plan to improve student attendance.

## **ACADEMICS**

### Assessments/ District Determined Measures

Students will complete at least two benchmark assessments, which are tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, in Math and English Language Arts during the school year. These assessments help us determine if important skills and concepts have been mastered and help inform instructional practices.

### Homework

Learning is a lifelong process that involves not only the students and teachers, but parents/guardians as well. Homework assignments are a critical part of the learning process and curriculum and aim to:

Reinforce and extend upon material taught during the day;

Encourage more in-depth study of specific topics at a pace and time appropriate for each student.

At the elementary level sharing literacy with your child is very important and 20 minutes of daily reading time can make a huge difference in their vocabulary development and critical thinking. We encourage you to share in the reading experience with your child by reading to them for 20 minutes each day, for example with them, and alongside them. We encourage all students to use their Agenda to write down all homework assignments given every day in their classes. In addition to reading, your child may have an additional time to complete work. We generally use the 10 minute rule for each grade level. (Kindergarten: 10 minutes, Grade 1: 20 minutes, Grade 2: 30 minutes and Grades 3 and 4: 40 minutes)

### Report Cards

Report cards are sent home three times per year for students in grades 1 and up. Kindergarten report cards are issued twice per year. Good communication between parents and teachers by means of conferences and reports are essential in understanding the children's needs and their progress in school.

### Grading

Teachers assign grades to report all aspects of a student's classroom performance: effort, achievement, homework, class work, and tests as well as special requirements that vary from class to class. Teachers should make expectations clear to students as well as learning objectives.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

## Parent-School Communication

We encourage parents to visit and become active in the school! Please feel free to contact your child's teacher with any compliments or concerns as soon as they arise. Teachers are available through the district's email system or by phoning the main office at 978-249-2406. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns of learning or social experiences at school.

### Open House

Open House will be held within the first month of school. This is an opportunity for students and parents to visit classrooms on an informal basis and learn about school programs, curriculum and instruction.

### Parent Conferences

A formal Parent-Teacher conference will be held once a year. This conference provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to exchange information in all areas that affect a student's school performance. This sharing should lead to insights that foster the child's growth and development. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity for parents to learn about their children's experiences.

## ***Parent/Teacher Organizations & Councils***

### Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in our PTO. This group meets monthly to provide enrichment opportunities for students and build community through planning and organizing family involvement activities.

### School Improvement Council

Parents and community members are vital parts of the council to work alongside teachers, and the building principal to review and update the School's Improvement Plan each year. If you are interested or considering becoming a member of the council, please contact the school through email or phone.

### Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Each elementary school in the district welcomes parents/guardians of children with disabilities to consider participation in our district's Parent Advisory Council. Membership is open to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.

## STUDENT LIFE/ SCHOOL OPERATIONS

### ACES- All Children Experience Success

1. I will show respect school property and the property of others
2. I will treat others with kindness
3. I will use nice hands and feet
4. I will help others learn by being quiet in the halls
5. I will always be cooperative and do my best work

### Computer Use Policies

#### Students shall:

1. Be provided the opportunity to gain entry into a file, either to read or change information or transfer files that are appropriate for learning.
2. Treat all forms of technology appropriately and use delicate hands at all times.
3. Positively use technology to enhance their learning experience.
4. NOT Access, download, display, transmit, produce, generate, copy or propagate any material that is obscene or pornographic material; that advocates illegal acts, that contains ethnic slurs, or racial epithets; or that discriminates on the basis of gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, disability or age.
5. Access the Internet only with positive adult supervision, and notify a teacher immediately if you come across inappropriate content.
6. Be aware not to share passwords and information that would allow others to gain access into individual accounts.

### Internet Use Policies

Students must abide by all District and School Internet Use Policies and must have a signed contract on file in the office in order to use the internet.

Internet access is coordinated through a complex association of government agencies and regional networks. The operation of the Internet relies heavily on the proper conduct of the users, who must adhere to strict guidelines. The district staff has the right and obligation to monitor student internet activities. Please remember that internet access at school is a privilege, not a right.

If a student violates any of the district's acceptable use rules, applicable state and federal laws, or posted classroom and district policies, the student may be subject to the loss of access or privileges and any other district disciplinary options as determined by the administration.

### Acceptable Use

- Students must use the Internet only for legitimate educational purposes.
- Students must access the Internet only with adult supervision.
- Notify a teacher or the computer technician immediately if you come across inappropriate content.

#### Unacceptable Use

- Threatening or obscene material is prohibited.
- Accessing other student's accounts
- Use the technology to create a negative school experience for classmates and other ACES students.

#### Daily Schedules

Individual school schedules are available at the schools. It is important that you note the times your child can arrive to school, when breakfast begins and dismissal times and procedures. All students are dismissed at 12:00 on half days. All students going somewhere different after school MUST have a note.

