

Dirigo High School

Student Handbook

2026-2027

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Vision and Mission Statement of Dirigo High School

“Realize Your Success”

The mission of Dirigo High School is to be a safe and respectful community with a rigorous and diverse curriculum that offers opportunities for students to develop skills, gain knowledge, and aspire to make lifelong productive choices.

Expectations for Student Learning

(Guiding Principles)

The DHS student:

- Demonstrates clear and effective communications through oral, written, visual, artistic, and technological modes of expression. The student can read, listen to, and interpret messages from multiple sources.
- Demonstrates capacity for self-directed lifelong learning. The student creates career and educational plans that reflect personal goals, interests, and skills. The student demonstrates capacity to undertake independent study and finds and uses information from libraries, electronic databases, and other resources.
- Demonstrates creative and practical problem solving. The student observes situations objectively to clearly and accurately define problems. The student frames questions and designs data collection and analysis strategies to answer those questions. Students identify patterns, trends, and relationships that apply to solutions of problems and generate a variety of solutions, builds a case for the best possible response, and critically evaluate the effectiveness of this response.
- Demonstrates responsible and involved citizenship. The student recognizes and articulates an understanding of the power of participation to affect the community. The student demonstrates an understanding of the importance of accepting responsibility for personal decisions and actions. The student knows the meaning of achieving personal and community health and wellbeing; the student recognizes and understands the diverse nature of society.
- Demonstrates integrative and informed thinking skills. The student applies knowledge and skills in and across English language arts, health and physical education, mathematics, science, social studies, and career preparation; the student comprehends relationships among different modes of thought and methods associated with the traditional discipline.

Staff Contact Information

Superintendent of RSU #56

Pam Doyen

Dirigo High School Office Staff

Kaelyne Thompson	Principal
Sara Thurston	Athletic/Activities Director
Beth MacFarlane	Dean of Students
Hannah Davis	School Secretary
Shiloh Felt	Guidance Secretary
Brenna Parent	Guidance Counselor
Kathy Wilcox	School Nurse
Steve Cronic	School Resource Officer

Dirigo High School Faculty & Staff 2026-2027

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RSU # 56 Administrators & Directors

Pam Doyen - Superintendent of Schools
Kaelyne Thompson - Dirigo High School Principal
Heidi Connelly - Director of Special Education
Jason Long - T.W. Kelly Dirigo Middle School Principal & District Curriculum Coordinator
Charles C. Swan - Dirigo Elementary School Principal
Mary Dailey - Business Manager
Brian Keene - Technology Director
Kenny Robbins - Building & Grounds and Transportation Director
Gena Cloutier - Food & Nutrition Director
Sara Thurston - Athletic/Activities Director

RSU #56 School Board Members

Canton: Carl Lueders and Natalie Sneller
Carthage: Rachel Boyd and Brad Dyer
Dixfield: Barbara Chow -School Board Chair, Bruce Ross, Bruce Weld, Elizabeth Kelly, Charity Webster
Peru: Julie Carlow, Paul Parent, Vacant Seat

Note to Students and Parents/Guardians

Students and parents/guardians are responsible for reading and following the rules in this handbook. This handbook has been developed within the framework of RSU #56 policies. In case of a conflict between a Board policy and the rules in this handbook, the Board policy will prevail. RSU #56 reserves the unlimited right to make changes to the handbook at any time without prior notice. The handbook is provided solely for the convenience of staff, students, and parents, and RSU #56, to the extent permissible by law, expressly disclaims any liability which may otherwise be incurred.

A copy of the RSU 56 Board's Policy Manual is available in the Superintendent's Office and each school office and district policies are available on the district's website (www.rsu56.org).

Equal Educational Opportunities

RSU #56 is committed to the concept and implementation of equal educational opportunities as required by federal and state laws for all students, regardless of race, sex, color, gender identity, national origin or ancestry, religion, disability or sexual orientation. Students or parents/guardians should direct any questions or concerns to the RSU #56 Affirmative Action Officer, Sara Thurston.

Contact Information

Phone: (207) 562-4251

Email: sthurston@rsu56.org

Staff Conduct with Students

The RSU #56 Board of Directors expects all staff members, including teachers, coaches, counselors, administrators, school volunteers and others, to maintain the highest professional, moral and ethical standards in their conduct with students. Students and/or their parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the appropriate administrator if they believe a teacher or other staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates any items listed in the board policy [GBEB - Staff Conduct with Students](#).

Academics

Bell Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

7:55-9:10	Period 1 or 5	75 minutes	An extra 5 minutes was added to this block for the Pledge of Allegiance and morning announcements.
9:15-9:25	Advisory	10 Minutes	- Attendance will be taken during this period. Being late or skipping would affect eligibility for sports/clubs and will result in school based consequences. - Students should check their email, grades, and their Adaptive Scheduler to see where they are assigned for Flex Block that day. - Students need to be on time and need to stay in their advisory for the entire 10 minutes. This is not a time for students to go to guidance, the main office, the library, or to check in with other teachers. - Students should use the restroom during passing time and not be sent to the restroom during this 10 minute period unless it is an emergency.
9:30- 10:40	Period 2 or 6	70 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
10:45 - 11:15	Flex Block	30 Minutes	- All students will be signed up for their Cougar Paw Advisory unless they have been signed up to work with another teacher. Those who have not been specifically signed up to work with a teacher will remain in their Cougar Paw Advisory and will work quietly during this focused learning block. - Juniors and seniors who have grades of 80 or above in each class at the bi-weekly grade checks, and who have had parental permission, will be able to sign out during this block. They must tell their advisory teacher that morning that they plan to use their privileges and they must make sure to sign out prior to leaving and upon returning to the building. If they are signed up for a staff member then it would be considered skipping a class if they do not show up. It is the student's responsibility to know where they have been assigned for Flex. - Juniors and seniors leaving the building can unlock their Yondr pouch at this time but must lock it back up upon returning to the building. If they choose to use this privilege, they must leave campus completely.
11:20-11:50	Lunch	30 Minutes	- Juniors and seniors can leave during lunch if they have signed parental permission. - Juniors must sign in and out on the ipad. - Juniors and seniors can unlock their Yondr pouch at this time but must lock it back up upon returning to the building. - If students are assigned a lunch detention, they will need to report directly to the main office.
11:55 - 1:05	Period 3 or 7	70 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
1:10 - 2:20	Period 4 or 8	70 Minutes	- Regularly scheduled class - Region 9 students need to report directly to the SCC upon returning. They will have a quiet study hall where their attendance will be taken. They will need to lock their devices in a Yondr Pouch upon entering the building.

Wednesday

7:45 - 8:35	Late Arrival Wednesday	50 Minutes	Staff have meetings in the morning during this time. Students should not be entering the building earlier than 8:30 on Wednesday. The warning bell rings at 8:50 and classes start at 8:55am.
8:55 - 9:55	Period 1 or 5	60 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
10:00 - 11:00	Period 2 or 6	60 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
11:00 - 11:30	Lunch	30 Minutes	- Juniors and seniors can leave during lunch if they have signed parental permission. - Juniors must sign in and out on the ipad. - Juniors and seniors can unlock their Yondr pouch at this time but must lock it back up upon returning to the building. - If students are assigned a lunch detention, they will need to report directly to the main office.
11:35 - 12:35	Period 3 or 7	60 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
12:40 - 1:40	Period 4 or 8	60 Minutes	Regularly scheduled class
1:45 - 2:20	Cougar Paw	35 Minutes	- Regularly scheduled class - Grades will be entered bi-weekly this year to make sure students are on track with their portfolio

Learning Lab Expectations

All students must report to their Learning Lab unless they are a senior student with Open Campus Privileges. Seniors who do not plan to use their Open Campus Privileges during their Learning Lab need to report directly to their Learning Lab teacher for attendance. If seniors with Open Campus privileges would like to go to the SCC they need to check in with their teacher and get a pass to provide to the main office staff on their way to the cafeteria. Learning Labs are used for quiet study time. Students are expected to arrive with work. Skipping a Learning Lab is treated the same way as skipping a class and will result in a school based consequence. Freshmen and sophomores are not allowed to have more than one Learning Labs per semester unless there is a specialized plan developed with guidance and administration.

Flex Block Expectations

Flex Block is a 30 minute period on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday during which students can receive extra support from their teachers. Students can ask teachers to sign them up for this block or a teacher may sign a student up to provide extra support. Students will find out their assignments for that day during Advisory. Students can also look up their assigned location for Flex on Adaptive Scheduler in PowerSchool. It is the student's responsibility to know where

they are assigned. Any student who is not signed up for intervention, enrichment, or a meeting will report directly to their Cougar Paw Advisory for a quiet study hall.

Juniors and seniors who have parental permission and have received an 80 or above in each of their classes at the biweekly grade check will be allowed to leave during Flex Block as long as they are not signed up to meet with a staff member. This privilege can be revoked if students are not meeting expectations both academically and behaviorally. Skipping Flex Block is the same as skipping class and will result in a school based consequence. This includes students who have a scheduled guidance appointment and leave during Flex Block.

Cougar Paw Advisory

Cougar Paw Advisory is a graduation requirement that students need to pass all four years of high school in order to earn their credit. Assignments for this course will be graded throughout each semester on a pass/fail basis. Students are expected to attend Cougar Paw and complete the assignments provided. Failure to do so could result in probation for extra and co-curricular activities along with not being on track for graduation. Region 9 students will be dismissed early on Wednesday from their programming in order to attend this course. All Region 9 students are expected to attend unless they have an excused absence or early dismissal for that day. If a student misses this course, they are expected to connect with their Cougar Paw Advisor in order to make up the assignments they have missed.

Graduation Requirements

The awarding of a diploma from Dirigo High School will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in the identified Graduation Benchmark Standards as well as the successful completion of credits as outlined below. The student must also fulfill any other requirements specified in this policy.

A. Meet the cross-cutting performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning results.

A student graduating from Dirigo High School is expected to be a:

- Clear and effective communicator;
- Self-directed and lifelong learner;
- Creative and analytical problem solver;
- Responsible and involved citizen; and an
- Integrative and informed thinker.

