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**Athol Elementary Schools Student Handbook 2020-2021
Section II**

Section 2

Welcome to the Athol Community Elementary School (ACES) and the Royalston Community School (RCS). We are so happy to have you as part of our school communities. We look forward to providing a safe and happy learning environment while challenging all students to be their best.

It is our goal to provide excellent learning opportunities to the communities in which we serve and to meet the needs of all students. These early years are critical in the development of the social, emotional, and academic skills of students. We embrace each child as a whole child and fully consider all aspects of your child's development as a successful learner.

Our staff works collectively to provide consistent behavioral expectations through core values.

At ACES, our core values are being kind, safe and responsible.

Kind: Thinking of your actions and acting in a positive way that is mindful of others and self.

Safe: Actions that keep our bodies and others secure in one's surroundings.

Responsible: Taking ownership of our actions within the community of our school.

At RCS, Respectful, Cooperative, and Safe are the key components of our approach.

Respectful: Treating yourself, others, and property with thoughtful care and consideration

Cooperative: Working together to achieve individual and group goals

Safe: Taking care of ourselves and others to avoid physical, emotional, or other harm

Students are taught expected behaviors associated with these values as a part of the routines that structure their school day, including in the classroom, the cafeteria, the playground, the bus and in other areas in the school.

As we partner with students and their families, we are always looking for ways to make our schools better. We appreciate constructive feedback for this purpose. We look forward to a positive learning experience for all our students.

This Handbook provides important information for Parents/Guardians and Students. It is not intended to cover all policies, rules and regulations used to operate the schools. If you have any questions, please feel free to call your child's elementary school.

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2.A. General Rules and Procedures

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE TIMES: Students should arrive at school between 8:15 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. and report directly to their classroom. No student should arrive before 8:15 a.m. The school day ends at 3:05 p.m. Students should leave school by 3:05 p.m., unless they are under the direct supervision of an adult. All students are dismissed at 12:00 on half days.

At RCS, students who are dropped off and picked up are to use the main entrance to the school. Pickup will require a parent or authorized adult to come to the entrance before a student is released.

BUS RULES (District Policy JICC): Students must adhere to bus rules whenever they ride on a school bus. All students will practice bus evacuation procedures twice during the school year. If students violate bus rules, they may be asked to practice bus rules during their free time at school.

Riding on the Bus

- Students are to be seated quietly at all times while buses are in motion and cannot change seats.
- Students will sit with their back against the seat and their feet in front- no feet in the aisles.
- Students will NOT eat food while 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.
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion.
- Use appropriate language and volume.
- Students may be assigned a seat by the bus driver.

Unloading from the Bus

- Students should remain seated until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
- Students will follow the instructions of the bus driver.
- Students will leave the bus in a quick but courteous and safe manner.
- Students who must cross a street as they depart the school bus, must walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus.

LOSS OF RIDING PRIVILEGES INITIATED FROM THE BUS BEHAVIOR REPORT FORM: Students may be asked to practice bus riding skills during free time at school, such as recess, or during an alternative lunch. Students engaging in unsafe or inappropriate behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a period of time up to the remainder of the school year. There is one warning given before students may be removed from the bus. Such suspension will be initiated by the administration. During any suspension of bus privileges parents are responsible for transportation. It is expected that students will attend school; absences due to a lack of transportation will be unexcused.

CAR TRANSPORTATION: At ACES, families choosing to drive students to school or pick up students to transport home should use the community entrance parking lot for pickup and drop-off. This area is used for both morning drop off and afternoon pick up.

STUDENTS SHOULD NOT ARRIVE EARLIER THAN 8:15AM, unless an adult is available to supervise the student. It is unsafe to drop off unsupervised students prior to 8:15. The front door entrance is available for students with special circumstances as long as the office is notified of the need. Families will need to obtain a pick up number from the school's office that will be affiliated with students and their siblings, to hang in their car to readily identify the vehicle and foster efficiency when picking up students.

Please be sure the student is aware of his/her pick up number.