#### Food and Drinks

Students are provided with snack time at school in the AM and some in the PM. Acceptable snacks can be sent in to eat during those times. Growing bodies and growing minds do best with healthy snacks to include veggie sticks, fresh fruit, granola bars, and protein rich items such as cheese sticks or yogurt. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and disposing of trash (especially when eating outdoors). Carbonated beverages are not allowed at school for snack or lunch. We provide guidelines for food at school.

**Please be conscious and courteous of food allergies at school and in your child's classroom. Many students have food allergies that can be life threatening.**

#### Electronic Devices

Cell phones are primarily allowed for emergency use only. The student's cell phone MUST remain in the child's backpack or with the teacher at all times. If a student is using a cell phone and does not have permission the device will be confiscated and sent home with the student at the end of the day. The school district cannot be responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen cell phones or electronic devices.

#### Field Trips

School field trips are scheduled throughout the year. Students generally leave school and visit a public area for educational purposes. Students are representing their school when they participate in one of these trips. When students participate in school sponsored field trips, they are expected to follow all school rules. All students have the opportunity to participate in field trips regardless of any special circumstances, including but not limited to special needs, lack of ability to fund the trip. Scholarships are often available to cover the cost of field trip for eligible families.

The building principal may choose to exclude a student from a field trip or special program due to poor behavior. Parents will be notified prior to the trip/program.

### Field Trip CORI

All volunteers and chaperones on a school trip must have a CORI form on record.

### Items delivered to school

If a member of your family needs to bring your possessions (instruments, lunch, homework) they will deliver your possessions to the main office. Parents are encouraged not to disrupt classes to deliver items. Please leave them at the office. Party invitations are not to be delivered if anyone in the classroom is excluded.

### Media Center

The Media Center is an area for learning. The print and non-print materials are meant for student study, research and browsing. We expect you to follow these guidelines:

- If you need to take materials out of the library, please check them out.
- When you are ready to leave the library, please check out at the desk.
- Please return all materials on time.
- Students are responsible to replace lost or damaged library books

### Lost and found

Misplaced articles should be turned in to the lost and found. Please check lost and found after lunch each day. Articles unclaimed after a period of time will be donated to the Salvation Army (November, February, May, June).

### Lunchroom procedures

We provide universal free breakfast and lunch for all elementary students. Students may choose to enjoy breakfast or lunch free of cost or bring food from home. Students will be sent to get their lunch after everyone is seated. Students may choose to purchase lunch, receive free or reduced lunch if they qualify, or bring their own. After getting their lunch, they are expected to be seated in the lunchroom. Lunch is a time to talk quietly with friends and relax a bit. Students are expected to treat our dining room as they would a nice restaurant.

- Please sit at the tables, not on the tables.
- Food stays on your plate or in your mouth.
- Pick up all trash from your table and from the floor area around your table.
- If something has spilled on your table or on the floor, please get paper towels to clean it up or ask for help.
- Talk with the people at your table, not people a distance away.
- Stay seated unless you are getting food or taking care of trash.
- Raise your hand to ask an adult permission to clear your tray.
- When you are done eating we ask that you return your trays and dispose of garbage.
- Remain at your table in the cafeteria until you are dismissed.

- If you need to leave the cafeteria for the restroom, you need to ask an adult for permission and take a pass
- Do not leave the cafeteria with open food.

Lunch menus go home at the beginning of each month and are posted on the district website. We provide universal free breakfast and lunch. This includes one meal per student. Students may choose to purchase a second meal or additional milk. Checks are payable to 'Athol School Lunch Program'. Please put payment into a sealed envelopes with your child's name and grade.

Pets and Animals The use of pets and animals in the classroom can be a valuable educational experience. However, the very presence of such animals creates the potential for health concerns. Permission must be received from the Principal. Students who bring pets and animals into the classroom to share must be accompanied by a parent. Pets are not allowed on buses.

### **Rules of Dress-**

We consider school our place of learning for students as well as staff. It is important that we all dress in ways that make it possible to do our work well. This means wearing clothing that is comfortable, safe, clean, and not distracting to others. Specifically, we require that:

- Students must wear appropriate footwear at all times.
- Students may not wear items of potential safety concern. (ie. Roller blade type shoe) Administration will make a decision as to what may be unsafe.
- Students may not wear hats, hoods, caps, bandannas while in the building.
- Students may not wear clothing that contains "obscenities, fighting words, incitement or defamation on them." (A guide to Rights and Responsibilities of Massachusetts Students, page 21.)
- If your dress is inappropriate we will have you call home for a change of clothes or we will provide a change of clothes for you.

**Winter Weather Wear:** Students must wear winter coats, boots, hats and mittens in order to participate in recess during cold weather. Students that wish to play in the snow must also wear snow pants/suits. Students choosing not to wear appropriate clothing to school must play in designated area(s).

