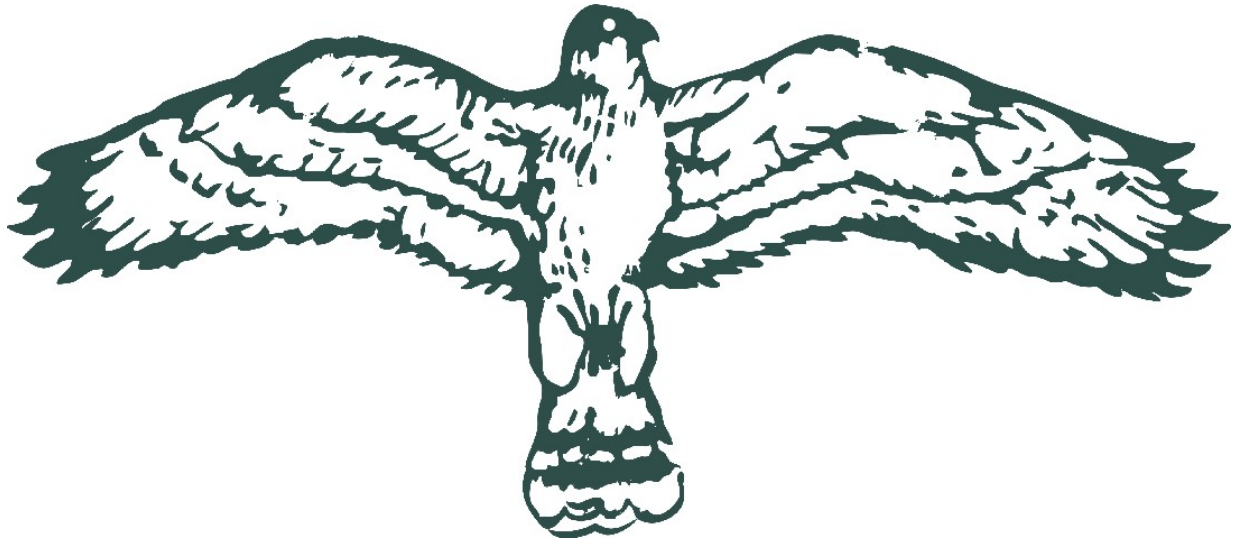


# West Tisbury School



## West Tisbury Elementary School Handbook for Parents and Students

Kindergarten through Grade 8

Up-Island Regional School District

Martha's Vineyard, MA

P.O. Box 250, Old County Road

West Tisbury, MA 02575

508-696-7738 Fax: 508-696-7739

<http://www.wtisburyschool.org>



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## Letter from the Principal

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the new school year! The entire West Tisbury School faculty and staff are excited to have you here as part of our learning community and school family. For those of you who are new to the West Tisbury School, I am confident that you will immediately see what a wonderful place this is to learn and grow. Our classrooms and halls are filled with eager minds that have the potential to do great things. Our energetic and caring staff is dedicated to helping all our students achieve their dreams and reach their full potential.

This handbook has been prepared for you to help promote a better understanding between home and school as to expectations, responsibilities, procedures, rules and guidelines. The handbook reflects the philosophical foundations and the practical realities of being part of the West Tisbury School family. I encourage you to sit down as a family and review the contents of this handbook. Please read through the Student-Parent Checklist and the Tips for Good Study Habits.

It is important to remember that this handbook does not cover every possible situation and could be added to if needed. Please take time to read it thoroughly and make it your first point of reference. If at any time this document does not answer your questions, please contact us. As a staff, we are committed to responding to your questions or concerns as quickly as possible. Our goal is to provide the best possible learning environment for all of our students. With your support and input we can provide a successful educational experience for everyone.

As we move through this new school year, let us work extra hard to support each other as we work together to provide an exceptional education for our students who have the great fortune to attend such an exceptional school.

Best wishes for an outstanding school year!

Sincerely,

*MRS. L-B*

## Parent Checklist

Certain parent permission forms and other information are important to help us secure the safety of your children. Many of these forms are due at the opening of school. Others are due upon request throughout the year. Please be sure to review, sign, and return the following forms when they are provided to you:

- ❑ Emergency contact card.
- ❑ Blanket permission slip.
- ❑ Permission to photograph, videotape, or air pictures of your child through newspapers, local television, and the media.
- ❑ Updated immunization records.
- ❑ Updated health records, including detail about allergies.
- ❑ Prescription medicine in its original container labeled by the pharmacist, for students who require medication.
- ❑ Free or reduced lunch application forms.
- ❑ MV Network Acceptable Use Policy signature form for Internet use (appendix II).

## Tips from Students and Staff about Good Study Habits

A successful student establishes good study habits. The following factors have been shown to contribute to success in school.

- Have a suitable study area. A comfortable, well-lit, and quiet place with a flat, desk-like surface is ideal. The area should be free of major distractions.
- Use proper equipment. Gather your equipment; pencils, pen, erasers, rulers, books, and reference materials, before you start.
- Establish a routine and study at the same time every day if possible. Help your child write a daily and weekly schedule of homework assignments, tests, or other projects.
- Be prepared. Know and understand your assignment before you start. Keep an assignment book and log your homework before you leave each class.
- Pace yourself. Work at long-range assignments daily. Prioritize tasks. Avoid cramming for tests. Don't leave projects until the day before they are due.
- Figure out how you learn best. Do you need to hear the material read out loud while you read along? Do you need to write something out or draw it to remember it? Would talking into a tape recorder help you save your ideas for later use? Do you need to sharpen your memory? Learning how you learn can be one of the most important discoveries of your school career.

## Superintendent

Superintendent of Schools: Richard Smith, 508-693-2007 ext. 15  
Special Education Director: Hope MacLeod, 508-693-2007 ext. 20

## West Tisbury School Administration

School Phone 508-696-7738

	<u>Ext.</u>
Principal: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt	404
Assistant Principal: Mary Boyd	407
Main Office:	
Secretary: Orlaith McCarthy Estes	401
Secretary: Sue Merrill	400
District Secretary: Anita Smith	402
Guidance Counselor:	
Molly Cabral	406
Student Support Coordinator:	
Graham Houghton	403
Nurse: Kristine Cammorata	405
Librarian: Stephanie Dreyer	240
Head Custodian: Jamie Labbe	410

## Up-Island Regional School Committee

Robert Lionette, Chilmark  
Alex Salop, West Tisbury, Chairman  
J. Skip Manter, West Tisbury  
Roxanne Ackerman, Aquinnah  
Kate Devane, West Tisbury

Up-Island Regional School Committee consists of five members. The towns of West Tisbury, Chilmark, and Aquinnah are each represented by at least one member, and the two remaining members are elected on an “at large” basis. The school committee meets monthly. Meeting dates and agendas are posted in advance of each meeting.

## School Advisory Council (SAC)

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 requires a school council consisting of the principal, teachers, parents, and other community representatives. The School Advisory Council recommends educational goals for the school, identifies educational needs of the students, reviews the annual budget, and formulates an annual school improvement plan. If you are interested in serving on the West Tisbury School SAC please talk with the school principal.

## Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The West Tisbury School PTO is a nonprofit parent teacher organization whose membership includes parents, legal guardians and staff at the West Tisbury School. The PTO's mission is to promote school spirit and help establish a close relationship between home and school by advancing opportunities for all parents to become involved in the West Tisbury School community.

The PTO sponsors assistance to teachers in classroom setting, raises funds for supplemental educational materials and experiences, supports school and family social interaction, and provides a non-biased forum for sharing information on issues that impact our children. It is our belief that the team effort of a parent teacher organization offers the best possible learning environment for our children. We encourage everyone to join the PTO.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are welcome at the West Tisbury School to help with classroom and school wide activities. Volunteer opportunities are announced by the principal and assistant principal, teachers, librarian, and other specialist teachers. All volunteers must complete a CORI check (criminal history) to help keep our school/students safe. A copy of the West Tisbury School CORI Check policy is included in the back of this handbook.

# School Philosophy, Vision and Mission Statement

## **School Vision Statement**

We believe students must become independent, lifelong learners, with a strong sense of personal identity and an appreciation for the larger communities of which they are part.

## **School Mission Statement**

The West Tisbury School staff strives to provide a solid academic foundation, to inspire a love of learning for the sake of learning, to foster an understanding of basic human values with a working knowledge of the rights and responsibilities associated with those values, and to promote independent thinking through cooperative and inclusive learning while maintaining the unique values of our diverse, rural island community.

We strive:

To teach solid academic skills,

To instill a love of learning, and

To promote an understanding of human values.

## **West Tisbury School Philosophy**

The West Tisbury School encourages process and project-based learning experiences. It also strives to promote a noncompetitive atmosphere where progress is judged on individual effort and achievement.

We believe in and value:

- A solid academic foundation for our students.
- Learning appreciated for its own sake.
- Education that includes basic human values and the rights and responsibilities associated with them.
- A safe and comfortable learning environment where each individual is respected and treats others with respect.
- Independent thinking and cooperative and inclusive learning.
- The unique and rural community of Martha's Vineyard as an integral part of our learning environment.



