

ORANGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



EVERY CHILD. EVERY DAY.

Fisher Hill and Dexter Park  
Grades PreK-6

**STUDENT HANDBOOK  
AND  
CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

[www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org)



### **Literature Distribution**

Literature distribution for independent outside organizations is distinct from sponsorship. Because of the Boy Scouts restrictive admission policy, 603 C.M.R. 26.06(1) precludes a public school from sponsoring the Boy Scouts as an extra-curricular activity for students. For purposes of its regulation, the department of Education interprets "sponsoring" to mean endorsing, supervising or participating in the organization of the activity. Literature distribution is part of the limited forum that our district provides. The Orange School committee is not sponsoring or endorsing the outside organizations whose literature the school makes available to students.

### **ON BEING A PARENT / GUARDIAN OF A STUDENT**

As the introduction to this Handbook indicates, the primary educators of children are parents, and the schools are established, by the community, to provide special resources and assistance in that special task. It makes a difference if the student understands that his / her parents support the schools as an extension of their own efforts to provide for their growth toward intellectual and social maturity.

It makes a difference to students when their parents get to know their teachers and the specialists and administrators of the school. Opportunities are provided for parents (and even grandparents) to come to the school for special events, for group conferences about what the students are learning in such subjects as reading, math and science, and for individual conversations about students' progress. In addition, parents are encouraged to contact a teacher at any time that questions arise or problems seem to be developing. Studies indicate that it is of particular importance that fathers, or father figures, take an active interest in their children's school experience.

It makes a difference when parents ask their children about the day's experience in school, about what assignments they may have to work on that evening, and what special events are coming in the near future. It is very important that parents read to their children or listen to their children read. Sometimes our children can become our teachers by sharing what they are learning in school.

Occasionally, a student may report that he/she has been mistreated by another student or by a teacher or administrator. It is, of course, important for the parent to take a complaint seriously, but it is equally important that the parent contact the school for whatever additional information may be available. A cooperative approach to problem solving is a gift to everyone involved.

## **Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and R.C. Mahar Regional**

### **WHAT IS THE CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?**

THE CODE OF CONDUCT for Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and Ralph C. Mahar Regional Schools is based upon the laws, rules, regulations, and policies that seek to allow access to education for all while protecting the due process rights of the individual. Discipline, as defined by the Code, must have the qualities of understanding, fairness, flexibility and consistency. It is the responsibility of the school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and the community to contribute to a school atmosphere which promotes a safe, healthy, and supportive whole-school environment that is conducive to learning. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and the community. The Code of Conduct is intended to be instructive, not punitive and is based on the principles of preventative and positive discipline (i.e. interventions, skill building and consequences) and will be aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs, and keeping students in school. In addition, the Code is intended to create clear expectations and graduated levels of support and intervention for all students with consequences for misbehavior that are individualized, consistent, reasonable, fair, age appropriate and that match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Our schools within the Consolidated Districts recognize the importance of individual student growth and development within a safe environment that supports and encourages learning. To help maintain that environment, the Code of Student Conduct will:

- Identify a multi-tiered system of support to insure safe and supportive whole school environments and individualized student interventions prior to exclusionary practices
- Describe the conduct that is disruptive and/or is a violation of the Code of Conduct
- Standardize procedures that the school will use in responding to conduct problems
- Define Due Process
- Specify the rights and responsibilities of students, parents and staff
- Suggest reintegration strategies for disciplined students

Each disciplinary case will be decided according to the facts accompanying it. Efforts will be made to discipline students while maintaining them in regular school programs. Our schools encourage parent(s) and guardian(s) to be involved in the disciplinary process. Due process will be followed for all disciplinary actions. In accordance with the United States Constitution and applicable federal and state laws and regulations, no student shall be suspended, excluded, or otherwise disciplined on account of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, genetics, or active military status.

The Code of Student Conduct is in force during regular school hours, portal to portal. This includes when students are being transported on a school bus to and from school, as well as such times and places as school sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, and other activities where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.

Additionally, it is important to understand that Massachusetts law provides a principal with authority to suspend a student for conduct that occurs away from school if the student is charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint and the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. This law also provides a principal with authority to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, admitted to guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

#### WHAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE EMPHASIZED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

The mission of our schools is to support academic achievement and to develop self-discipline. Therefore, the measures emphasized in the Code of Conduct are incremental with the goal of using the least extreme measure that can resolve the discipline problem. In the past, disruptive students and the teachers involved in the incident were not given the opportunity to interact prior to a student's return to the classroom; in fact, teachers often did not know when a student would return from a suspension.

This code includes a multi-tiered system of interventions (Appendix A) aimed at preventing behavioral problems as well as bridging and reintegration strategies to decrease the reoccurrence of the offending behavior. Schools and parents/guardians may offer other bridging strategies that teach appropriate behavior. Teachers and administrators will continue to use and develop a variety of informal disciplinary and guidance strategies in teaching new behaviors before, during, and after disciplinary measures.

School administrators should conduct a thorough investigation into school related discipline matters, including student interviews, prior to recommending disciplinary action.

### DEFINITIONS

Behavior Intervention Plan: An individualized student plan that describes problematic behavior and provides a prescriptive menu of incentives and consequences based on the function of the behaviors to replace the problematic behavior with appropriate behavior.

Safe and Supportive School Environments: Includes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design.

Student Interventions: Disciplinary responses to violations in the Code of Conduct that do not involve removal from class or suspensions, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, behavioral contracts and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Principal: The instructional leader or headmaster of a public school, or his or her designee, for purposes of school disciplinary matters.

Parent: A student's father, mother, or legal guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or legal guardian.

Superintendent: The chief executive officer employed by a school committee or board of trustees to administer a school system, charter school, or virtual school pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §§59, 59A, 89, or 94, or his or her designee appointed for purposes of conducting a student disciplinary hearing.

Temporary Removal from Class: Removal of the student from his/her assigned classroom to a comparable educational program within the school building for up to one (1) school day. Beyond one (1) school day, removal constitutes an in-house suspension.

In-House Suspension: Removal of the student from the regular classroom activities, but not the school premises. In school suspensions of ten (10) or fewer days consecutively or cumulatively is not considered a "short-term suspension." In house suspensions of more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days will be considered a "long-term suspension" for due process purposes. Students must be able to make progress in school including doing work, taking tests/quizzes, receive information about long term assignments and other similar classroom activities during the in-house suspension period.

Short Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for:

Elementary 1-3 school days\*

Secondary 1-4 school days

Short term suspensions resulting in ten (10) or more days of suspension, cumulatively, for multiple disciplinary purposes in any school year will be considered a long term suspension for due process purposes.

\*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out of school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Long Term Suspension: Removal of a student from the school premises and/or regular classroom activities for:

Elementary 3-6 school days\*

Secondary 4-9 school days

Long term suspensions may be served in school.

\*Written notification to the Superintendent or designee is required prior to an out of school suspension taking place for students PreK- Grade 3 explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Emergency Suspension: A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following a suspendable offense where continued presence in the school building posing a danger to persons or property and materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and in the principal's judgment there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such cases, the principal must immediately notify the superintendent or designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student. A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Indefinite Suspension: Exclusion from a school for a period of time from ten (10) to ninety (90) school days due to a felony charge and a determination that continued presence will have a substantial detrimental effect on school's general welfare. The suspension shall continue pending adjudication of the case. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.

Expulsion: Removal of the student from the school premises, regular classroom activities and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days or permanently. Educational services must be provided to the student during this disciplinary period.

Alternative School Transfer: (Secondary Only) Decision made by the Superintendent or designee following a district process documenting repeated violations or a single episode of severity causing a threat to the safety of others.

School Wide Educational Service Plan: A document developed by the principal which includes a list of educational services available to students who are suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. Such a plan will detail the events and activities which represent the student's opportunity to continue to receive educational services and make progress while out on discipline.

## DUE PROCESS

### *IN HOUSE SUSPENSION OF TEN (10) OR LESS CONSECUTIVE OR CUMULATIVE DAYS*

At a hearing at which an in-house suspension is to be imposed, the principal/designee must:

Advise the student of the disciplinary offense(s) charged and the basis for the charge.

Provide the student with an opportunity to dispute the charge or explain the circumstances.

If charges are substantiated then the student is informed of the length of the in-house suspension.

Make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally on the same day the decision for an in-house suspension is imposed of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. Invite the parents to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, as well as strategies for student Engagement and responses to the behavior. The meeting shall be scheduled on the date of suspension, if possible, or soon thereafter. Two (2) attempts to contact the parents must be documented under such circumstances.

Following the decision to impose an in-house suspension, the principal/designee must send written notice to the parents and invite the parents to meet if the parents were unavailable for a meeting after oral notice. This notice must be forwarded by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

During in-house suspensions, the student must be able to make progress in school, is able to do his/her work, take tests, quizzes, receive information about assigned long-term assignments and other similar classroom activities.

### OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS (SHORT/LONG TERM)

Prior to the suspension, the principal or designee must:

Provide written notice to the parent in plain language English and home language that states:

(a) All charges;

(b) Basis for the charges

(c) The reason for the potential exclusion; and

(d) Provides an opportunity for a "meeting" or "hearing" with the principal and the date, time and location of the meeting/hearing where parents are given the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

(e) The right to interpreter services at the meeting, if relevant, and



(f) If long-term suspension is a possibility, then notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent as an appeal if the principal does suspend the student for longer than ten (10) consecutive days.

(g) If long term suspension is a possibility, notice must also include the following:

Prior to the hearing, the student/parent is afforded the opportunity review the student record and documents on which Principal/designee may rely.

The student has the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person and his/her own expense.

- The student has the right to produce witnesses and to present the student's explanation of the incident. Student witnesses / victims do not have to be summoned if the Principal/designee specifically rules, orally or in writing, at the hearing that identification of the student witness, or the presence of a known witness / victim at the hearing, would endanger his or her physical safety or cause intimidation. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a guardian if under 18 years of age.
- Student has the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district. All witnesses must be voluntary and accompanied by a guardian if under 18 years of age.
- The student has the right to request that the hearing be recorded and to receive a copy of the audio recording if an audio recording is requested by the principal.

