

2009-2010

Morton Middle School Student Handbook

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Karlene Ross, Principal & Main Office 508-675-8340

George Ackley, Vice Principal Ext. 02

Maria Matos, Guidance (A-L) Ext. 07

Heather Waite, Guidance (M-Z) Ext. 06

Liberia Phelan Ext. 03

Thomas Keating, Truant Officer Ext. 14

Kathleen Silveira-Murphy, Nurse 508-675-8415

All students receive a copy of the Student Handbook in September. Students sign a form acknowledging that they have received a copy and that they will read it and abide by the policies therein.

The Morton Pledge

I pledge to be a Mortonian with the core values of caring and commitment.

I will show care by always acting with fairness, eliminating taunting and name calling from my own behavior, and encouraging others to do the same.

I will set the example of a caring individual.

I will do my part to make Morton Middle School and Fall River a safe place by being more sensitive to others, not letting my words or actions hurt others.

I am committed to being a responsible, trustworthy individual.

Through my caring and commitment, I can make the world a better place.

STUDENT HANDBOOK

We are pleased that you are a member of Morton Middle School. Our school has a proud tradition to uphold, and it is with great anticipation that you will be part of our educational family. During your time here, it is our hope that you will find Morton a school where you will grow academically and socially. Our staff is dedicated to the goal of preparing you for your future endeavors. This handbook was written for you. It will prove to be very valuable because it contains much of the information you need to be successful at Morton. Read it carefully. Once again, congratulations and welcome!!

BELL SCHEDULE

Students enter	7:35
Homeroom	7:45-7:54
Period 1	7:56-8:47
Period 2	8:49-9:40
Period 3	9:42-10:33
Period 4	10:35-11:26
Period 5	11:28-12:44
A lunch (6th grade) *	(11:28-11:50)
B lunch (7th grade) *	(11:55-12:17)
C lunch (8th grade) *	(12:22-12:44)
Period 6	12:46-1:37
Period 7	1:39-2:30

SCHOOL ABSENCES

If you are going to be absent, your **parents must call the school (508-675-8340) before 7:45 AM to notify the office.** The greatest cause for student failure is a poor attendance record. You should make it a point to be in school and do your very best. We realize that some sickness is unavoidable.

SCHOOL HOURS

Morton Middle School Main Office is open daily from 7:15 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Administrators usually can be reached during these hours. Teachers can be reached from 7:45 A.M. - 2:45 P.M.

HOME, SWEET HOME (House Structure)

The Middle School structure is designed to provide effective guidance, advising, and academic services to students and the community. The House system provides an equitable distribution of students among counselors, Vice Principals, and teachers. The result is increased interaction between the middle school's professional staff and each student, making the academic experience rewarding and effective.

Morton Middle School is divided into houses at each grade level: 2 sixth, 2 seventh, 2 eighth. Each house is to some degree a "school-within-a-school" and every effort has been made to give each house an identity and special area so that students don't get "lost" in such a large school. This is especially important for 6th graders. It helps with the transition from smaller elementary schools. In each house there is a team of teachers. Each team of teachers works together to teach students on the team their academic subjects.

Each student is assigned to one of two houses at each grade level. The core subjects (*English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies*) are taught in the house with the same group of students transitioning from one class to another within the same wing or general area of the building. Electives (*Art, Music, Tech Ed, Family and Consumer Science, World Languages*) are taught in other areas of the building. Elective classes are comprised of students from both houses.

MAIN OFFICE

The main office is located on the second floor of the school building. There is always someone in the Main Office to lend assistance to any student or parent. The Principal and Vice Principal's offices are located in or near the Main Office. It is a very busy place during the school day. No student is allowed in the office unless they have business to conduct. If you must visit the office, please wait patiently for someone to assist you. Parents may enter the building by the parking lot entrance on the north side of the building. The Main Office is one flight up and to your left.

GUIDANCE

We have two excellent guidance counselors at Morton Middle School. Mrs. Matos services students whose last names begin with A-L. Mrs. Waite services students whose last names begin with M-Z. Their offices are located on the second floor. It is their responsibility to make your stay here very enjoyable. On occasion, it may be necessary to make an appointment with your Guidance Counselor to discuss your concerns. You will find that your Guidance Counselor will be very understanding about your problems. Your parents may also want to take advantage of their expertise. Each student will have a chance to meet with his/her counselor for a personal interview.

NURSE
(508) 675-8415

We hope you don't get sick or injured at school, but if you should, the Nurse is always there to lend a helping hand. If you have a medical situation ask your Teacher for permission to see the Nurse and go directly to the Nurse's office located on the second floor. You are not allowed to go to the Nurse between periods or during period 7 unless it is an emergency. If the Nurse feels that you should be sent home, you will be given a dismissal slip and your parents will be contacted to provide you with a ride home. The Nurse has a very difficult job don't take advantage by seeing her for something that is not important!

The Nurse can dispense medication only with written orders from your doctor. Proper medical forms for this procedure can be obtained from the Nurse. If you are taking any kind of medicines, make sure that you see the Nurse first thing in the morning. Please realize that the Nurse deals with illnesses and injuries that occur at school. If you are sick before school starts, you should stay home and have your parent call the school at 508-675-8340. Students cannot call parents to dismiss themselves if they are ill. Student must see the nurse at these times. She is the **ONLY** staff member who may dismiss a student for medical reasons.

HOMEWORK

Homework counts for at least 10% of the grade. You should realize that homework is to help you learn and you should always do the work assigned. If you do not, you may be required to stay after school to complete the assignment.

Study homework is equally as important as written homework. A successful student is a conscientious student.

Parents/guardians may request class work and homework for students who are absent for more than three days.