# Hours and Attendance

## **Hours**

- ➡ School hours are 8:10 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. The entrance bell rings at 8:10 when students are expected to go directly to their classrooms.
- ➡ Attendance is taken in the classrooms at 8:20 a.m. daily. Students that are tardy must report to the office before going to class.
- ➡ Students need written permission of a parent or guardian to be dismissed prior to 2:40 p.m. Please send a note to the office. Children must be picked up at the office.

## **Attendance**

- ➡ School attendance is a legal requirement in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. More importantly however, daily attendance in school is crucial for successful academic performance. Without classroom instruction and clarification, homework assignments can be significantly more difficult and frustrating. Make-up assignments do little to reinforce skills and almost nothing to prepare the student for the next day's lesson. **Punctual daily attendance is crucial for a student's overall development.**
- ➡ Absences can be excused for the following reasons: illness, bereavement, religious holiday, family emergency, or other exceptional reason with approval from the school principal. All other absences are considered unexcused absences.
- ➡ Parents or guardians will provide an explanation in writing or by e-mail for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.
- ➡ Parents will be notified if their child has an unexcused absence from school. If a student has 5 or more unexcused absences, parents will need to meet with school personnel to create an action plan to improve student attendance. Please reference the Student Absences and Excuses Policy in the Appendix of this handbook for more information.
- ➡ Students who take vacations during scheduled school days are still responsible for maintaining academic progress. Parents must contact the classroom teacher or teachers in advance of special absences.
- ➡ Extended vacations may require temporary 'Home Schooling' status. Parents must contact the principal or guidance counselor in advance of extended absences.
- ➡ Please avoid unnecessary absences during state required testing in April and May.
- ➡ Upper level students experience school as a social environment. Daily interaction with the peer group is important. On a day that students are absent or tardy, they will not be allowed to participate in school events or extracurricular activities.

## Cancellation, Delayed Opening, School Closing

*Please Note: Whenever possible the school website will post any changes in the school day and an email or phone call will be placed to each home through an electronic alert system.*

### **Cancellation of School**

When there is no school due to weather conditions or other emergencies, the “No School” signal is sounded by the Town Fire Whistle. The fire alarm rings two blasts at 6:00 a.m. and at 7:00 a.m. Local radio and television stations and the M.V. Communications Center broadcast “No School” announcements.

### **Delayed Opening**

If weather forecasts indicate clearing during the morning, we may have a delayed opening. All bus routes and schools then begin one or two hours later than usual. Fire horns will NOT sound. Radio Stations WILL broadcast the delayed opening by 6:30 a.m. If weather does not improve by 8:00 a.m., school may then be canceled. Radio Stations and the Communications Network will announce the cancellation of schools by 8:00 a.m.

### **Early Dismissal**

When an early dismissal becomes necessary because of deteriorating weather conditions or another emergency, announcements will be made over local media and the M.V. Communications Center Broadcast Network. The announcements are made at or before 12:00 Noon. Parents who will not be at home if school is dismissed early should make arrangements with relatives or friends to care for young children.

## Student Transportation

Students who live more than one mile from the school are provided bus transportation to school prior to 8:10 a.m. and from school at 2:40 p.m.

When there is a late bus, students must be at the main entrance at 3:55 pm for the “4:00 pm” late bus.

## Fire Drills and Safety Procedures

Fire drills and other evacuation procedures are conducted periodically to promote the safety of all of the students, staff, and members of the West Tisbury School.

Please bear in mind that:

- All visitors must 'check-in' with the office so that the office personnel are aware of all visitors to the building.
- Everyone, including visitors, must leave the building during fire drills and other evacuation procedures.
- Students line up with their teachers at the designated areas a safe distance from the building.
- Teachers take attendance at the designated safety area.
- All teachers and aides are responsible for lining up the children and waiting quietly for instructions.
- The last person out of each classroom and exit should close the door.
- The principal, custodians, and designated action team members will inspect the building and give the "all clear" when it is time to return.
- If a student happens to be in the bathroom or not with their regular classmates for any reason, he or she should exit by the nearest doorway and report to the nearest adult or teacher in charge.
- Students should not wander around looking for their homeroom teacher. The adults will be responsible for notifying the teacher or administrator that the child is safe and accounted for at their designated area.

## Curriculum & Instructional Program

The West Tisbury School supports the continuous growth of skills and knowledge in each child for the progressive development of their individual talents and abilities. We offer a full program of core academic subjects with specialist instruction in technology, art, music, industrial arts, Spanish, physical education, and special education. Ongoing efforts promote curriculum articulation between grade levels, subject areas, and other Island schools. Short and long-term curriculum development goals have been identified, and related assessment and staff development practices support the curricular/programmatic initiatives. Curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts State Standards and Frameworks. Curriculum Frameworks have been developed for Science and Technology/ Engineering, English Language Arts, Mathematics, History and Social Science, Arts, Comprehensive Health, and Foreign Languages.

## Reporting Progress to Parents

### **Progress Reports**

Reports are issued twice per year, generally are issued in January and June.

The West Tisbury School promotes individual achievement in a noncompetitive environment. Therefore, the school does not issue an honor roll or letter grades. However, we are very proud of our comprehensive report cards. Each student's progress is reported through a comprehensive assessment and summary for each area of study.

### **State Mandated Testing**

We mail out individual reports generated by the state for students in grade 3-8. Please contact the office if you have a question about state mandated testing.

### **Conferences**

Teachers may be contacted for a conference at any time throughout the school year. A parent may email or leave a telephone message for a teacher on their voice-mail extension, and the teacher will call back to arrange a conference.

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring.

## Emergency Cards / Contact

You will need to complete an Illness/Emergency Procedure Card for each of your children in school. The information helps to locate parents in case of an emergency or other need. The card provides an update on each child's health status and the parents' preferred ways of managing individual health needs. It gives permission for emergency care. This card must be completed and returned to the school nurse at the start of each school year or at the time of registration of a new student. It is very important that each child's emergency card contain at least 2 forms of parent contact in case of an emergency.

**Health information that is for the nurse only should be submitted in a note addressed to nurse and marked "confidential".**

## Medication Dispensing Policy

1. Medication should be given at home if at all possible. Speak with your doctor about a dosage schedule that allows for this.
2. **Initial doses** of a medication cannot be given in school. After a child has been observed to tolerate a medication without side effects or problems at home, subsequent doses may be given at school if necessary.
3. All medications brought to school must be in their original container, labeled by the pharmacist.
4. Students may not carry medication to school. An adult must hand deliver medication and written instructions to the school nurse. If the nurse is not in the health office, she can be paged from the main office.
5. For medication to be given regularly at school the following forms are required:
  - written instructions from the parent for administration of the drug by the school nurse
  - written instructions from the prescribing physician for in-school administration of medications with serious side effects and/or uncommon medications. Ask the school nurse to send or fax blank forms to you and/or your physician if you anticipate needing them.
6. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) tablets, and some topical remedies are available in school and may be given ONLY after written instruction from the parent is obtained. Instructions from parents may be written on the emergency procedure card or in a separate letter to the nurse.

## Medical Records

Records of a child's immunization status must be submitted for the school nurse's review before a child attends school. Documentation of immunizations received while attending school is required for the child's school health record.

Record of a physician's exam, done within 12 months prior to entry to schools in Massachusetts, is required of new students. Thereafter, documentation of a physician's exam is required every 3-4 years, usually for kindergarten, 4th and 8th grades.

Participants in a West Tisbury School after-school sport are required to supply documentation of a physician's exam and statement that the child is in good health and may participate without restriction in school activities (including sports). If a child has a restriction, such as needing to use an inhaler before exercising, we will accommodate the restriction, so the student may participate. The doctor's exam must be dated within 13 months of the start of the season.

Massachusetts's immunization requirements are as follows:

Before entering kindergarten:

- 5 doses DTP-unless 4th dose given after 4th birthday, then 4 doses
- 4 doses polio-unless 3rd dose given after 4th birthday, then 3 doses
- If combination of IPV and OPV received, 4 doses are required
- 3 doses Hepatitis B
- 2 doses measles-this is usually given as part of the MMR vaccine
- 1 dose each of mumps & rubella-these are usually given as part of the MMR vaccine
- 1 dose chicken pox (varicella) vaccine unless child had chicken pox disease

Before entering 7th grade:

- A tetanus shot (Td, DT, DTP, or DTaP) in the past 5 years.
- 3 doses Hepatitis B at any time in child's life
- 2 doses measles-this is usually given as part of the MMR vaccine
- 1 dose chicken pox (varicella) vaccine, unless child had chicken pox disease

Alternatively, parents may:

- Submit a doctor's note explaining that your child should delay or omit one or more of the required immunizations.
- Provide a written statement that immunizations conflict with your personal religious beliefs. If you need printed materials about the required immunizations or have other questions, contact the school nurse or your health care provider.