Parental participation and evidence to secure is required –The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parents orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The regulations continue that “reasonable efforts” are made with written notice AND two (2) attempts to contact the parents. Written notice includes hand-delivery, certified mail, first class mail or email to an address provided by the parent.

In all cases of out of school suspensions for PreK-Grade 3, the principal/designee must send a copy of the written determination to the Superintendent/Designee explaining the reasons for an out of school suspension BEFORE the suspension takes place.

AFTER THE MEETING/HEARING:

Determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense.

If so, determine after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, the remedy or consequence to be imposed, in place of or in addition to a suspension.

Send the written determination to the student and parents by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal/designees and the parents.

Prepare a written determination that:

- Identifies the disciplinary offense, the date of and participants at the hearing.
- Sets out the key facts and conclusion reached by the principal/designee.
- Identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, and the date of return to school.

□ In the case of a long term suspension, informs of the right to appeal the principal/designees' decision to the superintendent/designee, which shall be in plain language in English and the primary language of the home and contains the process for appealing the decision

## EMERGENCY SUSPENSIONS

A student may be removed for not more than two (2) school days following the date of the emergency suspension if the student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property or material and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's / designees judgment, there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption.

Principal/designee must immediately notify the Superintendent/designee in writing and describe the danger presented by the student.

During the two (2) day emergency suspension, the principal/designee must make reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and parents of the emergency suspension, the reason for the removal, and must also notify them of the process in oral and written form and in the primary language of the home if not English.

The notice must include the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up work assignments or other school work, as needed, to make academic progress during the period of removal. This notice must be forwarded by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail or email to an address provided by the parents.

Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing, with the principal, consistent with the hearing for a short/long term suspension.

Provide the parents an opportunity to attend the hearing before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal/designees, student, and parent.

Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day consistent with the decision issued for a short/long term suspension.

## APPEALS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT

Long term suspensions (more than 10 consecutive or cumulative days) may be appealed to the Superintendent/designee upon the filing of a written appeal by the parent or student. The following appeals process must be followed:

- ❑ Student or parents must file a written notice with the Superintendent/designee within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long term suspension subject to an extension of the filing, upon agreement with the Superintendent/designee for up to a total of seven (7) calendar days.
- ❑ Long term suspension remains in effect unless and until the Superintendent/designee decides to reverse the principal.
- ❑ The Superintendent/designee must send written notice to the parent of the date, time and location of the hearing and must make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing process.
- ❑ Students shall have all the right afforded the student at the principal / designees hearing for long-term suspension.
- ❑ Hearing shall be held within three (3) school days of the request subject to an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days.
- ❑ A tape recording of the appeal at the Superintendent/designee level must be made and a copy must be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- ❑ The Superintendent / designees written decision must be made within five (5) calendar days. If it is determined the offense was committed, the decision must state the consequence, which may be the same or lesser than the principal/designee but shall not be greater than that that imposed by the principal/designee.
- ❑ The Superintendent's /designee's decision is final.

## **APPENDIX A**

### STUDENT INTERVENTIONS AND TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

All of our schools have adopted a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Guided by student outcome data, a multi-tiered approach is used to make decisions to improve student achievement and behavior by assisting in the creation of well-integrated and seamless system of instruction and intervention.

Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School and R.C. Mahar Regional are implementing the Massachusetts model of tiered systems of support (MTSS). MTSS is a blueprint outlining a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system level change across the classroom, school, and district to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. It guides both the provision of high-quality core educational experiences in a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and academic and/or non-academic targeted interventions/supports for students who experience difficulties and for students who have already demonstrated mastery of the concept and skills being taught.

## DEFINITIONS

Tier I: Core Instruction/Universal Behavior Supports – All students in Tier I receive high- quality, scientifically-based instruction, differentiated to meet their needs, and are assessed on a periodic basis to identify struggling learners who need additional support.

Tier II: Supplemental and Core – In Tier II, students not making adequate progress in the core curriculum are provided with increasingly intensive instruction matched to their needs on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress.

Tier III: Intense and Core – At this level, students receive individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits for the remediation of existing problems and the prevention of more severe problems.

## APPENDIX B

### DISCIPLINE RELATED INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER IDEA and SECTION 504

The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B allow school personnel to move a student with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days, if that student is in possession of a dangerous weapon at school or a school function or on school property, is in possession or uses a controlled substance or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function or on school property, or inflicts serious bodily injury on a person, including him/herself. The appropriate interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP TEAM.

The IDEA and M.G.L. c. 71B also allow school personnel the option of asking a hearing officer or a court to move children with disabilities to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 school days, if they are substantially likely to injure themselves or others in their current placement.

When a special needs student has been suspended for more than ten (10) consecutive or cumulative days in a school year, such that a substantial change in placement is occurring or will occur, the IEP TEAM will meet to conduct a manifestation determination. Relevant members of the TEAM meet for the manifestation determination, and they answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's IEP?
2. And is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability?

A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review.

If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be disciplined according to the discipline policy in this handbook. The student will receive educational services during this period of suspension or exclusion. If the TEAM finds that the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the school may still be able to implement an IAES (see ## 2 and 3 above). If the IAES is not possible, then the student will remain in his/her current placement, and the TEAM will arrange for a functional behavioral assessment (if one has not been conducted on the student) and the development or modification of a behavior intervention plan. The Principal (or designee) will notify the Special Education/Pupil Services Office of the suspendable offenses of a special needs student and a record will be kept of such notices.

#### Students not yet determined to be eligible for special education or 504 services:

The law applies to general education students if the school system had knowledge prior to the misconduct that the student was disabled. Under the law, a school district is presumed to have "had knowledge" that a general education student was disabled if the student's:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) has "expressed concern in writing" to the school district that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- Parent/guardian(s) have requested a special education evaluation of the child, or
- District staff have "expressed concern" directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. If there was no knowledge, the parent/guardian(s) may request an expedited evaluation. During this period, the student may be suspended or expelled under normal School Committee policy. Students determined to have a disability must receive appropriate educational services.

#### Students identified as having a disability and provided with a Section 504 plan:

Students are expected to meet the expectations for behavior identified in this Code of Conduct. A student on a Section 504 plan may be disciplined like any other non-disabled student. However, if the student is going to be suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days, expelled or suspended for more than fifteen (15) cumulative days (and there is a change in placement as a result), then a manifestation determination review shall be conducted. The student's 504 team shall convene, and answer two questions, after reviewing relevant documents and the misconduct of the student:

1. Is the misconduct the result of failure to implement the student's 504 plan?
2. Is the misconduct caused by, or does it have a direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability? A summary of the manifestation determination review will be written and a copy provided to the Parent(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible after the review, but no later than five (5) school days after the review. If the misconduct is not a manifestation of the student's

disability, then the disciplinary process can proceed. If the misconduct was a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student shall be reevaluated while he/she remains in the current placement.

## **CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL SCHOOLS**

**Building a Learning Community.** One of the major goals of our schools, and of each of our teachers, is to encourage social behavior marked by self-control and concern for others. This is so essential to the learning environment. The rules, regulations and procedures listed in this handbook are designed, of course, to ensure the safety of students and staff, but they are also designed to describe a learning community in which our differences are cherished, individual rights are protected, and we commit ourselves to work together towards common goals.

**Parental Concerns.** Parents who have a concern about their child's progress or behavior should first talk with the classroom teacher. A conference time convenient for both the parents and the teacher may be arranged by calling the school office. Should they be dissatisfied after this conversation, parents may turn to the principal and teacher together, and then to the Superintendent.

Parents and visitors to the schools are required to go to the office to register their presence before proceeding to a classroom or other area. This is important for the safety of everyone. **Parents must sign in and out and wear a visitor's badge when they are visiting the school buildings.** Trespassers will be prosecuted.

**Attendance:** Students are required by law to attend school when it is in session. If a student is ill or for some other reason cannot attend, or will arrive late, a parent or guardian **must** call the school with this information, and do so each day that the student will be absent or arrive after the beginning time. If we do not hear from you, we will put our **call back** system in place. Our school nurses will call you to verify that you know that your child is absent. When a student returns to school after an absence, or arrives after the beginning of school, he or she is still **required to bring a note** from the parent or guardian indicating the nature of the absence or the reason for the tardiness.

The Department of Transitional Assistance requires that, under the Welfare Reform Law, in order to receive benefits under the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, children under the age of 14 must meet specific school attendance requirements. The school may release attendance records to D.T.A. under 603 CMR. The school **must** have written absence notes stating the reason for the absence.

**Truancy:** (State Law - Ch.76) A child will be considered truant if he/she misses 7 or more day sessions within any period of six months.

There is no doubt that one of the keys to academic achievement is good attendance. Consistent participation in school and school-based activities is important for making a successful transition from youth to adulthood. Student tardiness and truancy are challenges that confront many communities like Orange and across the state. Often, these behaviors are the first indicators that a student may be experiencing stress or other difficulties in his or her life.

The following is a summary of some of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to attendance:

### **School Attendance**

Please let us know if your child will be absent due to illness or other reasons as soon as possible in the morning. As a school, we want every opportunity for your child to be met with success; we will pay close attention to attendance and have every expectation that all students attend school on a regular and consistent basis. In accordance with Chapter 76, Section 1B, Parent(s)/guardian(s)

will be notified by letter when a student has missed at least five (5) or more school days in a school year. We value your child's education and if a student accumulates 7 cumulative absences within a six month period (See MGL Ch. 76, S. 2), a meeting will be setup with the Principal to develop a plan to get the student to school consistently. Your child's success is important to us and we want them to share in the experiences throughout the whole school day. Please be advised that if the child's attendance at school does not improve, the school will be required to involve the District Attorney's Office through the filing of a CRA. Please contact the school office, in advance, to notify the school of any planned absence. Students are responsible for completing all owed work following an absence.

### **Notification and Contact Information**

Chapter 76, section 1A of the Massachusetts General Laws states that parents/guardians must be provided each year with the instructions for calling a designated phone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a student and the reason for the absence. In addition, parents/guardians must provide the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number so that they may be contacted during the school day so the school may call and inquire about said absence.

### **Who is a Supervisor of Attendance?**

Chapter 76, section 19 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that each school committee must employ a supervisor of attendance. A supervisor of attendance has the power to apprehend and take to school any child who is truant and is required to investigate all cases where a child in the district fails to attend school.