### **School Closings/Delayed Openings**

In the event of a storm or hazardous road conditions or other emergencies requiring schools to be closed will be announced over radio stations or listed on the following television stations WCAT (700) AM, 99.9 FM in Orange, WSRS (96.1 FM) in Worcester, WJDF (97.3) in Orange, WWLP, TV 22 Springfield, WGGB TV 40 Springfield, WCVB TV 5, and WBZ (TV4) in Boston. Parents may also opt to be included in the One Call Now to get telephone messages about school closings.

### **Student Release Procedures**

If it is necessary for your child to leave school during the day, he/she will need to be excused by the classroom teacher and signed out in the office by the adult picking the child up. Children will

only be released to adults listed on the registration form or with a note from parent/guardian. Adults picking up children may be asked for identification if school staff does not know them.

#### Visitation Procedures for Parents, Volunteers, and Guests

In the interest of keeping our school safe, we are highlighting our procedures for visiting our school. We would ask that when entering our school, visitors ring the bell at the entrance door, buzz in, sign in at the office and wear a guest tag. Teachers are to expect no one show up in their rooms without prior arrangements having being made. If you are dropping off your child, please do so quickly and without interrupting the classroom. When you drop off items or materials for your child, please leave it at the office and they will be given to your child. Our students' safety is our number one concern.

\*We ask that when you come to school with your child at drop off or dismissal that you do not go to the classroom with your child. There are appropriate places to meet your child. If you need to go to the classroom please sign in at the office and wear a visitor's badge.

#### Written Notes

Children should bring a "school note" or written permission by parents for:

- an early dismissal (to be released only to authorized individual at the office)
- going home other than the usual manner.
- going to an after school activity
- excusing child for absence from school for any reason
- tardiness
- going with someone other than parent after school

Please make all arrangements for students ahead of time. Calling in instructions for your child or the teacher is disruptive to the school day. The office is hectic especially at dismissal time; we do our best, but cannot guarantee that your directions are relayed to the child or teacher. Only call with a change in your child's dismissal procedure in the event of an emergency. All other instructions should be sent to the office via a note in the morning. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Bus Rules

Please read the bus rules outlined below and adhere to them whenever you ride on a school bus. All students will practice bus evacuation procedures twice during the school year. These rules are for anytime your child is riding on the bus.

### Waiting for the Bus

- Students should be at their bus stops ten minutes before the published pick-up time.
- Use common sense around roadways and avoid crossing streets when possible.
- Do not move toward the bus to board until the bus has come to a full and complete stop.
- Appropriate behavior is expected at the bus stop.

### Riding on the bus

- Students are to be seated quietly at all times while buses are in motion and cannot change seats.
- Sit with your back against the seat and feet in front of you- no feet in the aisles
- Do not eat food while you are on the bus.
- Nothing is to be thrown either on the bus or out the windows.
- Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.
- All body parts (hands, arms, etc.) must remain in the bus at all times.
- No switching seats or moving while the bus is in motion.
- Use appropriate language and volume.

### Unloading from the bus

- Do not leave your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
- Again, obey any directions issued by the driver.
- Leave the bus quickly but in a courteous manner without pushing any other pupils.
- If you must cross a street as you leave the school bus, be sure to walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus. If you get too close to the front of the bus, the driver will not be able to see you, and a serious accident could occur.
- Again, be sure to observe all safety precautions as you travel from your bus stop to your home.

### Loss of riding privileges

- Students engaging in unsafe or inappropriate behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a period of time. Any such suspension will be determined by the school principal.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

### Child Study Teams

Each elementary school within the district has a child study team which consists of members of the faculty and the building principal. This team discusses students who may be experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties in school. Parents and teachers may refer any student experiencing said difficulties. This may result in additional strategies to ensure student support, including but not limited to examining a student's progress in relation to grade level curriculum standards using a tiered system of support or Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. MTSE is a general education process of providing high-quality, scientifically-researched instructional practices based on your child's needs, monitoring your child's progress, and adjusting instruction & interventions based on your child's response rate of success. The school district endorses a three step process of identifying student needs. This process is followed by a tiered approach to intervening. Depending on the significance of a student's learning difference and the effectiveness of tiered interventions, this approach may result in the development of a district curriculum accommodation plan, a positive behavioral intervention and support plan, the

development of a 504 accommodation plan if a student has a substantial impairment, or possibly a referral for evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education.

### MTSS Model/ Tiered Systems of Support

**Step 1: *Formal Assessments***-We assess every child at least twice a year in reading and math. We utilize a range of formative and summative assessment data to track how students are doing in comparison to benchmark expectations.

**Step 2: *Analyze Student Data***-We examine these assessment results to identify the learning needs of all students.

**Step 3: *Provide Differentiated Instruction***-A variety of instructional strategies are used to teach students with different learning styles and rates. This instruction is delivered through a three-tier approach:

Tier 1- involves the classroom teacher using different strategies and additional or different materials to assist student learning. If a child is not progressing as expected, they will need to spend some additional time receiving Tier 2 support.