B. Successfully complete a minimum of 22 credits as follows:

1. **English Language Arts:** 4 credits
2. **Mathematics:** 3.5 credits
3. **Science and Technology:** 3.5 credits

4. **Social Studies:** 3.5 credits
 5. **Fine Arts (art, music, industrial arts, culinary arts, drama, etc.):** 1 credit
 6. **Health and Physical Education:** 1.5 credits
 7. **Cougar Paw:** 1 credit (.25 per year)
 8. **Service:** 0.5 credits
 9. **Future Perspectives:** 0.5 credits
 10. **World Language:** 0.5 credits
 11. **Electives:** 2.5 credits
 12. **Senior Tri Fold/Portfolio:** P/F
- C. The student must demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit's standards for Computer literacy, proficiency, and performance.
- D. The student must engage in an educational experience relating to English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology in each year of secondary schooling.

Dirigo High School will also accept credit toward graduation and demonstrations of proficiency following multiple pathways when pre-approved by guidance and administration. Please consult with the guidance counselor and the principal on how to form an Individual Learning Plan or to learn more about these opportunities. Also, please consult the full school board policy [IKF-Graduation Requirements](#) for a more detailed explanation.

Grades

Grades are composed of summatives, formatives, and HOWL (Habits of Work and Learning). A summative assessment (60% of total grade) is used to evaluate student learning at a point in time when the instruction of a learning target is complete. Formative assessments (30% of the total grade) to provide students with feedback about their progress towards the learning target. Formative assessment can take many forms such as quizzes, reflections, conversations, and observations. HOWL grades are worth 10% of the total grade and are connected to the guiding principles.

Grades at Dirigo High School:

A= 93-100

B = 85-92

C = 77-84

D = 70-76

F = below 70

Credit Recovery Range = 60-69 and students have to complete at least half of the work assignments in the class

Below 60 = student failed the class and will need to retake it for credit

Standards Requirements

Certain courses have specific graduation standards that students are required to pass throughout the course in order to graduate. Students are expected to receive a 2.0 or above in order to demonstrate necessary skills in that standard. The rubric for standards is listed below:

Score	Definition of Performance
4	In addition to the 3.0 knowledge, infers or applies in a new context or to a higher level
3.5	Demonstrates all of a score of 3 and some aspects of a 4
3	Is proficient with complex targeted knowledge (concepts, principles, processes)
2.5	Demonstrates all of a score of 2 and some aspects of a 3
2	Is proficient on foundation knowledge (skills, terms, details)
1.5	Demonstrates some aspects of a 2
1	With help, cannot do Level 2 work
INC	Incomplete can be used when work has not been passed in but the assignments are open for completion or replacement. Incompletes become 0 at the end of the term.

Credit Recovery

Students who fail a required course should plan to make up the course as soon as possible by reaching out to the teacher directly. Credit Recovery is an option for courses with grades between 60 and 69. Students should set up a meeting with their teacher of record within two months of the failed course to discuss credit recovery options. This could mean summer school, Flex Block, after school, or other viable options for pathways that the teacher of record sees fit. Credit recovery must be completed within one year of failing the course. Completing credit recovery during summer school *after* one year is not an option. Correspondence courses are also acceptable, with the approval of the principal.

Weighted Grades

The high school curriculum provides weighted grades for designated courses and advanced placement courses.

College Level and AP Courses	1.1 multiplied to their semester grade (ex: $80 \times 1.1 = 88$)
Advanced Courses	1.05 multiplied by their semester grade ($80 \times 1.05 = 84$)

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades can be given to students for extenuating circumstances (examples, including but not limited to; extended medical absences, family emergencies, etc.). The student and teacher should make a plan for how the missing assignments and content will be made up. The teacher will need to submit an **Incomplete Form** to the guidance office. An incomplete grade on a student's report card must be made up within two weeks after the close of grades for the semester, not within two weeks of receipt of the rank card. In extenuating circumstances, the principal may grant an extension of the two week period. Any teacher who wishes to assign a student an Incomplete report card grade must request permission from the principal prior to assigning the Incomplete.

Add/Drop Period

There will be a ten (10) school day add/drop period at the beginning of each semester. Students may request course changes in their schedule during this time by completing the required forms available in the Guidance Office. Students are expected to report to their assigned class until the change has been finalized on PowerSchool.

There are 6 reasons a student may be allowed to add/drop a course:

1. The student has already taken and passed the class.
2. The class the student is enrolled in is being taken out of the recommended sequence (i.e. Algebra II before Algebra I).
3. A senior is missing a class required for graduation.
4. There is a Learning Lap or "gap" in the student's schedule and/or the student is enrolled in less than five classes. A 9th or 10th grader has more than the allotted number of Learning Labs per semester.
5. Permission by an administrator (i.e. principal) has been granted to make a schedule change due to extenuating circumstances.
6. A student is changing course level (i.e. moving to an advanced course)

Add/Withdraw: Schedule changes after the closing of the add/drop period require communication between a parent/guardian and the teacher and/or an administrator.

If a student is failing a withdrawn class at the time of the schedule change, it will be represented as a Withdraw Fail (WF) on their transcript and the grade at the time of withdrawal will be factored into their GPA. If the student is passing at the time this form is being submitted, it will be represented as a Withdraw (W) on their transcript and will have no effect on the student's GPA.

Definition of Full-Time Student

A full-time student at Dirigo High School is enrolled in the equivalent of five classes per semester. This could include multiple pathways such as Extended Learning Opportunities and community service that take place outside of the building but are credit bearing. Any extenuating circumstances to this definition would be decided by the principal in consultation with the guidance counselor and other school staff. Freshmen and sophomores are expected to take more than five classes in order to be on track for graduation. Students who are in 9th and 10th grade are only allowed one Learning Lab per semester unless there has been a specialized plan developed by guidance and the administration.

Participation in Graduation

In order to participate in Dirigo High School's graduation activities (Candlelight Ceremony, Final Assembly, and Commencement Ceremony), a student must have completed all graduation requirements, the student must meet the attendance requirements set by the district, and have returned or accounted for all books and/or school issued equipment. Outstanding balances must also be paid before participating in graduation activities.

A student who is deficient in academic requirements may meet these requirements through a post-secondary course, a State-approved adult education course, a State-approved summer school program, or a distance learning or correspondence course approved by the school principal in advance of registration.

Graduation Recognition

Each year, Dirigo High School recognizes members of the graduating class based on their cumulative GPA. Students with a GPA of 93 or above will be designated as graduating High Honors and students with a GPA between 85 and 92 will be designated as graduating with Honors. This list is determined by the cumulative GPA of each student at the conclusion of the first semester of the year they plan to graduate.

Honor Roll

Full-time student status is a requirement of Honor Roll eligibility. Dirigo students attending Region 9 Programs are eligible for the Honor Roll. Recognition is based on semester grades. Semester High Honors students hold a GPA 93 or above with no grade lower than a 76. Semester Honors students hold a GPA between 85 and 92 with no grade lower than a 76.

Class Marshal

To be eligible, a student must be in good academic and behavioral standing, have a minimum of eleven credits over four semesters, and maintain an 82 grade point average or better over five semesters. The senior class will then vote for two students from a ballot of the class marshal candidates.

Attendance

General Attendance Information

Regular school attendance is essential to academic success. The process of education depends upon exposure to subject matter, continuity of instruction and class participation. Absence from class is detrimental to student learning.

The following conditions apply to all absences:

1. Despite the fact that an absence is excusable by law, it still counts toward a student's total absences.
2. Reasons for excusable absences apply to absence for all or part of a day including tardiness and early dismissal.
3. If a student misses more than half of a class they are considered absent for that class.
4. School administrators are responsible for determining whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Because Maine School Law is specific (see below), parental permission for an absence does not guarantee that it will be an excused absence.
5. School Administration may request documentation for medical related absences.

[JEA - Compulsory Attendance](#)

Excused Absences

Under Maine law the following reasons would be circumstances would be considered excused absences:

1. Personal illness
2. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day.
3. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the school day.
4. A family emergency (approved by the school)
5. A planned absence for personal or educational purposes that has been approved by the school. (Approval must be secured in advance. Forms are available in the main office.)
6. Education disruption resulting from homelessness, unplanned psychiatric hospitalization, unplanned hospitalization for a medical emergency, foster care placement, youth development placement or some other out-of-district placement that is not otherwise authorized by either any individual education plan or a superintendent's agreement. "Educational disruption" does not apply to a student who is out of school for 1- or more consecutive school days as a result of a planned absence for a reason such as a family event or a medical absence or planned hospitalization or recovery.

In addition, the following reasons for missing class will be considered as excused absences:

- In cases where a student's 504 or IEP determines that the absence is related to a disability
- Absences due to school sponsored or school approved trips or events
- Serving a school assigned disciplinary suspension

Parents/guardians are responsible for the school attendance of students who are under 17 years of age. The school will work with families in an effort to ensure compliance. Attendance is extremely important to a student's overall academic performance.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence that does not conform to the five excusable reasons for absences under [Maine Law](#). A student with seven (7) consecutive unexcused absences or ten (10) total unexcused absences will be considered truant. Dirigo High School will work with the home, attendance intervention personnel, outside agencies, and law enforcement to ensure truant students and parents re-engage with the school and improve attendance.

Chronic Absenteeism

Students who have missed 10% or more of their enrolled days are considered chronically absent regardless of whether or not the absence was excused or unexcused. Students who are chronically absent may not be able to attend Spring Fling, Prom, or participation in Graduation Ceremonies. There will be specific attendance check-points where each student's attendance will be reviewed. If a student has hit the specific number of days absent listed in the table below, they will be unable to attend. Students will have the ability to appeal to the superintendent or the school board depending on the event. Please view the table of information below in order to see attendance check-points:

Activity	Attendance Check-Point Date	Ineligible to Attend	Appeal Deadline
Spring Fling	Friday, February 12th	Absent 10 or more days	Friday, February 26th (In writing to the superintendent)
Prom	Friday, April 16th	Absent 15 or more days	Friday, April 30th (In writing to the superintendent)
Graduation Ceremonies (Candlelight, Final Assembly, Graduation)	Friday, May 21st	Absent 18 or more days	May, 25th (Attend the school board meeting for appeals)

Tardy Procedures

The school building opens at 7:30am on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 8:30 on Wednesday. Students who arrive at school after 7:55am (8:55am on Wednesday) are considered tardy and must report to the Main Office where they will be given a pass which is required to enter class. Oversleeping or missing the bus are examples of unexcused tardies. Students are encouraged to contact the office ahead of time if they know they will be late.

Students who have an unexcused tardy are ineligible to participate in a co-curricular or extracurricular activity that school day. Each student has one (1) “free pass” per season.

Students entering classes after the bell rings will be marked Late (L) by their teacher. Every 5 tardies results in an after school detention. Students who miss more than half of a class due to a tardy are considered absent from that class.