### **What is a CRA?**

A "CRA" (Child Requiring Assistance) replaced a "CHINS" (Child In Need of Services) in 2012. Under the law the school district can petition the courts if a child is: "Habitually Truant": A child between 6 and 18, who, without excuse, willfully fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter. The school applicant must state whether or not the child and the child's family have participated in a truancy prevention program. M.G.L. c. 119, § 39E. Under M.G. L. c. 119, § 39G, dismissal must occur when the child turns 16. The Court's authority pursuant to a CRA petition includes the power to place the child in the custody of the state agency known as the Dept. of Social Services.

### **What is a 51A?**

A 51A is a report of suspected child abuse or neglect that is filed with the Dept. of Social Services. Under Chapter 119, section 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, a report can be filed on behalf of a child under the age of eighteen for educational neglect if a child is not attending school on a regular basis.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that a child under their control attends school daily. It is a crime for a responsible parent or guardian not to cause such a child to attend school. If a child fails to attend school for seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions within any six month period, the supervisor of attendance may file a criminal complaint in court against the responsible parent/guardian.

### **Inducing Absences**

It is a crime to induce or attempt to induce a minor to miss school, or unlawfully to employ or to harbor a minor who should be in school.

**Attendance at Field Trips and Other Special Events:** Field trips and other special activities and events are integral parts of the whole education of the child. They enhance day-to-day curriculum by offering hands-on experiences that bring to life what students read about in books or hear about from their teachers. Our hope is that all children will always be part of these experiences. There are times, however, when alternate decisions need to be made regarding attendance at these events. If a child's behavior is such that it is deemed unsafe to take him/her on a field trip or to an event, then the principal will notify the

parent of this decision as early as possible.

**Dismissal:** If a student's normal dismissal procedure changes, a note is required from the parent/guardian notifying the school of the change. Parents are asked not to request such a change by telephone. Calls for changes to dismissal will NOT be accepted beyond 2:15 p.m. except in the case of an emergency. Such changes can be made via phone directly to the main office. As the end of the school day is a busy time, please plan accordingly and limit these exceptions to emergencies ONLY.

If a family emergency or other special circumstances require that a student be dismissed before the end of the school day, the parent/guardian should notify the school via phone. The parent/guardian should come to the school office to meet the student at the time, which has been stipulated. A student dismissed early will not be allowed to wait outside the building for his/her ride. Students in emergency situations may use the school telephones. Children involved in after school programs **must** be picked up at the ending time of the activity by a person who has been identified as the responsible party to pick up the student.

**Absence Reporting:** If your child will be absent from school, please contact the school office via phone by 8:30 a.m. or as soon as possible.

**Emergency Information:** Parents are responsible for completing the emergency information sent via email on the first day of school. This information is very important to the office as they are used to call parents and caretakers in emergency situations and when a child is sick or needs to be dismissed for some reason. Parents are responsible for updating the school when changes in telephone numbers and addresses are made. No student will be dismissed to unauthorized individuals without parental consent via note (or telephone call in emergencies). These persons, if unknown to the schools, will be asked to produce proper identification.

**Legal Documentation:** If legal documentation exists pertaining to your child, please provide the office with copies of such documentation. This may be in the form of custody papers, restraining orders, adoption papers etc. We know that family situations may change at any given time therefore changing the legal documentation. We **must** be notified with updated information in order to look out for the best interest of all students and families. Our schools comply with all MA. laws regarding custodial access to student information.

**Fire Drills & Emergency Evacuations:** Each school has fire drills. The schools may also be confronted with other emergencies that require the evacuation of the school. If it becomes necessary to evacuate the schools, there are procedures in place for such evacuation. It is mandatory on such occasions that every occupant of the building leave the building in an orderly manner and in silence. Students are to remain with their teacher or other staff member and may not re-enter the building without explicit instruction to do so.

**Student Behavior:** Should a student's behavior become disruptive to the learning process, or appear to be dangerous to him or herself and/or to others, the teacher will be the first to seek a change in such behavior. If change does not occur, the teacher will discuss the matter with the parents and may also seek the assistance of the principal. Examples of unacceptable behavior include throwing objects, fighting, vandalism, vulgar language, mocking others with reference to their religion, color, economic status, gender or physical attributes, disrespect for teachers and staff and disregard for the rules of the classroom, bus, playground or cafeteria. If a student should need to be restrained, it will be in accordance with School Committee Policy and Massachusetts General Laws. See the attached appendix for restraint policies.

**Discipline:** The health and safety of children is one of our primary goals. All of our resources are used, and the assistance of the parents earnestly invited, in order to alter behavior, which is disruptive or dangerous to the student or others. If suspension or relocation to another academic setting seems to be the only alternative, the rights of the student and of the parents will be fully protected in accordance with School Committee policies and the laws of the Commonwealth. The "out of school" suspension of a student is a rare event.



Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, section 37G, prohibits the use of corporal punishment and this law is, of course, observed in our schools.

**Inspection and Searches:** The Schools reserve the right to inspect students' lockers, desks and personal possessions, if there is a reasonable suspicion that they may harbor illegal drugs, tobacco products, dangerous weapons, alcohol or any other item which may be detrimental to that student or to others and to take possession of any item which is found. If such a search is indicated, it will be done by at least two persons, one of whom, when possible, should be a school administrator. Inspections of all lockers and desks for the purpose of encouraging tidiness may also be made.

**Bringing Things to School:** Young people sometimes have a desire to bring favorite things to school to show to their friends and the teacher, such as, trading cards, small toys, etc. Since some things may disrupt the learning environment or prove injurious to others, students may bring to school only what is necessary for the school program, unless they have explicit permission from the teacher. **On field trips, audio equipment may be allowed with permission from the classroom teacher and bus driver.** Special occasion deliveries, for example flowers, balloons, etc., are discouraged at all schools. At Fisher Hill and Dexter Park, all deliveries will be held in the office until the end of the day when it is expected that an adult will pick them up.

**Vandalism:** Vandalism of school property is prohibited, as is the defacing of the building or grounds itself. Stickers are not to be placed on lockers, inside or out.

### **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS (from Article II.A.15.f.)**

The Orange Elementary Schools are committed to the regulations set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as they apply to the use of physical restraint on students of publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. This policy and regulations apply to all students including regular education students, collaborative students, and students with disabilities.

The two goals that this policy enforces, only after less intrusive methods have been attempted or considered, are:

- ❖ To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student or member of the school community from imminent, serious physical harm; and
- ❖ To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as the result of the use of physical restraint.

It should be noted that nothing in the policy precludes a teacher or other staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, themselves, other persons from assault or imminent, serious physical harm, as noted in MA DOE Regulations 46.05 (1).

Please refer to details in the policy manual on line at [www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org).

### **STAFF PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH STUDENTS (from Article II.A.15.g.)**

The purpose of this policy statement is to provide all employees with guidance and direction with respect to physical contact between employees and students. It is in addition to our policy and prohibitions regarding sexual harassment and to any applicable criminal laws. It is an area of educational policy, judgment and law, which is fraught with uncertainties and changing standards. What constitutes appropriate physical contact in one circumstance may be totally inappropriate in another. Its appropriateness will depend on a variety of factors, not the least of which will be the purpose and nature of the contact, the age of the student, the setting, etc. The School Committee expects all its employees to conduct themselves in a manner which is educationally sound and acceptable, both within the professional community and the community at large.

## General Principles

1. All physical contact between employees and students should have a valid educational purpose and objective necessary to meeting the student's (not staff member's) needs.
2. The use of physical contact or force in order to impose the staff member's will upon a student, except as necessary to protect themselves or others from immediate physical harm from the student, is strictly prohibited.
3. Employees who observe physical contact between students and employees, which they deem to be inappropriate, are required to report said observations to the building principal and/or the Superintendent of Schools immediately. If the contact is perceived to be immediately harmful by the observer, prompt intervention to prevent further harm is expected.
4. Questions of the appropriateness of physical contact will be determined by the context of the contact on a case-by-case basis. Issues such as intent, contact, location, circumstances, age and sex are all considerations, which may be relevant. Examples: Hugging a first-grade child who is crying may be perfectly appropriate while any touching of eighth-grade students of either sex who is not posing an immediate risk to himself or others of physical harm, may never be appropriate. While holding or comforting a first-grader who has fallen and is crying may be appropriate, placing a hand on a child's head to redirect his attention to the front of the room is not.
5. Touching students under clothing, or in the genital areas, or on the buttocks, or breasts is prohibited.
6. Instances of inappropriate physical contact initiated, encouraged, practiced and/or tolerated by employees, in even a single instance, may result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

## Summary

Given the complexity of this issue, the School Committee recognized that some employees might deal with it by implementing a practice of never touching any students of any age. While that is a legitimate choice, that is not the School Committee's intent or objective.

## **THE USE OF ANY VIDEO AND DIGITAL OR TECHNOLOGY THAT CAPTURES AND REPRODUCES IMAGES**

**Philosophy:** The Orange School Committee acknowledges that media documentation can be used for the improvement of teaching and learning, as well as for the maintenance of discipline and security. We also recognize that media documentation can be abused and, therefore, the policies which follow are designed to maximize the benefits and avoid possible misuse.

**Buses:** Cameras may be used to monitor behavior in school buses. The images from bus cameras may be shared with teachers, parents, students and other appropriate authorities at the discretion of the building principal with the concurrence of the Superintendent. The images from bus cameras are not to be made available to the general public.

**School Buildings and Grounds:** Cameras may be used to monitor school buildings and grounds. The images and/or audio from this equipment may be viewed only by the building principal and/or the Superintendent, or by a person appointed by either to view such images and/or audio. At the discretion of the Superintendent, they may be released to appropriate civil authorities.

**Teaching Events:** Media documentation may be done in classrooms or at other teaching events and, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, such documentation shall be at the request of, or with the consent of, the teacher(s) involved. The viewing of such documentation shall be at the discretion of the teacher(s) involved, and/or the building principal and/or the Superintendent.

**Public Events:** Parents and other persons may be granted permission, explicitly or implicitly, to document concerts, lectures, exhibits and other public events sponsored by an individual school or by the school district as a whole. The person in charge of a particular event may, with the concurrence of the building principal and/or the Superintendent, request that documentation not

occur. Parents and other persons shall have the privilege of media documentation in classrooms only for a specific reason and only with the express consent of the classroom teacher(s) and the building principal.