DELIVERING ITEMS TO STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS: If a member of a student's family needs to bring the student an item during school hours (instruments, lunch, homework) they will deliver the item(s) to the main office. Main office staff will ensure that items are delivered to the classroom with the least amount of disruption to the class. Party invitations are not to be delivered if anyone in the classroom is excluded.

DRESS CODE: 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. Closed toed shoes are required to use the playground area and the structures therein and are also required to participate in P.E. Class.
- Students may not wear items of potential safety concern. (i.e. Roller blade type shoe) Administration will make a decision as to what may be unsafe.
- Students may not wear hats, hoods, caps, or bandannas while in the building, except with teacher/admin. discretion that is clearly communicated to all staff.
- Students may not wear clothing that contains, including but not limited to: obscenities, fighting words, incitement or defamation.

If student dress is determined inappropriate by the building administration, we will call home for a change of clothes or we will provide a change of clothes.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Cell phones are primarily allowed for emergency use only. The student's cell phone must be turned off and 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. A second offense will warrant a parent or family member retrieving such device from the teacher/ front office. Cell phones are not allowed on field trips. Electronic devices may be used on the bus at the discretion of the driver, provided they are used to access appropriate content and do not cause disruption of those around the area.

LOST and FOUND: Please be aware that we collect a large amount of items in our lost and found within just a few months. Misplaced articles should be turned into the lost and found. Please have your children check the lost and found after lunch each day. Articles unclaimed will be donated to the Salvation Army (November, February, May, June).

LUNCH RULES:

- An expectation is that students must show respect to cafeteria workers and staff, following lunch supervisors' and cafeteria workers' directions in the food lines and at all times during lunch.
- Also, students must stay seated except to get lunch, return their tray, buy a snack, and at dismissal time.
- Students may raise their hand to request access to the bathroom or to ask other questions of cafeteria duty staff/teachers.
- All food should remain in the cafeteria. No food is allowed on the playground.

- All lunches must be eaten in the cafeteria, unless designated by the administration.
- Students should remain in the cafeteria during lunch and not be permitted in other areas during lunch, except when accompanied by an adult.
- Students may not throw, toss, or forcefully slide food or drinks.
- It is expected that students will clean up their area during lunch. If multiple infractions occur, students may be asked to practice cleaning up during other times of the day.
- Students must walk quietly to and from lunch staying to the right in the hallways.
- Students must follow all other school rules while in the lunchroom.
- Lunch menus are posted on the district website at: www.arrsd.org.

Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken when there is a violation of the lunch rules. All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the administration. These may range from a warning, to an alternative lunch, or even an in school or out of school suspension. Other consequences may be assigned by administration.

Currently, under US guidelines, breakfast and lunch are free for everyone community eligibility Provision (CEP). Should that change, the district will revert to applications for free/reduced lunch and our meals would fall under income guidelines (paid, free, and reduced). At no time would any child be denied a complete meal if money were owed.

MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS: Each morning begins with students making morning announcements using the PA system. Students lead the school community in the Pledge of Allegiance, and make brief announcements. Students remind the school community of the core values through the school motto.

PERSONAL ITEMS/TOYS: Personal items/toys must be stored during the school day. Whenever possible these items should be kept at home. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items/toys brought to school.

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 signed by the parent/guardian. Adults picking up children may be asked for identification if the school staff does not know them. Students will be called to the office when the person releasing them arrives at school. This maximizes their time on learning so that no student is waiting for extended periods in the office.

VISITORS TO SCHOOLS: In the interest of keeping our schools safe, we require visitors to the building to ring the bell at the entrance door, buzz in, sign in at the office, and wear a guest badge.

For classroom visits, visitors must have made prior arrangements to visit classrooms.

Addressing students who are tardy and students who require early dismissals will take place in the Main Office to minimize classroom disruptions. Our students' safety is our number one priority.