Early Dismissal

Any student leaving the school building during the school day for any reason must first report to the main office. The school cannot dismiss any student without the permission of the parent/guardian or a parent-designated adult. Students who need to be dismissed should have their parent/guardian contact the main office directly. Students are welcome to use the main office phones to communicate with their parents/guardians during the school day if a dismissal is necessary. Juniors and seniors who have turned in their signed Open Campus Permission Forms are allowed to leave during the appropriate blocks if they are meeting Open Campus Privilege requirements. Those students are still required to sign out. Students leaving school property without following the proper dismissal procedures will be assigned a school based consequence starting with a detention. Continued failure to meet this expectation will result in in-school suspensions and parent/guardian meetings. For the safety and wellbeing of the school, it is important that the main office is aware of everyone who is entering and exiting the building.

Reporting Absences

The school is responsible for determining the whereabouts of all of its students on a daily basis. Parents are expected to report all student absences and may do so by calling the school the morning of the absence. The parents of all students reported unexcused absent from their first class of the day will receive attendance communication from the school, unless the student has already been reported absent by a parent/guardian or they have Open Campus. If the school is unable to reach a parent/guardian by phone, the school will leave a message (if able to do so). The parent may return the call to the school or send a note with the student when the student returns from the absence. Because Dirigo High School is required to track and record student absences according to state statutes, we will ask parents for the reason why a student is tardy, absent, or being dismissed. Students are expected and allowed to make up work for excused absences. Students may not be eligible to make up work for absences which are unexcused as it is a teacher choice.

Even if a student has been marked excused by a parent or guardian, this absence does count towards their total number of absences. Students may become ineligible to attend extracurricular activities such as dances or even graduation if they hit a certain number of total absences throughout the school year. Please review the section on **Chronic Absenteeism** and reach out directly to the school if you have specific questions.

Planned Absences

Students who will miss school for a planned absence for personal and/or educational purposes and wish for the absences to be excused must secure permission in advance. This is done by completing and submitting the **Planned Absence Form** to the main office. Completion of the form does not guarantee that the absences will be considered excused by school administration. This form is not required for school sponsored events and field trips.

Student Make-Up Work

If work was previously assigned or was planned prior to the student's absence, the work is due prior to absence. Otherwise, the work is due the next time the student is present at school. If work is assigned during an excused absence, the student has **two days** to complete and submit their work. The student must conference with the teacher of a particular class the next time they are present in the building, unless communication can be done via other viable methods.

Unexcused absences will be handled at the discretion of the teacher. Teachers may decide not to allow work to be made up if the student was marked as unexcused on PowerSchool.

Student Services/Resources

Guidance Department

The guidance program at Dirigo High School is structured to help students explore information and receive assistance in all aspects of their educational, career, and personal experiences.

Students are encouraged to utilize the available resources in the Guidance Office pertaining to selection of their high school course of study, career education and information, college and vocational school information, and careers in the military. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be a part of this planning process and are more than welcome to make appointments with the Guidance counselor to support their student with yearly course selection and the post secondary planning process. If parents/guardians would like to meet with the guidance counselor they should call the main office to schedule an appointment. If students would like to meet with the guidance counselor they should email or stop by during passing time, Learning Labs, or lunch to set up an appointment through our Guidance secretary.

For more information about guidance procedures and course offerings you can view our [Dirigo High School Program of Studies 26-27](#) which is also available on the Dirigo High School Website. This program of study includes information about multiple pathways for students such as independent studies, Extended Learning Opportunities, and Alternative Education.

Library

Dirigo High School's library is the research center for the school and its community. The following rules ensure its efficiency.

1. Students who have a necessary academic reason to use the library may ask their teacher if they can obtain a pass. The teacher will check with the librarian to see if there is space available and then will provide the student with a pass.
2. Students shall go directly to the library and remain there until excused.
3. The library is a quiet place for reading, studying, and research. Students should plan to be busy the entire period.
4. Food and drinks are not allowed in the library.
5. Books may be signed out for a two week period.
6. Some books may circulate overnight only. These should be returned before the first period of the next day.
7. Current magazines may not circulate. Old issues may circulate.
8. Reserved books and magazines may not circulate. They must be returned at the end of the period.
9. Overdue books should be returned or renewed. Overdue books are checked on a monthly basis. Students will be billed for lost books. Graduating seniors must settle library bills before diplomas are issued.
10. Using the library is a privilege which may be revoked at any time a student behaves irresponsibly.
11. When the library is reserved for class use, it will be closed for Learning Lab students.
12. The library is open from **11:50 - 2:20** Monday through Friday, unless otherwise specified. Students should not be in the library unsupervised unless they have been given permission by the main office staff for a specific reason.

Food Service

RSU #56 and Dirigo High School is proud to offer healthy nutrition services to all students in the form of breakfast and lunch. RSU 56 participates in the National School Lunch Program ensuring affordable and healthy meals to all Dirigo High School students. Breakfast and lunch remain free for all students during the 2026-27 school year. If a student opts to purchase a milk separately, milk costs \$0.50. Due to participation in community eligibility provision we will no longer require families to fill out the free and reduced application. We do ask, however, that families fill out the financial form sent home. We use that information for other grant opportunities

Administration of Medication to Students

The Board discourages the administration of medication to students during the school day when other options exist. However, that may not always be feasible. The policy linked below intends to promote the safe administration of medications to students by school personnel and to provide for authorization of student emergency self-administration of medication from asthma inhalers and epinephrine autoinjectors. Student prescription and or nonprescription medication including throat lozenges, cough drops, Tylenol, pain relievers, vitamin supplements and other over the counter medications, must be brought to the office by a parent where it will be stored until needed. Medication must be in the original container and must be clearly labeled with the student's name, name of the medication, exact individual dosage, and time due. The medication shall be taken under appropriate supervision in the office. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Parents/guardians are encouraged to reach out directly to the nurse with questions about the process.

[JLCD - Administration of Medication to Students](#)

Immunizations

All students who enroll in the school unit schools are required by Maine law to present a certificate of immunization or evidence of immunization, as outlined in Maine state law (Chapter 126). Non-immunized students shall not be permitted to enroll in school, or to attend school or school activities unless one of the conditions listed in the Board policy are met.

[JLCB - Immunization of Students](#)

Child Find

RSU 56 seeks to ensure that all children within its jurisdiction are identified, located and evaluated who are school-age 5 and under the age of 22 and who are in need of special education or supportive assistance. This includes homeless children, state wards, state agency clients, students who have been suspended or expelled, children attending private schools receiving home instruction, children incarcerated in county jails, children who have the equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year, highly mobile children, and children suspected of being disabled and in need of special education and supportive assistance even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

If a Child Find process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the IEP Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

[IHBAC - Child Find](#)

Behavioral Expectations/Consequences

Student Conduct

All school and district policies are in effect throughout the school day and at any and all school-sponsored functions and events.

Behavioral Expectations

Dirigo High School follows the [JIC - System-Wide Student Code of Conduct](#)

The students at Dirigo High School are expected to conduct themselves in such a way as to reflect pride and respect in their school, community, and themselves. At assemblies, field trips and extracurricular functions, students are expected to display good sportsmanship and courtesy.

In the classroom, Dirigo High School students are expected to maintain a school environment that promotes respect and consideration for one another. Students are expected to abide by the classroom expectations set by individual teachers.

General Campus Conduct

Throughout the Dirigo campus, at all times, students are expected to:

1. Walk in the halls. Refrain from running, pushing, shoving or inappropriate contact.
2. Use technology appropriately. Personal electronics should be powered off and secured in the school provided pouch during the school day. All school based electronic devices should be used for academic purposes.
3. Display appropriate and acceptable language and behavior at all times.
4. Exercise care and respect for all school property and the property of others.
5. Be responsible with food. During the school day, food and drink may be consumed at the discretion of the teacher/staff.
6. Students should have a pass from a staff member whenever they leave a classroom and are expected to report directly to the location of that pass. Multiple students should not be leaving classes at the same time, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
7. Understand that displays of affection between students need to be school appropriate. Inappropriate displays of affection will result in referral to the office and notification of parents.
8. Students are expected to follow directions from school staff.

Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Expectations

To review the full board policy please see [JICJ - Student Cell Phone Use and Other Electronic Devices](#).

At Dirigo High School and TWK Dirigo Middle School, the following guidelines will be used:

Cell phones, smart watches and other personal electronics—including wireless Bluetooth headphones—may **not** be used and will be powered down and stored in magnetic cases provided by the district during school hours.

- Students will power down phones/personal electronic devices and place them in secure magnetic cases provided by RSU 56 or place the phone in the main office upon entering the building.
 - Students who are dismissed early will need to stop in the main office to use the unlocking device.
 - Students may keep their phones in their lockers, in their backpacks, or on their person while in the magnetic case.
 - Students may, with permission, use the classroom or office phone to contact their families if there is an emergency or serious, specific reason to make a phone call.
 - If families need to communicate with their child during the school day, they may call the office or email school office personnel.
 - Phones can be removed from magnetic cases at the end of the school day by using the swipe devices outside the main office and/or at identified exit points.
- A. The use of cameras, including camera phones, is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms, and other places where privacy is generally expected. In all other school locations, permission must be granted before photographing or recording another person.
- B. The use of a cell phone or other electronic device in any manner that violates Board policy or school rules is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to harassment, cheating and violations of the student code of conduct. If a Board policy or school rule is violated, the teacher or school administrator may confiscate the device for the remainder of the school day. Student cell phones and other electronic devices may be subject to search if there is reasonable suspicion of a violation.