Chicken Pox

Massachusetts' law requires that children be immunized against chicken pox (varicella). This law also makes chicken pox a reportable disease, and quarantines are required (105 CMR 3000.00). If a child or school staff member has been exposed to chicken pox, and has not already had the disease or been immunized, then they are considered potentially infectious from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> day after their exposure. Such individuals are excluded from school during that period during the infectious period. If an individual receives the vaccine within 3 days of exposure, s/he may return to school immediately, unless high-risk situations exist, such as a susceptible pregnant or immune-compromised individual at school.

If you have any questions regarding this law or any medical concerns, please contact the school nurse at 508-696-7738, extension 405.

## Breakfast, Lunch and Snack Program

### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is served every school day from 8:00-8:20. The monthly menu is available on the school website and in the front office.

Students do not need to order breakfast in advance, they can simply come to the cafeteria and get their meal. For the 2022-23 school year, breakfast is free for all students.

### **Lunch**

Lunch is served every school day. The monthly lunch menu is available on the school website and in the front office.

Students order lunch each morning. Students coming in late need to order in the cafeteria. For the 2022-23 school year, lunch is free for all students.

All families are given application forms for free or reduced price lunch and milk for their children. These forms should be filled out and returned to the district assistant, Anita Smith, as soon as possible. She will notify you in writing whether your application is approved for free breakfast/lunch and milk, reduced price breakfast/lunch and milk, or denied. All applications are kept in strict confidence.

### **Snacks**

In most classrooms, students have time for a daily snack. The cafeteria has fruit available for free.

When bringing food for a classroom celebration we encourage nutritious items. Teachers can give you suggestions of treats children enjoy for special celebrations and cooking projects. Always check with the classroom teacher before bringing in food, as many students are subject to food allergies.

### **Allergies**

Due to life threatening allergies, some classrooms may need to be 'nut free' environments. If this is the case, the school will let all families know well in advance and provide parents with information about supporting a nut free classroom.

Parents should notify the school nurse and child's teacher of any food allergies. All tables are clearly labeled either nut free or nuts allowed. Other allergies can be accommodated. Hand-washing before and after lunch also safeguards against accidental exposure to allergenic foods.

## Student Attire

### **Physical Education Attire**

Students are strongly encouraged to have a change of clothes or an extra shirt in school for physical education, so that they may have greater freedom of movement in class and can keep their regular school clothes clean and fresh for the entire day.

The PE department is looking for your child to wear a traditional running or court sneakers for Physical Education class.

Sneakers appropriate for Physical Education class:

1. can be tied or velcroed snugly to the foot
2. are made of athletic fabric/mesh or sneaker lightweight leather
3. have a closed foot (the foot is completely enclosed in the sneaker)
4. have an athletic, traction sole

Some examples of unacceptable footwear for Physical Education class:

1. loosely tied sneakers of any kind
2. slip-ons (like Mocs or Crocs)
3. hard leather
4. dress/fashion shoes with a soft sole (like an open-front Mary Jane)
5. cleats
6. sandals or flip-flops
7. boots (like Uggs)

These guidelines are for the safety of your child and all of the children in PE class.

Note: Even though some popular shoe companies may call a fashion shoe a “sneaker”, please follow the guidelines listed above for choosing safe footwear for your child to wear for Physical Education class.

### **School Clothing**

School officials in Massachusetts have the authority under state and federal law to establish dress codes that promote health, safety, and cleanliness.

Students may not wear clothing that is disruptive or offensive, including clothing that promote weapons, drugs, sex, or alcohol. Students will be asked to change clothing that is excessively tight or revealing, offensive, disrupting, or distracting.



## School Library

The West Tisbury School's Library Media Center will be an extension of every classroom, supporting all phases of the curriculum with a variety of materials. Our mission is to enhance the skills and strategies of students and teachers to access, evaluate, and utilize all forms of information needed for further education, the workplace, family management, and community and global participation in the 21st Century. We continually strive to encourage lifelong learning and literacy through reading.

### **Hours of Service**

Students are welcomed to use the library resources between 8:10 a.m. and 2:40 p.m., Monday through Friday during the school year.

### **The Collection**

The collection is online <https://wtslmc.follettdestiny.com>. Materials range from books, audiobooks, magazines, videos, audiovisual equipment, as well as a parent and professional section.

### **Circulation**

Each student is given a library number, for which he or she is responsible. Kindergarten students begin the year by keeping their books in the classroom, and as the year progresses we move toward taking them home. They may check out print materials for a week with the option to renew. Parents are encouraged to sign up for a library number. Please feel free to access our resources and share them with your families.

### **Fines and Overdues**

We do not charge fines for overdue books, but stress that the individual who signs out a material is responsible for its return. A replacement cost is charged on lost or damaged items.

### **Book Fairs**

With the assistance of the PTO and parent volunteers, we host two book fairs annually. Profits are used to purchase new materials, sponsor author visits, and fund reading incentive programs. We also host a "Second-hand" book fair in December, which benefits the Red Stocking Fund. Donations of children's books are welcome all year long.

## Extra-Curricular and Enrichment Activities

A number of sports and extra-curricular activities are available to students.

Students are encouraged to become involved in such activities. Parents and guardians are responsible for providing their own transportation home from any after school activities if a "late bus" is not available.

### **Grades 6-8**

Activities for grades 6-8 include student council, chorus, homework club, and intramural sports. Football is available for grades 6, 7, & 8 through the high school.

### **Music and Drama**

For students in grades 4-8, activities also include band and orchestra. The grades 6-8 chorus usually meets during school, and the All-Island Junior High Chorus meets after school. The annual musical or play rehearsals are usually after school.

### **Eligibility**

In order to participate in ANY extracurricular activity, students must be at school, on time, the day of the activity.

Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior and good sportsmanship while involved in any extra-curricular activities. Students who fail to live up to reasonable expectations in their school performance and behavior will be deemed ineligible for sports or extra-curricular activities. Ineligibility means that the students will not be allowed to participate in such activities until their behavior or performance is considered appropriate. The administration makes that determination.

### **Athletic Program**

The West Tisbury, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, and Tisbury Schools make up the Interscholastic, or "Junior High" League on Martha's Vineyard. (The M.V. Public Charter School at times will also field teams.) The athletic program consists of three sports seasons: Track and Field, Basketball, and Volleyball. Each school has an Athletic Director who provides overall supervision and administration. Additionally, there are coaches for the individual teams.

The seasons are typically as follows:

All-Island Jr. High Football early September - mid October

Track and Field early September - mid October

Basketball early November - late January

Volleyball mid February - late March

Participation at the West Tisbury School has been consistently high. Students are encouraged to join teams and represent their school. Student-athletes benefit both athletically and socially, which contributes to a well-rounded early adolescence. Our teams have often been successful,

winning several league championships, and have been proud representatives of the school, demonstrating sportsmanship and fair play.

Participation is dependent on a student maintaining eligibility status, both academic and behavioral. Each week during the season, the Athletic Director distributes and collects information from teachers that determine eligibility. If a student is deemed ineligible, he/she may not participate (practices or games) for one week. The Athletic Director will notify students if they are ineligible.

Track and Field is always open to grade 6-8 students, and is divided into girls' and boys' teams. All 7th and 8th graders may sign up for the other sports, and they may be opened to 6<sup>th</sup> graders, depending upon the numbers of students participating. There are no "cuts" - every student who wishes to participate is allowed to. Basketball season sees the school field junior varsity and varsity teams for both girls and boys. Volleyball is a co-ed sport and includes junior varsity and varsity teams.

Participants in a WTS after-school sport are required to supply documentation of a physician's exam and statement that the child is in good health and may participate without restriction in school activities (including sports). If a child has a restriction, such as needing to use an inhaler before exercising, we will accommodate the restriction, so the student may participate. The doctor's exam must be dated within 13 months of the start of the season.

Individual sports' coaches schedule practices for the teams. The school provides transportation to away games, however students must find their own transportation home. The late bus from the West Tisbury School will bring students home following many of the practices. All equipment and uniforms, other than footwear, are provided by the school. It is the responsibility of students to return these items at the end of the season.

All students who participate on school teams are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and proper behavior at all times, as they represent our school.

## Field Trips and Fund Raising

### **Field Trips**

Field trips and cultural events are an integral part of the West Tisbury School program. However, due to budgetary constraints, we sometimes ask parents to help by providing transportation, activity fees, etc. In some instances students raise funds to pay for their trips.

Among our traditional trips are the 5th grade Museum of Science Overnight, 6th grade Alton Jones trip, 7th grade ski trip, and 8th grade multicultural exchange to England. Please note: The Shenandoah is not a school sponsored or sanctioned trip.

The school understands that some families may have financial difficulty with the cost of some field trips. Whenever a request is made for help with any kind of special cost, it is understood that it will include a completed free and reduced school lunch application. Activity or scholarship funds may be provided confidentially to cover a part of such expenses for any students who cannot afford them. Please contact the guidance counselor or principal for more information.

### **Field Trip Attendance**

All off-island field trips require a signed permission slip. There are also numerous on-island field trips. On-island trips do not require separate permission slips, although a "blanket" permission form must be on file. The classroom teachers will notify the parents when their children will be out of the building.