WRITTEN NOTES: Children should bring a written permission by parents for:

- An early dismissal (to be released only to an authorized individual at the office).
- Going home other than in the usual manner, including going with someone other than a parent after school.
- Going to an after school activity.
- Written notice for an absence from school for any reason; may not be accepted to “excuse” absence, but will be kept on file as family communication regarding school absenteeism.
- Tardiness.

Please make all arrangements for students ahead of time. Calling in daily instructions for your child or the teacher should be avoided as it may be disruptive to time on learning. The school office may be especially busy at dismissal time and last minute changes may not be possible to accommodate. All changes in dismissal must be made prior to 2:45pm. Please 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.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: We expect all students to adhere to academic honesty and avoid any acts of dishonesty regarding their academic work. Cheating, tricking, or misleading regarding a student doing his/her own school work are all acts of dishonesty. Plagiarism is taking another person’s ideas, writings, or work, and passing it off as one’s own. Any form of cheating or plagiarism is an act of dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. All students involved in such dishonesty are in violation of this rule and are subject to disciplinary action.

Cheating/Plagiarism Includes:

- Copying of another student’s test paper or any other school assignment.
- Using material during a test not authorized by the person giving the test.
- Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in whole or part, the contents of a test or other assignment.
- Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself to take a test or complete an assignment.
- Bribing another person to obtain a test or other assignment that is to be administered.
- Securing copies of a test or answers to a test or other assignments in advance of a test or assignment.
- Copying or copy and pasting information from print or Internet sources without proper citation.

BENCHMARKS/TARGETS/ASSESSMENTS: Students are given benchmark assessments in Reading and Math three times per year. Students participate in state-mandated testing during the school year, such as MCAS. Other data is diligently collected to assure that students are making academic progress or receiving intervention to support such progress. Additionally, common formative assessments are given according to a district timeline. These assessments align with the curriculum adopted by the District.

CLUBS and ACTIVITIES: Various clubs and activities may be offered throughout the school year for either before or after school. Students will be made aware of and may participate in activities/clubs that are offered. School rules apply and infractions will be met with discipline as outlined for behavior infractions during the school day.

A current working phone number, as an emergency contact, is necessary in order for students to participate in clubs/activities.

FIELD TRIPS: Teachers will provide students with a permission slip for field trips. These forms must be returned to the teacher prior to the day of the field trip. Students are expected to follow all school rules when on a field trip. A student who has consistently demonstrated poor attendance, continual tardiness, attitude or behavior problems, or who has not completed the required work may not be permitted to go on a field trip. This decision is up to the school administration. Parents will be notified prior to the trip/program.

All volunteers and chaperones on a school trip must have a CORI form on record. CORI forms are available in the school office.

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

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 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 significant difference in their vocabulary development and critical thinking. We encourage you to share the reading experience with your child by reading with them and/or alongside them for 20 minutes each day. In addition to reading, your child may have additional time to complete work. We generally use the ten-minute rule for each grade level. (Kindergarten: 10 minutes, Grade 1: 10 minutes, Grade 2: 20 minutes, Grade 3: 30 minutes, Grade 4: 40 minutes)

LIBRARY/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 students to follow these guidelines when using these materials:

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

REPORT CARDS: Report cards are sent home three times per year for students in grades first through sixth. Kindergarten report cards are issued three times per year. Good communication between parents and teachers by means of conferences and report cards are essential in understanding the children's needs and their progress in 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 and learn about school programs and curriculum. This is a wonderful time for students to show off their school. Please be mindful, this is not a time for parent conferences.

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. Conferences are a wonderful opportunity for parents to learn about their children's experiences and to collaborate with teachers.

PARENT /TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS and COUNCILS:

- **Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)/Parent-Teacher Group (PTG)** - Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in our PTO/PTG. 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 principal via email or phone.
- **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)** - 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.

For those individuals participating in the Special Education Parent Advisory Council, duties include but are not 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 SEPAC 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.

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 of your child's school. Appointments must be made in advance for parent/teacher meetings.