Tier 2- happens beyond the core instruction already occurring in reading and math. We provide additional small group instruction 3-4 days per week for 20 minutes. Sometimes children need additional and more frequent help to meet standards. If that is the case, we will need to look at Tier 3 interventions.

Tier 3- involves an individualized intervention plan (4-6 weeks in length) that will be developed for the child. Instruction will be tailored to specific learning goals.

### English Language Education

Athol Royalston Schools provides English language instruction and support for students whose native language is not English. Instruction is provided outside the regular classroom in a small group setting or on an individual basis. English language learners (ELL students) study language appropriate materials to increase their English language reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher collaborates with the classroom teacher and sends home quarterly reports. If your family speaks a language other than English and you believe your child needs English language support, please contact your child's classroom teacher or building principal. They will notify the ESL teacher so services can be scheduled.

### Guidance Department

If you need to see the guidance counselor please make arrangements with your classroom teacher or the counselor. If it is urgent you may speak to the Principal. The guidance staff is shared among buildings and not always readily accessible. Often they are dealing with children in crisis. The counselors are here for your children. If something is happening with your child that may affect them at school, please know that you may call your child's counselor at any

time. They will provide any assistance that you and/or your child may need during a difficult time at home or school.

School wide academic support (TITLE I) Some of our elementary schools receive Title I Federal Grant aid based on enrollment numbers and federal guidelines. These funds are used to provide academic assistance to students who are identified as at-risk or unable to meet the state's content and performance standards in literacy.

TITLE I- Right to Know Provision The Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires all local education agencies (LEA) to notify parents of all children in all Title I schools that they have the right to request and receive timely information on the professional qualifications of their children's classroom teachers. This notice must be sent at the start of each school year. The notice does not itself contain the teacher information; it simply tells parents the types of information they may request. At a minimum, if a parent requests it, LEA/school must report:• Whether the teacher has met state qualifying and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher is teaching;• Whether the teacher is teacher under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;• The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, including the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and• Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessional and, if so, their qualifications. In addition, if a child is assigned, or taught by, a teacher who is not "highly qualified" for four or more consecutive weeks, the parents must receive timely notice. These and other communications with parents must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practical, in a language the parents can understand. According to ED guidance, if there is no other way to provide information, it should be provided in oral translation. Requests must be in writing to the principal. This applies only to Title I schools. "

### Special Education

Athol Royalston Schools provide special education services in accordance with IDEA and CMR 28.00. Students may be referred for a special education evaluation following modifications to the regular classroom program and a pre-referral meeting at the building level. A student is determined eligible for services if he/she has a qualifying disability and requires specially designed instruction or the provision of a related services. The educational team will write an Individualized Educational Program, which defines the type and frequency of services. Our schools provide special education services in the regular classroom whenever possible. Specialists work with children in their own classrooms to help them achieve success.

### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a broad civil rights law that protects the handicapped or disabled individuals in programs that receive federal funds. Under this Act, a qualified disabled person is "one who has had a physical or mental disability which substantially limits a major life activity or, has a record of such or is regarded as disabled by others." Major life activities include the ability to care for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working. A disability need only limit one major life

activity for an individual to be eligible. Typically, students with disabilities who do not qualify for special education under IDEA 2004 or IDEA do qualify under Section 504. These disabilities might include students with Attention Deficit Disorder (AD/HD), students with AIDS, heart conditions, and other physical disabilities such as severe asthma, juvenile diabetes, severe arthritis, and cerebral palsy, etc. All of these conditions under 504 allow a student to receive the necessary related services to make their education comparable to non-disabled students.

Services given to students under section 504 are considered the responsibility of regular education, as they are not in need of basic skills help and can function with adjustments in the regular classroom. Many of the specific regulations found in IDEA 2004 or IDEA do not apply to Section 504. However, the due process rights of students and parents or guardians are protected and a specific grievance procedure must be in place including the right to mediation or an impartial hearing and the right to be represented by an attorney. If students are thought to have a disability under Section 504, they have a right to an evaluation. A team knowledgeable about the student will make recommendations regarding modifications and/or placement in the least restrictive environment. A written plan must be developed documenting the presence of a disability, which limits a major life activity, and a statement of the adjustments that will be made.

#### Tutoring

If your child has to be out of school for an extended period of time (exceeding 10 school days) due to a serious medical issue than the school district may be able to provide short term tutoring. Please contact the Principal as soon as possible if your child has a medical condition that will prevent or otherwise limit his or her daily school attendance. The school district wants to work with family to maintain continuity in learning and to minimize the educational impact that could occur from any loss of instructional time.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY AND LEGAL NOTIFICATIONS**

#### Compliance Statement:

The Athol-Royalston School District will not discriminate in their educational programs, activities, or employment practices on the basis of color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation and/or disabilities under the provisions of Title IX and Title VI of the 1872 Educational Amendment; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

#### FIRE PLANS AND DRILLS

##### Fire/Building Evacuation Plans

- Each room has displayed a conspicuous and well-marked evacuation plan map.

