



Student Handbook

2026-2027

Dear Paw Paw Early Elementary Families,

Welcome to Paw Paw Early Elementary! We are excited to partner with you for another wonderful school year. Our school is a place where students are encouraged to grow academically, socially, and emotionally while feeling safe, supported, and valued every day.

At Paw Paw Early Elementary, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to learn, succeed, and develop a strong sense of belonging. Our staff works hard to create a positive learning environment where students are challenged, supported, and inspired to do their best. We are proud of the strong partnership we share with families and our community, because we know that when schools and families work together, students thrive.

This handbook is designed to provide families with important information about school procedures, expectations, and resources that help our school run smoothly. It outlines many of the policies and guidelines that support a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment for all students. We encourage you to review the handbook with your child and keep it as a reference throughout the school year. If you ever have questions, concerns, or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact our office. Communication and collaboration with families are key to student success.

Thank you for being an important part of the Paw Paw Early Elementary community. Together, we will continue to support our students as they learn, grow, and demonstrate that “Our Pack’s Pride is Hard to Hide!”

Sincerely,

Leah Barnes
Principal
Paw Paw Early Elementary



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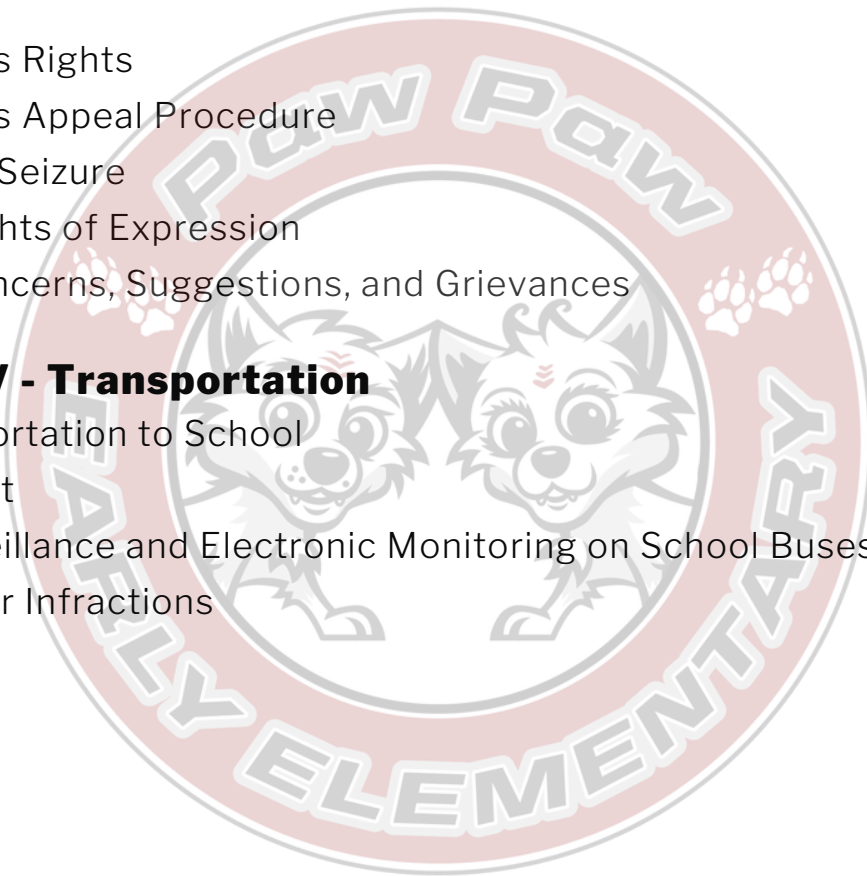
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Introduction

Foreword

This handbook summarizes many of the official policies and administrative guidelines of the Board of Education and the District. To the extent that the handbook is ambiguous or conflicts with these policies and guidelines, the policies and guidelines shall control. This handbook is effective immediately and supersedes any prior handbook and other written material on the same subjects. This handbook does not equate to an irrevocable contractual commitment to the student, but only reflects the current status of the Board's policies and the School's rules as of July 1, 2026. If any of the policies or administrative guidelines referenced herein are revised after July 1, 2026 the language in the most current policy or administrative guideline prevails.