MORTON "M" HONOR ROLL

Honor Rolls will occur twice in the school year once at the end of the second quarter and again at the end of the year.

Grades are to be determined by the following criteria:

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| A+ (97--100) | A (93--96) | A- (90--92) |
| B+ (87--89) | B (83--86) | B- (80--82) |

C+ (77--79)
D (65--69)

C (73--76)
F (below 65)

C- (70--72)

Failures for the year are determined by averaging quarterly grades.

To qualify for the Honor Roll, you must have the following credentials:

Highest Honors:

A's in all core subject areas with one B allowed in Impact/Special subject areas.

Honors:

A's or B's in all subjects, which must include at least one A in an Academic subject and an Impact/Special subject respectively.



REPORT CARDS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards will be distributed four times a year. These should be signed and returned to school by the designated date. Progress Reports are usually given midway through the term. In some cases the progress reports are "warnings" that the student is in danger of failing. These warnings must be signed by the parent/guardian and returned as soon as possible.

PROMOTION POLICY

1. In order to be promoted, a student must pass Math and English in all three years (grades 6, 7 and 8).
2. Students who pass English and Math may also be retained if they fail Science and Social Studies.
3. Courses failed may be made up in Summer School. Students who receive an average score of 50 or less in a failing subject will not be allowed to make up the course in summer school.
4. Students who fail English, Math, Social Studies, and Science will be retained and are ineligible for promotion through summer school.

5. Prior to enrollment in summer school, students should review possible summer school selections with their guidance counselor to ensure that promotion standards will be met.
6. Under extraordinary circumstances, a principal may convene a hearing of all relevant parties to consider the retention of a student. Upon due consideration, the principal may promote the student to the next grade. The decision of the principal is final pending the right of appeal to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum.

MCAS

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 mandated a statewide program, the *Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)*, designed to measure the performance of students, schools, and districts on the academic learning standards contained in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Yearly, in May, students are tested in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and History and Social Science.

The Purpose of the MCAS Program

The statewide assessment program is designed to address two goals. First, it is a tool to measure the performance of individual students and the school against established state standards. Second, it is intended to improve classroom instruction by:

1. Providing useful feedback about the quality of instruction and
2. Modeling effective assessment approaches that can be used in the classroom.

The Education Reform Law also requires students to pass the state's grade ten tests, in addition to local graduation requirements, as a condition for receiving a high school diploma. Students will be given multiple opportunities, if necessary, to pass the test.

The Education Reform Law also requires the Department of Education to evaluate whether schools and districts are improving students' performance based on the learning standards contained in the state Curriculum Frameworks. Once in place, this evaluation of school and district performance will be based in part on results from the MCAS scores.

Local educators use the results of the MCAS tests, together with results of local tests and assessments, to identify strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction, and to determine the needs of individual students in order to serve them more effectively. In addition to MCAS results, teachers and administrators use the released MCAS items to develop and implement instructional strategies designed to support the goal that all students attain the state's academic standards.

Graduating students need to meet the *Needs Improvement* threshold scaled score of 220 in both English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science MCAS grade 10 tests in order to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination. The Massachusetts Board of Education intends to raise the threshold scaled score for the Competency Determination in future years.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

No student will be called out of class to answer the phone unless it is an emergency. This is to prevent classes from being disturbed. Important messages will be given to the student.

USE OF TELEPHONES

Students who need to call home for important reasons may use the office or guidance phones with permission.

CELLULAR PHONES, BEEPERS, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of electronic devices in our society has become commonplace for students and adults. While the Fall River School Department recognizes the helpful role that such technology plays in our daily lives, it also understands the potential for disruption to the educational process that may become associated with such devices.

As such the Fall River Public Schools prohibit the use of electronic devices during school hours. Electronic devices shall include, but not be limited to: cell phones, pagers, beepers, CD Players, DVD players, radios, picture cameras, camera phones, camcorders, laser pointers, and other related devices as identified by the school administration.



Because of the value of direct communication between students and parents, possession of a cell phone is not prohibited, and may be used before and after school. Once the school day begins however, all devices must be kept out of sight, and turned off.

Please refer to the Fall River policy concerning the use of electronic devices. This policy is in the back of the handbook.

Parents who wish to contact their children during the school day must contact the school office in order to do so. During the school day students must follow the directive, “OUT OF SIGHT AND TURNED OFF.”

SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Sometimes it becomes necessary for you to leave school during the day. If this should occur, a note signed by your parent/guardian is necessary. No student will be dismissed without his or her parent/guardian's permission. A dismissal slip must be obtained from the main office on the morning of the day you are being dismissed.

TARDINESS

Students are expected to be in their homeroom seats by 7:45 AM for attendance and morning announcements. Any student who arrives after 7:45 AM will be marked tardy by the homeroom teacher. Students are not allowed to leave school grounds when dropped off by a parent or guardian to go to the park or to local stores. Students arriving after 7:45 AM should report directly to the office for a tardy slip.

***Detention will be issued to students who are TARDY. Each incidence of tardiness will result in school detention and possibly extended day and out of school suspension.**

WINTER STORM

When there is a question as to school cancellation because of poor weather, you or your parents should tune to:

WHTB 1400 AM	WSAR 1480 AM
WMYS 98.1 FM	TV CABLE CHANNEL 03
TV CABLE CHANNEL 20	TV CABLE CHANNEL 18
TV CABLE CHANNEL 17	LOCAL TV CHANNELS 6, 10, 12

If there is no school, an announcement will be made to that effect. Please try tuning to the above stations before calling the school to minimize phone calls.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Students are expected to remain outside until 7:35 AM. However, in case of inclement weather or cold winter days, students may enter the school and go directly to the auditorium and wait until the 7:35 AM bell. This privilege may be revoked if a student does not follow proper rules of conduct.