**Restrictions:** No images and/or audio documentation, whether made at a teaching event or a public school event can be used for commercial purposes without the express consent of the Superintendent.

**Restrooms:** No image and/or audio equipment of any kind shall be installed or operated in any school restroom.

In addition to the general expectations listed above, each school has rules, which are specific to that school. These rules are as follows:

### **The Dexter Park School**

**Start Time: 8:30 AM End time: 3:00 PM (12:30 dismissal every Weds)**

Students should arrive at the school no earlier than **8:30 A.M.**

All playground rules are to be observed. Violators will be disciplined accordingly. There is to be no rough or physical play that may endanger a student or others.

No objects that may endanger students (rocks, sticks, snowballs) can be thrown that are not normally associated with structured games.

For safety reasons, only one student is allowed on a swing at a time. It is also for safety reasons that no student or group of students is allowed to play in the woods.

There is to be no sliding on the hill during school hours, whether with or without a sled. Students are not allowed on the playground area in the winter months without boots.

During lunch recess, students are expected to remain on the playground and are not to enter the building without permission from supervising adults.

Students, upon dismissal, may not loiter on the playground. Students are to go directly home unless parental permission to stay has been granted with a note or phone call.

**Homework Philosophy :** At the Dexter Park School, we are committed to building a culture of respect and collaboration between adults/students and school/community while creating an inclusive environment where instructional practices are designed with each learner's strengths, passions, and needs in mind. We believe that we, the adults, play critical roles as models for our students and we are working hard to achieve work/life balance, making time for things we enjoy and spending time with those personal relationships that are so important to our well-being. With this in mind, the Dexter Park Innovation School is committed to helping our students have similar expectations for themselves. We believe that after school, students should be engaging with family, doing things they enjoy, or simply relaxing after a day at school. This does not mean we do not give homework but if we do, we choose assignments that enrich our student's education, make deeper connections to the content being covered in class, or that offers students some choice in what they do. It is our belief that this will result in students and staff who are ready each day to do the work necessary in school: to be empathetic, confident and curious learners. You should expect your child to receive no more than 30 minutes of homework per night. If you are finding your child is spending more time than this, please contact your child's teacher. This homework statement is aligned to our school's vision and mission, and is backed by a strong research base that

shows little correlation between homework and student achievement

(<http://www.evidencebasedteaching.org.au/hatties-2017-updated-list/>). If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your child's teacher to hear what homework looks like in their classroom.

### **FISHER HILL SCHOOL**

**Start Time: 8:30 AM End Time: 3:00 PM (12:30 dismissal every Wednesday)**

Students should arrive at the school no earlier than **8:30 A.M**

Safe use of the playground equipment will be explained and the rules for safe use must be followed.

No student is allowed to play in the woods, on the berm, the hill or in the tall grass. Winter sliding is permitted as long as the student is wearing snow pants, boots, jacket, and hat. All sliding is done under the supervision of a duty person. For safety reasons, sleds are not permitted. Students are not allowed into the field area during winter months (when it is wet and snowy) without boots.

**Homework Philosophy:** The primary goal of homework at Fisher Hill is to create strong home/school connections. Bridging the relationship between home and school can be accomplished in many ways and homework should be used by the teacher to encourage family involvement, while practicing skills at this early childhood level. Many activities may constitute homework, including household chores, tying your shoes, and reading before bedtime. Responsibilities at home help children to develop language and social skills, responsibility and confidence. Making math a real part of the home environment (pairing socks and counting by twos; dividing a pizza into equal pieces; shopping and counting change) and giving your child a voice in family decisions are important to their learning of math concepts and the social emotional competencies-self-management, self-awareness, relationship building, social awareness, and responsible decision-making. We encourage daily reading with and to your child every day, which will result in quality family time and enhancement of their literacy skills. The key is for students to engage with their parents in learning activities, so families are also encouraged to play cards or board games, for example. It's important to not forget that students also need time after school to play, exercise, engage in other non-academic activities, spend time with family (especially meals), and sleep—which the research shows has an enduring, positive impact on learning.

### **SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

**Riding the Bus :** Although state law mandates busing only if the student lives two or more miles from the school or from a current bus stop, the Orange Elementary Schools use a one-mile limit. Appropriate behavior on the bus is a major factor in assuring the safety of all the students. A driver who is trying to solve a behavioral problem cannot give full attention to driving. The basic bus rules of conduct are the following:

- Follow the driver's directions while waiting for the bus; keep back from the street
- Do not push or shove when getting on or off the bus
- Stay seated, don't switch seats and keep the aisles free
- Keep hands and arms inside the bus
- Speak quietly so that the driver can hear traffic sounds
- The use or possession of tobacco products, alcohol and illegal drugs is prohibited
- The possession or use of a weapon is prohibited, as is the use of any object as a weapon
- Fighting and/or verbal abuse will not be tolerated

- No hanging key chains or toys are allowed on backpacks or clothing
- No loose, long clothing

The driver will report violations of the above rules to the building principal. The principal will determine the appropriate response to a violation. The response will be determined by the nature of the offense(s) and by their frequency. The following are among the principal's options:

- A letter or telephone call to a parent or guardian
- Suspension of the privilege of riding the bus for one or more days
- The parent (s) or guardian may be asked to meet with the principal to discuss the matter

If the student is excluded from riding the bus for one or more days, the parents/guardian become responsible for transporting the student. **A student who does not attend school during a bus suspension is considered truant.**

All busses are equipped with video cameras and tapes are reviewed by the principals on a random basis, or whenever a driver reports a violation of the rules. Parents may be invited to review the tapes, and in some extreme cases the police, but the tapes are not available for general viewing and are not made available to the media. The use of the cameras is to support the safety of our children.

**On Walking and Riding a Bicycle to School:** Students who walk to school or to a bus stop in areas with sidewalks are required to use the sidewalks, and where there are crosswalks, to cross in the marked areas.

Bicycles ridden to Dexter Park are the responsibility of the parents / students and it is recommended that they be locked. Bicycles may not be ridden on school grounds. Students should dismount and walk their bikes to the racks.

Because of age and the steepness of the hill, bicycles and scooters are **not allowed** at Fisher Hill School.

**In line skates, skateboards and sneakers with wheels are prohibited at both schools.**

A reminder: **State law requires that riders 12 years old and younger wear helmets.**

**Failure to wear a helmet will result in the loss of the privilege to ride a bike to and from school.**

The school is not responsible for the behavior and well-being of students who walk or ride their bikes until they enter the school grounds.

## **SCHOOL CLOTHING**

### **Student Dress (Mass Law CH. 71, S. 83) Student Right; Personal Dress**

School officials shall not abridge the rights of students as to personal dress and appearance except if such officials determine that such personal dress and appearance violate reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness. The school can prohibit a manner of dress which constitutes a disruption or distracting to the educational process.

It is helpful, particularly in the younger grades, if the students' names are written in or attached to all hats, gloves, coats, boots, lunchboxes and backpacks.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Orange Elementary School Department does not discriminate or exclude a child from any activity, service or resource available in our public schools on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or handicapping condition.

The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski, has been designated by the School Committee to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies pursuant to Title IX, Title VI and Section 504, and MGL, Ch. 76, Section 5. If you feel that we are in violation, you are encouraged to contact the Superintendent at 544-6763. Further information regarding these policies can be obtained from:

The Bureau of Equity and Language Services  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148

## **ANTI-HARASSMENT: STATEMENT AND PROCEDURES**

**General Statement-**The Orange Elementary Public School district is committed to protecting the rights of all individuals within the school district to work and learn in an environment that is free of harassment.

Harassment on the basis of race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability in any form will not be tolerated. Such harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures, physical contact and the display or circulation of written materials or pictures which are derogatory to either gender, or are derogatory to racial, ethnic or religious groups, or are derogatory to an individual's age, sexual orientation or disability.

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

- Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or an employee's ability to undertake his/her job responsibilities, or creates an intimidating, hostile, threatening or abusive educational or work environment; or,
- Interferes with a student's academic performance or learning opportunities; or interferes with an employee's work, continued employment or advancement opportunities.

Harassment of any kind, including bullying and teasing, will not be tolerated.

### **Orange Elementary Schools Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation Plan Definitions**

Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation are prohibited. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §370 and Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, defines these terms as:

**"Bullying"**, the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

**"Cyber-Bullying,"** bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by

a wire, radio electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

**“Retaliation”** is any action taken against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

**Sexual Harassment-** The General Laws of Massachusetts, Chapter 151C, define the term sexual harassment as follows: "Any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: 1) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis of evaluation of academic achievement; or 2) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment."

This definition is understood to include, but not be limited to, unwanted sexual attention in the form of verbal comments, touching, off-color humor, or sexually explicit photographs, drawings or graffiti.

Sexual harassment, or the existence of a sexually hostile environment, is to be determined from the viewpoint of a reasonable person in the alleged victim's situation.

In both Federal law (Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972) and State law (Chapter 76, section 5, a.k.a. Chapter 622) sexual harassment is included as an act of sex discrimination and made subject to civil penalties. This policy statement of the Orange Elementary Schools is intended to be in compliance with these Federal and State laws.

Sexual harassment can occur adult to student, student to adult, adult-to-adult, student-to-student, male to female, female to male, female-to-female and/or male-to-male. Sexual harassment can be based on gender or sexual orientation.

*Examples:*

- Telling sexual jokes or stories
- Making sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or appearance
- Repeatedly asking out a person who is not interested
- Telling lies, spreading rumors, or gossiping about any person's sexual life
- Whistling, catcalls, making kissing sounds, smacking lips
- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving sex, gender or sexual orientation
- Following a person or blocking a person's path
- Drawing or displaying sexually explicit or suggestive posters, cartoons, pictures, calendars, designs on clothing, or other similar materials
- Staring or leering with sexual overtones, making sexual gestures with hands or body movements
- Giving unwanted gifts of a personal or suggestive nature
- Unwanted touching of people, their hair, or their clothing
- Unwanted hugging, kissing, pinching, patting, or stroking
- Assault, attempted rape, or rape

**Responses to Claim of Sexual Harassment**—STUDENTS who allege harassment by OTHER STUDENTS are encouraged to immediately indicate to the harasser that his or her behavior is unwanted and unacceptable. If the student, because of fear of reprisal or for any other reason, is unable to address the alleged harasser, or if the behavior does not cease, then the student is encouraged to report the incident or incidents to any staff member. The staff member may assist the student in resolving the problem and/or, if necessary, may assist the student in sharing the incident with a principal, counselor or another staff member of the student's choice.