2.B. Student Health and Well Being

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Our learning day begins at 8:30 a.m. Attendance will be taken daily and monitored carefully for each student. The elementary schools wish to partner with families and problem solve any barriers keeping students from attending. School meetings are designed for this purpose, along with accountability for school attendance that fosters student success.

The attendance protocol is as follows:

- A call is made home when a child is absent without an explanation.
- After three days of absences/tardy during the school year, a conversation is started between the school and the family about the importance of attendance that includes where the student falls in terms of the number of absences.
- Once a child has missed five days, families receive a letter, signed by the Principal. A referral may be made to a School Counselor.
- Upon the seventh absence, a meeting will be scheduled with the family and the Assistant Principal/Principal and/or School Counselor.
- When a child's record contains ten absences, a meeting with the Principal, School Counselor and

- Teacher is held for a clear demonstration of how the absenteeism is impacting the child's learning.
- Further steps may be filing with the Court for a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) or with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for educational neglect.

If your children arrive late to school, you must accompany them to the main office to sign in prior to them going directly to class. 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. If your child is unable to arrive at school on time, a meeting may be scheduled to develop an attendance plan that will help them to be successful.

Please inform your child's school, as soon as possible before 8:45 a.m., if your child will be absent due to illness or other reasons. As a school, we want every opportunity for your child to meet with success. As a school community, we will pay close attention to attendance and have every expectation that all students attend school on a regular and consistent basis.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION: The school office must have an accurate and current emergency contact for each student.

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 an authorized caregiver in the event of illness or accident. We reserve the right to initiate safety checks at the last known address if an active phone number is not on file. In emergency circumstances where the district is unable to connect with you, we may utilize our School Resource Officer by sending him to your home as part of the outreach effort.

FIRE DRILL PROCEDURES: Each room has displayed in a conspicuous and well-marked location an evacuation plan and map.

We ask that each student respond to every 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. The students will close all windows and doors if the teacher or staff member instructs them 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. Students are expected to walk quickly and silently. During a fire drill groups of students may be rerouted to available exits. In this instance, students should listen for alternative instructions from their 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 the Central Office. You can be assured that we will be working on keeping all children safe at all times.

In an effort to minimize confusion, we ask that parents not dismiss at this time. We will keep you updated on the situation as we are able.

GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT: 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 reach out to 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.

Family transitions often impact a child's presentation and/or performance at school, please notify the Guidance Department of such changes so that your child may be more closely monitored for support around school success. Your family's information will be kept confidential unless it impacts the safety of your child.

HEALTH ISSUES: The school nurse's function is to establish a comprehensive school health program consistent with the Massachusetts guidelines, regulations and statutes governing nursing, school health, and local school district policy. Sharing information on health changes and possible needs assists us in addressing areas that might be possible barriers for each child.

HEALTH OFFICE PROCEDURES: Students who are ill or injured must receive a pass from their teacher, and report to the Nurse's Office. 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.

HEALTH SCREENINGS: Screenings that take place throughout the school year include the following

- 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. Parents or guardians should notify the school nurse in writing by November 1st, if they feel that this screening is not necessary.
- Postural screening for scoliosis and kyphosis will be performed annually in grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 as per Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines. The school nurse will perform the screenings with parental consent. Parents or guardians of students with abnormal findings will be notified and referred in writing.
- Physical exams are required for Pre-Kindergarten, 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 conduct a physical examination of your child at school. A physical exam is required for all new students within the first year of transfer and upon special request.

ILLNESS/INJURY: 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. At no time should a teacher administer treatment to a student. 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. Early dismissal rules must be followed at this point.

MASSACHUSETTS IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS: Immunizations are reviewed periodically by the school nurse. Parent(s) or Guardian(s) are notified regarding any immunization deficiencies and follow-up is carried out to ensure compliance with state regulations. Any child not meeting these requirements will be excluded from school. State surveys are completed annually for Kindergarten and 7th Grade Students.

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

Entry into Preschool:

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

Entry into Kindergarten:

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

MEDICALLY EXCUSED FOR PE: Medical excuses are required for those students who cannot participate in physical education classes. A parental note will suffice for one gym class. After that, a note from a physician with the medical diagnoses, specifying the length and extent of the excused absence, will be asked for submission.