Mission of the School

At Paw Paw Early Elementary, **we are all in for all kids!**

Equal Education Opportunity

It is the policy of this District to provide an equal education opportunity for all students. Any person who believes that they have been discriminated against on the basis of their race, color, disability, religion, gender, or national origin, while at school or a school activity should immediately contact the School District's Compliance Officer listed below:

Name: Susanne Carpenter

Title: Director of Curriculum/Instruction and State/Federal Programs

Phone: (269) 415-5200

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with the procedures as described in Board Policy 2260. Any student making a complaint or participating in a school investigation will be protected from any threat or retaliation. The Compliance Officer can provide additional information concerning equal access to educational opportunity.

Paw Paw Public Schools' Mission Statement

The mission for Paw Paw Public Schools is to develop, support, challenge, and inspire every child for life-long success.

Paw Paw Public Schools' Vision Statement

United with our community to build success.

Paw Paw Public Schools' Core Values

- **Integrity:** Without compromise, we do what is legal, ethical, and fair.
- **Community:** We value our differences and collaborate for the common good.
- **Success:** We commit to providing opportunity and reaching high levels of achievement for every child.
- **Innovation:** We pursue opportunities to create, adapt, and grow.
- **Kindness:** We treat ourselves and others with empathy, compassion, and respect.

Board of Education

Meetings are typically held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. An updated meeting schedule is available on the District website at: www.ppps.org, under the Board of Education tab.

Board Members **2026-2027 Office Held** **Term Expiration**

Brent McNitt - President	December 31 st , 2026
Lindsay Clark - Vice President	December 31 st , 2030
Ray Martin - Secretary	December 31 st , 2028
Nate Mitchell - Trustee	December 31 st , 2028
Mary Beth Sons - Trustee	December 31 st , 2026
Tom Imus - Trustee	December 31 st , 2030
Maria Bowater - Trustee	November 2026

Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Paw Paw Early Elementary has an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). All parents/guardians are welcome to participate. PTO meetings are held the third Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. The elementary PTO can be reached at elementarypto@ppps.org.

Board Members

2026-2027

President	Heather Mihollin
Vice President	Jackie Hillring
Co-Secretary	Jennifer Farrow
Co-Secretary	Chelsea Chambers
Treasurer	Jen Zachary
Event Coordinator	Open
Volunteer Coordinator	Chelsea Chambers
Teacher's Treasurer	Barb Ameling

Staff Directory

Front Office

Principal - Mrs. Leah Barnes
Dean of Students - Mrs. Jesey Davis
Secretary - Mrs. Susan Amos
Office Clerk - Mrs. Erica Irwin
Nurse - Mrs. Alicia Livock

Young Fives Teachers

Mrs. Laura Hansen
Ms. Liz Glidden

Kindergarten Teachers

Mrs. Suzanne Baker
Miss Hannah Barker
Miss Kylie Brown
Mrs. Nikki Clemons
Mrs. Kalani Reeves
Miss Alyson Riley
Mrs. Katey Sampson

1st Grade Teachers

Miss Cassie Burnett
Mrs. Jaime Lindsay
Miss Eliana Moran
Miss Brooke Seely
Mrs. Sierra Thompson
Ms. Anna Thorbjornsen
Mrs. Tracy VanDenBoom

2nd Grade Teachers

Mrs. Terra Bovee
Ms. Ashley Conner
Mrs. Roberta Davison
Mrs. Kelly Imus
Ms. Kelsey Parmley
Mrs. Britnee Warzybok

Student Supports

Instructional Coach - Mrs. Cari Croak
Intervention Teacher - Mrs. Jennifer Dalton
Behavior Management Specialist - Miss Madison Savage
Building Substitutes - Mrs. Alicia Koss & Mrs. Leanne Wolfen

Special Education Teachers

Mrs. Amaris Hunt
Mrs. Jessie Jenkins
Mrs. Katie Verville

Specials Teachers

Art - Miss Stephanie Basurto
Music - Mrs. Erin Emery-Dumas
P.E./Health - Mrs. Jennifer Ayres
STEAM - Mrs. Jessica Farnquist
Media Clerk - Mrs. Kayla Giannecchini

Paraprofessionals

Ms. Analise Arbo
Ms. Allisa Hamden
Ms. Sarah Perez
Mr. Nathanael Wright

Mrs. Lauren Carothers
Mrs. Jennifer Carra
Mrs. Kallie Elmore
Mrs. Jennifer Farrow
Mrs. Jessica Housler
Ms. Autumn Moureau
Ms. Alyssa Sirrine
Mrs. Shannon Wiatroluk

Mrs. Jennifer Herd
Mrs. Kim Hiscock
Mrs. Kara Marsh

Mr. Dalton Jenkins
Miss Aimee Johnson
Miss Maggie Turner

Staff Directory (contd)