Teachers must be able to feel comfortable that children can follow the Code of Conduct in order to include them on field trips. Parents will be notified if a student's ability to follow the Code of Conduct is in question.

If a parent does not elect to have a child go on a field trip, the student should attend school on that day or they will be marked absent.

### **6th Grade Trip**

Our grade 6 students attend a 4-day environmental education & team-building program through Nature's Classroom. This program is an integral part of the sixth grade curriculum and the transition process from 5th to 6th grade. The total cost to each student is approximately \$325.00 this year.

### **7th Grade Ski Trip**

As part of our physical education program, our 7th graders take a 3-day, 2- night ski trip in January or February. The cost to each student is approximately \$400.00, including transportation to Gunstock Mountain, N.H., ski lessons, lift tickets, equipment, breakfast and lodging. We encourage all seventh graders to participate in this trip, which helps to promote collaboration and self-confidence.

### **8th Grade Class Trip**

An 8th grade tradition at the West Tisbury School is a multicultural exchange trip to England in the spring. British students visit the Island in the fall. If the political climate or other considerations do not allow for international travel, a domestic trip may be offered. The decision of what domestic trip is taken in lieu of the exchange rests solely with the school administration. Expenses for the exchange are met with class fund raising, i.e. dances, selling ads for the 'Schools Out' summer newspaper, etc. Any costs beyond the funds raised are usually borne equally by the parents.

This trip is a privilege. In order to attend, a student must participate in the fund raising activities and maintain a good academic, attendance, and behavior record at school. Parents will be notified in advance if their child is in danger of being excluded. Please refer to the Code of Conduct for behavioral expectations.

### **Fund Raising**

All Fund Raising that is done for school sponsored trips or activities must be pre-approved by the Principal. Group fundraising activities are always the preferred model. Students will not be assigned individual fundraising targets, and all funds raised for school-sponsored trips will be utilized for the entire group and not assigned to individual students. All funds for school-sponsored trips will be handled through the school office following appropriate auditing rules. If a school-sponsored trip is to be financially supported by a booster club, or parent group, which is incorporated (501c3 or other such organization), those funds must be donated to the school that will act as the fiscal agent for the trip.

Neither parents nor outside agents may use the school to help fundraise for trips, activities, or causes that are not sponsored by the West Tisbury School.

### **Parent Chaperones**

Many trips welcome parent chaperones. Teachers will ask for volunteers as needed. Any parent attending an On-Island field trip needs to be CORIed prior to the trip. Any parent attending an Off-Island trip needs to be both CORIed and finger printed.

## Telephones, Bicycles, Skateboards, Headphones, etc

### **Use of Telephones**

Office and classroom telephones are not available for students' use except in cases of emergency or for school business. Arranging after-school play activities is not considered an emergency nor is routine requesting of rides home.

Parents are encouraged to make after-school arrangements before their children come to school in the morning. Requests to deliver routine messages to students during the day are disruptive to classes. If you need to get an emergency message to your child, call Sue in the main office.

### **Cell phones, headphones, earbuds, etc.**

West Tisbury School practices "Away for the Day" for all non-school supplied electronics. Students may not use cell phones, headphones, pagers, handheld electronic games, or similar devices in school, including during recess. Earphones and earbuds must be removed when students enter the school.

If a student must bring a cell phone into school, it must be **off** and should be stored in the student's **backpack (k-5)**, **locker (6-8)** or the **front office**.

### **Bicycles**

Bicycles brought to the school should be locked at the bike rack. The school assumes no responsibility for unlocked bikes. Students are required by law to wear bicycle helmets. Bicycles must be walked on school grounds.

# Lost & Found, Lockers, and Valuables

## **Lost and Found**

- Lost clothing is stored in the alcove by the greenhouse.
- Jewelry, money, and eyeglasses are usually brought into the office.
- If clothing is clearly marked with the child's name, loss is minimized.
- Periodically, unclaimed items are donated to charitable organizations.
- Please check the lost & found often; many expensive items go unclaimed.

## **Lockers**

The West Tisbury School fosters honesty and integrity. The school wishes to promote a society where locked doors are unnecessary. Therefore, our lockers have no locks. A lock may be requested for an upper-level locker if a parent/student wishes. Only locks provided by the school are acceptable. Requests for locks should be made to the Assistant Principal. Students helped to develop the following guidelines. Continued infractions could lead to the loss of locker privileges.

1. Schedules, pictures, etc., may be affixed with magnets or tape that can be removed. No stickers are allowed. Writing on lockers is prohibited.
2. Locker space is limited to school-related items – backpack, books, gym clothes, supplies, lunches, and after-school sports equipment.
3. Large, cumbersome items, such as overnight bags and equipment bags, cannot be stored in lockers. Ask your homeroom teacher or in the main office for space to store them that day. Nothing may be kept on the floor outside your locker.
4. Lockers are not banks. Let someone in the office hold money for you.
5. Lockers must be closed at all times. If the door will not close properly, the locker may be over loaded. If a problem exists with the latch, report it to Judy. Open lockers are a safety hazard and create an opportunity for temptation.
6. The lockers are located in a busy hallway. People must be able to pass through without disruption. Please do not block the hall. When you are finished at your locker, move on.
7. Lockers are to be accessed before homeroom, at lunch and recess, and at the end of the day. Prepare for the morning and afternoon by taking the materials needed.
8. Students are responsible for their possessions at all times. The school cannot assume responsibility for lost, misplaced, or stolen items.
9. Lockers are school property. They may be opened and inspected at any time. Please take your leftover lunches and used athletic clothing home with you!

## **Valuables**

- We caution students against bringing valuables and large amounts of money to school.
- Do not leave money, watches, iPods, cell phones, etc., in desks or lockers. If such items must be brought to school, they should be stored in the office with one of our secretaries until the end of the day.

## Code of Conduct

The West Tisbury School code of conduct is based on the rights and responsibilities of all students. All students have the right to attend school in a safe, harassment-free atmosphere and are responsible for helping to keep it that way. The assistant principal manages the daily responsibility for student discipline.

This handbook spells out expectations for conduct for students and parents. The code of conduct is to be followed by all students, while in school and during school-sponsored activities. School-sponsored activities include, but are not limited to, class field trips, music transportation, participating on sports teams, riding school buses to and from school, beach outings, concerts, and plays.

According to MA General Law, Chapter 71, Sections 37H and 37H1/2, the principal has the authority to suspend or expel a student for possession of a dangerous weapon, illegal drugs, assault, or for being charged with a felony. Any student who is suspected of violating a part of the code of conduct must be reported to the principal or assistant principal. The administration will use discretion in notifying the legal authorities.

1. All students are expected to obey the golden rule and to treat others, as they want others to treat them.
2. Any adult present is in charge. Students must listen respectfully, respond politely, and follow the adult's directions.
3. Students should keep hands, bodies and objects to themselves. Fighting may result in suspension from school.
4. Students must walk inside the building. Running, jumping, and shoving are annoying and dangerous.
5. Students are expected to use acceptable language, spoken at a reasonable decibel level. Profanity will not be tolerated at any time.
6. For safety purposes, students are expected to stay in the areas to which they are assigned. Roaming the building is not permitted. Students are expected to use the classroom sign-out sheet when they leave a class.
7. Teasing is usually the first step that leads to hazing and harassing. Teasing and bullying are unacceptable behaviors and will not be tolerated. Neither should any student engage in or support comments or actions that are biased, prejudicial, or discriminatory toward any group.
8. Gum chewing is not permitted.
9. Weapons of any kind are prohibited in school. Students must leave sharp or dangerous objects at home, including pocket or fishing knives, fingernail files, guns (real or fake), laser pointers, matches, lighters, or any other object that may be dangerous to others.
10. Tobacco, alcohol, and drugs may not be used at any time. The West Tisbury School is a tobacco-free campus.



11. Students are expected to follow the guidelines for the acceptable use of technology. Please read the M.V. Network Acceptable Use policy in the Appendix of this handbook. A signed copy must be returned before a student uses the network.
12. Truancy is absence from school or scheduled classes without permission. Truants are subject to disciplinary action and will be expected to make up any missed work at the teacher's convenience. Parents and police will be notified.