BOOKS AND EQUIPMENT

Books and equipment issued to students are loaned for the duration of the course. Students are expected to take care of them because they are costly. **All textbooks must be covered.** All equipment must be properly cared for.

It must be understood that students will be assessed for damaged and lost books and other school equipment. Payment for lost books will be based upon replacement cost of the book including shipping and handling charges. The same method will be used for damaged or lost equipment, including laboratory equipment, sports equipment, and other attire.

Parents or Guardians will be notified of the lost material in writing or by phone. It is required that payment for the lost article be remitted to the school as soon as possible. A refund of the payment will be made in the event a lost item is returned. Failure to meet the financial obligation may result in denied participation in school activities and/or other consequences.

LOCKERS



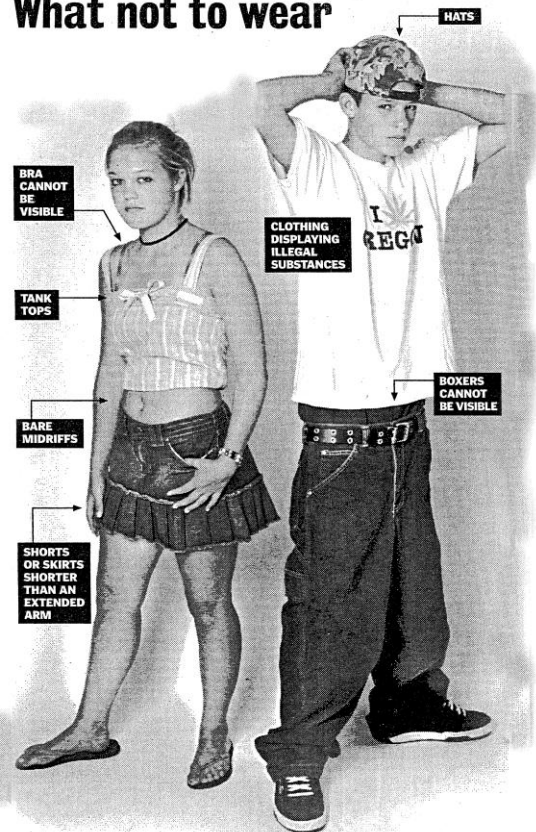
At the start of the school year you will be issued a locker by your Homeroom Teacher that you will share with a classmate. Students are expected to supply their own lock. Money and valuables should not be left in a locker. Items of this type may be left in the office. Keep your locker clean and neat. Use of a locker is a very important privilege. Don't abuse it. Do not allow anyone to place items in your locker other than your locker partner. If contraband or illegal

items are found in your locker, you are responsible. You may place your books, clothes and other items in your locker before and after school. You may also go to your locker during scheduled locker breaks. Do not go to your locker during any other times unless you have permission to do so. Lockers are school property and may be searched at the discretion of the school administration.

DRESS CODE

The appearance of any young person is primarily the responsibility of that individual and his or her parents or guardian. We expect students to maintain the type of appearance that is not distracting to teachers or students or to the detriment of the educational process of the school. The following is

What not to wear



Also banned:

- Clothing displaying offensive language, tobacco use, alcohol use, acts of violence, sexual material or inappropriate material for school or community
- Religious, ethnic or other context.
- Halter tops
- Spaghetti straps
- Off-the-shoulder tops
- Head coverings
- Visors
- Heavy-gauge chains

the official dress code policy adopted by the Fall River School District.

Students who wear any of the following may be found in violation of this dress code:

Outdoor clothing during the usual course of the school day except when coming or going out of the building.

Clothing which advertises or alludes to any drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, or violence.

Clothing depicting any words or symbols that could in any way be construed as sensual, sexual, or obscene.

Clothing which is worn improperly so that it might be too revealing, or any clothing which may be too revealing (*example: tank tops, very brief shorts, or skirts, or pants worn so low that they are too revealing or hinder mobility*).

Clothing or other attire, which may be perceived as a gang, related symbol. (*example: hats, belts, bandanas, beads*).

Any accessories, devices, or objects, which may cause or inflict bodily harm (*example: jewelry which could be used as a weapon such as chains, or piercing of body parts which may pose a safety hazard*).

Apparel or other modes of appearance (*such as tattoos*) which promote hatred regarding another person's race, color, sex, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Foot wear which poses hazards to the student or school such as jelly shoes, flip flops, spikes etc.

DRESS CODE POLICY

ANY MANNER OF DRESS, WHICH PRESENTS A HEALTH OR SAFETY HAZARD TO A STUDENT OR OTHERS, IS POTENTIALLY DAMAGING TO SCHOOL PROPERTY, OR DISTRACTING TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS IS PROHIBITED.

Students in violation of the above will receive the following sequential consequences:

Principal/Student/Parent will attempt an informal resolution to the situation.

Student may, at the Principal/Vice-Principal's discretion, be sent home to change into more appropriate clothing. (*with parent notification*).

A parent conference may be called to discuss the issue.

If the problem persists, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as indicated in the Discipline Code.

The following guidelines may be useful in helping parents to determine school attire, which may be improper or distracting to the educational process.

Please Note:

According to the Educational Reform Act, individual School Councils have the authority to recommend to the School Committee changes in their codes of conduct. As such these Councils may decide to augment these guidelines according to the individual needs of their school.

LOST AND FOUND

Occasionally students lose or misplace items. In the event that you find something that does not belong to you, please bring the item to the office. If you lose something check at the Main Office for any "Lost and Found" items. You may be lucky; someone may have brought it to the office. Please be responsible for your books, clothes, etc. Don't leave your items unattended.