Food Service Staff

Kitchen Lead - Mrs. Sue Boyer
Kitchen Staff - Mrs. Katie Harrop
Kitchen Staff - Mrs. Marcy Shilts
Kitchen Staff - Mrs. Christy Hunt

Custodial Staff

Lead Custodian - Mr. Taylor Mitchell
Custodial Staff - Mr. Austin Terry
Custodial Staff - Mr. Noah Bigley-
Klaassen
Custodial Staff -

VBISD Staff

Regional Supervisor of Special Education - Mrs. Phoenicia Green
Regional Supervisor of Special Education - Mrs. Natalie Resseguie
School Psychologist - Miss Madelline Mann
Diagnostic Teacher Consusltant - Mrs. Anna Fawley
Mental Health Clinician - Mr. Eric Clark
Animal Assisted Intervention Coordinator - Mrs. Katy Cole
Occupational Therapist - Mr. Joe DeYoung
Physical Therapist - Samantha Crider
Multi-Language Learner Teacher - Mrs. Diana Rodriguez
Multi-Language Learner Interventionist - Mrs. Isa Herrera
School Social Worker - Mrs. Jen Krause
School Social Worker - Ms. Crystal Knapp
Speech & Language Pathologist - Ms. Natalie Helmuth
Speech & Language Pathologist - Mrs. Jenny Nondorf



PAW PAW PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2026-2027 CALENDAR

(177StudentDays;3QualifyingProfessionalDevelopment InstructionalDays,186TeacherDays)

(Updated 8-3-2026)



Date	Event	Details
Aug 13	New Teacher Orientation (District)	TBD
Aug 17-19	Teacher Professional Development Days (18 Hours*)	No Students
Aug 17	Open House (ECC, ELEM)	5:00-6:30 P.M.
Aug 18	Open House (MS)	5:00-6:30 P.M.
Aug 18	Open House (HS)	6:00-7:30 P.M.
Aug 20	New Teacher Orientation (Building)	TBD
Aug 24	Y5-12 Grade - STUDENT'S FIRST DAY!	½ Day in A.M. for Y5-12 Students
Sep 4	No School	No School
Sep 7	Labor Day	No School
Sep 8	Early Childhood Center – STUDENT'S FIRST DAY!	
Sep 28	District-Wide Professional Development (Half)	
Oct 7	Fall Student Count Day	½ Day in A.M. for PreK-12 Students
Oct 8	Parent-Teacher Conferences (MS)	
Oct 15	Parent-Teacher Conferences (HS)	3:30-7:50 P.M.
Oct 30	MS/HS Professional Development (ECC, Elem Work Day)	3:30-7:50 P.M.
Nov 4	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	½ Day in A.M. for PreK-12 Students
Nov 4	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	½ Day in A.M. for Pre K-5 Work Day in P.M. 4:00-7:15 P.M.
Nov 5	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	
Nov 12	Secondary Exams /PM Work Day for MS/HS	1:00-7:15 P.M., Half Day A.M. for Pre K-5 Students
Nov 13	Secondary Exams /PM Work Day for MS/HS	½ Day for grades 6-12
Nov 13	End of First Trimester	½ Day for grades 6-12
Nov 16	Begin Second Trimester	
Nov 23	District-Wide Professional Development (Full)	
Nov 24	District-Wide Professional Development (Full)	
Nov 25	No School**	No Students
Nov 26-27	Thanksgiving Break	No Students
Dec 21-Jan 1	Winter Break	No School
Jan 4	School Resumes	No School
Jan 21	Parent-Teacher Conferences (MS)	
Jan 28	Parent-Teacher Conferences (HS)	
Feb 10	Spring Count Day	3:30-7:50 P.M.
Feb 12, 15	Mid-Winter Break	3:30-7:50 P.M.
Mar 4	Secondary Exams / PM Workday for 6-12	No School
Mar 5	Secondary Exams / PM Workday for PreK-12	½ Day in A.M. for 6-12 Students
Mar 5	End of Second Trimester	½ Day in A.M. for Y5-12 Students
Mar 8	Begin Third Trimester	
Mar 10	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	
Mar 10	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	
Mar 11	Parent-Teacher Conferences (ECC, ELEM)	½ Day in A.M. for Pre K-5 Work Day in P.M. 4:00-7:15P.M.
Mar 26	No School**	1:00-7:15 P.M., Half Day A.M. for Pre K-5 Students
Mar 29-Apr 2	Spring Break	No School
Apr 5	School Resumes	No School
Apr 14	MS/HS State Testing (MS/HS) Prof Dev. (ECC, ELEM)	
Apr 14	Parent-Teacher Conf (MS/HS)	
May 7	District-Wide Professional Development (Half)	½ Day in the A.M for Pre K-12 Students
May 27	PPHS Graduation	2:50-7:10 P.M. Work Day in P.M.
May 27	Early Childhood Center – Students last day	½ Day in A.M. for Y5-12 Students
May 31	Memorial Day	7:00 P.M.
June 1	Next to Last Student Day	
June 2	End of Third Trimester, Last Student Day	No School
		½ Day in A.M. for Y5-12 Students
		½ Day in A.M. for Y5-12 Students