##### Fire Drill Procedures

- We ask that you respond to each fire drill as though an actual fire existed. All students and staff are to follow all fire drill procedures without exception. The objective of the fire plan and drill is to clear the entire building with no confusion and no injury as quickly and safely as possible.

- At the sound of the fire alarm all students will rise and exit the classroom according to the fire exit plan.
- Close all windows and doors if the teacher or staff member instructs you to do so.
- The teacher or staff member will escort the group from the classroom according to the fire plan.
- The last person out of each room needs to close the door.
- Walk quickly and silently.
- During a fire drill groups of students may be rerouted. In this instance, please listen for alternative instructions from your teacher or other adult.

#### General Conduct during Drills

- All students will obey the instructions of staff members without exception.
- Students are to remain quiet throughout a fire drill.
- When outside the building, all walks and roadways must remain clear.
- All students will wait in groups with the adult supervisor for the signal to return to the building.

In the event that there is an emergency situation at one of the schools or in town, we ask that parents please think about the safety of all students. We ask that you call the school first to find out what the procedures are, if you are unable to reach someone, please call Central Office. You can be assured that we will be working on keeping all children safe at all times. Having parents arrive to dismiss students at this time causes more chaos and confusion. We will keep you updated anyway possible on the situation.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

### **Health Office Procedures**

Students who are ill or injured must receive a pass from their teacher, and report to the Nurse's Office or the Main Office if the school nurse is unavailable. If the school nurse or administration finds it necessary to dismiss a student due to health reasons such as illness or accident, a parent/guardian will be notified. A parent/guardian or authorized person must pick up the student at the main office and sign them out.

It is extremely important that our school office have an accurate and current emergency contact list. If your family's home or work phone numbers change or your address changes, please notify the school right away so that we are able to reach them.

### **Medication at school**

Ideally, all medication should be given at home. If the physician feels it is necessary for the student to receive medication during school hours, the school must receive the following before we begin to give *any* medicine at school, both over the counter and prescription medication:

1. A written, signed, dated, note from the parent.
2. A written, signed, dated, note from the physician.
3. Medicines should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container by parent or guardian. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty day supply of the medicine should be delivered to the school. No student should carry any medication.

All medication must be kept in the nurse's office.

Field trips - for a student to have medication available for field trips they must have the above completed forms on file in the health office. Please note: inhalers, EpiPens and as needed medications should have MD orders to include consent for self-administration.

### **Health Screening**

- Vision screening will be conducted annually for all elementary students.
- Hearing screening is conducted annually for students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade
- Body Mass Index (BMI) screening will be conducted annually for 1st and 4th grade students. BMI is a measure used to show a person's weight for height and age. It is a tool that is used to determine possible health risks. Parent or guardian should notify the school nurse in writing by November 1st, should they feel that this screening is not necessary.
- Physical exams are required for Kindergarten and 4th grade students. The completed physical should be returned to the nurse to be filed in the student's permanent health record. This physical is best done by your family physician, who has a comprehensive knowledge of your child's health. If this requirement poses a financial hardship for you the school physician, can do the physical on your child at school. A physical exam is required on all new students within the year of transfer and upon special request.
- The parent or guardian of any student with an area of concern discovered during these screenings shall be notified in writing for follow-up and/or evaluation.

### **Pediculosis - Head Lice**

Pediculosis head checks will be done periodically throughout the school year as needed. Those found to have lice will have parental notification to include education. Students will be sent home for treatment if live lice are found. Follow up will be done. Additional intervention will be addressed on an individual basis.

### **Drugs, Alcohol, Intoxicants, Smoking**

Smoking of any kind including a nicotine delivery device or vaping, is not permitted on school grounds. All medications and drugs prescribed by a physician must be dispensed only under the supervision of the school health office.

### **Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements for School**

Under state law, in order for a student to enter/attend school, the student must have received for:

#### **Entry into Kindergarten:**

- A. At least five (5) DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) immunizations
- B. At least four (4) polio immunizations
- C. Two (2) MMR (Measles, mumps and rubella) immunizations
- D. Three (3) Hepatitis B immunizations
- E. Two (2) varicella (chicken pox) immunizations or Proof of disease
- F. Lead test with results

#### **Entry into Preschool:**

- A. At least four (4) DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus) immunizations.
- B. At least three (3) polio immunizations.
- C. One (1) MMR (Measles, mumps and rubella) immunizations
- D. Three (3) Hepatitis B immunizations
- E. One (1) varicella (chicken pox) immunization or proof of disease
- F. One (1) to Four (4) Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type B)

## **BULLYING POLICY**

The complete Bullying Policy is available online at <http://www.arrsd.org/>. Please contact the building principal if you have any questions or concerns.