RSU56 Cell Phone/ Smartwatch & Personal Device Ladder of Consequences

Offense Examples:	1st Offense	
Misuse of pouch		● Student sent to the office and receives a 1-hour detention ● Document in student record

Forgetting to lock a pouch Seen using phone or watch Not truthful about location of devices Use of other devices not in pouch/ multiple devices Use of personal laptop - texting, social media, etc. Etc.		Yondr pouch with smart devices locked inside stays in the office for the day and picked up by student at dismissal including Juniors and Seniors with Open Campus privileges.
	2nd Offense	- Student sent to the office and receives two (2) 1-hour detentions - Document in student record - Yondr pouch with smart devices locked inside stays in the office for the day and picked up by student at dismissal including Juniors and Seniors with Open Campus privileges.
	3rd Offense	- Student issued In-School Suspension - Document in student record - Yondr pouch checked into the office daily for two weeks - pouch will not be with student during school hours - Parent/Guardian reentry meeting required. (Yondr pouch checked into the office daily until the parent/guardian meeting occurs even if it is beyond the two weeks)
	4th Offense	- Student issued Out-of-School Suspension - Document in student record - Yondr pouch checked into the office daily for the next 30 school days - pouch will not be with student during school hours - Parent/Guardian meeting required. (Yondr pouch checked into the office daily until the parent/guardian meeting occurs even if it is beyond the 30 school days)
	Refusal to use Yondr pouch or Additional Offenses	- Parent/Guardian meeting required - May result in an expulsion hearing

Please note: Students are expected to comply with the consequence(s) issued. The consequence(s) issued must be followed as issued or will be reassigned for the next school day the student is present. Failure to turn a Yondr pouch with devices into the office when requested will result in an automatic in-school suspension. Failure to comply with consequences issued could result in an expulsion hearing.

Throughout the school year the Yondr Pouches will be checked to make sure that the locking device still works. Students are expected to let the main office staff know immediately if their pouch is damaged or the locking device is no longer working. Students are responsible for the cost of lost or damaged pouches. Intentional damage or vandalism of the pouch will result in disciplinary action along with the replacement costs.

Computer and Technology Use Policies

Each student at Dirigo High School will be provided with a laptop. Students are not allowed to use privately owned computers or devices at school. Students and parents/guardians are expected to abide by all school and district rules and policies regarding the use of any technology hardware and software. The board policies are linked below. Families will need to sign and return the **Acceptable Use Form** sent home in their summer packets stating that they have read and understood the policies prior to receiving a school device.

Acceptable Use

1. The school unit's computers/devices, networks, and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the school unit's educational mission, curriculum, and instructional goals.
2. Students must comply with all board policies, school rules, and expectations concerning student conduct and communications apply when students are using computers/devices, whether the use is on or off school property.
3. Students also must comply with all specific instructions from school administrators, school staff or volunteers when using the school unit's computers/devices.

Compliance with the school unit's policies and rules concerning computer/device use is mandatory. Students who violate these policies and rules may, after having been given the opportunity to respond to an alleged violation, have their computer/device privileges limited, suspended, or revoked. Such violations may also result in other disciplinary action, referral to law enforcement, and or legal action.

Please review the following policies by clicking these links below:

[IJNDB - Student Use of School-Issued Computers/Devices and the Internet](#)

[IJNDB-R - Student Computer/Internet Acceptable Use Rules](#)

[IJNDE - Internet Safety](#)

[IJNDB-E - Student Computer/Internet Acceptable Use Form](#)

Lunch and Breakfast Expectations

In addition to providing students with nutritional foods, breakfast and lunch at DHS also provides a time for students to socialize. With that in mind, there are several expectations that students must follow in order to keep this time safe and enjoyable for all.

Failure to follow the rules could result in detentions, school suspensions, clean up duties, or removal from the cafeteria and/or gym area.

1. When going to lunch, students should not be running and should wait quietly in line (without cutting) until they are served.
2. Students are responsible for picking up their trays, throwing away all trash, cleaning up their areas, and restacking their chairs before leaving the lunch room.
3. Students are expected to remain in assigned locations provided during the lunch and breakfast times of the day. They should not be leaving those areas without permission from a DHS staff member.
4. Students are expected to be respectful of their peers and staff members throughout these non academic time periods. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Using appropriate language
 - b. Maintaining appropriate personal space
 - c. Using restrooms appropriately
5. Students who have permission to eat lunch in a teacher's classroom need to provide the main office with a pass from that teacher.
6. Juniors and seniors who leave for lunch need to sign out and back in appropriately/exiting and entering through the main entrance.
7. Freshmen and sophomores are prohibited from leaving the building anytime during the school day, including during lunch, unless they have been dismissed by a parent or guardian.
8. DoorDash is prohibited during the school day, as it disrupts main office operations.
9. Students who wish to use the gym during the lunch block are expected to wear appropriate shoes while playing basketball and are expected to play basketball appropriately. Students who are unable to do so will be banned from the gym.
10. No food or open drinks are allowed in the gym at this time.
11. Students should not be accessing the locker room at this time unless given permission by a staff member on duty.

Bus Expectations

Students who ride the bus home from school must be on school grounds after school in order to board the bus. It is the student's responsibility to be at the Nash Street exit to board their bus on time.

Students are allowed to provide their own transportation to Region 9 with parental and office permission. Students need to fill out a **Region 9 Student Driver Form** and turn it into the main office at the start of school.

The safe transport of students is a top priority in RSU 56. As such, a student's privilege to use district transportation services is conditional upon their behavior and observance of all bus rules. The bus driver and other accompanying adults are in charge and must be shown the proper respect at all times. The following rules are to be followed or students will be subject to the consequences outlined below:

Meeting the Bus:

1. Whether at home or at school students should be visible and on time when waiting for the bus. The driver will stop for waiting passengers, but is not required to wait for students who are running late.
2. Students should not run alongside or around the bus at any time and should wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before entering or exiting.
3. Students who must cross the road to meet or exit the bus must go in front of the bus and wait until the driver directs them to cross the road.

On the Bus:

1. Nothing is to be hung outside of the bus windows, including hands, heads and other objects.
2. There is no pushing, shoving, or fighting (verbal or physical) allowed on the bus at any time.
3. Students will not touch the emergency door or roof exits unless in an emergency situation or directed to by the driver.
4. Students who vandalize the bus in any way will be responsible for the cost of the damage and may be removed permanently from the bus.
5. Windows can only be opened with permission from the driver.
6. Students are not to shout out the windows or throw anything out of the windows.
7. Students must remain seated at all times and not exit the bus until it has come to a complete stop.
8. Students are not allowed to eat or drink on the bus unless given permission by the driver.
9. Students cannot possess drugs, alcohol, tobacco or weapons of any kind on the bus.
10. DHS student use of personal electronic devices such as cell phones must not be a distraction to the driver. Students may use the devices only while in their seat and facing forward so that the light emitted from the device does not reflect in the driver's rear view mirror. Students who fail to comply with this expectation will be required to stop using and put away their device. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices are prohibited during field trips that take place during school hours.

Arrival at School:

1. Students are to report directly to the school and wait for the first bell in the SCC.
2. Students are not allowed to leave school grounds once they have arrived at school unless they have written parental permission that has been submitted to the main office.

Students who are in violation of these rules will face consequences from written warnings to a suspension from school and removal from the bus. Incidents such as fighting, insubordination, drug and alcohol offense or multiple minor offenses will result in the student being removed from the bus for a minimum of three days and face potential additional disciplinary actions such as detention or suspension. Any student removed from the bus is responsible for finding their own transportation to and from school.

Dress Code

The RSU 56 Board recognizes that responsibility for the dress and appearance of students rests with individual students and their parent(s)/guardian(s). The Board will not interfere with this right unless the personal choices of students create a disruptive influence on the school program or affect the health or safety of others.

Students are encouraged to use sound judgment and reflect respect for themselves and others in dress and grooming. In keeping with the goals of the school unit to provide a safe, healthy, and non-discriminatory environment for educating students for maximum academic and social development, the following restrictions on dress shall be enforced.

A. Articles of clothing that promote the use of tobacco, marijuana, alcohol, other drugs or paraphernalia may not be worn on school grounds (when school is in session) or at school functions.

B. Clothing, footwear, insignia, or accessories that are intended to identify the wearer as a member of a particular gang are prohibited.

C. Articles of clothing with displays that are sexual, vulgar, lewd, or indecent or include insulting words, graphics or symbols (e.g., racial/ethnic slurs) are impermissible.

D. Clothing that inappropriately exposes one's body parts, or inappropriately exposes one's cleavage, chest, belly, buttocks, or undergarments for both males and females:

1. No more than 2" of midriff/torso showing at high school.
2. The lowest part of the neckline of shirts must meet the top of the armpit.
3. Sides of shirts must meet the armpit.
4. Shorts and/or skirts must always fully cover the butt.
5. Strapless garments are prohibited.
6. Torn clothing must not expose skin above the short/skirt level.

E. Clothing that is destructive of school property (e.g., cleats, spiked or studded clothing, pants with metal inserts that scratch furniture, etc.) are prohibited.

F. Bare feet or stocking feet are prohibited.

G. Hoods and other similar types of head or face coverings may not be worn in any school building when school is in session, except for religious/other reasons as approved by the principal.

H. Clothing with confederate flags is prohibited at all times.

I. The wearing of hats and caps shall be prohibited at the elementary schools and shall be determined by the individual teachers within their classrooms at the middle school and high school.

School administrators or teachers may require special clothing for health and safety reasons for students participating in physical education, certain extracurricular activities, working with or around machines or other activities. However, no specific brand may be required.

All students are expected to adhere to RSU 56 dress policy. All administrators, faculty and staff will monitor. Consequences for students who do not comply with the dress policy shall be administered as determined by the building Principal/Director, Assistant Principal/Director or designee using standard disciplinary guidelines as outlined in each school's parent/student handbook.

The Superintendent is responsible for the development of any administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy.

This policy will be published annually in the student handbooks.

Cross Reference: JIC- Student Code of Conduct

ENFORCEMENT

All students are expected to adhere to RSU #56 dress policy. All administrators, faculty and staff will do monitoring. Consequences for students who do not comply with the dress policy shall be administered as determined by the principal/director, assistant principal/assistant director or designee using standard disciplinary guidelines as outlined in each school's parent/student handbook.

[JICA- Student Dress](#)

Open Campus Expectations

Juniors

- Juniors who have turned in their signed permission slip can leave school during lunch as long as they sign out correctly when leaving and sign back in upon returning. They will need to secure their personal electronic devices upon re-entering the building.
- Juniors with grades of 80 or above in all of their classes at the bi-weekly grade checks are allowed to leave during Flex Block. However, they must adhere to the expectations listed below or this privilege will be revoked.

Seniors

- Seniors who have turned in their signed permission slip can leave school during lunch as long as they sign out correctly when leaving and sign back in upon returning. They will need to secure their personal electronic devices upon re-entering the building.
- Seniors with grades of 80 or above in all of their classes at the bi-weekly grade checks are allowed to leave during Flex Block and their Learning Labs. However, they must adhere to the expectations listed below or this privilege will be revoked.