On All Wednesdays the district will have a 1-hour early release for students at the discretion of the district.

* 18 hours maximum for Prof Develop. on Aug. 17-19 to compensate for teachers' required attendance at Open House. **8-3pm**

1 ½ **consecutive hours** during PD in August required for teachers to work on Safe Schools module completion.

** Release time on Nov. 25 and Mar. 26 to compensate for teacher attendance at parent-teacher conferences.

"No School" means no students and no teachers

"No Students" means teachers only



Young Fives Supply List	Kindergarten Supply List	First Grade Supply List	2nd Grade Supply List
Backpack (Large enough to fit folders and papers coming home)	Backpack (Large enough to fit folders and papers coming home)	Backpack (Large enough to fit folders and papers coming home)	Backpack (Large enough to fit folders and papers coming home)
Plastic Pencil Box (please no pencil pouches)	1 set of corded headphones, in a ziploc bag labeled with name (no earbuds or bluetooth headphones)	Pencil Box	Pencil Box or Pouch
1 set of corded headphones (no earbuds or bluetooth headphones)(may need a second pair)	2 Boxes of Crayola Crayons-(24 Count)	2 sets (one at school, one spare) of reinforced heavy-duty corded headphones (no earbuds or bluetooth headphones)	2 sets of reinforced, heavy-duty corded headphones (no earbuds or bluetooth headphones)
2 Boxes of Crayola Crayons-(24 Count)	2 Boxes Crayola Washable Markers	2 Boxes of Crayola Crayons-(24 count)	2 Boxes of Crayola Crayons-(24 Count)
2 Boxes 10 count Crayola Washable Markers	9 Elmer's Glue Sticks	2+ Dozen #2 Ticonderoga Pencils, Sharpened	4 Dozen #2 Ticonderoga Pencils, Sharpened
5 Elmer's Glue Sticks	1 Pack Expo Dry Erase Markers, Black (4 count)	10 Elmer's Glue Sticks	12 Elmer's Glue Sticks
1 Pack Fine Point Expo Dry Erase Markers,		4+ Expo Dry Erase Markers,Black	12 Count Expo Dry Erase Markers, Black, Fine Tip
1Package-Paper Plates		1 package paper towels	4 Highlighters
1Package-Paper Towels		Paper Plates & Bowls	2 pkg. of Pencil Top Erasers
			2 pkg. Sharpie markers
Please do not send individual pencil sharpeners or rulers			
4 Boxes of Kleenex Facial Tissues	1 package of paper towels	2 Boxes of Kleenex Facial Tissues	4 Boxes of Kleenex Facial Tissues
2 Containers of Clorox Wipes-Bleach Free	4 Boxes of Kleenex Facial Tissues	3 Containers of Clorox Wipes-Bleach Free	4 Containers of Clorox Wipes-Bleach Free
	3 Containers of Clorox Wipes-Bleach Free	1 Box Ziploc Gallon Bags	1 Containers of Hand Sanitizer
			1 Box Sandwich Ziploc Snack Bags
			1 Box Ziploc Gallon Bags

Section I - General Information

School Hours

The regular school day is 8:35 a.m. – 3:50 p.m. The building opens at 8:30 a.m., and students may not enter before that time.

School Day

Teachers	8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Students	8:35 a.m. - 3:50 p.m.
Wednesday Early Release	8:35 a.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Half Day Dismissal	8:35 a.m. - 12:20 p.m.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

We are pleased to inform you that Paw Paw Early Elementary will be participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as part of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for the 2026–2027 school year.

Great news! All students enrolled at our school can receive a healthy breakfast and lunch at no cost to your household each day.