## Consequences for Violations of the Code of Conduct

Students should consider themselves responsible for their behavior and will be held accountable. In all cases where disciplinary action is necessary, the faculty and administration will use discretion. Generally, the course of action is as follows:

- Warnings will be given for minor offenses.
- A student may be required to stay in from recess or after school to confer with the teacher. The teacher will notify the parent. Students must remain after school on the day requested. If a student has an important after school obligation that cannot be changed, a parent or guardian may call and request that the discipline conference take place another day.
- Conduct referral forms may be sent home to notify parents about positive or negative behavior. White slips are usually sent for improved or exceptional behavior or attitude in class, on the playground, and on field trips. Pink slips are notices of disciplinary incidents such as rudeness, excessive talking, being late to class, or annoying classmates.
- Serious infractions or habitual misbehavior will result in a call to parents and possibly a student/teacher/parent meeting, to develop a unified approach to correcting the problem.
- Any student who threatens physical harm or aggressive behavior toward students or staff on school grounds or on a school sponsored event will be suspended immediately. Suspension will be followed by re-entry only after a conference with the parent. The administrator may make the re-entry contingent upon psychological evaluation.
- Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated. Sexual, religious, racial, ethnic, and any other types of harassment are serious offenses. Any student reported for bullying or harassment may be referred to the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Guidance Counselor for actions that may range from counseling to suspension. Any such student may lose school and/or extra-curricular privileges as a result of these offenses. Please take the time to review the Civil Rights Policy as well as the Bullying and Cyber-bullying Policy included in the Appendices of this handbook.
- Misuse of computers or technology will not be tolerated and may result in restricted use of computers. Please take the time to review the M.V. Network Acceptable Use policy included in the Appendix of this handbook.

## **Suspension**

The following offenses are very serious and may result in suspension from school. Any student who threatens physical harm or behavior toward students or staff on school grounds or on a school-sponsored event, will be suspended immediately. Suspension will be followed by re-entry only after a conference with the parent. The administrator may make the re-entry contingent upon psychological evaluation.

- Weapons are not permitted on school grounds. Weapons may include guns, knives, or any sharp objects that can do bodily harm. Possession will result in long-term suspension or expulsion. Parents and police will be notified.
- Any student using or possessing any tobacco or alcohol product at school is subject to suspension.
- Possession, use, distribution, purchase, or sale of drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, or any controlled substance in any place or vehicle under school jurisdiction and at all school-sponsored activities, regardless of time or location is prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion. Parents and the police will be notified.
- If the school administration suspects that an individual is in possession of or under the influence of a controlled substance, lockers and other personal effects will be searched as per established reasonable suspicion protocol. Suspension and/or expulsion may follow.
- Aggression and threats of aggression are serious offenses at school and will not be tolerated. Students are advised to avoid fights and seek adult assistance when facing interpersonal problems. Students who threaten or exhibit aggressive behavior are subject to suspension.
- Students involved in stealing in school are subject to suspension. Parents will be notified. The student will make restitution whenever possible.
- Serious or continued bullying or harassment that is sexual, religious, racial, or ethnic may result in suspension.
- Special Education students are not exempt from suspension. Individual Education Plans will be reviewed prior to 10 consecutive or cumulative days of suspension, and educational services will be provided after 10 days of suspension.

## **Due Process**

When a student has been accused of an infraction, he or she (or their parent) may request a meeting with an administrator, and the student may be present. The student has a right to face the person who has reported the infraction. The student may then present his/her side of the issue. In a K-8 school, the rights of due process are guided by what is developmentally appropriate.

## Recess

The purpose of recess is to provide students with time for physical activity and fresh air in order to help them improve physical skills, have a pleasant time in positive interaction with their peers, and aid in socialization. Recess is part of the overall educational program. It should be a time to expend physical energy in order to maintain and increase the mental energy necessary for good academic performance.

Most students go outside for a recess period at some point during the day. Students should be dressed for the weather when they leave home in the morning. Students may leave an extra set of clothing at school to allow them to change in case of wet weather, spills, or other emergencies. Teachers and/or teacher assistants supervise students during lunch/recess time. To help ensure that all students are able to enjoy recess, these guidelines should be followed:

1. Students must sit when swinging and dismount rather than jump from swings.
2. All playground equipment must be used with respect and care.
3. Students must use the slide from the top down only. Sliders must be in a sitting position.
4. Students must stay on the field and not wander into the woods. The storage shed is not part of the play area.
5. Shoes must be worn at all times in the play area.
6. Throwing snowballs, ice balls, rocks, sand etc. is not allowed and subject to disciplinary action. Pushing, shoving, and tripping are not allowed.
7. All trash, peels, juice containers, unwanted food should be thrown in trash barrels outside.
8. Sticks, knives, sharp objects, roller blades, skateboards, toy guns, etc., are not allowed at school at any time.
9. In the event that ice appears on the playground, students are not allowed to slide or play on the ice. The dangers of falling and/or getting wet are obvious.
10. The school nurse or teachers(s) shall make the determination of whether cold or other weather conditions shall require an indoor recess.

## Bus Safety/Behavior

Safety is the primary concern regarding bus travel. Everyone deserves to have a safe and pleasant trip, including the bus driver. The Code of Conduct includes school bus behavior. In the case of continuous misbehavior, the driver will give the student a written warning and report the student to the principal. Misbehavior will warrant a call or letter home. Bus privileges may be suspended. In the case of repeated misbehavior, parents will be asked to drive the student to and from school for a period of time.

**No eating or drinking is allowed on buses. This is crucial due to food allergies.**

## Student Support Services

The school is a resource for parents and educators about child and family services available in school as well as elsewhere in the school system, the community, and off-Island.

### **School Nurse**

The school nurse coordinates and provides a range of health support services. The following are examples of these services:

- Immunization record updating and free clinics;
- Screening: hearing, vision, spinal curves, height, weight, and blood pressure;
- Speech therapy: screening and therapy by a speech pathologist.
- Dental clinics, when available

### **School Counselors**

The counselors provide academic, emotional, or social support to students in grades K-8. Support may be provided through individual sessions, student groups, or meetings between counselor, parent, and student. All parents or guardians meet with the counselors when students enter Kindergarten and in 8th grade to plan high school courses.

The counselors provide direct services, coordinate the services of others (e.g., school nurse, special education teacher, and paraprofessionals) and make referrals. With parent permission, they may make referrals on the basis of a child's academic performance, behavior, or mental health. The school may be able to assist the family in finding funding for some services. Referrals to community resources may include a physician, psychiatrist, hospital, Island Counseling Center, Vineyard Health Care Access Program, CONNECT, and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

## **Educational Services**

When a child is seen as having academic difficulty, a teacher, parent, or administrator may request that the counselor convene a Student Support Team (SST).

The SST plans and evaluates intervention strategies. If the SST process results in a referral for additional testing for special needs, parents may be asked to give permission for a school psychologist to administer individual psychological and educational assessments.

## **Health Education**

The West Tisbury School provides an extensive classroom program for alcohol and drug awareness, bullying and violence prevention, and other health, social, and occupational competencies necessary for students to become successful contributors to society. The counselors and health educators are responsible for the program.

## **Substance Abuse Policy**

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools prohibit possession, use, purchase, or sale of drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, or any controlled substance in any place or vehicle under school jurisdiction or at any school sponsored activity, regardless of location. Attempted sales, purchase, or distribution are likewise prohibited. The goal of this policy is to insure a drug-free school environment.

It is the policy of the district to recognize the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol and to accept responsibility for promoting activities that will help students cope effectively with them. This policy focuses on:

- Substance abuse prevention in the school and community population.
- Intervention of school authorities into suspected and actual cases of substance abuse.
- The enforcement of a clear and consistent disciplinary code in matters pertaining to substance abuse.

In all aspects of this policy, it is the district's position that early and prompt attention to potential and actual problems will minimize the instances of alcoholism and other chemical dependencies.

A general aim of the school is to enlist the cooperation of students with respect to substance abuse problems. Efforts should be made by staff to encourage the student user to share his/her problem with parents, counselors, or other school staff members in order to obtain help. The school system will continue to provide, without penalties, assistance to students who are voluntarily seeking drug and alcohol treatment or advice, and will continue to protect the due process rights of all students.

## Student Records

### **Incoming Student Records**

All incoming students who register at the West Tisbury School must provide a complete copy of their student record from their prior school, as required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 37L.

### **Access to Records**

Parents, legal guardians, and students who are at least 14 years old may request copies of student records and request an interpretation of the records, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71.

### **Confidentiality of Records**

With few exceptions, only the parents, the student, administrators, counselors, and authorized school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student's permanent record, without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student. Please understand that the court may subpoena records and parents will be notified in that event.

### **Amendment of Records**

The parent, guardian, and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system. The appeals process must begin with the building principal, then the superintendent of schools and, as a final resort, the school committee.

### **Transfer of Records**

When a student transfers from this school, the student's records will be mailed to any school in which the student is enrolling, upon receipt of a written request signed by a custodial parent or legal guardian. Records of students who have completed Grade 8 will be transferred to Martha's Vineyard Regional High School.

### **Disposal of Records**

The student's transcript shall be maintained by the school and may only be destroyed 60 years following his/her graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system. The temporary record of any student enrolled shall be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school system. Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal. Such notice shall be in addition to the routine information letter required by state law.

## Residency

Students must physically reside in the Town of West Tisbury in order to attend the West Tisbury School. Under the regional agreement, students from Aquinnah may attend either the West Tisbury School or the Chilmark School. Once a student is enrolled in the West Tisbury School or the Chilmark School, however, they must stay in that school or go through the School of Choice process.

All West Tisbury, Chilmark, and Aquinnah students attend the West Tisbury School for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

## School Choice

The Up Island regional School District schools are Island schools of choice. A parent from any Island district may apply for a student's entry to the West Tisbury School or the Chilmark School through the lottery system.