BUSES

FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS K-8 BUS RULES

All students in the Fall River Public School who ride a bus to school are subject to regulations while riding the bus. Any misbehavior that distracts the driver is a VERY SERIOUS hazard to the safe operation of the vehicle and as such jeopardizes the safety of all passengers. Every school bus company has been provided with the rules of conduct. Students will be cited for the following violations. Some of the violations may include the following. This is not an all-inclusive list:

- Failure to remain seated
- Refusing to obey the driver
- Fighting
- Profanity
- Lighting matches
- Smoking on the bus
- Throwing objects out of bus
- Hanging out of windows
- Spitting
- Disobeying bus monitor
- Bothering others
- Vandalism

If a child is reported for any of the above activities, the Principal will take the following disciplinary actions:

First Offense: A warning to the student with a report to the parents. It is hoped that the parents will help to prevent a reoccurrence.

Second Offense: Removal from the bus. Length of time to depend on the seriousness of the infraction. A report to the parents.

Third Offense: Automatic suspension of riding privileges. The length of time to depend on the seriousness of the infraction. A report to the parents.

*** Serious offenses may result in removal from the bus immediately. Any time a student is removed from the bus it will be the parent's responsibility to provide transportation to and from school.**

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

If you lose or ruin a book, you will be held financially responsible. When you get your book, your teacher will note the book's condition, its number and your name for his/her records. Of course when you get your book, COVER IT. This rule benefits you, so why not follow it? Students who destroy or vandalize school property or equipment will be required to pay for damage and will be subject to disciplinary action and possible criminal action.

CORRIDOR RULES

In order to ensure a smooth passing between periods, students should KEEP TO THE RIGHT AT ALL TIMES. There will be NO YELLING OR RUNNING in the corridors. Any misbehavior in the corridors or on the stairs will result in disciplinary action.

AUDITORIUM USE

Through the course of the year we will have a variety of programs in our auditorium. When we have a program in the auditorium, we must remember a few basic rules:

1. Come quietly into the auditorium and in single file.
2. Fill in every seat, unless told otherwise.
3. Be a good audience by being polite and courteous. Don't whistle, boo, or stamp your feet. Show your appreciation by clapping.
4. Keep your feet on the floor, not on the back of chairs.

BATHROOM PRIVILEGES

You must have permission from your teacher to go to the lavatory. Students are not allowed to go to the lavatories between periods.

Remember:

1. Do not hang around in the boys or girls room.
2. Keep the boys and girls room clean.
3. Wash your hands before leaving.
4. Please put all waste paper in the waste paper baskets that are provided.

FIRE DRILL CONDUCT

In the event of a fire drill, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Students should know the proper exit from any place in the building.
2. Be alert and ready to respond to instructions.

3. Exit the building quietly and in an orderly manner.
4. Stay with your class and with your teacher.

There is a law against pulling a Fire Alarm! A False Alarm is not a prank! IT IS A CRIMINAL VIOLATION AND WILL BE TREATED AS SUCH. It puts the lives of the responding firefighters in danger as they rush to get here, and students could get hurt exiting the building.

EARLY DISMISSAL

There are times when school must be dismissed early due to weather or other emergency situations. In order to have a safe and orderly placement of the students, we need assistance. It is the expectation of the Fall River Public Schools that each parent of guardian will make the necessary arrangements to have their child picked up from school in the event of an early dismissal of school. If a child is inadvertently left at school, we will be referring to the Emergency Cards for direction unless we are notified otherwise. If there are no specific instructions, students will be released in the usual manner. If you have any questions or concerns about this matter, please feel free to contact the office.

FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMERGENCY-EARLY DISMISSAL GUIDELINES

1. The Fall River Public Schools will dismiss or cancel school in the event that an emergency situation exists which would affect the safety and welfare of our students.
2. At the beginning of each school year all parents/guardians will be informed of the School Department's policy as it relates to early dismissal for emergency reasons. (See above)
3. It is the expectation of the Fall River Public Schools that each parent or guardian will make arrangements for their child to get home safely in the event school is dismissed early.
4. The Fall River Public Schools will make every effort possible to provide the general public with at least one-hour notification through local media prior to the dismissal of students for emergency reasons.
5. All employees of Fall River Public Schools will make every reasonable effort to assist in ensuring that children get home safely.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Tech Ed now is a part of Science. Students will learn the steps in making a project. This will include the design, problem solving and techniques used in mass production. Students will study communications, power and energy, transportation, manufacturing and construction.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE *(HOME ECONOMICS)*

The Family and Consumer Science Program at Morton Middle School consists of learning Life Skills. The lessons learned in these classes help prepare students with basic skills necessary as they head towards their adult lives.

MUSIC

Every student is scheduled to participate in our Music Program. Having a good singing voice is not necessary for you to become part of the Morton Music family. There are many activities outside of the music classroom in which you can be involved, such as Chorus, School Band, and Orchestra. If you have ever had the desire to learn to play a musical instrument, don't miss the boat. Here at Morton Middle School it is possible for you to develop the skills to play a wide variety of musical instruments. We are really excited about our Music Program, and we hope you will be too.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Each student capable of taking Physical Education must complete three years of middle school instruction. In addition, Health will be taught through the Physical Education classes. Your grade in Physical Education is based on your participation and effort not your ability. Therefore, missing classes for an unexcused reason will affect the outcome of your final grade. Students with permanent physical handicaps or anyone recovering from serious illness, operation, or accident will be considered medically excused with proper verification. A doctor's note would be warranted in most circumstances. A parent's note will excuse a student on a daily basis. All notes will be brought to the nurse. In instances where the teacher feels that the attire is unsuitable, such a student will not be allowed to participate in class.