Although meals are provided at no charge, we still need each household to complete and sign the Education Benefit Form. This report is critical in determining the amount of funding our school receives from a variety of state and federal programs, including Title I, At-Risk (31a), Title II, and E-Rate. These programs support our students and school through:

- Instructional supports (staff, supplies, and materials)
- Non-instructional services (counseling, social work, and health services)
- Professional learning for staff
- Parent and community engagement activities
- Technology

All information submitted in this report is confidential. Without your assistance in completing the report, our school may not receive the full funding available to support our students. We prefer the form be filled out online at pawpaw.familyportal.cloud. If you are unable to fill out the form online, paper forms will be available in the school offices. You may list all your children on one form.

If we can be of any further assistance, please contact:
julia.osier@ppps.org.

Breakfast Procedures

Breakfast is available to all students each morning. Beginning at 8:30 a.m., 1st and 2nd grade students arriving by bus or as car riders should report directly to the cafeteria. Students will proceed through the serving line, pick up their breakfast, and return to their classrooms to eat. Young Fives/Kindergarten students should drop off their belongings in their classrooms before heading to the cafeteria to retrieve their breakfast for the day. Breakfast is served until 9:15 a.m. each day.

Birthday Celebrations

To support the health and safety of all students, Paw Paw Early Elementary follows a non-edible birthday celebration practice. Due to food allergies and dietary restrictions, food items may not be brought to school for birthday celebrations. Students will continue to be recognized and celebrated by their classroom teacher and school staff. Families who wish to recognize their child's birthday at school may choose to:

- Provide a small, inexpensive non-edible item for classmates (such as pencils, bookmarks, stickers, erasers, or similar items).
- Donate an age-appropriate indoor recess game to the classroom.
- Donate an age-appropriate book to the classroom library or Birthday Book Vending Machine collection.
- Donate an item from the classroom teacher's wish list.
- Dedicate a book to the classroom library in honor of their child's birthday.

The school reserves the right to determine whether any birthday-related item is appropriate for distribution. We appreciate families' cooperation in helping us maintain a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment for all students.

Parent/Visitor Parking

Each school year, we prioritize clear communication and consistent monitoring of traffic flow and parking procedures to ensure the safety of our students and families. As we begin another school year, we would like to review drop-off and pick-up expectations.

Student safety is our top priority, and we must work together to avoid unnecessary risks. To help ensure a safe environment for everyone, please maintain a speed of no more than 5 mph in all parking lots and drive-through areas. Please review the following guidelines and expectations:

- **What is Allowed**

- Use designated crosswalks when dropping off or picking up your child.
- Park only in legal parking spaces.
- Use the drop-off lane at arrival and remain in your vehicle while your child exits.
- Use the pick-up lane at dismissal and remain in your vehicle until your child enters.
- Ensure children enter and exit vehicles from the passenger side only.
- Use the left lane to exit the parking lot/pass vehicles in the drop-off/pick-up lane.
- Follow all posted signs and traffic flow patterns.
- Follow all directions given by school staff.
- Plan ahead, arrive early when possible, and be patient.

- **What is Not Allowed**

- Crossing between vehicles in the drop-off or pick-up lanes.
- Parking or exiting your vehicle in the drop-off/pick-up lanes or exit lanes.
- Parking in the bus loop or staff parking areas.
- Children entering or exiting vehicles from the driver's side.
- Children entering or exiting vehicles from the left (passing) lane.

Student Assistance Parking Spaces

We updated our parking lot with the addition of 'Student Assistance Parking' spaces near the front of both the EE and LE lots. These spaces will be coned off and will only be accessible to those families whose students need additional supports at arrival and dismissal. We ask that you do not park in these spaces unless you have a matching rearview mirror tag. Thank you for your support in making our campus more inclusive for all students!

Attendance (Board Policy 5200)

Regular attendance is critical to student success. Each day a student is in school is an opportunity to learn, build relationships, and stay on track academically. Missing school—even occasionally—can quickly lead to gaps in learning that are difficult to recover from. Students enrolled in Paw Paw Public Schools are expected to attend school every day that school is in session, except in cases of illness or unavoidable personal circumstances. The State of Michigan requires that students have the opportunity to attend school for at least 1,096 hours (approximately 175 days) each year. The principal reserves the right to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. We ask families to partner with us in prioritizing attendance by:

- Scheduling appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
- Planning vacations around the school calendar.
- Ensuring students arrive on time each day.

Consistent attendance helps develop responsibility, strong work habits, and academic success. Frequent absences or repeated tardiness are among the most common causes of poor performance and may result in school intervention. This expectation is in place to ensure students stay on track academically, build strong routines, and do not fall behind in their learning.