The primary goal in responding to claims is to secure an altered behavior on the part of the person or persons who have harassed another. The staff member to whom a student goes will assist the student to articulate what has happened and, in person or by letter, to inform the harasser that the attention is unwanted and unacceptable. The staff member will determine that the harasser understands the complaint and that there is good intent to cease the unacceptable behavior.

Confidentiality for all parties involved is of high importance and information gathered shall be shared only when it is necessary to the successful resolution of the situation. Copies of the substance of an oral communication between harassed and harasser, or the letter, if that form be used, together with a resume of the incident and its resolution may, when warranted, be sent to the building principal, the superintendent and to the parents or guardian of the students involved.

A student who, having been counseled, continues to behave in violation of this policy, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Any STUDENT who feels that he or she has been sexually harassed by a TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER is encouraged to immediately share his or her concern with a teacher, counselor, or principal. If first shared with a teacher or counselor, that person will assist the student in sharing the incident with the principal who will, in turn, inform the superintendent. The superintendent and/or principal will conduct an investigation and, if warranted, will chair a discussion of the incident which includes the person to whom the report was first made, the alleged harasser, the parents or guardian of the student who alleges harassment and, if appropriate and if the parents or guardian consent, the student who has made the claim.

If the complaint is satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, a brief record of the complaint and its resolution shall be provided in writing to the student and his or her parents or guardian and to the person against whom the complaint was made, the building principal and the superintendent.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, the person against whom the claim is made will be provided a hearing.

In conclusion, school records are personal and the Federal Freedom of Information Act of 1974 must be complied with, as well as the State Law.

Please refer to details in the policy manual on line at [www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org).

**Harassment Based on Race, Color, National Origin, Religion or Disability** – Harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity and transgender, sexual orientation or disability is unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct relating to the characteristics of a person's race, color, national origin, religion, or disability that:

- Unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational or work performance; or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.

*Examples of harassment based on race or color:*

- Using nicknames that emphasize racial stereotypes
- Graffiti containing racially offensive language
- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving race or color



- Racial slurs, negative stereotypes, and hostile acts which are based upon another's race or color
- Written or graphic material containing racial comments or stereotypes which is posted or circulated and which is aimed at degrading members of specific racial or ethnic groups
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, race or color

*Examples of harassment based on national origin or religion:*

- Comments on a manner of speaking or proficiency with the English language
- Negative comments regarding surnames, customs, and/or language
- Graffiti containing offensive language which is derogatory to others because of their national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Threatening or intimidating conduct directed at another because of the other's national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Jokes or rumors based upon an individual's national origin, ethnicity, or religion
- Written or graphic material containing comments or stereotypes which is posted or circulated and which is aimed at degrading individuals or member of specific ethnic or religious groups
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, national origin, ethnicity, or religion

Disability harassment includes harassment based on a person's disabling mental and/or physical condition and includes any unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition.

*Examples of harassment based on disability:*

- Imitating manner of speech or movement
- Interfering with necessary equipment
- Bullying
- Name-calling, teasing, or other derogatory or dehumanizing remarks involving physical and/or mental disability
- Threatening or intimidating conduct directed at another because of the other's physical and/or mental disability
- Jokes or rumors based on an individual's physical and/or mental disability
- Physical acts of aggression or assault upon another because of, or related to, an individual's physical and/or mental disability
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property which is motivated by an individual's physical and/or mental disability

The above reference descriptions of inappropriate conduct represent examples, and are not intended to serve as an all-inclusive list.

If you are unsure as to whether you have been a victim of any form of harassment, or if you have knowledge of an incident of harassment, you must contact your school principal, or Director of Pupil Services, or other appropriate school staff member with any questions that you may have.

Because what may be acceptable behavior to one individual may not be acceptable to others, all employees and other members of the school community should aspire to the highest standards of respectful, appropriate and professional behavior. For example, ethnic or racial jokes and remarks or sexually oriented gestures or pictures are often offensive to others, and thus should not occur within the Orange Public Schools. The members of the school community include the School Committee, School Councils, Administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, volunteers and authorized visitors, contractors or vendors while they are engaged in school-related activities.

**Responsibilities and Procedures (harassment)**-Individuals that believe they have been harassed should bring the matter to the attention of an administrator so that appropriate action may be taken at once. (The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible in handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.)

## **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS**

**Reporting Complaints-**Any member of the school community who believes that s/he has been the victim of harassment (as defined above) by an administrator, teacher, pupil, visitor, or other personnel of the Orange Public Schools, or who has knowledge of any of the above, must report the alleged acts as soon as possible. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report.

A harassment complaint may be made to the principal or his/her designee. If the complaint involves a staff member, the complainant should file their report with either the building principal or the superintendent of schools.

Upon receiving a complaint, whoever receives it, will immediately notify the building principal, who will oversee an investigation and who will serve as the complaint hearing officer. The building principal or designee will address the concern in a timely manner. Within ten (10) working days, the principal will forward all formal complaints to the superintendent of schools.

**Investigation-**The principal, or designee, will consider every report of harassment seriously and will investigate all reports in a timely manner. The Director of Pupil Services will assist the school hearing officer, as needed, in the investigative procedures and identification and delivery of all necessary services to concerned individuals.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any other individuals who may have knowledge of the alleged incidents(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the principal or designee should consider the surrounding circumstances, any relevant documents, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, and the relationships between the parties involved. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this procedure requires a determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances. Special care will be taken to make sure that the person(s) accused of harassment has full and fair opportunity to explain his/her side of the story.

In the event that students are involved in allegations as victim, perpetrator, or witnesses, the principal will notify the parents and/or guardians of the allegations in a timely manner using appropriate discretion in the notification.

Whenever possible, the principal will complete the investigation and report within ten (10) school days after the complaint has been filed indicating whether the allegations have been substantiated as factual or not. There will be no reprisal against the person filing the complaint whether or not the complaint is sustained. If the allegations are sustained, the principal, or in a case against an employee, the Superintendent (or designee) must take immediate corrective and/or disciplinary action to resolve the situation. Such action may include, but is not limited to, requiring an apology, direction to stop the offensive behavior, counseling or education, warning, suspension, exclusion, transfer, expulsion, or discharge.

Anyone who is disciplined under this procedure will have the right to appeal to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) working days of receipt of the concluding report.

Alleged abuse by a parent, guardian, school staff, or other caretaker will be reported to the Department of Social Services according to school policy and procedure. If allegations warrant, the local law enforcement agency will be notified.

**Confidentiality-**The Orange Elementary Public Schools recognize that both the complainant and the alleged harasser have strong interests in maintaining the confidentiality of the allegations and related information. The privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and all witnesses will be respected as much as possible, consistent with legal obligations to investigate.

**Provision against retaliation**—Retaliation against a complainant or witnesses will not be tolerated. The Orange Elementary Public Schools will discipline or take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator or other school community member who retaliates against:

- Any person who reports alleged harassment
- Any person who testifies, assists, or participates in an investigation of harassment
- Any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing related to an allegation of harassment

Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment.

**Dissemination of procedure** –This procedure will be included in all handbooks (faculty and student) and will be made available in all main offices. Faculty members, parents and students will be informed of this procedure annually. Faculty members will be trained in the identification and prevention of all of the type of harassment discussed in this document.

Please refer to details in the policy manual on line at [www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org)

## **THE USE OF THE INTERNET**

**Philosophy** – It is the intention of the Orange School Committee to provide all students with the opportunity to understand and to use computers and to access the educational resources available through the computer Internet. The Committee recognizes that some materials available on the internet are clearly not appropriate for elementary school children and that additional material may be considered inappropriate by some parents and/or guardians. The policies, which follow, are designed to facilitate the best use of computers and of the internet, to avoid that use which is inappropriate or illegal, and to invite the support of parents and guardians in achieving these goals.

All access to the internet must be in support of the educational objectives of the Orange Elementary Schools.

Teachers and staff members will assist students to use the Internet in ways that are appropriate to our educational mission. However, the Committee disclaims that it is possible to prevent inappropriate use by every student at all times.

Uses considered inappropriate include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of inappropriate language, e.g. vulgarities
- Illegal activities, including the violation of copyright protections
- Claiming the work of others as one's own
- Revealing one's personal address or phone, or that of another person
- Sharing one's personal account with another, or leaving it open and unattended
- Using an account which belongs to another
- The unauthorized infiltration of another computer system
- The sending of materials or messages likely to be offensive to the recipient(s).

Students using the Internet must agree to share with a teacher, principal or other staff member messages or materials that they have received which they consider inappropriate or which make them uncomfortable.

While all students will be introduced to the internet, only those with the consent of a parent or guardian will be granted the

privilege of individual access. The form for providing this consent is on the last page of this book and needs to be signed by both parent(s) and child.

Please refer to the details in the Technology Responsible Use Guidelines or Policy Manual on line at [www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org)

### **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, DANGEROUS WEAPONS, ASSAULT, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO**

The Orange Elementary Schools prohibit the use of any alcoholic or tobacco products, drugs or dangerous weapons within the school buildings, on the school grounds, on school busses at any off-campus athletic, educational or social event sponsored by the schools. Massachusetts' law prohibits smoking in or on any school property. This includes the parking lots in all schools.

The possession of dangerous weapons, or the use of any item as a weapon, is prohibited on school grounds and school busses, and in school buildings and this prohibition applies to both students and staff and includes off-campus athletic or educational events. All types of toy weapons are also prohibited on school property.

Any physical assault upon any staff member, professional or support staff or other children is prohibited.

The possession, consumption and/or distribution of an alcoholic beverage on the school grounds or school busses or in school buildings is prohibited and this prohibition applies to both students and staff and applies also to off-campus athletic or educational events.