WORLD LANGUAGE

Morton Middle School offers Portuguese and Spanish. Students in the 6th grade take both. Students are then selected to take either of these languages in the 7th and 8th grade based on teacher referrals and demonstrated overall academic success.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The school year will begin and students will be given a list of after school activities that will be offered. These activities vary from year to year based on funding,

availability of programs and student interest. Some of these may include intramural athletics, drama, homework club, newspaper and yearbook.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM/CAFETERIA

Each student will receive a lunch application for free or reduced lunch. If you wish to apply for a free or reduced lunch, the application must be filled out completely and returned to the Main Office as soon as possible.

Areas to complete include:

1. Name
2. Size of family
3. Family income
4. Parent's signature and address
5. Social Security Numbers (in some cases Food Stamp Numbers)

Applications will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. The sooner a student returns the completed forms, the sooner it will be processed. An application will not be accepted if the above information is not properly completed. The cafeteria will be given a master list of those students who are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Students are expected to give their name at the cash register as they pass through the lunch line.

LUNCH PRICES WILL BE DETERMINED EACH SEPTEMBER

Our cafeteria is located on the fourth floor of the school. To ensure a pleasant lunch period, there are a few rules we have to observe.

1. While waiting in line for your lunch, be orderly and quiet.
2. Classes are to sit together at their assigned tables.
3. You must stay in your seat until your table is dismissed.
4. All tables should be kept neat and clean.
5. Before leaving the cafeteria, your class area and table should be cleaned of food and trash.

If you so desire, you may bring your own lunch. The school lunch program has been set up to provide a nutritionally balanced meal during regularly scheduled lunch periods. No student will be denied a lunch. Students who forget their lunch money may borrow money for a lunch. It is expected that the money will be paid back as soon as possible.

LATE TO CLASS

When changing classes, you are expected to be on time. Students are permitted a maximum of two (2) minutes between classes. If you are late to class with a good reason, you should have a note from the teacher explaining that reason or an admit slip from the office. Do not come to the office for a late pass unless directed to by a staff member. The classroom teacher will handle tardiness. Students without an excuse will be expected to make up that time after school. Severe cases of tardiness will be referred to the office.

STAYING AFTER SCHOOL

If you have to stay after school for a teacher or for detention, you will be expected to report immediately after school. You will be given 24-hours notice. You may be excused only if you speak privately with the teacher or your Vice-Principal and present an acceptable reason as to why you cannot stay. Please make arrangements to stay another day. Parents may not always be notified when a student is given a detention. It is the students responsibility to inform the parent but in all cases a 24-hours notice will be given.

SCHOOL DETENTION

The following violations are examples of offenses (*BUT NOT LIMITED TO*) punishable by school detention. Discretion will be allowed in the enforcement of these (but not limited to) provisions as they apply to individual students. Students must receive 24 hours notice prior to the start of a detention.

1. Cutting a period, class or study.
2. Unauthorized absence.
3. Reasonable suspicion of smoking.
4. Second and subsequent failures to report to teachers.
5. Not being in a location where the student's program requires him/her to be.
6. Throwing or shooting objects (example-spitballs).
7. Possession of fireworks.
8. Forgery of any kind.
9. Trespassing in unauthorized areas.
10. Not identifying or incorrectly identifying self to faculty or staff.
11. Tardiness to school.
12. Tardiness to class.
13. Corridor violations (yelling, running, pushing or other violations that effect the safety of others)
14. Disobeying traffic rules.
15. Violation of locker rules.

16. Failure to observe rules of the cafeteria.
17. Disruption of the classroom.
18. Leaving school or class without authorization.
19. Littering.
20. Defacing school property.
21. Violation of Fire Drill regulations.
22. Gum chewing.

In case of any violation not specifically covered herein, but which represents conduct, which inhibits the educational process, the discretion of the principal will apply.

DUE PROCESS

All students are entitled to receive due process whenever a suspension is being considered. Procedures for ensuring due process are included in this handbook. The right to a due process hearing shall extend to students and parents if the student is age 14 through 17 or has entered the 9th grade. For students under the age of 14 or in grade 8 or below, these rights shall revert to the parent. For students age 18 and above due process shall be provided to the student alone. *(Parents of 18 year olds may continue to be provided these rights at the discretion of the student).*

DUE PROCESS/STUDENT RIGHTS

Policy concerning Short Term Suspension (less than 10 days).

A. Students charged with committing an act which warrants a short-term suspension will have the following rights:

1. Right to be informed of the specific offenses charged with.
2. Right to present his/her side of the story.
3. An explanation of the basis of the accusation.
4. Right to be informed of the length of the suspension.

B. The above rights are modified only in the case of an emergency suspension. When an administrator determines that the presence of a student clearly endangers persons or property or threatens the educational process, a one-day suspension may take place immediately. In this event, notice as described above will be given to the student on the next school day.

C. If a student can present facts which unquestionably show that a temporary suspension will cause serious consequences, or feels that he or she can produce evidence that may prove innocence, he or she has the right to request a more formal hearing. Serious consequences could include permanent damage to reputation (*see Long Term Suspension and Expulsion*). The student must express the desire for such a hearing, in writing, no later than one school day after the initial hearing. In such notice the student must present the facts supporting this

request. The principal or his/her designee will decide if such a hearing is warranted based upon the ability to prove that the above conditions exist.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline in our school is based on "Good Old-Fashioned Common Sense." Your main goal in school is education, which will prepare you for your future.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CODE, GRADE 6-8, FOR THE FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A school exists to educate all its pupils. Education is guaranteed to all by public law as defined by the State Legislature. When a student, by his or her behavior, interferes with the education of other students, or threatens the health and well being of students or staff, some form of discipline is warranted.