### **PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Acts of bullying, which include cyber bullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or

5. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyber bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### **Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

### **Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation**

#### **1. Safety**

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary. The principal or designee will

implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

## 2. Obligations to Notify Others

a. Notice to parents or guardians. Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School or District. If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement. At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

1. Investigation. The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee will remind the alleged aggressor, target, and witnesses that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee will consult with legal counsel about the investigation. (Align this with school or district procedures.)

1. Determinations. The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the student's teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

### **RELATIONSHIP OF BULLYING LAW TO OTHER LAWS**

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the school or district, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. Nothing in the Plan prevents the school or district from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½, other applicable laws, or local school or district policies in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

In order to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment all students are expected to meet our code of conduct standards. The District assumes the responsibility to provide every student with an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension whether in-school, out-of-school, or expulsion.

Consequences for behavioral infractions may include, but are not limited to:

Loss of Privilege	Apology of Action
Parent/Guardian Phone Call	After School Detention
Community Service	Office Detention
In- School Suspension	Out of School Suspension

The building principal will be in contact with a parent or guardian if a disciplinary action is being taken.

Behaviors listed below are considered serious and will result in disciplinary actions that could include loss of privilege as well as school suspension, and/or expulsion.

- Threats, Harassment or Bullying
- Tardiness to school, tardiness to class
- Truancy from class or part of a class
- Forged absence note or dismissal note
- Forged signature on any school-related document such as hall pass, note from home, etc.
- Disruption in class or out of class
- Lunch period misconduct
- Refusal to follow direct instructions in disruptive or conflict situations
- Unauthorized possession or use of lighters, matches, or other flaming devices
- Misconduct on field trips
- Misconduct on school buses or at school bus stops
- Improper or disruptive conduct such as verbal harassment, inappropriate language, pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, wrestling in hallways, classrooms or other areas
- The use of derogatory language referring to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, or ethnicity.

### **Fire Safety Rules**

- Students may not be in possession of a lighter or matches
- Students may not ignite matches, lighters, or other flaming devices.
- Students may not ignite any material except under supervised, experimental conditions.
- Setting fire to any material or property will be considered a criminal act -- arson.
- Students may not ignite or possess any incendiary device, firecracker, sparkler, etc.

- Setting off a false fire alarm will be considered a criminal act as well as a violation of school rules.

#### Police Action

If a student is extremely disruptive or has seriously broken the law, the administration of the school may call the police. The police will interview students at their own discretion. Parents will be notified if the police need to be called in response to their child's behavior or actions.

#### Property Damage

It is against the law to deface or damage public school property or the property of others. Students will be held accountable for damage costs. Students need to respect school property during the school day and after hours.

#### Malicious Physical Abuse or Assault

- A student who abuses others and with whom normal school disciplinary action is not effective may be subject to a complaint filed by school officials with District Court.
- A student who clearly assaults another may be subject to a complaint filed with District Court.
- Any intentional act which results in the serious abuse or injury of another may be considered an assault or assault and battery and treated accordingly.
- A student who physically assaults a school employee or volunteer staff member (tutor, monitor, helper, substitute teacher, etc.) may be, in accordance with state law, expelled from school.
- In school suspension can be administered in place of a suspension at the discretion of the principal.

#### Weapons

All weapons including but not limited to knives or any kind of guns are banned from school. This includes penknives and exacto knives. Any item that may be used to cause harm is also considered a weapon (rocks, stones, sticks, chains, etc.). A student in possession of any "weapon" will be immediately removed from class and/or school. Toy weapons are also not allowed at school and will be confiscated and returned to the student's parents. A toy may result in a disciplinary action including suspension from school.

#### Expulsion from school

State law provides the principal with the authority to recommend the expulsion of any student from school under the conditions stated below.

- 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 94C, including but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- 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.
- Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (1) or (2) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.
  - After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (1) or (2); provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that, in his/her opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.
  - 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.

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

#### Disciplining Students not yet Eligible for Special Education:

These procedural requirements must be applied to all students not yet determined to be eligible for special education:

"If, prior to the disciplinary action, the district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

1. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
2. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
3. School district staff had expressed concern that the student had a disability.

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District having no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

## Disciplining Students with Special Education Needs

The District shall make appropriate procedures for the discipline of with disabilities and students with Section 504 Accommodation Plans. All discipline of special education students shall be in accordance with the provisions of 20 U.S.C. § 1415(k) and 34 CFR §§ 300.530-300.536.

Accordingly, an underlying principle of IDEA 2004 is that a student who has been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individualized Education Plan must be treated in a manner that most resembles his/her peers who do not have special needs while at the same time considering his/her unique programming needs. The following procedures must be followed with respect to the suspension (including in-school suspension) of any child on and I.E.P.