Open Campus Expectations:

- **Students must have 80 or above in all of their classes to leave during Flex Block (Juniors) and during Flex Block/Learning Labs (Seniors).** Students will receive an email after each bi-weekly grade check letting them know if they have not met this requirement. If a student receives an email, they will not be allowed to use their privileges for the full two weeks until their next grade check. This is the case even if they were able to get all their grades above an 80 prior to the end of the two week period.
- If there is an error with a grade, the student must connect with the teacher the Monday of grade checks in order to get it resolved. No changes will take place to privileges after the Monday of grade checks.
- Students may only leave campus if they have turned the permission form signed by their parent/guardian into the main office.
- Students must sign out prior to exiting the building.
- Students must leave and enter through the main entrance of the building any time they are using their Open Campus privileges.
- Students must leave school property if they choose to use their Open Campus Privileges. If they do not wish to use their Open Campus Privileges that day they should report directly to their Learning Lab or Flex Block. Seniors are allowed to get a pass from their Flex Block/Learning Lab teacher to go to the SCC for those periods. They must follow school wide expectations while in the SCC and should not be wandering the halls, in the gym, or on the stage.
- Students must return to school on time for their scheduled classes, sign in when they arrive, and secure their personal electronic devices. Repeated tardies to class will result in disciplinary action and loss of privileges.
- If a student is signed up for a teacher, is assigned a lunch detention, has a meeting with Guidance, or there are other academic sessions taking place, the student is expected to attend or it will be considered skipping and result in a school based consequence (this could also affect eligibility for athletics/clubs)
- **Open Campus can be revoked at any time for academic reasons, behavioral issues, or for not meeting the expectations listed above.**

Underclassmen

- Freshmen and sophomores **do not** have Open Campus privileges and are required to remain at school for the entirety of the school day unless they have been dismissed by a parent/guardian through the main office. Any underclassmen found leaving school property without being properly dismissed will receive a consequence.

Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy

Harassment of students because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of board policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws. Students who believe they are victims of harassment should report to a staff member, counselor, or administrator. A substantiated charge of harassment could lead to suspension, expulsion and/or police involvement. Retaliation or knowingly false reporting are also subject to disciplinary action. Please see the full Board policies linked below for more information.

[ACAA - Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students](#)

[ACAA- R - Student Discrimination, Harassment and Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures](#)

Bullying and Cyberbullying Policy

Dirigo High School is committed to making sure students feel safe and are free from bullying. It is important for all students and families to read and understand the board policy linked below.

[JICK - Bullying and Cyberbullying](#)

Students who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action which may include suspension, expulsion or a series of graduated consequences including alternative discipline or other behavioral interventions. The Board retains the right to impose disciplinary consequences for bullying and other conduct that occurs at any time or place that substantially disrupts the instructional program, operations of the schools or welfare of students. Any student violating this policy may also be subject to civil or criminal penalties.

Hazing Policy

Maine statute defines injurious hazing as "any action or situation, including harassing behavior, that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental or physical health of any school personnel or a student enrolled in a public school."

Injurious hazing activities of any type, either on or off school property, by any student, staff member, group or organization affiliated with this District, are inconsistent with the educational process and shall be prohibited at all times. Students and employees are expected to abide by the policy linked below.

[ACAD - Hazing](#)

Bomb Threats

The RSU #56 recognizes that bomb threats are a significant concern to the school unit. Whether real and carried out or intended as a prank or for some other purpose, a bomb threat represents a potential danger to the safety and welfare of students and staff and to the integrity of school property. Bomb threats disrupt the instructional program and learning environment and also place significant demands on school financial resources and public safety services. These effects occur even when such threats prove to be false.

Any bomb threat will be regarded as an extremely serious matter and treated accordingly. The Board directs the Superintendent to react promptly and appropriately to information concerning bomb threats and to initiate or recommend suitable disciplinary action.

Prohibited Conduct:

No person shall make, or communicate by any means, whether verbal or non-verbal, a threat that a bomb has been, or will be, placed on school premises. Because of the potential for evacuation of the schools and other disruption of school operations, placement of a bomb or of a "look-alike" bomb on school premises will be considered a threat for the purpose of this policy.

It is also a violation of Board policy to communicate by any means that any toxic or hazardous substance or material has been placed, or will be placed, on school premises with the intent to endanger the safety and welfare of students or staff and/or to disrupt the operations of the schools. For the purpose of this policy, "toxic or hazardous substance or material" means any material or substance, including biomedical materials or organisms, that, when placed as threatened, could be harmful to humans.

A "bomb" means an explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine, "Molotov cocktail" or other destructive device. A "look-alike bomb" means any apparatus or object that conveys the appearance of a bomb or other destructive devices.

Making a bomb threat is a crime under Maine law. Any student suspected of making a bomb threat shall be reported to Law Enforcement authorities for investigation and possible prosecution. Administration may suspend and/or recommend for expulsion any student who makes a bomb threat. Any student aiding or failing to report information or knowledge of a bomb threat is also subject to consequences, which may include suspension and/or expulsion.

[EBCC - Bomb Threat](#)

Weapons, Violence, and School Safety Policy

The School Board believes that students and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats and other disruptive behavior. Students, school staff, volunteers, and visitors are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, and reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

Students are prohibited from engaging in behaviors that make the school environment unsafe and are required to abide by the policy linked below.

[JICIA- Weapons, Violence and School Safety](#)

Academic Dishonesty Procedure

Academic dishonesty is any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in grades through dishonesty in the performance on assignments or assessments. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to; copying the work of others, allowing others to copy your work, unauthorized use of notation aids, unauthorized use of digital or online translation (e.g. google translate and/or other translation platforms) and/or work completion sites (e.g. ChatGPT, Photomath, and/or other AI platforms), or looking at another student's work during a test situation; procuring, previewing or supplying examinations ahead of time, and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unauthorized use or close imitation of the original work of another and the representation of that work as one's own work. This would include submitting the work of another as one's own, or the lack of proper citation crediting the work of another..

Incidents of academic dishonesty in a course will be handled as follows:

1st offense: Teacher notifies the office and contacts the parents/guardians. The teacher assigns one of the following: recording no credit on the assignment or the chance to redo the assignment.

2nd offense: Teacher notifies the office and contacts the parents/guardians. No credit is given for the assignment and a detention is assigned by the office.

3rd offense: Teacher notifies the office and contacts the parents/guardians. No credit given on the assignment and further discipline consequences are given by school administration.

Detentions

Detentions are the consequence of the violation of school rules or inappropriate classroom behavior. Students assigned a detention will be given a 24 hour notice prior to the expected detention time. Students are expected to inform parents/guardians of all detention dates and times.

Detention Types:

1. **Teacher Detentions** - The length is determined by the teacher up to one hour. These detentions are assigned for violations of teacher expectations and classroom rules.
2. **Office Detention** - Assigned by school administrators for violation of school rules, violation of classroom expectations and/or a refusal to serve teacher detentions. Office Detentions may be assigned during the lunch block or may be assigned for after school depending on the offense. Students who are assigned a Lunch Detention are expected to get their lunch and report directly to the main office. Students are allowed to eat their

lunch quietly for the duration of that period. After school detentions take place Monday through Friday from 2:30 to 3:30 pm.

Students who do not show for their assigned detention will face additional consequences such as additional detentions, in-school suspension, or an out-of-school suspension. Any student who continues to violate school and district rules will meet with the Superintendent. At this meeting, the Superintendent will determine whether the student will go before the Board of Directors of RSU #56 for an expulsion hearing.

Detentions will only be rescheduled for extenuating circumstances such as illness and family emergencies. It is the responsibility of the student to communicate with the person who assigned the detention if these circumstances come up.

Suspensions

School suspension is administered for serious school offenses, including, but not limited to the following: violations of drug and alcohol policies, fighting, assault, harassment, theft, vulgarity or verbal abuse of a staff member, vandalism, insubordination and disrupting the school setting. Also, repeated violations of lesser offenses may result in suspension. Length of suspension will be determined by the school administration and will reflect the offense committed. Parents or guardians will be notified in writing of the action taken. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with individual teachers to make up all work and assessments that were missed during suspension. Any students serving an in-school or out-of-school suspension are not eligible to attend any school functions throughout the duration of their suspension (this includes, but is not limited to practices, games, dances, and other extracurricular activities). If a student has received an out-of-school suspension they are not allowed on school property at any point during the duration of their suspension, including after school activities, games, and events.

Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices Use and Possession Procedures

In order to promote the health and safety of all students and staff and to promote the cleanliness of all facilities, the Board prohibits smoking and the use of all other tobacco products including smokeless tobacco products and products resembling tobacco products such as the e-cigarette, in school buildings, facilities and on school buses during school-sponsored events and at all other times on school grounds by all persons, including students and employees. This means no tobacco use at any time, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, by anyone on school property or at any school-sponsored functions.

In addition, students are further prohibited from possessing, selling, distributing or dispensing tobacco products in school buildings, facilities, on buses, and on school grounds at any time.

Violation of the **Tobacco Use and Possession Policy** will be dealt with as specified within this procedure.

ADC-R - Use or Possession of Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices Administrative
Procedure, Disciplinary Guidelines

ADC - Use and Possession of Tobacco and Electronic Smoking Devices

First Offense - Student will be suspended for up to three days and/or receive six weeks of drug cessation program.

- Parents will be called and notified in writing of the offense.
- Parents will receive a letter regarding cessation programs available for their child and will receive information as to how they may provide additional support for their child to quit smoking.
- The student will be referred to the school social worker and other school personnel as deemed necessary.
- At the initial appointment the student will be provided with the following:
 1. Information regarding tobacco use;
 2. A list of agencies and/or clinics where assistance can be found or referrals to appropriate outside agencies; and
 3. Information regarding an age-appropriate cessation program.

Second Offense - Students will be suspended for up to five days.

- Parents will be called and notified in writing of the offense.
- The social worker will meet with the student and provide the following:
 1. Referrals to appropriate outside agencies;
 2. Attendance at a cessation program and/or a referral for further medical assistance regarding addiction.

Subsequent Offenses - Students will be suspended for ten days and referred to the Superintendent and/or the School Board for possible expulsion.

Drug and Alcohol/Chemical Use Procedures

The consumption, possession, distribution, and use of drugs or alcohol on school property is strictly prohibited. School staff will work to provide prevention education and interventions in order to support students but students who are found to have violated these school wide expectations will also be held liable for illegal behaviors that results in suspensions and referrals to local law enforcement.

First Offense for alcohol or drug possession/use shall result in out-of school suspension up to ten days. Drug infractions will require a re-entry meeting with the parent, building administrator, and the Superintendent.