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. This includes both over the counter and prescription medication:

- A written, signed, dated, note from the parent.
- A written, signed, dated, note from the physician.
- Medicines must be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container by the student's parent/guardian.

Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty (30) day supply of the medicine should be delivered to the school.

Students may not carry medication. All medication must be kept in the nurse's office.

Please note: inhalers, Epipens and as needed medications must have MD orders to include consent for self- administration.

MEDICATION FOR 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.

PEDICULOSIS - (Head Lice): In addressing Pediculosis (lice), head checks will be done periodically throughout the school year as needed. Parents of students found to have lice will be notified and will be provided with information regarding treatment. Students will be sent home for treatment if live lice are found. Follow up by the school nurse will be required prior to returning to the classroom. Additional intervention will be addressed on an individual basis.

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 to bring a pet and/or animal into the classroom to share must be received from the Principal and the pet and/or animal must be accompanied by the student's parent. Pets are not allowed on buses.

TUTORING: If your child has to be out of school for an extended period of time (exceeding 14 school days) due to a serious medical issue, 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 families to maintain continuity in learning and to minimize the educational impact that could occur from any loss of instructional time. Documentation by the medical practitioner overseeing the medical condition creating a barrier to school attendance will be needed to inform the school's decision.

USE OF THE ELEVATOR FOR MEDICAL REASONS: Use of the elevator is granted on a case by case basis. School administration will be consulted for permission to use the elevator unless a note from a medical professional is submitted.

WINTER WEATHER ATTIRE: Students must wear winter coats, boots, hats and mittens in order to participate in recess during cold weather conditions. Students who wish to play in the snow must also wear snow pants/suits. Students choosing not to wear appropriate clothing to school must play in the designated area(s). Please contact the school administration if the expense of appropriate outerwear is a hardship for your family.

2.C. Non-Discrimination

The Athol and Royalston Elementary Schools follow the ARRSD Non-Discrimination policies and procedures found in Section 1.C. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

2.D. Student Records Regulations

The Athol and Royalston Elementary Schools follow the ARRSD Student Records Regulations policies and procedures found in Section 1.D. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

2.E.. Equal Access

CHILD STUDY TEAMS: Each elementary school within the district has a child study team consisting of members of the faculty and the building administration. This team discusses students who may be experiencing academic and behavioral difficulties in school. Parents or 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 Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. MTSS 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.

MTSS MODEL/MULTI TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS): Many schools use a framework of interventions and supports designed to address behavioral and academic challenges. This framework, known as MTSS, helps schools to identify struggling students early so that they may receive assistance quickly.

- **Step 1: Formal Assessments** - Every child is assessed at least three times 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** - Assessments results are analyzed 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.

Because of the steps mentioned above, MTSS is an all-student initiative that provides a method of early identification and intervention that can help struggling students to catch up with their peers. As such, MTSS uses three tiers of support to assist all students at various levels. These three tiers include:

- **Tier 1:** This tier 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:** This happens beyond the core instruction already occurring in reading and math. We provide additional small group instruction. If that is the case, Tier 3 interventions are explored.
- **Tier 3:** This tier involves an individualized intervention plan that will be developed for the child. Instruction will be tailored to specific learning goals.

The school district endorses this three step process of identifying student needs for all students. Depending on the significance of a student's learning abilities, difference and the effectiveness of tiered interventions, this approach may or may not 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 an initial evaluation to determine if a student is eligible for special education services.

ENGLISH LEARNERS: ARRSD provides English language instruction and support for students whose native language is not English. English learners (EL 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 to address push-in and pull-out supports 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.

The district will work to identify needs that your family may have relevant to translating materials sent home and providing translation/translator services during meetings and other contacts.