Violation of any of these prohibitions by a student will result in an immediate conference between the principal and the parent(s) or guardian who will determine together the appropriate response, which may include one or more of the following:

- Suspension from school
- In-school counseling
- Outside drug or alcohol counseling / treatment
- Notification of the police

The Educational Reform Act of 1993 contains provisions, which may apply, and, as required, the provisions are printed here.

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94 C including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, at his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b) provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that, in his/her opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a fact determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

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

### **BEHAVIOR SCHOOL RESPONSE INTERACTION WITH POLICE**

1. **Behavior:** Student voluntarily confides a drug or alcohol problem to a teacher.
  - **School Response:** Teacher will consult the school nurse or counselor and the principal for assistance in deciding action on referral.
  - **Interaction with police:** None.
2. **Behavior:** School official has reasonable cause to suspect that student is under the influence of alcohol or drugs but none is found.
  - **School Response:** Principal will notify parents and remove the student from class until a parent conference is held. A treatment program representative and the school nurse will be involved.
  - **Interaction with Police:** Informal notification at the principal's discretion. The Youth Officer will decide on the level of police involvement.
3. **Behavior:** Student is found to be or admits to being under the influence of drug/alcohol but none is found.
  - **School Response:** In accordance with the Code of Conduct I Student Handbook, the principal will make immediate notification to the police, the Superintendent of Schools and the parent and hold a conference with the parent, student and appropriate others before the student returns to school. The student will be required to attend outside drug/alcohol counseling or treatment as determined by school personnel and parents. Suspension from school and privileges as stated in the student handbook could result.
  - **Interaction with Police:** Formal notification by the school. Youth Officer and/or School Attendance Officer may also decide whether a CHINS or a Care and Protection Order should be initiated or other court action should be taken.
4. **Behavior:** Student found to be in possession of alcohol/drugs.
  - **School Response:** Same as above with the exception that a suspension from school will be imposed and contraband turned over to police.
  - **Interaction with Police:** Formal notification by the school. Criminal action may be taken. Only under extreme circumstances are arrests made at school.
5. **Behavior:** Student found to be selling/distributing drugs/alcohol.
  - **School Response:** In addition to the parent and police notification. The student will be suspended as provided in the manual and, if convicted in court, the student will be recommended to the School Committee for complete expulsion from the school system.

### **DISCIPLINING STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Mass. Law)**

Generally, students with special needs are expected to adhere to the same discipline regulations as non-special needs students. At the same time, legislation has been enacted to provide procedural safeguards to students with disabilities.

School personnel can remove (suspend) a child with a disability for short periods of time as long as the removal does not constitute a change in placement. A change of placement occurs if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or the child is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year, and because such factors such as length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

School personnel may order, to the extent removal would be applied to children without disabilities, the removal of a child with a disability from the child's current placement for not more than 10 consecutive school days for any violation of school rules, and an additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct (as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement).

When a suspension constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, District personnel, the Parent, and other relevant members of the Team, as determined by the parent and the District, will convene a behavior manifestation determination meeting within 10 days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, teacher observations and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the behavior was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or was the direction result of the Districts failure to implement the IEP.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the suspension or expulsion may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except, after a child with a disability has been removed for more than 10 school days in the same school year, the District must provide services to enable the student, although in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward IEP goals. In addition, the LEA must conduct, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child. If the child already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP team shall meet to review the plan and its implementation and modify as necessary.

School personnel may order a change of a placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days if the child carries a weapon to school or a school function or possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function. A hearing officer may order a change to an interim setting for not more than 45 days if the LEA demonstrates that maintaining the current placement is likely to result in injury to the child or others. If an action is contemplated regarding a 45 day removal, or other action that constitutes a change of placement, the parents must be notified and provided procedural safeguards' notice not later than the date on which the decision to take action is made.

Immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, a review must be conducted of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action (manifestation determination).

If the child's parent disagrees with the manifestation determination, the parent may request a hearing to appeal. The State or local educational agency shall arrange for an expedited hearing before a hearing officer. If a parent requests a hearing or an appeal to challenge an interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child must remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided (45 days), whichever occurs first, unless the parent and local educational agency agree otherwise.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment and a behavioral intervention plan if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the IEP Team reviews and modifies it as necessary to address the behavior. The student returns to the original placement, except when the student has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting, (if the behavior involved illegal drugs, weapons, or the infliction of serious bodily injury on another person while in school or at a school function) unless the parents and District agree otherwise or a hearing officer orders a new placement.

Chapter 766, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997 Amendments), and case law such as Honig v. Doe, affect disciplining students with special needs. The Massachusetts Department of Education and Legislature have also made recent changes to Special Education laws and regulations (effective September 2000).

The section above is only an attempt to highlight applicable laws and regulations and is not meant to replace the actual documents.

The reader should refer to the actual documents for the full text.  
(Federal Register Vol. 64, No. 48, March 1999 S. 300.519 - S. 300.529).

For a discipline flow chart, see: [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr\\_meetings/disc\\_chart.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/disc_chart.doc)

## **STUDENTS NOT YET DETERMINED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### ***Student Discipline under IDEA***

If the district does not have prior knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be subject to the same disciplinary measures as are applied to children without disabilities who engage in comparable behavior.

Student may assert IDEA protection if the District has "prior knowledge" that the student had a disability before the behavior incident.

*Prior knowledge is defined by the District as follows:*

- A parent has expressed concern in writing to school personnel that the student is in need of special education and related services (not 504).
- A parent has requested an evaluation in writing.
- The behavior or performance of the student demonstrates need for special education.
- The teacher or other school personnel have expressed concern about the student's behavior or performance to the special education director or to other school personnel involved in the special education referral process.

The District does not assert IDEA protection if any of the circumstances listed below has occurred:

*District exception to prior knowledge:*

- If the District has proposed an evaluation on a student and the parent has not consented to the Evaluation.
- The parent has previously refused special education services for the student.
- An evaluation has occurred that resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

*No Prior Knowledge:*

If the District had no knowledge that a child had a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures, the District can change the placement to the extent it changes the placement of non-disabled children. However, if an evaluation is requested while the student is being disciplined, the Orange Elementary School District will place the child in an educational placement pending the results of an expedited evaluation.

**THE SCHOOL YEAR**

The school year lasts 180 days and includes more than the required 900 hours of instruction.

DAILY SCHEDULE

SCHOOL	GRADE	AM START	DISMISSAL
Fisher Hill	PK-2	8:30	3:00
Dexter Park	3-6	8:30	3:00

\*Please note that students will be dismissed at 12:30 each Wednesday for teacher collaboration and professional development\*

**ENTRANCE AGE**

Massachusetts's law requires children to begin school during the calendar year in which they become six years of age.

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

**Kindergarten-** A child entering Kindergarten must reside in Orange and be five years of age on or before August 31 of that academic year. Appeals may be made to the Superintendent.

**First Grade-** Students entering first grade or transferring to the first grade in Orange from other schools, public or private must reside in Orange or be accepted for School Choice and be six years of age on or before August 31 of that academic year. Children accepted for school choice will follow the same age and date requirements.

**Records Required for Kindergarten Entrance-**An **official birth certificate** must be shown when the child is registered in the spring (usually in April) prior to the September the child will enter kindergarten. No child can be registered without a birth certificate.

At this registration parents will be provided with an official state school physical form for their child to be completed by their family physician sometime before entrance to school. The doctor will fill out the form as he/she completes the physical examination.

Parents must also provide information that the child has received immunization against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping



cough), polio, measles, mumps and rubella. Proof of a lead paint test is also required, and a tuberculin test is recommended.

The only exceptions that are allowed are: 1) a written statement from the parent that such immunization is against their religious beliefs or 2) a physician's statement to the effect that a particular immunization is not in the best interests of a particular child or 3) that the necessary immunization is currently in progress.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER AND SCHOOL DISMISSAL**

In case of inclement weather, children may enter the building upon arrival at a reasonable time.

A decision to not open school for severe weather conditions is usually made before 5:45 A.M. so that we can notify the bus contractors, personnel and the public. Such a decision takes into consideration the road conditions in all parts of the town. Sometimes it is possible to delay the opening of school if it appears that conditions will rapidly improve. On rare occasions, it is necessary to close school early due to rapidly worsening weather conditions or other emergencies that may arise. It is advisable that parents develop an alternate childcare schedule in the event of an early dismissal.

In order to get such information to you, we notify a number of radio and T.V. stations, including WJDF (97.3) and WHAI (98.3). It is also on, Channels 5 (WCVB) and 7 (WHDH) from Boston and Channels 3 (WCBS), 22 (WVLP), (NECN) and 40 (WGGB) from Springfield. These stations will announce school closings several times. In addition the Fire Department issues 4-4-4 blasts on the fire signal at 6:30 AM. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOLS, FIRE STATIONS, OR THE RADIO STATIONS.

The automated calling system, available to all student households, is utilized for notification as well as the superintendent's Facebook page - Superintendent of Schools for Orange, Petersham and R.C. Mahar Regional and Twitter @suptthomas.

On days school is canceled due to inclement weather, all activities (and the use of buildings) are canceled.

### **FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT:** School Breakfast and School Lunch

The diet of school children needs to be planned with special care because they are growing and active. As such, it is important that we provide them with the most nutrient rich foods possible while they are in school. We follow the National School Lunch Program and the USDA guidelines to ensure that your children receive the best available meals possible during the school day. Most items have been reformulated to meet the nutritional requirements and limitations of the NSLP while being appealing to our youngsters. It doesn't matter if they don't eat it! This includes lowering salt and sugar and adding whole grains. Students in the Orange Elementary Schools are expected to eat breakfast at home or at school each day and lunch at school each day, including early release days.

The Orange Elementary School District currently qualifies to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision. Because of this, complete School Meals (a fruit + 1 item at breakfast and a vegetable + 2 of the five food groups at lunch) are available to all children **FREE** of charge. Breakfast meals in this district are served in your child's classroom during their morning meetings each day. Once a child takes a complete breakfast meal, they may decide they don't want a particular item. That item is then placed into a "share bin" and made available to the remaining students who might like more food or wish to take something for a snack later in the day. Please don't be alarmed if you find food items in your child's backpack. It's a good idea to check each day. If your child has an allergy and wishes to participate in the breakfast program, please let us know so we can provide an appropriate meal for them.