Second Offense of alcohol or drug possession/use shall result in an out-of-school suspension and a disciplinary hearing with the School Board.

Please review the following board policies linked below for detailed information on the expectations and procedures.

[JICH - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students](#)

[JICH-R - Drug and Alcohol Use by Students Procedures](#)

Appropriate Bathroom Use

Students are expected to use the bathroom appropriately, maintaining a clean and safe environment at all times. No more than one student should be in an individual stall at a time. Students are expected to respect the privacy of others while using the restroom. Phones and electronic devices are supposed to be locked in a Yondr pouch throughout the school day. Taking pictures or videos of any kind are prohibited while using the restroom. Students are responsible for throwing trash in the appropriate receptacles and should report any problems or vandalism directly to the main office. Students should not be spending time in the bathroom to socialize. Students who are found to be misusing the bathroom are subject to consequences that follow Board policies stated in this handbook.

Passes

Students are expected to have a pass anytime they are going to a different location in the building once the bell has signaled that the period has started. Standardized bathroom passes are available in each classroom. However, students should receive a written pass from a staff member if they are going to the nurse, library, main office, guidance office, or other locations in the building. The pass should show the destination, the time, and the date. Students are expected to go directly to the destination listed on their pass. Students who are found in other locations than the one specified on their pass will be subject to school based consequences.

Region 9 Student Expectations

Region 9 students are expected to secure their electronic devices in the Yondr pouch when they enter Dirigo High School and should report directly to the SCC area to wait for their transportation. They should also pick up their lunch if they have chosen to be provided with one from the DHS kitchen. When the bus arrives, they will be able to unlock their pouch prior to boarding the bus.

Region 9 Drivers are expected to fill out the Region 9 Driver Permission Form at the beginning of the school year and submit it to the main office. Region 9 drivers are expected to return for Cougar Paw Advisory each week on Wednesday and any other school wide event that is communicated in advance. Cougar Paw will be graded throughout the semester and those grades will factor into Open Campus Privileges and Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Eligibility.

Any Region 9 student using bus transportation back to the high school at the end of the school day will need to sign in with the main office, secure their electronic devices in their Yondr Pouch, and report to the SCC for a quiet study hall. Students found not signing in, securing their devices, or not reporting to the SCC will be subject to school based consequences.

Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Activity **Participation and Regulations**

Eligibility

Eligibility at Dirigo High School is determined by the board policy [JJJ - Eligibility for Participation in Co/Extra Curricular Activities](#). Students must meet the following requirements in order to participate:

- In order to participate in co/extra curricular activities, scrimmages, exhibition games, performances, competitions, or tournaments a student must be a full time student, failing no more than one class, and be on track to graduate. Students not meeting these academic requirements are on probation.
- Grade checks will take place every two weeks. A student who is on academic probation may regain eligibility if their two-week progress report indicates that they are meeting the academic requirements listed above.
- A student who becomes academically ineligible two times during a season will be released from the co/extra curricular activity.
- While on probation, a student will continue participating in practices and will attend home games.

Athletics

Dirigo Athletics offers a variety of interscholastic athletic programs for our students with expectations set in place that can be found within the Dirigo High School Student-Athlete Handbook. Student-athletes along with parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to review the handbook and submit all required participation documents prior to the beginning of the season. The current athletic program includes competition in the following:

Fall Athletics:

Cross Country
Field Hockey
Golf
Football (11-person)
Soccer (8-person)

Winter Athletics:

Basketball
Cheerleading
Nordic Ski
Unified Basketball
Wrestling

Spring Athletics:

Baseball
**Esports*
Softball
Tennis
Track & Field

Required Participation Documentation Information:

In accordance with the Regional School Unit No. 56 policy **JJI**, all students are encouraged to participate in co/extra-curricular activities. These activities offer students the opportunity to learn new skills, to compete in a variety of sports, to experience being part of a team, to develop character, positive attitudes and self-discipline, to demonstrate leadership and to realize personal accomplishments. The required participation documents must be submitted prior to the beginning of the athletic program season. These documents are as followed:

- 1) Student-Athlete & Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Support Contract
- 2) Medical Update Form
- 3) Annual Student Participation & Parental Approval Form

In addition to the above, before participating in intramural or interscholastic sports, a student must submit the following:

- A) Physical Examination Report (Recommended annually but accepted on a biannual basis)
- B) Proof of Medical Insurance
- C) Student-athlete and parent(s)/guardian(s) attendance at preseason meeting required.

Concussion Information

The following board policies provide fact sheets and danger signs for parents/guardians around concussions. Concussions may occur from an injury in any setting. DHS has protocols in place for a graduated school re-entry following a concussion and medical clearance procedures.

[JJIF - Management of Concussions and Other Head Injuries](#)

[JJIF-E Concussion-Information and AcknowledgementSheet](#)

Physical Examination of Students

A physical examination is required every two years for all interscholastic athletic program participants. Please review the board policy linked below for more information or contact the school nurse/athletic director.

[JLCA - Physical Examination of Students](#)

Clubs and Activities

The following clubs and activities are available at Dirigo High School. Additional organizations often occur during the year in response to students' needs and interests.

1. Student Council
2. National Honor Society
3. Drama Productions
4. Civil Rights Team
5. Speech and Debate Team
6. Outing Club
7. Others as offered by individual staff members

Class Officers

Each class elects class officers yearly to conduct the business of the class. Officers are responsible for coordinating class activities and projects. Class officers must meet all academic standards and extra/co-curricular eligibility requirements.

National Honor Society

Students at Dirigo High School who have a minimum cumulative grade of 90 or better are eligible to be considered for selection to the National Honor Society. Those eligible are notified in writing of their eligibility by the chapter advisor and are then invited to a meeting in which the requirements for selection are reviewed.

Student Council

Dirigo High School has a Student Council, composed of four members from each class. To be considered for Student Council a student must file a nomination form signed by at least 20 members of their class, and submit a narrative relating to their desire to be a Student Council member to the class advisor with a signed "Student Leadership Guideline" form. An election will be held.

After School Hours

Students staying after school for tutoring, extracurricular, or co-curricular activities must be in a supervised location of the building with a staff member or parent volunteer. Students may have the use of their cell phone and other personal devices but all other school rules apply. Students who are unable to abide by these rules will need to leave school property and are subject to school based consequences.

General Information

Dances

All school and district rules and policies are in effect at any and all school functions, including dances. Students and/or their guests who violate any school or district rule or policy will be subject to disciplinary action. We want our dances to be fun, but at the same time we want them to be safe and a positive experience for all involved.

Dirigo High School Dance Expectations:

- Students are only allowed to invite one guest to a dance. The guest sign-up process will be available at least one week prior to the dance, and guests must be signed up by the close of school on the Thursday before the dance. All guest information will be reviewed by the principal. School administration has the right to deny guests.
- Dirigo High School students may only invite guests who are not older than 21 and who are not in middle school.
- A guest must enter and leave the dance with the host. In addition, a guest must remain with the host for the entire dance. If a guest or the host gets into trouble during the dance, both will be asked to leave and the host could face further disciplinary action.
- Once a student leaves a dance they are not allowed to return for any reason.
- To be eligible to attend a dance a student must be present the entire day of the dance. If the dance is on a Saturday, they must be present the entire day prior to the dance. Any student who has an unexcused tardy or unexcused absence will not be allowed to attend. Any student who has an in-school or out-of-school suspension on the day of the dance will also not be able to attend. Students may not be eligible to attend the dance if they are chronically absent at the attendance check-points throughout the school year.
- Four adult chaperones, three of whom must be Dirigo High School faculty members, are required at all dances. Administration will also be supervising the dance.
- Cleaning up at the end of the dance is the responsibility of the group sponsoring the dance.
- With the exception of Homecoming and Prom, dances will end no later than 10 p.m.

Visitors

Students are not to have visitors other than parents or guardians in school. All visitors who wish to visit classrooms, observe aspects of the instructional program, or meet with staff members are expected to schedule such visits in advance. Visitors must check into the office, confirm approval of the visit/appointment, and sign the visitor record upon arriving and departure from the school building. A visitor's pass will be issued. Visitors are expected to respect all school rules and expectations.

Fundraising

Student activities/groups that wish to do fundraising are to refer to the board policy linked below. All student fundraising activities must be pre-approved in advance by the building administrator and the athletic director. There shall be sufficient benefits to the school and/or students to justify the fundraising activity. All fundraising activities must provide a service, product, experience, or opportunity. Please refer to the full board policy for more information.

[JJE- Student Fundraising Activities](#)

Outdoor Guidelines

While outside the building before school, at lunch, or while waiting for a bus at the end of the day, students must remain visible within the designated supervised area. Teachers and students planning to hold class activities outside of the school building need to notify the main office. Teachers planning to hold classes off school property need prior approval from administration. Students must also respect the property of the area residents.

Lockers

Students have access to their own assigned locker with a combination lock. If a student decides that they would like a locker for the school year they should go to the main office to receive their locker number and combination. Students are strongly encouraged to keep both physical education and hall lockers locked to avoid theft. The school is not responsible for reimbursement of lost or stolen items. Outside decorations on lockers are not allowed. Inside decorations must be school appropriate and must not damage or deface the lockers. **Lockers remain school property and are subject to search at any time.**

Questioning and Searches

The Board seeks to maintain a safe and orderly environment in the schools. School administrators may question and/or search students in accordance with this policy and accompanying administrative procedure.

School administrators are under no obligation to notify a student's parents/guardians prior to questioning a student regarding alleged violations of Board policies, school rules, and/or federal/state laws.

Students, their personal property, and their vehicles may be searched upon reasonable suspicion that they possess any items or substances which are prohibited by law, Board policies and/or school rules, or which interfere with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school.

When special circumstances exist, including but not limited to a suspected ongoing violation of the Board's drug/alcohol or weapons policies, or when a potential threat to safety is identified, school administrators may search groups of students or the entire student body without individualized suspicion.

Student use of all school storage facilities, including but not limited to lockers, desks, and parking lots, is a privilege granted by the school. All storage facilities are school property and remain under the control, custody, and supervision of the school. Only locks provided by RSU #56 may be used to secure student lockers.

Students have no expectation of privacy in school storage facilities or for any items placed in such storage facilities. School administrators have the authority to inspect and search storage facilities and their contents on a random basis, with or without reasonable suspicion, and without notice or consent. Canine officers may be used.