• **Reporting Absences**

All absences must be reported by a parent/guardian through a phone call or written note, submitted before or upon the student's return to school. Documentation must be received within 30 days of the absence for it to be considered excused. This process helps us ensure student safety and allows us to account for every student each day.

- Parents/guardians are expected to call the Early Elementary attendance line at (269) 415-5398 by 9:00 AM to report an absence. Voicemail is available 24/7, including the option to report an absence the night before.
- If no call is received by 9:00 AM, the school will attempt to contact a parent/guardian to verify the absence.
- Once contact is made, the absence will be marked as excused. If no contact is made, the absence will remain unexcused.

• **Attendance Monitoring & Truancy Process**

- Attendance is monitored throughout the entire school year (not by trimester). Families will be notified as absences accumulate:
 - 5 absences → First attendance letter (warning)
 - 8 absences → Second attendance letter (review of concerns and expectations)
 - 10 absences → Final warning letter; a meeting with the principal may be required to determine next steps
- If attendance concerns continue, the school may:
 - Initiate a truancy referral;
 - Schedule a meeting with a truancy officer and school team;
 - An attendance officer may be involved at any point to support improving student attendance.

- **Tardies (Board Policy 5230)**

Students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to learn by the start of the school day. Arriving on time is essential, as even small amounts of missed instruction can add up and impact student learning.

- Students arriving after 8:45 a.m. must report to the office with an adult to sign their student in before going to class.
- Students are not marked tardy if their bus arrives late.
- Tardies and early dismissals are considered unexcused unless appropriate documentation (e.g., from a physician) is provided.

- **End of Day Dismissal**

Students will exit the building at the end of the school day. For security purposes, all elementary building doors remain locked during the school day. Parents/guardians or authorized designees picking up students should wait outside the building. These procedures are in place to maintain a safe, organized, and efficient dismissal process for all students.

- **Sibling Pick-Up Procedures:** Families with students in both buildings who are afternoon car riders/walkers will be staged and escorted to the Sibling Pick-Up Area, located between both buildings on the sidewalk.

- **Early Dismissal (Board Policy 5230)**

Any student leaving the building during school hours must be signed out through the office by a parent/guardian or authorized designee. Parents/guardians may not go directly to the classroom; students will be called to the office upon arrival. This procedure ensures accountability and safety for all students during the school day. We ask for your cooperation in limiting early pickups to unavoidable situations. This procedure is in place to maintain accurate accountability and ensure every student is safely released to an approved adult.

Unfamiliar parents/guardians or designees will be required to present identification, and all contacts will be verified through PowerSchool before a student is released. Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining accurate and up-to-date contact information in PowerSchool using the Parent Portal. Students returning to school during the day must be signed in at the office by a parent/guardian or designee before returning to class. Parents/guardians must ensure that PowerSchool includes at least two authorized emergency contacts approved for student pick-up.

If your child will be going home in a different way than usual (for example, being picked up instead of riding the bus or leaving with another adult), the school office must be notified in writing or by phone no later than 3:15 p.m.

Without a written note or direct communication (phone call) from a parent or guardian to the school office, changes to a student's dismissal plan will not be permitted. In these cases, students will be sent home according to their regular transportation plan. This policy is in place to ensure the safety of all students.

Homeless Students - McKinney-Vento Act

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence have the right to attend school and receive support services. This includes students who are:

- Living in shelters, motels, hotels, or campgrounds
- Sharing housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, or other temporary situations
- Unaccompanied youth not living with a parent or guardian

Federal law ensures that eligible students have the right to:

- Immediate enrollment in school, even without typical documents (birth certificate, proof of residency, immunization records, etc.)
- Remain in their school of origin (the school they attended before becoming homeless), if it is in their best interest
- Transportation services to and from their school of origin
- Access to the same educational programs and services as all other students
- Support to remove barriers to attendance, participation, and academic success

At Paw Paw Public Schools, eligible students will be supported through our District Liaison for Homeless Children, who assists families with enrollment, services, and ensuring student success. If you believe your child may qualify or would like more information about McKinney-Vento services, please contact:

Name: Susanne Carpenter

Title: Director of Curriculum/Instruction and State/Federal Programs

Phone: (269) 415-5200

Student/Family Address and Telephone Changes

It is important that the school always has accurate and up-to-date contact information for your family. This ensures we can reach you quickly in case of an emergency or important school matter.