The following offenses are considered to be serious. The penalty of suspension should be considered the usual punishment.

The administrator involved will be allowed to display reasonable judgment in all cases that involve school discipline. Behaviors which may lead to a short-term suspension (*1-9 days*) are as follows:

1. Smoking and/or possession of smoking materials inside the school building or on school grounds (*by persons under 18 years of age*). Note: Smoking materials are defined as cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco, matches, lighters, and other instruments capable of producing an open flame or sufficient heat to ignite paper or tobacco.
2. Willful destruction of school property including vandalism, arson, or attempted arson. (See note)
3. Ignition of fireworks.
4. Fighting or inciting fights.
5. Tampering with school records.
6. Insubordination to a member of the school staff.
7. Obscene language and/or gestures.
8. Possession, sale or use of alcohol or drugs. (*See substance abuse policy*).
9. Direct threat or bodily harm or damage to personal property directed to other students or staff members.
10. Physical assault and/or battery on a student or staff member.
11. Harassment. Any comments behaviors or actions, which are offensive or intimidating to others. (*See also Sexual Harassment and Harassment policies*).
12. Theft. Unauthorized possession of materials belonging to someone else.

13. Any offense not specifically covered herein but which detracts from the good order of the school, intrudes on another person's rights, or creates an atmosphere not consonant with the educational goals of the school.

NOTE:

Parents are responsible for the actions of their children. Any willful destruction of school property may result in legal action to recover full restitution. In addition, some specific infractions of this code may constitute a criminal offense. School personnel are obliged by law to refer such instances to legal authorities.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

This is an after school program to replace In-School-Suspension. It will be held three days per week (usually Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and will run from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Students will be assigned to the Extended Day for committing those offenses that in the past would warrant an ISS such as failing to serve a detention.

EXTENDED DAY RULES

- Students who fail to stay for Extended Day will be suspended and must return with a parent.
- Students are required to do assigned classwork while serving Extended Day.
- Students will be given at least 48 hours notice before being assigned Extended Day.
- Parents will be contacted by phone and given an Extended Day form to sign.
- Students are responsible for their own transportation home from Extended Day.

EXPULSION

In cases not covered specifically herein, but which represent a clear and immediate threat to the physical safety of student, school personnel, faculty, or administrators, a principal may recommend long-term suspension or expulsion (*see policy Concerning Expulsion, Due Process/Student Rights*).

Also, Long Term Suspension or Expulsion may be recommended for the following:

1. Hazing. Conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, which willfully or recklessly, endangers the physical or mental health of another person.
2. Possession of a firearm, dangerous weapon or facsimile thereof.

NOTE:

In addition, to the provisions of this code, the Gun Free Schools Act of 1995 requires an automatic one-year suspension of a dangerous weapon as defined by this Law (*see Due Process/Student rights for additional information*).

In addition hazing and possession of a dangerous weapon are violations of state law and may be punishable by a fine, imprisonment or both.

HARRASSMENT POLICY

Harassment related to one's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation is not tolerated in the Fall River Public School. Such harassment includes any related comments, behaviors or actions, which are unwanted, offensive, or intimidating to others.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

According to Fall River School district policy, sexual harassment is defined as any sexual comments, behaviors, or actions, which are unwanted, offensive or intimidating to others. Such behaviors may include verbal comments, subtle pressure for sexual activity, pinching, patting and other forms of unwanted touching, as well as more severe manifestations such as assault, rape, or attempted rape. Any and all cases of harassment must be brought to the principal or vice principal.

POLICY CONCERNING LONG TERM SUSPENSION (10 DAYS OR MORE)

Students charged with an offense which warrants a long term suspension or expulsion will have the following rights:

- A. Written notice of the intention to suspend or expel, specific rules violated, proposed length of suspension or expulsion, the reason leading up to this action, and the place, time and circumstances of the hearing. Such notice will be sent (*certified mail*) as soon as possible. The hearing will take place no sooner than three (3) school days after the referral. The principal has the right to suspend the student temporarily, prior to the hearing, as long as the procedure followed in the section on short-term suspension is followed. The student and/or parent have the right to request rescheduling the time of the hearing as long as all can reach another acceptable time. Failure to notify the principal within two (2) school days of receiving notification of a desire for rescheduling, combined with failure to appear at the hearing, will be construed as a waiver of the student's and/or parent's desire for a formal hearing. In such event, the hearing will take place with the student "in absentia."
- B. A full and fair hearing before an impartial committee consisting of three (3) members of the professional staff. In the event that an expulsion committee cannot be convened, the principal or his/her designee will serve in its stead. If one of the committee members has been closely involved in the case and has been responsible for collecting evidence against the student, he/she will be replaced by an impartial alternate to be chosen by the principal. This committee will provide a written recommendation to the superintendent. The superintendent makes final decisions relative to expulsions.
- C. The right to present witnesses or evidence in his/her own behalf and to cross-examine opposing witnesses.
- D. The right to legal counsel or some other adult representation at the hearing.
- E. The right to copies of appropriate records at the student and/or parent expense.
- F. The right to some kind of written record (*not necessarily verbatim*) of the proceedings.
- G. The right to appeal the decision of the committee to the superintendent. Intention of such an appeal must be sent to the superintendent, in writing, no later than three (3) days after the decision. The decision of the committee or person will remain in effect until the conclusion of the appeal process.

NOTE:

In cases involving permanent exclusion from school, the school committee will hear the case and make the final decision.

DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS AND STUDENTS ON 504 PLANS

1. Each special needs student will have indicated on his/her Individual Education Plan (*IEP*) whether he/she will be required to meet the regular discipline code or if a modification is required. Any modifications will be included in the *IEP*.
2. Special needs students who are required to meet the regular discipline code will be subject to the same rules and procedures as all other students with the following provisions:
 - A. When the suspension of a special needs student is about to accumulate to six (6) days, in any given school year or when any long term suspension (*10 or more days*) is being considered, the principal/vice principal will contact the appropriate special needs supervisor to initiate the review of the *IEP*.
 - B. At the review, three provisions will be considered:
 1. A modification of the original *IEP* to reflect a new program to better meet the student's needs.
 2. An amendment to the *IEP* to provide for delivery of special education services during periods of exclusion.
 3. In the case of any long term suspension (*10 or more days*) immediate notification of the suspension and request for approval of an alternate plan must be sent to the Special Needs Office (*Regional Special Education Department Office*).

CIVIL RIGHTS

Pursuant to Chapter 622, Massachusetts Acts of 1971, and the regulations issued by the Massachusetts Board of Education, it is the policy of the Fall River Public Schools not to exclude any child from any school nor to prohibit or discourage any child from participating in any course, activity, or resource available in such school because of the child's race, sex, color, national origin, or religion.

Civil Rights Coordinator - George Ackley, Vice Principal

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION LAW

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A allows parents to exempt their children from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality or human sexuality issues through written notification from the parent/guardian to the high school principal. Before making a determination, parents can call the Health Education Office at 675-8430 to review instructional materials.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

The school environment is the place in which the intelligence, capabilities and skills are developed and enhanced. Physical and psychological dependence upon chemical substances creates health problems and is counter-productive to the goals of education. Frequent use of any drug results in impaired performance. Therefore, use, possession or sale of illegal drugs or alcohol cannot be permitted as it undermines the educational process. School policy has been developed to underscore our commitment to maintaining healthy growth and development in our students a respect for the quality of our education environment.

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO STUDENTS ATTENDING ANY SCHOOL-SUPPORTED ACTIVITY OR EVENT ON OR OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS.

STUDENTS SEEKING VOLUNTARY DRUG/ALCOHOL ASSISTANCE

The school will provide, without penalties, assistance to any student who voluntarily seeks drug and alcohol treatment or advice. If a student voluntarily seeks information or assistance about illegal substance use and has not been apprehended for any violations, school staff will take the following actions:

1. Immediately develop treatment plan including in-school and community resources.
2. Students will be given the opportunity to make up any schoolwork that is missed.
3. Parents should be involved.

The Student Assistance Team on a case-by-case basis will be convened consisting of concerned, supportive school personnel, parents and students to:

1. Clarify problems that are interfering with the student's education.
2. Describe relevant school policies and procedures that might have an impact on student if plan is not followed.
3. Develop plan to address these problem areas.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

1. If a student voluntarily confides a drug and alcohol problem to a staff member, the following steps will be taken on a confidential basis to develop treatment options:
 - A. Staff member should refer student to a member of the Student Assistant Team.
 - B. No disciplinary action is warranted.
 - C. Make determination if internal services and/or outside evaluation/assessment are necessary.
 - D. Parents should be involved.

2. If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol:
 - A. A nurse will be notified to assess the potential medical risk.
 - B. Designated administrator will notify parents or guardian who will take student home.
 - C. Staff members, student and parents will hold a conference to develop background information and treatment options.
 - D. Primary focus of intervention is medical evaluation, parental involvement, in-house team meeting and counseling.

3. Student found to be in presence of other students using or distributing substances:
 - A. Staff member will notify designated administrator.
 - B. Administrator notifies parents of student's involvement.
 - C. Referral to Crisis Intervention Team for further exploration.
 - D. Disciplinary action may occur. Suspension up to five (5) days may result at discretion of administrator.

4. Student found to be in possession of a drug or alcohol
 - A. Staff member will notify designated administrator.
 - B. Administrator informs parents and refers student to the Crisis Intervention Team.
 - C. Crisis Intervention Team will develop background information.
 - D. Notification of Police. Any drugs found must be turned over to the police officer.
 - E. Mandatory, automatic suspension for five (5) days. (*Elementary administrators see H*)
 - F. Crisis Intervention Team meeting: parent-student-staff meeting during suspension period to discuss recommendation and need for further treatment.
 - G. Readmission to school will be contingent upon compliance with recommendation and/or report from treatment resources.
 - H. Elementary administration will determine appropriate disciplinary action for elementary students

5. Student found selling or distributing drugs:
 - A. Staff member will notify designated administrator.
 - B. Administrator informs parents of student's activity.
 - C. Crisis Intervention Team will develop background information.
 - D. Notification of Police. Any drugs must be turned over to the police.
 - E. Mandatory maximum legal suspension of nine (9) days.
 - F. Crisis Intervention Team Meeting. Parent-Student-Staff meeting during suspension period to discuss student's behavior and problem and to discuss treatment and development of recommendations.
 - G. Automatic hearing for Long Term Suspension.
 - H. Readmission contingent upon hearing with documented evaluation from community substance abuse treatment service.
 - I. Elementary school administration will determine appropriate disciplinary action for elementary school students.

6. If a student is exhibiting signs, symptoms, or indications of an ongoing alcohol or drug related problem:
 - A. Staff member should contact any Student Assistance Team member to alert them of his/her concerns and fill out a referral form on the student.

- B. Student Assistance Team will develop background information and determine appropriate intervention.

The above procedures are applicable for students in grade K-12.

Repeated violations of drug and alcohol policies by a student will be referred to Crisis Intervention Team. The Team, after evaluation, will make appropriate recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools for appropriate actions.