If a search produces evidence that a student has violated or is violating the law, Board policies and/or school rules, such evidence may be seized and impounded by school administrators and appropriate disciplinary action may be taken. Evidence may be forwarded to law enforcement authorities as required by law or as deemed appropriate by school administrators. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement, with input from legal counsel, administrators, and/or other appropriate persons, any administrative procedure necessary to carry out this policy.

This policy and the accompanying procedure will be included in student/parent handbooks. Such administrative procedures shall be subject to Board approval

[JIH - Questioning and Searches of Students](#)

[JIH-R - Questioning and Searches of Student Administrative Procedures](#)

Student Vehicle Use

In accordance with board policy [EEBB - Use of Private Vehicles on School Business](#), no student will be allowed to drive or transport other students on field trips or on any school sponsored or sanctioned event in which the district would normally provide transportation. No student may drive his/her vehicle, an employee's vehicle, or a school-owned vehicle on school trips or errands.

Student Parking

Students who plan on using personal transportation to and from school and who are parking on school property must fill out a **Dirigo High School Student Parking Registration Form**. Students are expected to read through the DHS parking expectations prior to signing and

submitting their registration form to the main office. Students must park in the designated student parking lot and adhere to all vehicle expectations

Parking along Weld Street (in front of the school) is reserved for short-term parking, such as drop off/pick up and for visitor parking.

When arriving and departing from school property, students must drive responsibly. Failure to meet the parking lot expectations will result in loss of privileges and notification of parents/guardians and/or the police.

Student Emergency Forms

A personal record form is to be filled in at the beginning of each school year by the parent or guardian and returned to the office. This form provides necessary information for emergency use. The information is vital to the personal welfare of each student. Changes in employer, telephone numbers, email addresses, doctors, addresses, etc. must be kept current to safeguard the personal welfare of each student in an emergency.

School Emergency Procedures

Dirigo High School has a prescribed set of procedures for emergency evacuations, fire drills and lock-downs. Students will be made aware of these procedures and the procedures will be practiced throughout the school year. During any evacuation or lockdown, students are expected to obey all commands and requests of any and all RSU 56 employed adults and emergency personnel.

School-Issued Materials

Students are responsible for any materials owned by the district which are given to students for their use. This includes, but is not limited to: textbooks, uniforms, equipment and technology hardware. Students who lose or cause damage to such items, outside of normal wear and tear, will be responsible to pay for those items. Payment shall be based on the age and condition of the item at its time of issue, the original cost or replacement cost, and the difference in return condition as compared to issued condition. For technology, please refer to the district's policies.

Work Permits

Under Maine law, a certificate showing the applicant's age and education is required for employment of a person under seventeen years. To obtain a work permit from RSU #56, a student must first secure a job. Once the student secures the job they can get a work permit in the main office at Dirigo High School.

Student Debt

Students attending schools in RSU 56 who owe money to the district will be ineligible to participate in co-curricular activities, extra-curricular activities and will forgo special privileges until their debt has been repaid. Debts include, but are not limited to; lost or damaged books, lost or damaged uniforms, lost or damaged school equipment, stolen articles, vandalism, and unpaid fees owed to the district.

Any funds that are collected will be spent to replace the item that was lost, damaged, stolen, vandalized, or unpaid. A receipt will be issued upon the payment of any debt. The principal shall then permit the student to participate in co-curricular activities, extra-curricular activities and retain special privileges in accordance with Board policy. Students may not participate in commencement activities and graduation exercises if they owe a debt to the district. Students shall contact the high school principal to make arrangements to pick up their diplomas.

Yearbook Procedures

Administrative Procedure for Determining What is Appropriate for the Yearbook:

Creating a school yearbook is an exciting project that helps capture memories of the school year. However, it is important to follow specific procedures to ensure that the pictures, quotes and other materials included are appropriate and reflect the school's values.

Understand the Purpose of the Yearbook

The yearbook is a way to celebrate the achievements and moments of the school year. It should reflect positive experiences and showcase school spirit. Therefore, it is essential to include pictures, quotes, and materials that are appropriate and inclusive for all students.

Criteria for Pictures

Seniors are encouraged to submit senior portraits and quotes that reflect them as a person. The following, however, will not be allowed:

- Weapons
- Alcohol or drugs
- Illegal activities

These guidelines are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Review of Pictures, Quotes and Materials

The yearbook advisor's job is to go through all submissions and decide which pictures, quotes, and materials fit the guidelines. The yearbook advisor and committee members should look for photos, quotes, and materials that show school spirit, fun activities, and memorable moments

while ensuring that no inappropriate content is included. In the event that the yearbook advisor has a question about a picture, quote, or material, the yearbook advisor shall seek input from the school principal and the superintendent of schools.

The superintendent of schools will have the final say about whether or not a picture, quote, or material is suitable for the yearbook.

Reviewed by the RSU 56 Policy Committee on December 10, 2024 and approved.

Controversial Topics and High-Quality Education

See [IMB - Teaching Controversial Issues](#)

As stated in RSU 56 Policy IMB, Teaching About Controversial/Sensitive Topics, “American academic tradition stresses the free contest of ideas as a vital element both in the development of curriculum and in classroom teaching.” Staff are strongly encouraged to review Policy IMB for the direction and principles therein.

The following expectations are provided by RSU 56 Policy IMB:

1. The teacher, in selecting both the content and the method of instruction, is mindful of the maturity level of the students.
2. The teacher has assured him/herself that the controversial subject to be discussed belongs within the framework of the curriculum to be covered, that the subject is significant as well as meaningful for the students, and that through the discussion, students will have the opportunity to grow.
3. The teacher handles the classroom presentation in ways that will ensure a wide range of information and interpretation for the students’ consideration and strives to present a balance among many points of view.
4. The teacher does not use the classroom as a personal forum. He/she does not employ the techniques of the demagogue or the propagandist for attention, for control, or simply for color. The teacher has the right to identify and express his/her own point of view in the classroom as long as he/she indicates clearly that it is his/her own.
5. The teacher emphasizes keeping an open mind, basing one’s judgment on known facts, looking closely at facts to evaluate them in terms of the subject under discussion, and being ready to change one’s opinion should new facts come into light.
6. The emphasis always is on the method of forming an opinion as much as on the opinion formed.

Educational Research; Surveys, Analysis, Or Evaluations

Parents shall have the opportunity to opt their children out of participation in any survey, analysis, or evaluation. Students who are 18 years of age or older may opt out of such surveys, analyses, or evaluations. Please review the full policy by clicking the link provided.

[Policy ILD - Educational Research_ Student Submission to Surveys, Analyses or Evaluation](#)

Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion

[JKAA - Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion](#)

[JKAA-R - Procedures on Physical Restraint and Seclusion](#)

IDEA Part B: Written Notification Regarding Use of Public Benefits or Insurance

Introduction:

You are receiving this written notification to give you information about your rights and protections under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), so that you can make an informed decision about whether you should give your written consent to allow your school district to use your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services that your school district is required to provide at no cost to you and your child under IDEA. First we will provide some basic information about IDEA.

Part B of IDEA is the Federal law that provides for assistance to States and school districts in making a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which includes special education and related services, available to children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. If your child has been evaluated and found eligible for services under IDEA because he or she has a disability and needs special education and related services, your school district must develop and individualized education program (IEP) for your child. Your school district must provide the special education and related services included in your child's IEP at no charge to you or your child.

IDEA funds pay a portion of your child's special education and related services. Funds from a public benefits or insurance program (for example, Medicaid funds) also may be used by your school district to help pay for special education and related services, but only if you choose to provide your consent, as explained below. Also, your school district cannot access your or your child's public benefits or insurance if it would result in a cost to you, such as a decrease in your benefits or an increase in your premiums. These "no cost" provisions are explained below as well.

Before your school district can ask you to provide your consent to access your or your child's public benefits or insurance for the first time, it must provide you with this notification of rights and protections available to you under IDEA. This notification is intended to help you understand these rights and protections, including the type of consent your school district will ask you to provide. If you choose not to provide your consent, or later decide to withdraw your

consent, your school district has a continuing responsibility to ensure that your child is provided all required special education and related services under IDEA at no charge to you or your child.

Notification Requirements- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(v)

You are receiving this notification because IDEA requires that you be informed of your rights and protections when your school district seeks to use your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services. The following sections explain when you must receive this notification and what information must be included in the notification.

When Notification Must Be Provided

You must receive this notification:

Before your school district seeks to use you or your child's public benefits or insurance for the first time and before it obtains your consent to use those benefits or insurance for the first time (the consent requirement is described below) and annually thereafter.

Format of Notification

This notification must be:

- written;
- in language understandable to the general public; and
- in your native language or in another mode of communication you use, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

Contents of Notification- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(v)(A)-(D)

This notification will explain: 1) the consent that your school district must obtain from you before it can use your or your child's public benefits or insurance for the first time; 2) IDEA's "no cost" provisions that apply to your school district if it seeks to use your or your child's public benefits or insurance; 3) your right to withdraw your consent to the disclosure of your child's personally identifiable information to your State's public benefits or insurance program agency at any time; and 4) your school district's continuing responsibility to ensure that your child is provided all required special education and related services at no charge to you or your child, even if you withdraw your consent or refuse to provide consent.

Parental Consent- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(iv)(A)-(B)

*If your school district has not accessed your public benefits or insurance in the past to pay for services that it was required to provide your child under IDEA at no charge to you or your child, all of the parental consent requirements described below apply.

Before your school district can use your or your child's public benefits or insurance for the first time to pay for special education and related services under IDEA, it must obtain your signed and dated written consent. Generally, your school district will provide you with a consent form for you to sign and date. Note that your school district is only required to obtain your consent

one time.

This consent requirement has two parts.

1. Consent for Disclosure of your Child's Personally Identifiable Information to the State agency responsible for administering your State's Public Benefits or Insurance Program Under Federal law—the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the confidentiality of information provisions in IDEA—your school district is required to obtain your written consent before disclosing personally identifiable information (such as your child's name, address, social security number, student number, IEP, or evaluation results) from your child's education records to a party other than your school district, with some exceptions. In this situation, your school district is required to obtain your consent before disclosing personally identifiable information for billing purposes to the agency in your State that administers the public benefits or insurance program. Your consent must specify the personally identifiable information that your school district may disclose (for example, records or information about the services that may be provided to your child), the purpose of the disclosure (for example, billing for special education and related services), and the agency to which your school district may disclose the information (for example, the Medicaid or other agency in your State that administers the public benefits or insurance program).
2. Statement to Access Public Benefits or Insurance
Your consent must include a statement specifying that you understand and agree that your school district may use your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for services under 34 CFR part 300, which are special education and related services under IDEA. Our consent form includes language that indicates that by giving us permission to bill Medicaid, you are allowing us to use your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services.