If your address, phone number, or other contact information changes during the school year, you must update it through the PowerSchool Parent Portal as soon as possible. Keeping this information current is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian, as the school office does not make these updates on behalf of families, and failure to maintain accurate information may impact our ability to contact you in urgent situations.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The rules and procedures of the school are designed to provide every student with a safe, orderly, and effective learning environment. Students have the right to freedom of expression, association, and fair treatment, as long as they respect those same rights for others, including both students and staff. In return, students are expected to follow school rules, follow staff directions, and contribute positively to the school community. Disciplinary procedures are in place to ensure fairness and due process before any student is removed from the learning environment due to behavior.

Parents/guardians, unless otherwise restricted by legal documentation, have the right to be informed about their child's progress and success in school. Communication will be provided regularly and as needed when concerns arise, including through mail or hand delivery, if necessary. Families are encouraged to maintain open, two-way communication with teachers and support staff by sharing questions, concerns, or information that may help support their child's success.

Students are expected to arrive at school on time, prepared to learn, and ready to actively participate in their education. If a student is unable to meet these expectations for any reason, they should seek support from a teacher, the main office, or school administration.

Health Services

• Health Precautions

If your child has, or is suspected of having, a communicable disease (an illness that can be spread from one person to another), such as COVID-19, measles, rubella (German measles), mumps, hepatitis, chickenpox, scarlet fever, strep throat, scabies, influenza, or head lice, please notify the school office as soon as possible. This list is not all-inclusive and includes any serious or unusual illness.

In accordance with guidelines from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), certain diseases must be reported to the health department. These include, but are not limited to: measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, Haemophilus influenzae Type B, meningitis, encephalitis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and any other serious or unusual communicable disease.

To maintain a healthy environment for all students and staff, families must evaluate their child's health every morning before sending them to school. In alignment with current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), a student should remain home if they are unable to comfortably participate in school activities or if they exhibit symptoms of a transmittable illness.

• Standard Health Exclusion Criteria

Students must stay home (or will be sent home from school) if they experience any of the following:

- Fever: A temperature of 100.4°F (or higher). The student may return to school only after they have been completely fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (such as Tylenol or Motrin).
- Vomiting: Two or more episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period. The student must remain home until 24 hours have passed since the last episode of vomiting and they can successfully hold down food and liquids.
- Diarrhea: Two or more loose or watery stools within a 24-hour period. The student must remain home until they are diarrhea-free for 24 hours and bowel movements have returned to their normal pattern.

- Respiratory Symptoms: Worsening or severe respiratory symptoms (such as a persistent, disruptive cough or shortness of breath) that are not better explained by an alternative, non-transmittable cause like seasonal allergies.
- Skin Rash: Any widespread rash accompanied by a fever or behavioral changes. The student should be evaluated by a healthcare provider and may return once the rash is determined to be non-transmittable or has subsided.
- Skin Sores: Weeping, draining, or open sores on an exposed area of the body that cannot be entirely covered and contained with a waterproof dressing..

- **Returning After General Illness**

Per public health recommendations, a child returning to school must be well enough to fully participate in the school day (e.g., they are not overly fatigued and can adequately manage improving symptoms on their own). While students returning from mild respiratory illnesses may still be slightly transmittable, they are considered safe to return once their overall symptoms are significantly improving and they have met the 24-hour fever-free standard.

- Note on Specific Diagnoses: If your child is diagnosed with a specific transmittable condition (such as Strep Throat, Pertussis, or Chickenpox), please contact the school office immediately. These illnesses carry specific medical exclusion timelines—such as remaining home until antibiotics have been taken for a designated timeframe—before the student is cleared to return.

The school nurse will be consulted as needed to support student health and safety. During the winter months, the school may receive requests for students to remain indoors due to illness or clothing concerns. In general, if a student is well enough to attend school, they are expected to participate in all school activities, including outdoor recess and lunch periods. Exceptions will only be made with documentation from a licensed healthcare provider.

- **Pediculosis (Head Lice)**

The following procedure reflects our district policy and aligns with evidence-based guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to manage head lice effectively while minimizing classroom disruption.

A student is considered to have an active case of head lice when live, crawling lice are found on the scalp. Head lice are transmittable primarily through direct head-to-head contact, and their presence is not a reflection of personal hygiene or cleanliness.