HARASSMENT POLICY: **PROMOTING DIVERSITY FALL RIVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

This country is strong because of its ethnic and cultural diversity. Fall River has a proud tradition of embracing diverse groups and weaving them into the fabric of our community. The Fall River School Department is committed to the advocacy of all students and staff in order to maximize their personal, creative and academic potentials as they move toward becoming lifelong learners and responsible world citizens. Given these beliefs, the Fall River School Department strongly prohibits harassment of any kind related to one's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Such harassment includes any related comments, behaviors, or actions, which are unwanted, offensive, or intimidating to others. Adults and students must refuse to engage in speech or other behaviors, which demean others. Slurs of an ethnic, racial or sexual nature should never be tolerated. In addition, individuals should refrain from jokes which are insulting to minorities or others who might be perceived in some way as different. Such acts may contribute to a hostile environment. School officials must examine the context in which such conduct occurs.

Anyone who witnesses such behavior should intervene, first through discussions with the offending person, or, if such talks are not possible or are unsuccessful, through referral to a person in authority.

Other behaviors that may contribute to a hostile environment are also prohibited. These include intimidation or an implied threat, physical acts of aggression, and other criminal offenses which are motivated by race, color, national origin or sexual orientation.

Research suggests that creating a supportive school climate is the most important step in preventing harassment. This policy seeks not only to curtail harassing behavior, but also to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect where learning can be optimized. Differences should not just be tolerated or accepted, but celebrated.

This policy should be disseminated to all students and staff annually. In addition, it should be posted in teacher's rooms, principal, vice principal and guidance offices. A copy should also be posted in a well-traveled area where it will be visible to students.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT (STUDENT TO STUDENT)

1. Each school will designate one or more ombudsman for all such complaints. The identities of these individuals should be disseminated to all students and parents, and be posted for all to see. Office staff should be informed of the identities of these individuals and be able to direct parents accordingly. Wherever possible every effort will be made to include individuals who reflect the racial/ethnic background of the school.

2. All complaints regarding harassment should be referred to the ombudsman who will meet initially with the victim and any other person of his/her choice. The ombudsman will then notify the building principal/vice principal before proceeding.

3. **Informal Resolution.** Informal resolution is the first step for dealing with harassment. This step is reserved for less severe cases in which the student might be unaware that he/she is engaging in conduct or speech that is offensive. It is very important that staff members be diligent in reporting such cases before they can escalate into more severe behavior. Often such cases can be resolved without disciplinary action.

On the first complaint, the ombudsman may assist the victim in communicating to the harasser, in writing or verbally, a description of the harassing behaviors, how the behavior made the victim feel; noting any consequences to school performance, and a request to stop the harassment. The ombudsman will be present when such communication is made and should record the date, time and substance of said communication for later reference.

If the victim chooses, the communication to the harasser may be made by the ombudsman alone. Care should be taken not to place the total onus for this communication on the victim. In either case, the ombudsman must inform the alleged harasser of the consequences should the harassment not cease or if retaliation should follow the communication.

NOTE:

When harassment of any kind is judged to be so severe that the potential to incite violence or other physical confrontation is likely, a referral will be made to the principal/vice principal for a formal investigation and appropriate disciplinary action. Such action could result in short term suspension, not to exceed ten (10) days. Repeated violations or violent acts following a suspension could result in a referral for expulsion proceedings.

IF AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS A SCHOOL OFFICIAL IS MADE AWARE OF BEHAVIOR WHICH MAY CONSTITUTE A CRIMINAL OFFENSE, HE/SHE IS OBLIGED BY LAW TO REPORT SUCH ACTIONS TO THE LEGAL AUTHORITIES, AS DESCRIBED IN THE DISCIPLINE CODE.

4. **Formal Investigation.** When a person brings a second complaint or in more serious cases as described above, a referral will be made to the principal/vice principal to determine if disciplinary action is warranted. This investigation, in which evidence is gathered and the due process rights of the accused are maintained, will determine if the harasser should be suspended.

5. If the principal/vice principal find sufficient cause, the harasser may be suspended from school as outlined above.

When a harassment complaint is made regarding a member of the staff, the ombudsman will immediately notify the building principal and superintendent of schools before proceeding.

1. In less severe cases the ombudsman will attempt to resolve the complaint informally as described above.
2. In more severe cases, or in the case of repeated incidences or retaliation after an informal resolution, a meeting will be held with the ombudsman, the harasser, and the building principal. **At this meeting the staff member has the right to representation as outlined in the appropriate contractual agreement.**
3. After this meeting the superintendent will be notified and a decision will be made regarding any disciplinary action to be taken. Such action could include a formal reprimand (oral or written) a suspension, or in the most severe cases, expulsion.

NOTE WELL:

SLURS OF AN ETHNIC, RACIAL OR SEXUAL NATURE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN OUR SCHOOLS WHETHER OR NOT AN IDENTIFIABLE VICTIM IS PRESENT. ANY STAFF MEMBER WHO WITNESSES SUCH BEHAVIOR IS ENCOURAGED TO INTERVENE APPROPRIATELY. SUCH INTERVENTION MAY INCLUDE AN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH THE PERSON MAKING THE INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS, OR A MORE FORMAL REFERRAL TO THE OMBUDSMAN, PRINCIPAL OR VICE PRINCIPAL.

Note:

The following state and federal agencies may also provide assistance in matters pertaining to harassment. Phone numbers are included for your convenience.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Commission Against Discrimination
1 Ashburton Place, Room 601
Boston, MA
(617) 727-3990

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
J.W. McCormack POCH, Room 701
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 223-9662

If anything in this handbook is difficult to understand because of a need for a different language, we will have it translated to meet your needs.