1. The I.E.P. for every special needs student will indicate whether the student is expected to meet regular discipline code or if a modification is needed. If a modified discipline is required, it will be written into the I.E.P.
2. The Principal will notify the Director of Pupil Services of the suspendable offense of a special needs student and a record will be maintained of such notifications.
3. When it is known that the suspension(s) of a special needs student will accumulate 10 days in a school year, a review of the I.E.P. will be held to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. The TEAM will make a finding as to the relationship between the student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition, special education placement, or implementation of the I.E.P., and either:
4. Design a modified program for the student, or write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any needed modification of the I.E.P. relative to the discipline code expectations.
5. The Director of Special Education shall notify the Department of Education as required by state policy.

## **DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS**

### **NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION**

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;

f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;

- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

### **APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

### **EMERGENCY REMOVAL**

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's

judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10**

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a

meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

### **SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H½**

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

#### **Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff**

A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

#### **Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint**

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Principal if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Principal will also provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the Superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The

Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

### **Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency**

The Principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

### **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT POLICY**

All persons have the right to be free from sexual harassment; therefore, sexual harassment in any form is strictly forbidden in school, on school grounds or at school related activities.

DEFINITION: Sexual harassment is a form of employee and/or student misconduct, which undermines the integrity of the educational mission of the Athol-Royalston Regional School Department. All employees/students must be allowed to work/learn in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment refers to behavior which is not welcome, which is personally offensive, which debilitates morale and which therefore interferes with work effectiveness and individual learning. Sexual harassment in the educational setting is also prohibited by law and is defined as follows with respect to students: "sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other 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 the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services, or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably intervening with an individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment." (M.G.L. Chapter 151C) If someone

is either touching you or saying things of a sexual nature and it makes you feel uncomfortable, you have a right to demand that they stop. We can and will help you in these situations.

**REPORTING:** Any student who believes he/she is a victim of sexual harassment should talk to his/her building principal or another adult in a position of authority in the school as soon as possible. Students should avoid trying to solve the problem of sexual harassment alone. All persons shall promptly report knowledge of actual or reasonably suspected sexual harassment to the building principal or the designee. The principal or the designee will investigate all complaints and follow through appropriately.

#### Title IX/Chapter 622 Regulations (for incidents of discrimination)

In accordance with Title IX regulations of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Chapter 622 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, Acts of 1971, the Athol-Royalston Regional School District re-states its adherence to the following policies: Title IX states "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal funds." Chapter 622 of the General Laws States: "No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion and national origin" as well as sexual orientation and/or disabilities.

A formal complaint may be filed with the Title IX hearing officer, The Director of Educational Services: Elizabeth Ervin, 1062 Pleasant Street, Athol, MA 01331, 978 249-2400. The Section 504 Coordinators are the building principals.

#### ***COMPLAINT PROCEDURE ---- INFORMAL PROCESS FOR STUDENTS***

In determining whether an alleged incident constitutes sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below, unless the Title IX Coordinator is the subject of the complaint.

- Any student of the District who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is to report the incident(s) to any administrator, Title IX Coordinator-Elizabeth Ervin, or directly to the Superintendent. The administrator and/or Superintendent are to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator. A written record of the complaint will be made by the party receiving the complaint. A separate file system will be maintained, apart from the student's personal record, regarding these complaints and as to all matters relating to the complaints.
- If the alleged harassment involves the Title IX Coordinator-Elizabeth Ervin, the Superintendent of Schools will act as the Title IX Coordinator.

- If the alleged harassment involves the Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary of the School Committee will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
- The Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator-Elizabeth Ervin will look at the totality of the circumstances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. They will attempt to resolve the problem by conferring with both parties in order to obtain a clear understanding of the facts. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible.
- Students may be accompanied, at any phase of this process or subsequent hearing before the Committee, by a parent, guardian or representative of their choosing. Parents will be immediately notified by the Title IX Coordinator of the existence of a student's report of sexual harassment.
- The Title IX Coordinator-Elizabeth Ervin will explain each phase of the Informal and Formal Complaint Process to a student who wishes to file a complaint and will assist the student in the processing of the complaint. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the student of additional forums for resolution of the complaint such as the Office of Civil Rights (O.C.R.) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (M.C.A.D.).
- Under normal circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator's investigation will be completed within five working days of the initial complaint. Upon completion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator- Elizabeth Ervin shall issue his/her findings in writing to the student and the alleged harasser.

### ***COMPLAINT PROCEDURE --- FORMAL PROCESS FOR STUDENTS***

- A complainant may file a formal complaint immediately or may do so after the Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator's efforts to reach a settlement under the informal process have proven unsuccessful.
- The complaint will state clearly and concisely the complainant's description of the incident and it will also indicate any remedy sought. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. The Superintendent's office will send the respondent a copy of the complaint within five working days after it is received. A separate file system shall be maintained as to all matters relating to the complaint. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent possible.
- The respondent will have ten working days to respond in writing. This statement will contain full and specific references to each claim in the complaint, admitting, denying or explaining the complainant's allegations. The respondent must sign his or her statement which will then be appended to the original complaint. Within three working days, the Superintendent's office will forward both statements to the complainant and the respondent.