Children who opt to bring a lunch from home may purchase an 8 oz. milk for \$ .40 per day. Juice , Water, and LACTAID are also available for purchase. Juice is \$.50. Water and Lactaid are \$1.00. Any other beverages you would like your child to have must be

sent from home. Please be mindful of what you pack for your child's lunches. Soda, candy and non nutritional items are not allowed. We will happily refrigerate any milk type items for you and insure that your child receives it at meal time.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to put money in your children's accounts for items outside the scope of a reimbursable meal or send them to school with cash to use to purchase them. This includes all ala carte items and snacks.. **No charging is allowed for snack or individual meal items.** You may put restrictions on your child's account by calling the Food Service office at 978-544-1127. For example, if you would like to restrict your child from purchasing a low fat ice cream to 1 day per week, let us know and we will flag the account on your behalf. You choose the limits.

Snacks are what we call "A-List" items in the industry. They go through rigorous testing to obtain this rating and must meet all criteria under the USDA guidelines. Did you know that our cereals, cookies, crackers, etc... are all specially formulated for schools? Limits on fat, sugar and calories as well as the requirement of whole grains set the stage for what we serve in all of our programs. A typical snack shelf might have low fat ice cream, 100% fruit ice cups, whole grain Cheez its, brown Rice Krispie Treats, Sunchips and WG Keebler cookies. "A-list" items may be purchased daily. A full List of "A-List" items is available on the John Stalker Institutes website.

Your child will come to the cafeteria and take their meal. They enter a specific identification number assigned to them into the Nutrikids Point of Sale (POS) system. This opens their personal account. Please encourage your child(ren) not to share this number to avoid someone else using their account funds. All transactions are recorded at the point of the sale. Full day Preschool and Kindergarten student meals are entered on their behalf by the cashier as those children come through the lunch line. Should you wish a printed report of activity on your child's account at any time during the school year, please send an email to [jdillenback@rcmahar.org](mailto:jdillenback@rcmahar.org) or [tammywoodard@orange-elem.org](mailto:tammywoodard@orange-elem.org), or give a call 978-544-1127 and we will assist you. You can send a check (made out to the **TOWN OF ORANGE**) or cash to school to be deposited in your child's account. If checks are returned to the school for insufficient funds, we will no longer accept a check from you. If you prefer, you may make deposits and view the account electronically by setting up a parent account on [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). There is a small fee for using that service.

If your child has an **allergy** or intolerance to a food item, we **MUST have a signed doctor's note** that states the medical condition, the bodies reaction to the allergic substance and the specific food substitute for each item in question. Further, the substitute **MUST** be the nutritional equivalent to the item being substituted per the USDA. For example... if a child is allergic to broccoli, the substitute might be spinach as they are both a dark green vegetable. A carrot might be substituted with a sweet potato as they too are a specific food type and both are red vegetables. **Milk can be substituted with Lactaid only. The NSLP and the USDA have strict requirements regarding nutrition. Federal dollars may not be spent on products that do not meet this criteria.**

As always, feel free to reach out to us for any reason! We are here for you! Nourishing body and mind, one child at a time.  
Jacki Dillenback, Director of Food Services

## **SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requiring more personal interaction at all levels of education and a more individualized approach to the learning process, the Orange Elementary Schools have implemented a program of continuous progress, which allows a student to proceed at his/her own rate. The students go through each program at their own progress rate with no time limit established for the completion of any level.

Retention is decided on an individual basis. Students may work in different levels of an academic subject while staying in their current grade. For example, a student in the second grade may be working in second grade levels in math, science, and social studies but still be in a first grade reading level if that is best suited for him/her. In return, she/he may work ahead of his/her year.

**The Orange Elementary Schools will no longer be accepting requests by parents for their child's next year's placement.**

The teachers and administration take into consideration the needs of each student and will make all placements.

The Orange Elementary Schools follow the revised 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. State standards are embedded in all curricular areas. The Orange Elementary Schools teach an integrated curriculum using a research-based approach. Emphasis is placed on the process of learning. The following activities are encouraged:

- Inquiry and exploration, hands-on experience, critical thinking skills
- Using trade books (popular literature and content-based readers)
- Process writing, learning to use resources, cooperative learning, phonics instruction, project learning.

Standard programs that are available in our schools to help meet educational goals include:

- Foundations Phonics Program (K-3)
- Zearn Mathematics (K-6)
- Zaner-Bloser, Inc., Penmanship
- Wonders Literacy Program for Reading and Writing
- Responsive Classroom
- Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) (K-2)
- Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) (K-2)

School property that is lost or destroyed needs to be paid for. We would appreciate your help in seeing that library books are taken care of and returned on time. The School Committee has adopted a materials selection policy, which outlines procedures for selecting library materials. If you have any concerns or questions regarding library materials, please talk to the principal.

## **REPORTING SYSTEM**

The reporting system is a standards-based report card and is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and set-up to correspond with this system of learning. Academic skills are still separated from work/study skills, and a new social skills section has been added. Report cards are sent home twice a year-January & June. There will be parent-teacher conferences in November and April. The parent-teacher conferences are extremely valuable as they provide an opportunity to discuss all facets of the child's progress. The written progress report will give the child a rating according to his/her capacity within the level at which he/she is working. At Fisher Hill and The Dexter Park Innovation Schools, instead of A, B, C, D, the student will be graded on his/her progress (Meeting grade level expectations, Progressing toward grade level expectations with some support, and Working towards grade level expectations with direct support).

## **ASSESSMENT**

At designated times during the school year or as needed, students may be formally assessed depending on their grade level and needs. The following standardized assessments may be used for assessing students:

- **MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) --(3-6)**
- **Wonders (reading program) Unit Assessments K-6**
- **Benchmark Assessment System (K-2)**
- **STAR Math (1-6)**
- **STAR Early Literacy (K-2)**
- **STAR Reading (2-6)**
- **Ages & Stages (Pre-K)**

- **My IGDJ-Early Literacy & Numeracy (Pre-K)**
- **Lucy Calkins Writing Rubrics (K-6)**
- **AdVantage Math Recovery (K-2/3)**
- **Zearn (mathematics program) Unit Assessments K-6**
- **DIBELS (K-3)**
- **DIBELS Maze (2-3)**

## **TITLE I**

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) is the largest federal aid to our education program. It was the first and most important federal program assigned to the U.S. Office of Education to recognize that educationally deprived school children may need extra help, or what educators commonly call compensatory education.

Notification to Parents of Teacher Qualifications – Compliance with P. L. 107 – 110, Section 1111 (h)(6)(A). The following page in this handbook is notification to all parents of your right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your children.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that parents have access to school report cards developed by the department of Education on an annual basis. The information is a general breakdown of district information relating primarily to staff and recent MCAS testing data. This report card is available on the district website [www.orange-elem.org](http://www.orange-elem.org).

Both the Fisher Hill Elementary School and the Dexter Park Innovation School current offer school-wide Title I programs. A school-wide program allows Title I funds to be utilized for provide supplemental support to any student in the Orange Elementary Schools. Orange Elementary qualifies to run as a Title I school-wide program based on their percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

## **NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS (Compliance with P.L. 107-110, Section 1111(h)(6)(A)**

The Federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, Orange Elementary Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he/she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

Orange Elementary Public Schools are committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above regarding your child's teacher, please contact your child's principal.

## **READING SUPPORT**

All schools provide students with extra reading support when needed. This may be in the form of in-class small group support or, at times, pull out-support. School personnel will notify parents if their child will be receiving any special reading services.

## **ELL SERVICES**

The Orange Elementary Schools offers English Language Learner (ELL) services to any qualifying student in grades Pre K through Grade Six. Upon enrollment in the Orange Elementary Schools, families complete a home language survey according to Federal law. If the language survey indicates that students have a native language other than English, then students are screened using the State approved language screener. Should the screening indicate the need for ELL services, then such services will be provided in accordance with State guidelines by a licensed ELL teacher. In addition, all ELL students will receive their general education and, if applicable, special education services in a sheltered English immersion (SEI) setting. All core academic teachers who provide educational services to ELL students are required by DESE to be SEI endorsed.

Students enrolled in the ELL program are required by State law to participate in ACCESS testing annually in grade Kindergarten through Grade 12. While families may choose to opt their child(ren) out of ELL programming, students are still mandated to participate in annual ACCESS testing. In addition to annual ACCESS results, families will also receive periodic progress monitoring of their child(ren)'s progress in gaining English proficiency, such progress monitoring is distributed with students' report cards.

All ELL students are required to participate in MCAS testing, except for the English Language Arts (ELA) MCAS for the first year they are enrolled in Massachusetts schools.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS DEPARTMENT**

Children in need of special education services are provided these services under the state law. The Director of Pupil Personnel is charged with overall responsibility of this complex program.

Special Education services do not "label" youngsters who are participants. These children now are receiving much the same services as before but are identified only as receiving those services on the basis of how much of their school day is spent with 1:1 tutorial assistance, small group work or in a separate program. Inclusion settings with typical and identified students are available at each grade level.

"Child in need of special education" is a child who has been determined to need special education in accordance with the provisions of 321.0, or has been referred to a program described in 502.7 (home or hospital program). Such determination or referral shall be based upon a finding that a child, because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties or attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional or physical factors, cerebral dysfunctions, perceptual factors, or other specific learning impairments, or any combination thereof, is unable to progress effectively in a regular education program and requires special education. Pursuant to M.G.L. c71B, 1, no child shall be determined to be a school age child with special needs solely because the child's behavior violates the school's disciplinary code. Children of ages three and four shall qualify as children in need of special education if, because of temporary or more permanent adjustment difficulties or attributes arising from intellectual, sensory, emotional or physical factors, cerebral dysfunctions, perceptual factors, or other specific learning impairments, or any combination thereof, they would be unable to progress effectively in a developmentally appropriate education program and would require special education.

If you have a child who you feel is in need of special education services, but is not receiving them, you are asked to contact either the Director of Pupil Services (544-2542 x 265) or the principal of the building.

A pre-referral team will then begin to discuss potential modifications to the child's educational program. If, after a time, a student is still experiencing difficulty, a referral for an evaluation may be made, with you as the parent becoming a part of the evaluation team.