A West Tisbury School parent may request that their child attend any other Island school according to the guidelines of school choice at the Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, or Tisbury Schools.

The UIRSD School Choice Policy is included as an appendix to this handbook.

## Class Placement

The teachers, guidance counselors and the administrative team work collaboratively to determine each student's class placement. Great care is taken to ensure the best learning environments are created based on important educational and developmental considerations. Parental input will be thoughtfully considered when class placements are determined, but final class assignments are the responsibility of the school administration.

## Building Use

The West Tisbury School encourages the use of our building and grounds by the community for educational, recreational, civic, and cultural activities to the extent possible under the law. We believe that school facilities are an important resource in developing and sustaining lifelong learning and in encouraging citizen participation in community activities. When space is available at times that do not interfere with the schools instructional programs, student activities, or the activities of school-related groups, community members may reserve school facilities on a scheduled basis. Facility use forms are available in the school office. The fee schedule for use of the West Tisbury school building and grounds may be revised on a regular basis.

## School Policies

A complete list of MVPS school policies is available online at: [www.mvyps.org/policies.html](http://www.mvyps.org/policies.html)

### Appendix I: Statement of Civil Rights Policy

## Statement of Civil Rights Policy

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools recognize the right of each student and employee to perform in an atmosphere free of harassment, intimidation, ridicule, hostility or offensiveness. The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) extends its policy of non-discrimination to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. *All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational/vocational education programs offered by the district.* Anyone aggrieved by or complaining of discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability may register a complaint with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator at the Office of the Superintendent, 4 Pine St. Vineyard Haven, MA 02568 508.693.2007 ext. 12. The Title VI and IX Coordinator is Dr. James H. Weiss, and the Section 504 Coordinator is Philip Campbell.

### 1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Once the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, principal, supervisor, or other school personnel is notified, an immediate investigation of the allegation(s) will be conducted and necessary corrective action shall be taken through the grievance process. No employee or student shall be subjected to adverse treatment because the employee or student made a complaint. All appropriate confidences shall be maintained.

### 2. GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Students and employees are encouraged but not required to directly object to acts or behavior felt to be discrimination. If (s) he feels uncomfortable in doing so, or if the issue is unresolved after direct discussion, (s) he should inform the school principal and/or the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator.

The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator may advise the aggrieved of various options:

- Formal or informal implementation of the grievance procedure;
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Department of Education
- Filing a complaint with the Massachusetts Human Rights Commission
- Filing a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
- Filing a private lawsuit



### 3. INFORMAL PROCEDURE

Once the grievance is brought to the attention of the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, (s) he shall attempt to resolve the matter through fact finding.

If the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator is unable to resolve the complaint, the complainant may move to the formal grievance procedure. The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator then becomes a resource to all parties.

### 4. FORMAL PROCEDURE

a. The complainant may file a formal grievance with the principal or supervisor within 30 (thirty) working days (school days for students and school year employees) of the date that the complaint was made to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator. If all of the parties involved in the complaint process desire to extend the formal process, the 30-day requirement may be waived. If the complainant does not file a written complaint to the principal or supervisor, the principal or supervisor will record the complaint in writing. If the complaint process begins with the principal and does not go back to the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator, then the formal process ensues. The principal/supervisor may advise the complainant to talk first with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator and proceed with an internal review.

b. The Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator will put in writing any recommendation for resolving the complaint and present it to the complainant, other parties involved in the complaint and the principal or supervisor.

c. Within fourteen (14) days (school days for students or school year employees) days from receipt of the complaint, the principal/supervisor must investigate and respond in writing with her/his review of the incident and of any action taken or decision made. The principal/supervisor may notify the parent/guardian in accordance with established school policy if a student under 18 (eighteen) years of age is involved. The investigation may include but is not limited to the following:

- meeting with the person charged to obtain a response to the complaint;
- conducting interviews of possible witnesses to any alleged events;
- report the matter to local police if criminal activity is involved (see Massachusetts general Laws, chapter 265 section 43, which prohibits stalking, and chapter 269 section 17 which prohibits hazing) and/or suspected child abuse to the Department of Social Services as required by Massachusetts General Laws chapter 119 section 51A;
- subject to the requirements of due process, take disciplinary action against the person charged pursuant to any collective bargaining agreement, student handbook, and state and federal law, including without limitation, a letter of reprimand or warning or a suspension of 1(one) to 10 (ten) days;
- refer the person charged to the Superintendent and/or designee for further disciplinary action.

The written report must contain the following information:

- All facts and circumstances of the incident;
- Verification of parent or guardian notification if a student under 18 (eighteen) years of age is involved;
- A summary of the investigation of all allegations which will include interviews with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information: the complainant, the person charged, and if either is under the age of 18 (eighteen), their parent(s)/guardian(s), witnesses, and anyone who may have been the victim of similar conduct

d. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response of the principal or supervisor (s), he may submit a written request for review to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within 30 (thirty) days (school days for students and school year employees). The Superintendent of Schools or designee must respond, in writing, within 14 (fourteen) working days.

e. An employee, student or parent/guardian acting on behalf of a student may at any time file a grievance with the following agencies:

United States Department of Education  
Region 1, John W. McCormack Building  
C.H.ROOM 222  
Boston, MA 02109-4557  
(617) 223-9317

Massachusetts Human Rights Commission  
51 Inman St. Second Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
(617) 349-4396

Massachusetts Department of Education  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148-5023  
(781) 338-3300

Records of any grievance filed by a complainant shall not be placed in the complainant's personnel file.

Retaliation/Confidentiality

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools will not allow anyone to retaliate against any person because (s) he complains of discrimination or assists in an investigation of discrimination.

Intimidation, coercion or any other attempt to interfere with an investigation of discrimination will not be tolerated. Information provided during an investigation of discrimination will be treated as confidential. This means that such information will be shared with others on a need-to-know basis only.

## Appendix II: MVPS Network Acceptable Use Policy For Students

### *MVPS Network Acceptable Use Policy For Students*

#### **Definition of Networks and Systems Covered Under This Policy**

There are three basic levels of networks that are covered under this policy. The Local Area Network (LAN) consists of all networked computers at the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS). The Wide Area Network (WAN) consists of the network connecting all Island schools, and in the future other Island institutions. The third level is our connection to the Internet. Within each of these networks, all hardware, software, and related peripherals used in connecting to or as a part of the network are included in this policy. In addition, all computers owned or leased by the MVPS shall be included under this policy.

#### **Guidelines**

Access to the MVPS networks is for educational purposes only. This access includes connections made on any Island public school, through a dial up or other provided access, or through the Internet. Below are categories of acceptable and unacceptable activities for these networks.

##### **A. GENERAL**

1. All users of these networks are representatives of the MVPS and should present themselves accordingly.
2. Access is for educational use only.
3. All users are expected to exercise responsible and ethical behavior when using these networks.
4. Students may only access the Internet under the supervision of a teacher or staff member.
5. Student use of the Internet should be for approved educational purposes only.
6. Activity on all network levels is subject to MVPS regulations, as well as all applicable local, state, federal, and international law.
7. Even though security measures are in place, be aware that sometimes information on networks can be accessed. Do not put information on line that you do not want others to have access to (i.e. credit card, bank account numbers, etc.)
8. Unauthorized use of copyrighted materials is prohibited.
9. Do not subscribe to any mail or listservs, or any service that will download large numbers of email messages to your mailbox without prior permission from a system administrator or Technology staff person.
10. Access to chat groups, video teleconferences, and the like are only to be done with the permission of a teacher or staff member and under their direct supervision.
11. If an email account is provided to a user, that person will use it for educational purposes only.
12. The MVPS reserves the right to examine, modify or remove any or all data stored in computers that are part of these networks to make sure that all users are in compliance with these regulations.

##### **B. SECURITY**

1. Use only account(s) assigned to you.
2. All users with an account will be given a password - do not give your password to anyone else or use another user's password at any time - You will be responsible for all activities taking place on your account.
3. If you think someone has accessed your account, or has information about your account, notify the system administrator or technology staff immediately.
4. If you identify any security problems, notify a system administrator, technology staff, or MVPS administrator only. Do not show or identify a security problem to other users.

##### **C. VANDALISM/DESTRUCTION/UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS OF DATA OR FILES/HARASSMENT**

1. Do not upload, download, or use any computer programs or hardware that will record or otherwise give access to passwords or other information to allow unauthorized access to a computer or account.
2. Do not upload or download any malicious program or other program designed to destroy or in any way compromise the operation of any computer, server, Network system or data.

**D. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. All users are responsible for their user accounts and activities on those accounts
2. Users are subject to all applicable laws when using these networks. Violation of any rules may result in disciplinary or legal action from within the MVPS as well as from outside legal authorities.
3. Users will not search for or participate in any activity on any network that is obscene, threatening, or contrary to educational pursuits.