Both parts of this consent requirement apply to the school district that is responsible for serving your child under IDEA. If your child moves to a new school within the same school district, you would not be required to provide a new consent because the same school district is still responsible for serving your child under IDEA. But if you enroll your child in a new school in a new school district, the new school district that is responsible for serving your child under IDEA must obtain a new consent from you before it can bill your child's public benefits or insurance program for the first time. The consent you would provide to your child's new school district must include both part of the consent as described above.

Electronic consent, if applicable (34 CFR §99.30(d))

As noted above, your consent must be written, signed, and dated. While there generally will be a paper form for you to fill out, you may provide your written consent in an electronic form, if your submission identifies and authenticates you as the individual providing the consent, includes an electronic signature and date, and your submission indicates that you approve the information contained in the consent.

Previous consent

If you gave your consent in the past for your school district to access your or your child's

public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services under IDEA, your school district is not required to obtain a new consent from you if the following two conditions are present:

1. There is no change in any of the following: the type of services to be provided to your child (for example, physical therapy or speech therapy); the amount of services to be provided to your child (for example, hours per week lasting for the school year); or the cost of the services (that is, the amount charged to the public benefits or insurance program); and
2. Your school district has on file the consent you previously provided. This previous consent must meet the requirements that were in effect under the prior IDEA regulations, and your school district will know what requirements applied under those prior regulations. An example of a previous consent your school district may have on files is a parental consent form you gave directly to another agency such as the ME Medicaid agency.

Even if your school district is not required to obtain a new consent from you, your school district still must provide you with this notification before it may continue to bill your or your child's public benefits or insurance program to pay for special education and related services under IDEA.

If your school district already has on file your consent to use your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services under IDEA, your school district must request that you provide a new consent when there is a change in any of the following: the type (for example, physical therapy or speech therapy), amount (for example, hours per week lasting for the school year); or cost of services (that is, the amount charged to the public benefits or insurance program).

An example of a change in the type of services would be that your child would receive speech therapy in addition to physical therapy and therefore, the services billed to your public benefits or insurance program would be different. An example of a change in the amount of services would be if your child was previously receiving 3 hours per week of physical therapy and will now be receiving 2 hours per week. An example of a change in the cost of your child's services would occur if the amount billed to the public benefits or insurance program for a particular service increases or decreases.

If any of these changes occur, your school district must obtain from you a one-time consent, specifying that you understand and agree that your school district may access your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services under IDEA. Before you provide your school district the new, one-time consent, your school district must provide you with this notification. Once you provide this one-time consent, you will not be required to provide your school district with any additional consent in order for it to access your or your child's public benefits or insurance if your child's services change in the future. However, your school district must continue to provide you with this notification annually.

No Cost Provision- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(i)-(iii)

The IDEA “no cost” protections regarding the use of public benefits or insurance are as follows:

1. Your school district may not require you to sign up for, or enroll in, a public benefits or insurance program in order for your child to receive FAPE. This means that your school district may not make your enrollment in a public benefits or insurance program a condition of providing your child the services it is required to provide your child under IDEA at no charge to you or your child.
2. Your school district may not require you to pay an out-of-pocket expense, such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay amount for filing a claim for services that your school district is otherwise required to provide your child without charge. For example, if you child’s IEP includes speech therapy and your insurance requires a \$25 co-pay or deductible payment for a session, you could not be charged the \$25. Your school district would need to pay the cost of your co-pay or deductible in order to bill your or your child’s public benefits or insurance program for the particular service.
3. Your school district may not use your or your child’s public benefits or insurance if using those benefits or insurance would:
 - a. Decrease your available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit, such as a decrease in your plan’s allowable number of physical therapy sessions available to your child or a decrease in your plan’s allowable number of sessions for mental health services;
 - b. Cause you to pay for services that would otherwise be covered by your public benefits or insurance program because your child also requires those services outside of the time your child is in school;
 - c. Increase your premiums or lead to the cancelation of your public benefits or insurance; or
 - d. Cause you to risk the loss of your or your child’s eligibility for home and community based waivers that are based on your total health-related expenditures.

Withdrawal of Consent- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(v)(C)

If you provided your consent for your school district to disclose your child’s personally identifiable information to the State agency that is responsible for administering your public benefits or insurance program you have the right under 34 CFR part 99 (FERPA regulations) and 34 CFR part 300 (IDEA regulations) to withdraw that consent at any time.

If you do not want your school district to continue to bill your or your child’s public benefits or insurance program for special education and related services under IDEA, you would need to withdraw your consent to your school district’s disclosure of your child’s personally identifiable information to the agency in your State that is responsible for administering that program. The FERPA and IDEA regulations, however, do not contain procedures for withdrawal of consent to disclosure of your child’s personally identifiable information. If you wish to withdraw your consent, you should ask your school district what procedures you would need to follow. For example, your school district may ask you to submit your withdrawal request in writing. To withdraw your consent please submit a written request, including the full name of the child and parent(s), to the following:

**Heidi Connelly, LCSW
145 Weld Street Dixfield, ME 04224**

What Your School District Must Do if You Withdraw Your Consent or Refuse to Provide Your Consent- 34 CFR §300.154(d)(2)(v)(D)

Finally, without your consent, your school district cannot bill your or your child's public benefits or insurance program to pay for special education and related services that it is required to provide your child under IDEA at no charge to you or your child. If you withdraw your consent or refuse to provide consent under the FERPA and IDEA regulations, your school district may not use your withdrawal of consent or refusal to provide consent to disclose personally identifiable information to a public benefits or insurance program to deny your child the special education and related services he or she is otherwise entitled to receive under IDEA. Therefore, if you refuse to provide consent or withdraw consent, your school district has a continuing responsibility to ensure that your child is provided all required services necessary to receive an appropriate education at no charge to you or your child.

We hope this information is helpful to you in making an informed decision regarding whether to allow your school district to use your or your child's public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services under IDEA.

Contact information: For additional information and guidance on the requirements governing the use of public benefits or insurance to pay for special education and related services see:

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/idea/part-b/part-b-parental-consent.html>.

RSU #56
145 Weld St. Dixfield, ME 04224

Non-Discrimination - Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy

The school unit does not discriminate on the basis of sex or other protected categories in its education programs and activities, as required by federal and state laws/regulations.

Discrimination against and harassment of school employees because of actual or perceived race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, age, familial status, disability or genetic information are prohibited.

Discrimination against and harassment of students because of actual or perceived race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability are prohibited.

For the purpose of this policy, "race" includes traits associated with race, including hair texture, Afro hairstyles, and protective hairstyles, including braids, twists, and locs.

The Board directs the school administration to implement a continuing program designed to prevent discrimination against all applicants, employees, students and other individuals having access rights to school premises and activities.

The school unit has designated and authorized an Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring compliance with all federal and state requirements relating to nondiscrimination, including sexual harassment. The Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator is a person with direct access to the Superintendent.

The school unit has implemented complaint procedures for resolving complaints of discrimination/harassment and sexual harassment under this policy. The school unit provides required notices of these complaint procedures and how they can be accessed, as well as the school unit's compliance with federal and state civil rights laws and regulations to all applicants for employment, employees, students, parents and other interested parties.

[AC - Non-Discrimination - Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action](#)

Annual Notice of Student Education Records and Information Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") provides certain rights to parents and eligible students (18 years of age or older) with respect to the student's education records.

A. Inspection of Records

Parents/eligible students may inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of making a request. Such requests must be submitted to the Superintendent or building administrator in writing and must identify the record(s) to be inspected. The Superintendent or building administrator will notify the parent/eligible student of the time and place where the record(s) may be inspected in the presence of school staff. Parents/eligible students may obtain copies of education records at a cost of \$.15 per page.

B. Amendment of Records

Parents/eligible students may ask the RSU #56 to amend education records they believe are inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the student's right to privacy. Such requests must be submitted to the Superintendent or building administrator in writing, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the Superintendent or building administrator decides not to amend the record as requested, the parent/eligible student will be notified of the decision, their right to request a hearing and information about the hearing process.

C. Disclosure of Records

The RSU #56 must obtain a parent/eligible student's written consent prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information in education records except in circumstances permitted by law or regulations as summarized below.

1. Directory Information

The RSU #56 designates the following student information as directory information that may be made public at its discretion: name, participation and grade level of students in officially recognized activities and sports, height and weight of student athletes, dates of attendance in the school unit, honors and awards received, and photographs and videos relating to student participation in school activities open to the public (except photographs and videos on the Internet). Parents/eligible students who do not want the RSU #56 to disclose directory information must notify the Superintendent in writing by November 18th or within thirty (30) days of enrollment, whichever is later. This opt-out request will remain in effect unless and until it is rescinded.

2. Military Recruiters/Institutions of Higher Education

Military recruiters and institutions of higher education are entitled to receive the names, addresses and telephone numbers of secondary students and the RSU #56 must comply with any such request, provided that parents have been notified of their right to request that this information not be released without their prior written consent. Parents/eligible students who do not want the RSU #56 to disclose this information without their prior written consent must notify the Superintendent in writing by November 18th or within thirty (30) days of enrollment, whichever is later.

3. School Officials with Legitimate Educational Interests

Education records may be disclosed to school officials with a "legitimate educational interest." A school official has a legitimate educational interest if he/she needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. School officials include persons employed by the RSU #56 as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); members of the Board of Education; persons or companies with whom the RSU #56 has contracted to provide specific services (such as attorneys, auditors, medical consultants, evaluators or therapists); and volunteers who are under the direct control of the RSU #56 with regard to education records.

4. Health or Safety Emergencies

In accordance with federal regulations, the RSU #56 may disclose education records in a health or safety emergency to any person whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals without prior written consent.

5. Other School Units

As required by Maine law, the RSU #56 sends student education records to a school unit to which a student applies for transfer, including disciplinary records, attendance records, special education records and health records (except for confidential health records for which consent for dissemination has not been obtained).

6. Other Entities/Individuals

Education records may be disclosed to other entities and individuals as specifically permitted by law. Parents/eligible students may obtain information about other exceptions to the written consent requirement by request to the Superintendent or building administrator.

D. Complaints Regarding RSU #56 Compliance with FERPA

Parents/eligible students who believe that the RSU #56 has not complied with the requirements of FERPA have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education. The office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202