SCHOOL WIDE ACADEMIC SUPPORT (TITLE I): Title I programs help ARRSD to provide additional instructional resources to help learners who struggle to make grade-level academic progress. Each school year, ARRSD receives funding from federal grant programs, like Title I and other programs to continue to engage students in meaningful, rigorous, and personalized learning experiences.

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, the 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 a 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.
- Whether the child is provided services by a 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. 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: ARRSD provides 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. Students are considered through the Child Study process prior to these referrals (Please see Section 1.E. of the Main Body handbook for more information on the Child Study Team process). A student is determined eligible for services if they have a qualifying disability and require specially designed instruction or the provision of a related service. The educational team will write an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which defines the type and frequency of services. Our schools provide special education services in the regular classroom whenever possible.

2.F. Technology Policies and Procedures

In addition to the Technology Policies and Procedures found in Section 1.F. of the Main Body portion of the handbook. The ARRSD Elementary Schools adhere to the following procedures.

COMPUTER USE POLICIES: When presented with the forms concerning computer usage and access, students and parents will be asked to sign these forms in order to access technology usage at school.

Violation of these usage rules will result in an immediate loss of computer privileges for anything unrelated to school content; assignments, assessments, practice sites. Administration will determine if paper copies of the school content activities may be delivered in paper format instead of computer based.

If a student violates any of the District’s Acceptable Internet Use Rules, or applicable state and federal laws, the student may be subject to the loss of computer privileges and any other district disciplinary options as determined by the administration.

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.

Administration will have final authority on usage of personal computers, pen drives, disks or other storage

devices.

2.G. Physical Restraints

The Athol and Royalston Elementary Schools follow the ARRSD Physical Restraints policies and procedures found in Section 1.G. of the Main Body of this handbook.

2.H. Student Discipline

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT: The Code of Conduct, annually reviewed by the School Council and approved by the School Committee, is designed to provide all members of the school community with clear expectations regarding student behavior along with specific consequences for the violation of these expectations. It is the school's goal for all students to come to school in a safe and orderly educational and social environment, and that they develop the necessary character, work ethic, and sense of personal responsibility to be successful in school and in life.

Students with behavior infractions may be asked to fill out a Think Sheet that allows them to reflect on the choice(s) made and participate in a "fix up," a restorative piece of problem solving for improved behavior in the future. Behavior incidents of this nature are tracked to make decisions about further support for student success. Parents are notified when a child fills out a Think Sheet. Consequences for behavior infractions are decided upon with teacher and/or administration input. Final decisions rest with the discretion of the school administration.

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District has developed discipline policies in keeping with our school culture, in accordance with district policies and state and federal regulations. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents/guardians. The focus is on student education and changing behavior whenever possible and/or appropriate.

The ARRSD Elementary Schools will adhere to the Student Discipline policies and procedures found in Section 1.J. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE, ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCES, and DUE PROCESS: The school's Code of Conduct provides a list of common infractions and the typical corresponding consequences for less severe violations of school rules. Consequences for such infractions range from detentions to short-term suspensions. Students who repeat the same offense will receive stronger penalties for subsequent offenses (at the discretion of the administration) which will likely include out-of-school suspension. The school administration reserves the authority to prevent students from participating in school events, keeping a leadership role, or being a member of a team if their behavior puts at risk other students or the reputation of the school. Families and students have the right to due process and appeal of decisions affecting them by faculty or the administration. The chain-of-command applies in processing such a complaint is as follows: teacher, principal, superintendent, school committee.

2.I. Discrimination and Harassment

The ARRSD Elementary Schools will adhere to the Discrimination and Harassment policies and procedures found in Section 1.I. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

2.J. Bullying

The ARRSD Elementary Schools will adhere to the Bullying policies and procedures found in Section 1.J. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

2.K. Public Complaints

The ARRSD Elementary Schools will adhere to the Public Complaints policies and procedures found in Section 1.K of the Main Body portion of the handbook.

2.L. District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

The Athol and Royalston Elementary Schools follow the ARRSD District Curriculum Accommodation Plan policies and procedures found in Section 1.L. of the Main Body portion of the handbook.