**E. PENALTIES**

1. Any user violating these provisions may lose network privileges temporarily or permanently.
2. Users are subject to all other rules and laws applicable when using these networks, and may be punished under MVPS regulations, as well as criminally prosecuted.
3. Users may be held responsible for any financial costs incurred as a result of malicious or intentional actions that cause damage to any aspect of the networked system.
4. School and district administrators will make the final determination on what constitutes unacceptable use. They will handle all punishments covered under this policy and school regulations.

The MVPS makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The MVPS will not be responsible for any damages a user may suffer, including loss of data. The MVPS will not be responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet or other network connections.

*I understand and will abide by the MVPS's Network Acceptable Use Policy. I further understand that any violation of this policy is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, I may be financially responsible for damages I have caused by malicious or deliberate actions, and district disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.*

---

STUDENT SIGNATURE

---

STUDENT-PRINTED NAME

I, \_\_\_\_\_, parent and/or guardian of the above, agree to accept all liabilities which may result from my son/daughter's use of the MVPS computer networks (as explained in the opening paragraph of this document). (This is for all children under the age of 18)

---

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE  
(if child is under 18 years of age)

---

PARENT/GUARDIAN - PRINTED NAME

## Appendix III: West Tisbury School CORI Policy

### West Tisbury School CORI Policy

At the West Tisbury School, we view parent participation in school activities as an exciting and a vital part of our program, and we want to take full advantage of all of our parents' energy and talents. At the same time, we must comply with a state law which requires that all schools obtain Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) on any current or prospective employee or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children (M.G.L. ch.71, 38R).

CORI reports reflect criminal records for offenses committed in Massachusetts. We recognize that most volunteers work closely with our teachers rather than having unmonitored contact with children. After lengthy discussion of the implementation of this law and consultation with other schools on the Island and throughout the Commonwealth, we believe the best way to ensure that we comply with the law is to conduct a CORI search on all current and prospective volunteers, including but not limited to trip chaperones, coaches and assistants, library volunteers, and dance chaperones.

This is a continuing obligation, requiring that criminal history information be obtained at least every three years throughout the term of service. (We have already completed CORI checks on all school employees and many parent volunteers.) If you intend to volunteer or think you might be interested in volunteering during the upcoming year, please complete the CORI request form and return it to the Superintendent's office by September 30.

Filling out a CORI form is voluntary. However, being CORI checked enables our teachers to take advantage of your volunteer work in the most flexible way and allows our students to benefit from your presence.

All CORI information will be kept confidential. CORI reports will be available only to the Superintendent and the School Principal, both of which are authorized by the Massachusetts Criminal History Board to view returned CORI reports. No other school personnel will have access to any CORI information.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping us comply with this state law. For more information on this legal requirement, please visit the following webpage:  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/CORI.html>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, Principal, West Tisbury School at 508-696-7738 x 404.

## Appendix IV Up-Island Regional School District School Choice Policy

### ***Martha's Vineyard Public Schools School Choice Policy***

If it is determined that space is available, the *School Choice Policy* allows children the opportunity to move from a school in the Martha's Vineyard Public School System to the Up-Island Regional School District. When the number of applicants exceeds the spaces available, a lottery will be held. In this lottery, priority will be given to siblings of those children who have changed their designated school through the lottery system, and currently attend the Up-Island Regional School District.

Any student of a school of choice in the Martha's Vineyard Public School System may transfer through the School Choice Lottery. Each year the Principal(s) of the Up-Island Regional School District, with the advice of the School Advisory Councils and staff, will determine which classes have available space for the upcoming year. In determining the spaces available to school choice applicants, the administration will take into consideration class size and dynamics.

Once a student has been selected through the School Choice Lottery, the Up-Island Regional School District becomes his/her designated school.

#### **MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE FOR SCHOOL OF CHOICE:**

The maximum number of students for all classes is *determined by the School Principal*. Please speak directly to the Principal's Office in that school.

If class size in any K-8 classes reaches the maximum number of students, there will not be the opportunity for any student from outside the district to transfer to the Up-Island Regional School District.

#### **TRANSPORTATION:**

Transportation to and from the Up-Island Regional School District will be the responsibility of the student's parents.

#### **PROCEDURES:**

1. The Superintendent's Office will place a public notice in the local newspapers by **April 1<sup>st</sup>** inviting individuals wishing to participate in the MVPS School Choice Program to submit letters of request. The deadline for these applications will be noon on **June 15<sup>th</sup>**.
2. Elementary school principals will meet no later than **July 1<sup>st</sup>** to review school choice applications and will notify successful applicants no later than **July 1<sup>st</sup>**.
3. Successful applicants will have until **July 15<sup>th</sup>** to notify each school if they plan to attend a school of choice. If spaces still exist after this notification, school principals may offer those available spaces to individuals who had previously applied but had been refused. This notification shall be made no later than **August 1<sup>st</sup>** and applicants will have until **August 15<sup>th</sup>** to indicate their choice.
4. After a student is officially accepted into the school, he/she does not need to re-apply after the first year.
5. If a student moves to another town during the year after the deadline, the parent of the student may write a letter requesting to stay at that school for the remainder of that school year only. If the student wishes to remain the following year, the parent must re-apply to the school and meet the June deadline for the following year.
6. Once the school year has begun, students new to the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools may apply for school choice transfer at time of enrollment until the December vacation. After that date, no school choice transfers will be considered.

{Adoption Date} 02.11.2014 by the Up-Island Regional School Committee

Revised: 12.01.2004; 5.23.2007; 04.2011; 10.23.2013      Approved:

1<sup>st</sup> Reading - 12.16.2013      2<sup>nd</sup> Reading - 01.27.2014      3<sup>rd</sup> Reading - 02.11.2014

## Appendix V: Student Absences and Excuses Policy

### ***Student Absences and Excuses Policy***

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee does recognize that parents or guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. For observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school principal.

A student's understanding of the importance of day to day school work is an important factor in the shaping of his/her character. Parents or guardians can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents or guardians will provide an explanation in writing or by e-mail for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. Schools in the district shall have a pupil absence notification program, designed to notify parents or guardians if the school has not received notification of an absence within three (3) days of the absence.

It shall be the policy of the Up-Island Regional School District to notify parents or guardians if a student has at least five (5) days in which he/she has missed two (2) or more periods unexcused in a school year or has missed five (5) or more school days unexcused in a school year.

Principals or designees shall make a reasonable effort to meet with parents or guardians of a student who has five (5) or more unexcused absences to develop an action plan to improve that student's attendance.

{*Original Adoption Date*} 11.21.2011 by the Up-Island Regional School Committee

LEGAL REFS: *M.G.L. Chapter 76, School Attendance*  
*Chapter 22, Student Access to Education*

REVISED: March 2014

{*Adoption Date*} 6.16.2014 by the Up-Island Regional School District



## Appendix VI: MVPS Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

### **Martha's Vineyard Public Schools Student Conduct and Discipline**

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) strive to provide all students with a quality education in a safe environment. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner, which promotes a safe, orderly learning environment within the schools and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including the possibility of expulsion for serious offenses if they fail to do so. In imposing disciplinary action, school staff should consider the need to maintain or restore an orderly environment, the overall disciplinary record of the individual student, and the need to improve the student's behavior where appropriate. Because effective discipline involves the participation of staff, parents or guardians, and students, school officials are required to contact parents or guardians of students under age 18 for offenses of this disciplinary policy, which may result in students' long or short term suspension from school or regular classroom activities or permanent expulsion from school.

A student whose safety or learning at school is jeopardized by other students is expected to report the matter to a professional staff member. Retaliation in any form against a person who makes a complaint is forbidden. Staff members who are aware of disruptive students should take appropriate action, including immediately reporting matters which cannot be appropriately handled in the classroom to the school administration.

#### **SCHOOL RULES**

Each school principal, in conjunction with the school staff and/or school council, will prepare a student handbook setting forth the school rules and possible consequences of violation of such rules. In addition to addressing matters specific to the individual school, such rules should address students' possession of controlled substances (including drugs and alcohol) or dangerous weapons, use of force, theft, vandalism, knowingly making a false accusation, or violation of other students' civil rights, all of which are strictly prohibited. The school committee shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes to take effect the following September, but may also consider changes at other times. School discipline will be administered according to the provisions of the student handbook and Massachusetts General Laws and regulations, particularly M.G.L. c. 71 and 603 CMR 53, as from time to time amended.

M.G.L. c. 71, ss. 37H and 37H1/2 provide that a student who possesses a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance, or who assaults a staff member or who is charged with or convicted of a felony offense where his/her continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the school community may be permanently expelled from school. As detailed in M.G.L., Chapter 71, §37H<sup>3/4</sup>, students who commit any other disciplinary infraction, however serious, are subject to suspensions or expulsions which may not exceed 90 school days.

In making determinations under M.G.L. c. 71, s.37H<sup>3/4</sup>, the school principal or designee will exercise discretion in deciding consequences for student discipline; will consider ways to reengage a student in the learning process as a result of a consequence imposed and will avoid using long term suspension or expulsion as a consequence until all other remedies and consequences have been tried.