## **SECTION 504**

Section 504 is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination based on a disability. A person may be considered disabled under the definition of Section 504 if the individual:

- Has a mental illness or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;
- Has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

If a student experiences educational difficulties, a School Based Student Support Team meets to discuss the concerns and suggest intervention strategies to help correct the difficulties. If the strategies are unsuccessful, the team can make a referral for evaluation.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Orange Elementary Schools is offering two programs designed to foster the language and social development among 3 to 5 year old children. The programs provide in-school services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and preschool evaluations for children in need of early intervention and integration into the school based setting.

The number of children serviced varies from year to year depending on funds available. If you are interested in these programs you need to contact Fisher Hill School at 987-544-0018.

## **HEALTH SERVICES:**

### **MassHealth MUNICIPAL MEDICAID PROGRAM**

The Orange Elementary Schools have entered into an agreement with the Division of Medical Assistance, the agency that administers the MassHealth program in Massachusetts, to help coordinate health care services for students enrolled in MassHealth. This allows us to work directly with each child's doctor, and other medical providers, to meet the child's health care needs.

If your child is a MassHealth member, the Division Of Medical Assistance will give us his/her MassHealth card number and the name of his/her doctor or health care maintenance organization. The school nurse will then contact the child's doctor to tell him/her the name of the school the child attends and the contact person and telephone number at the school so the doctor may contact the school if coordination of health services is needed. Under Massachusetts Law (MGS c112s12G), your child's doctor, as a MassHealth care provider, may contact the school to share medical information about the delivery of health care services to your child.

Any information the Orange Elementary Schools receive from your child's doctor or other health care provider will be kept in a health file separate from his/her regular student record. It will only be accessible to you, as the child's parent or guardian, and school personnel directly involved in the delivery of health care services to your child.

In order for the Orange Elementary Schools to effectively communicate with health care providers, parents will be asked to sign a permission slip. It will allow the school nurse to discuss with the doctor necessary and important medical information, such as the results of health screenings for vision and hearing, the need for certain immunizations, or other health care concerns that may arise. If we have concerns about your child's health, or we believe your child needs further health care services from his / her doctor or health care maintenance organization, we will contact you before we contact or make a referral to your child's doctor, except in cases of emergency.

## **SCHOOL PHYSICIAN**

Parents usually have the family physician give their kindergarten student the required physical examination before entering school. Physical examinations are required before entering the second grade and fifth grade. The School Physician is annually retained by the School Committee as a consultant for handling situations which require expert medical opinion. A good example of this recently was the adoption of an attendance policy for students who are diagnosed as AIDS patients.

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

The school nurse is familiar to the students because it is usually this person they see for minor injury on the playground or in school. Besides rendering such services, the school nurse is a very important resource for both parents and school personnel. The school nurse is also very much involved with public relations because of the many sensitive areas that might be involved. For example, the school nurse advises parents when their child(ren) must be excluded for head lice (pediculosis). This is not a pleasant situation. The school nurse is also the person who makes home visits when they are necessary.

The nurse is responsible for all vision and hearing testing, weighing and measuring with follow-up regarding defects or abnormalities needing correction. A special screening is provided for all students in Grade 5 and 6 for the early identification of scoliosis (a spine curvature situation that is often correctable if treated early). We also provide a fluoride rinse program for those students who have received their parent's permission.

The school nurse also keeps the health records up to date so that they provide meaningful data to personnel interested in the student.

Medication: Must be prescribed by a physician and dispensed by the school nurse.

## **YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH**

Students who become ill in school will be cared for until the parent or parent substitute can be notified. In case of accident "First Aid" will be given. "First Aid is the immediate and temporary care given before the services of a physician can be secured." Although the school will provide proper care of children in case of accident or sickness, the responsibility for the treatment of the child by a physician rests with the parents. The school's obligation extends to placing the sick or injured in the care of the parent or parent substitute who will be asked to furnish the transportation of the sick or injured child.

The emergency information provided by the home will be the primary source of information for the action taken. It is very important that the student's parent or guardian fill out an Emergency Information form **completely** for each child in the family and keep it up to date regarding changes in address, phone number, etc. Please include **cell phone and pager numbers**.

## **REMINDER**

All children aged 0-18 are eligible for free or reduced-cost health coverage. MassHealth is available to those who meet the income guidelines, and for those who don't, the Children's Medical Security Plan is available. Information about these plans is available from Healthy Connections at 249-5634. It is important to obtain health coverage before an accident or illness occurs.

## **COMMON COLD**

The first three days of a cold are the most infectious period. To prevent the spread of germs, the child should be kept at home until his explosive cough, sneezing and watery nasal discharge have begun to wane.

## **SOILING AND WETTING**

Occasionally, children do have soiling and wetting accidents. For preschool procedures concerning this issue, please refer to the Early Childhood Handbook. In grades K-6, if your child soils or wets, and is unable to clean and change themselves, it is expected that you will come and pick him/her up, clean and change him/her and return him/her back to school provided it is before 1:30 in the afternoon. After 1:30, they may remain at home.

**IMMUNIZATION** (see Admission Requirements pg. 23)

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Minimum Quarantine for the Following Diseases:

Chicken Pox - One week from the appearance of eruptions and until all lesions are dried.

Scarlet Fever - May return to school 24 hours after start of antibiotic, provided therapy will continue for at least 10 days. When returning to school after having one of the above diseases, it would be advisable to have the school nurse check the child.

## **HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)**

Each year we feel it necessary to remind parents of the problem the schools have with Head Lice (Pediculosis). Any child's hair, no matter how many times it is washed, can pick up this common pest from someone else's person or clothing. Unfortunately, the schools are often a place where an infestation can occur because of the large number of children together in one place.

If you find evidence of head lice, please notify the school immediately so that we can have the school nurse check the child's classmates to see if pediculosis has spread. The treatment for head lice is:

1. Check all other members of family for signs.
2. Shampoo hair vigorously for 5 to 15 minutes (depending on amount of hair) with either Kwell Shampoo (RX)\*, A-22 Rinse, Pyrinate Liquid Rinse, Cuprex Rinse.
3. Rinse hair thoroughly.
4. Dry with towel.
5. Comb with a fine steel comb to get any remaining nits.
6. Next morning check carefully. If no sign of nits, the child may go to school.
7. Also Be Sure To:
  - Wash all clothing and place in the dryer on a hot setting.
  - Iron clothes with a hot iron.
  - Disinfect any toilet articles such as comb.
  - Air out hats, pillow, etc., and brush thoroughly.
  - Place all stuffed toys in a securely tied plastic bag for 2 weeks.
  - Clean upholstered furniture with appropriate disinfectant

Should you require further information, we recommend you contact your family physician.

\*RX preparations listed above are not available at your pharmacy without a prescription; ask your family doctor for a prescription.

Based on the latest recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), students diagnosed with head lice will not be restricted from attending school. If nits or live lice are discovered at school, the nurse will notify parents/guardians of findings and discuss an appropriate treatment plan.



## **AIDS/ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME**

- A. All children diagnosed as having AIDS, or with clinical evidence of infection with AIDS associated virus (HTLV III) and receiving medical attention, are able to attend regular classes.
1. If a child has cutaneous (skin) eruptions or weeping lesions that cannot be covered, he/she should not be in school.
  2. If the child exhibits inappropriate behavior, which increases the likelihood of transmission (I.E.: biting or frequent incontinence), he/she should not be in school.
  3. Children diagnosed with AIDS, or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HTLV III), who are too ill to attend school, should have an appropriate alternative education plan.
  4. Siblings of children diagnosed as having AIDS, or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HTLV III), are able to attend school without any further restrictions.
- B. The child's personal physician is the primary manager of the child diagnosed as having AIDS, or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HTLV III). Management includes acting as the "gate keeper" for the child's attendance at school in accordance with the policy outlined above.
1. The child's personal physician, after consultation with the family, is responsible for reporting cases of AIDS to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Division of Communicable Disease. The school superintendent will be notified and will provide assistance in identifying those educational or health care agents with an absolute need to know.
  2. Only persons with an absolute need to know should have medical knowledge of a particular student. In individual situations, the superintendent might notify one or more of the following: Principal, School Nurse, Teacher, and Counselor
  3. Notification should be by a process that would maximally assist patient confidentiality. Ideally, this process should be direct person-to-person contact.
  4. If school authorities believe that a child diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HTLV III) has evidence of conditions described in #1, then the school authorities can dismiss the child from the class and request authorization from the child's personal physician so that class attendance is within compliance with the school policy.
  5. If school authorities and the child's personal physician are in conflict, then the case should be referred to the Department of Public Health for review by an appointed physician who would determine the permissibility of attendance.
- C. Since the child diagnosed as having AIDS or with clinical evidence of infection with the AIDS associated virus (HTLV III) has a somewhat greater risk of encountering infections in the school setting, the child should be excluded from school if there is an outbreak of a threatening communicable disease such as chicken pox or measles until he/she is properly treated by a physician (possibly with hyperimmune gamma globulin) and/or the outbreak has no longer become a threat to the child.

## **INOCULATIONS OF STUDENTS**

Students entering school for the first time, whether at kindergarten or through transfer from another school system, will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **603 CMR 23.00: Department of Education Student Records**

In September 1995, the Commonwealth issued regulations consistent with the Education Reform Act and federal law, which were promulgated to insure parent and student's rights of confidentiality, inspection amendment, and destruction of student records. Basically these regulations are:

- Provides specific rights to students who are either 14 or are entering ninth grade whichever occurs first.
- Below that age the rights are the parents.
- Between the age of 14-18 both the student and parent can exercise the rights.
- Beyond age 18, the student has these rights alone but, if the student wishes to expressly deny the parent's rights, he/she must do so in writing.

The student's records are now open to the parent or student in entirety and access by others to the record is severely limited. The record or parts of it may be challenged and/or amended. There is also an elaborate appeals procedure should the parent or student object to content within the record.

If a student seeks or intends to transfer to another school, the authorized school personnel of that school may have access to such student's record without the consent of the eligible student or parent.

Copies of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding parent and student rights are available from the schools at the parent's request.

As of 1998, Massachusetts Law (General Laws, Ch. 71, Section 34H) specifies detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the school principal.

## **ADDENDUM**

[Click to view the district's Health and Wellness Policy](#)