- There will be two modes of resolution for formal complaints. A complaint may be settled through mediation or through a hearing. If the complainant and respondent agree to pursue mediation, a date mutually acceptable to both parties will be set within ten working days. If the mediation results in a mutually acceptable agreement, copies of the agreement will be forwarded to both parties. If the mediation does not result in an agreement, the case will be forwarded to the Superintendent for a hearing unless the Superintendent is the alleged harasser in which case the hearing will be before the Athol-Royalston Regional School Committee.
- When a hearing is requested, the Title IX Coordinator-Elizabeth Ervin will inform the Superintendent or the School Committee, as the case may be, and the case will be heard at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the School Committee pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law and/or before the Superintendent pursuant to M.G.L., c. 71, § 42.

### **FORMAL HEARING**

- The purpose of the Superintendent or School Committee Hearing is to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated, and, if so, to determine the appropriate consequences for the violation.
- Both parties will be given a full and fair hearing. The proceeding, although formal, is not a court proceeding and the Superintendent or School Committee is not bound by the procedures and rules of evidence of a court of law. In most instances, complainants and respondents will be expected to speak for themselves, although, if desired, each party may be accompanied by counsel or an advocate.
- The presiding officer of the hearing may have counsel present for purposes of assisting in the orderly conduct of the hearing and the questioning of witnesses. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to clarify the issues and to define the areas of disagreement. To encourage a fair and focused hearing, at the start of the proceedings the points of agreement and disagreement will be reviewed. The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will hear testimony and consider whether the School Committee Policy on Sexual Harassment has been violated, and, if so, will recommend appropriate consequences.
- The presiding officer will:
  1. ensure an orderly presentation of all evidence;
  2. ensure that the proceedings are accurately recorded by means of a tape or stenographic recording; and
  3. see that a decision is issued no later than ten working days after the conclusion of the hearing or, when written arguments are submitted, ten working days after their submission.

- The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will:
  1. conduct a fair and impartial hearing which ensures the rights of all parties involved;
  2. define issues of contention;
  3. receive and consider all relevant evidence which reasonable people customarily rely upon in the conduct of serious business;
  4. ask relevant questions of the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses if needed to elicit information which may be of assistance in making a decision; and
  5. ensure that the complainant and respondent have full opportunity to present their claims orally or in writing, and to present witnesses and evidence which may establish their claims.

### ***DECISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OR THE COMMITTEE***

- After all the evidence, testimony, and written arguments have been presented, the committee will convene for deliberations to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the policy has not been violated, that fact will be registered in the records of the hearing, and the written decision will be forwarded to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after completion of the hearing.
- In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the policy has not been violated, the Superintendent will issue a written decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.
- If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the charge of violating the District's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the hearing Committee will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Committee will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the Superintendent will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Superintendent will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

The findings of fact as well as the penalty and relief will be based solely on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing.

- The penalty should reflect the severity of the harassment. The penalties may include, but will not be limited to, any one or combination of the following: verbal admonition, written warning placed in the respondent's personnel file or student record, probation, suspension without pay, dismissal, demotion, or removal from administrative duties

within a department; students may be subject to suspension or expulsion proceedings following a finding that the policy has been violated. The Committee or Superintendent may also make appropriate recommendations, such as professional counseling, and may recommend relief for the complainant which reinstates and restores, as much as possible, the aggrieved party.

## SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

### 1. Statement of Intent:

It is the policy of Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of Section 504. Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools will not discriminate against its personnel or students because of a person's physical or mental disability. Athol Elementary Schools will also make reasonable adjustments wherever necessary for all employees or applicants with disabilities and students provided that any adjustments made do not require significant difficulty or expense. The Athol Elementary Schools policy of nondiscrimination applies to all personnel and employment practices (See ADA policies and practices) and all public preschool, elementary and secondary programs and activities.

### 1. Access to Programs and Services

The Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools will review all procedures used to identify student's eligibility under Section 504, and access to appropriate educational services. The principal is responsible for Section 504 for the Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools and has the complete support of management in the implementation of this program.

Any person having inquiries concerning the Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools compliance with Section 504 is directed to contact: Superintendent of Schools or Special Education Director, Athol-Royalston Regional School District, 250 South Main Street, Athol, MA 01331, (978) 249-2400. Athol-Royalston Elementary Schools will make every effort to ensure that all interested parties are informed about and assist in the implementation of Section 504.

Thank you for being an integral member of our elementary school community.  
We choose kindness and expect excellence for every student every day.