The school principal shall provide all students suspended or expelled the opportunity to make academic progress during such suspensions and expulsions. The school will continue to provide educational services to any student suspended from school for ten (10) or fewer consecutive school days. The school will provide an opportunity to make academic progress, to make up assignments and earn credits missed.

For all students suspended or expelled for more than ten (10) consecutive school days for any reason, the school principal shall have created a school-wide education service plan which may include, but is not limited to tutoring, alternative placements, Saturday School and online or distance learning or other alternatives permitted under state regulation.

The principal or designee shall notify the superintendent of an exclusion imposed on a student enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 3 in writing prior to the exclusion taking effect, describing the alleged misconduct and the reason for exclusion

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION

No student shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation as detailed in M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5. Further, the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools has no tolerance for harassment based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

#### HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools are committed to equal educational opportunity for all students, without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Please review the policy procedures *and consequences* detailed in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools' Sexual Harassment Policy, *which is attached and are used for all harassment complaints.*

#### PROCEDURAL DUE PROCESS

No student shall be disciplined without being afforded appropriate due process as provided by M.G.L. Chapter 71, § 37H, 31H1/2, 37H3/4, and 603 C.M.R. 53.00 which includes but may not be limited to notice of the disciplinary charges, opportunity for hearing, rights of the student to participate in the hearing, and rights of appeal as set forth in state law and regulations, as from time to time amended.

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the procedural protections noted above, the discipline of a student with disabilities – one who is on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or with a Section 504 Plan – shall be governed by procedures pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 *and/or* M.G.L. Chapter 71 B. If it becomes apparent that a student so identified as having special needs or referred for an evaluation may be excluded from school for a total of ten (10) days in any school year (both in-school and out-of-school), the *district personnel, the parent or guardian and other relevant members of the Team* must convene *within ten (10) days to review all*

*relevant information and determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was a direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP.*

#### PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The use of any tobacco product is prohibited within the school buildings or school facilities, on school grounds, or school buses by any individual. A student who violates this provision may be suspended.

{Original Adoption Date} 5.7.2009 *by the UIRSD School Committee*

Revised: 3.2014

{Adoption Date} 6.16.2014 *by the UIRSD School Committee*

LEGAL REFS:

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H, 37H $\frac{1}{2}$ , 37H $\frac{3}{4}$  M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5

*Provisions of the IDEA*

CONTRACT REFS.:

CROSS REFS.:

## Appendix VII: Island-wide Chaperone Guidelines

The following guidelines were developed by Island educators and members of the Youth Task Force. Parents who wish to chaperone school field trips and/or athletic trips must understand our clear general expectations.

1. All chaperones and school volunteers must have a completed and up-to-date CORI on file with the Superintendent's Office. An individual cannot serve as a chaperone or volunteer until the CORI report comes back from the CORI Board and is reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or his designee.
2. While chaperoning, at all times (24/7) parent chaperones should provide positive role models for the student on the trip, in behavior, speech and dress, and chaperone shall maintain all school rules.
3. Chaperones must abstain from using alcohol or drugs while on the trip;
4. Tobacco use is discouraged, and it should not occur within sight of the students.
5. Chaperones should provide for and monitor the physical, verbal and emotional safety of the students and should intervene in any situation where problem behavior is occurring.
  - Chaperones shall avoid being alone with an individual student.
  - During travel on bus, boat, or plane, chaperones should distribute and/or seat themselves throughout the student group so that all students have an adult nearby.
  - Chaperones shall inform the trip leader and school administrator of any problem situations as soon as possible, including unlawful or disruptive behavior, harassment, bullying, hazing or discrimination.
  - Individual students may function best with a chosen or individual chaperone. It is the prerogative of the school to make participation in any *away-from-school* activity contingent upon assigned or individual chaperoning arrangements.
  - Individual and overnight trips may provide additional, trip-specific chaperoning guidelines and rules. Chaperones shall make themselves available to participate in any pre-trip meetings to learn about additional rules that may apply to specific trips.

I have read the above guidelines, and as a parent chaperone or volunteer, I agree to them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

# Appendix VIII: Bullying, Cyber Bullying, and Harassment

## *Bullying Policy*

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Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

Bullying is defined as the repeated act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions. Bullying can take many forms and can occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that may affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extracurricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

Examples of bullying include but are not exclusive to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological;
2. Threats of any kind, stated or implied;
3. Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological, and emotional; and
4. Attacks on student property.

The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students and termination for employees.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The principal, or his/her designee, of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy,

{Adoption Date} December 1, 2010 by the Up Island Regional School District

### LEGAL REFS:

M.G.L. Chapter 151C, M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5

M.G.L. Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19, M.G.L. Chapter 71 §§ 82, 84

M.G.L. Chapter 71 §370

## *Cyber Bullying Policy*

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The Martha's Vineyard Public Schools is committed to providing a positive and productive learning and working environment for students and staff. Any form of harassment using electronic devices, commonly known as cyber bullying, by students or staff is prohibited and will not be tolerated by the district.

Cyber bullying is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to convey a message in any form (text, image, audio or video) that defames, intimidates, harasses or is otherwise intended to harm, insult or humiliate another in a deliberate, repeated, or hostile and unwanted manner under a person's true or false identity. In addition, any communication of this form, which disrupts or prevents a safe and positive educational or working environment, may also be considered cyber bullying. Students and staff shall refrain from using personal communication devices or district property to harass or stalk another individual.

In situations where the cyber bullying originates from a non-school computer but is brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based on whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operations of a school. In addition, such conduct must also be violative of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats or making a threat off school grounds to kill or hurt a teacher, staff member, or student.

The district will take any report of cyber bullying seriously and will investigate credible reports promptly. Students are encouraged to report an incident immediately to a teacher or principal who will take appropriate action. Students who make a report are expected, but not required, to preserve evidence of cyber bullying. For example, a student may save or bring a copy of an email, a text message, picture or other electronic transmission, which the student believes was intended to harm, insult, or humiliate.

Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to loss of computer privileges, and may be subject to other disciplinary measures, including but not limited to suspension. The district may revoke the privilege of a student or anyone who uses a personal communication device to engage in cyber bullying, to bring any personal communication device on district property or to district-sponsored activities. Staff whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal.

{Adoption Date} December 1, 2010 by the Up Island Regional School District

### LEGAL REFS:

M.G.L. Chapter 151C

M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5

M.G.L. Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19

M.G.L. Chapter 71 §§ 82, 84

M.G.L. Chapter 71 § 370

## *Harassment Policy*

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Harassment of students, staff, or any individual will not be tolerated in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools. This policy is in effect while individuals are on school grounds, school district property, or property within the jurisdiction of the school district, school buses, or when engaging in school activities.

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

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

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

1. Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
2. Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
3. Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other matters; and
4. Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities.

The district will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints alleging harassment.

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

The superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

*{Adoption Date}* December 1, 2010 by the Up-Island Regional School District

## **BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

The *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, prohibits bullying/cyber bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools, and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to addressing bullying/cyber bullying incidents. Parts of the law that are important for students and parents or guardians to know are described below.

These requirements will be included in the schools' or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("the Plan"), which was finalized by December 31, 2010. The Plan will include the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying/cyber bullying and retaliation, or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including parents and guardians.

### **Definitions**

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

***Bullying*** is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Bullying includes cyber bullying.

***Cyber bullying*** is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and internet postings.

***Hostile environment*** is a situation in which bullying/cyber bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

***Target*** is a student against whom bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation is directed.

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

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

### **Prohibition Against Bullying**

Bullying is prohibited:

- on school grounds;
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds;



- at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether it takes place on or off school grounds;
- at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school;
- through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased or used by a school district or school (for example, on a computer or over the Internet); or
- at any program or location that is not school-related, or through the use of personal technology or electronic device, if the bullying/cyber bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

### **Reporting Bullying/Cyber Bullying**

Anyone, including a parent or guardian, student, or school staff member, can report bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation. Reports can be made in writing or orally to the principal of your local school or another staff member, or reports may be made anonymously.

School staff members must report immediately to the principal or his/her designee if they witness or become aware of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation. Staff members include, but are not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity, and paraprofessionals.

If the principal or his/her designee is the alleged aggressor, the report must be made to the Superintendent. If the alleged aggressor is the Superintendent, then the report must be made to the school committee.

When the school principal or his/her designee receives a report, he or she shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or designee determines that bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation has occurred, he or she shall (i) notify the parents or guardians of the target, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying/cyber bullying or retaliation; (ii) notify the parents or guardians of an aggressor; (iii) take appropriate disciplinary action; and (iv) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

### **Professional Development for School and District Staff**

Schools and districts must provide ongoing professional development to increase the skills of all staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying/cyber bullying.

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying/cyber bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying/cyber bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying/cyber bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying/cyber bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been

show to be particularly at risk for bullying/cyber bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber bullying; and (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber bullying.

Additional information about the school's or district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be made available when it is finalized.