◦ **Protocol for Active Live Lice**

Whenever a student is found to have live lice, the following steps will be taken:

- **Parent/Guardian Notification:** The school will privately notify the parent/guardian via a phone call.
- **Dismissal from School:** The parent/guardian will be requested to promptly pick up their child from school.
- **Required Treatment:** Treatment at home must be completed that same day or night. Information and treatment instruction sheets will be provided to the parent/guardian at pickup.
- **Next-Day Recheck:** The student must be brought to school by a parent/guardian the following morning to be examined in the main office by designated school personnel prior to entering the classroom.
- **Readmission to Class:** Students will be permitted to return to their regular class only if no live lice are found during the office check.

◦ **Protocol Regarding Nits (Lice Eggs)**

Students may remain in or return to school with nits. In accordance with MDHHS guidelines, "no-nit" policies are no longer recommended because nits are firmly glued to the hair shaft and are not easily transmittable to other students. If only nits are found, the student will remain in the classroom, and parents/guardians will be notified and given information on proper monitoring and nit-combing techniques to prevent a recurrence.

◦ **Classroom and Prevention Measures**

If school personnel determine that other students in a classroom are showing potential symptoms of head lice, confidential head checks may be conducted for those individual students. Classroom-wide notifications are generally not distributed to protect student privacy, per public health recommendations. Parents are encouraged to routinely caution their children against sharing personal items that have direct contact with hair, such as combs, brushes, hats, scarves, and hair accessories.

- **Immunization Records (Board Policy 5320)**

Before enrolling for the first time in Paw Paw Public Schools, students must meet all minimum immunization requirements (at the time of registration or no later than the first day of school pursuant to the provisions of the DHHS regulations. Per PPPS Board Policies. Link to MDHHS vaccine schedule requirements for school entry in Michigan here).

Required Vaccines for Kindergarten and Transfer Students (Ages 4–6)

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP, DTaP): 4 doses. (One dose must be administered on or after the 4th birthday).
- Polio: 4 doses. (Only 3 doses are needed if the 3rd dose was administered on or after the 4th birthday).
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR): 2 doses. (Both doses must be at or after 12 months of age).
- Hepatitis B: 3 doses.
- Varicella (Chickenpox): 2 doses administered at or after 12 months of age (or a verified clinical history of chickenpox).

Required Vaccines - Flyer

- The Van Buren County Health Department offers immunizations for school-age children and may be a resource for families needing assistance. It is important that the school has accurate and up-to-date health information for each student.
- Parents/guardians are asked to:
 - Provide current immunization records
 - Notify the school of any illnesses or health concerns
 - Inform the office of any ongoing or special health conditions
- A health record is maintained in the school office for each student. Prompt communication from families helps ensure we can support student health and respond effectively when needed.

- **Medication Authorization (Board Policy 5330)**

If your child takes medication which must be administered at school, Paw Paw Public Schools require an authorization form to be on file. All medication (aspirin, Tylenol, etc.) MUST be provided by the parent with physician's documentation. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to provide ANY medication. Please complete and sign the form and send it to school. The school will not allow the student to bring medications home on the bus—all medications should be dropped off and picked up by an adult.

- **Use of Medications**

In those circumstances where a student must take prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- Parents/guardians should, with their physician's counsel, determine whether the medication schedule can be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- The Medication Authorization Form must be filed with the respective building principal and school nurse before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours.
- All medications must be registered with the principal's office.
- Medication that is brought to the office will be properly secured.
 - Medication should be conveyed to school directly by the parent. A 30 day supply (maximum) can be left in the school office.
 - Medication MAY NOT be sent to school in a student's lunch box, pocket, or other means on or about his/her person, except for emergency medications for allergies and/or reactions. The medication should be kept in a labeled container as prepared by a pharmacy, physician, or pharmaceutical company and labeled with: Name of student, name of medication, dosage of medication to be given, frequency of administration, route of administration, name of physician ordering medication, date of prescription, and expiration date.
- Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of a school year.
- The parents/guardians shall have sole responsibility to instruct their child to take the medication at the scheduled time, and the child has the responsibility for both presenting himself/herself on time and for taking the prescribed medication.
- A log for each prescribed medication shall be maintained which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written instructions and the parent's written permission release.

- **Non Prescribed (Over-the-Counter) Medications**

Parents/guardians may authorize the school to administer a non-prescribed medication using a form which is available at the school office. A physician must authorize such medication but all of the other conditions described above under prescribed medications will also apply to non prescribed medications. The student may be authorized on the request form by his/her parent to self-administer the medication in the presence of a school staff member (grades 9-12 ONLY). No other exceptions will be made to these requirements. Over-The-Counter FDA-approved topicals can be administered by a designated school personnel with consent by parent only.

MEDICATION FORMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE

- **Asthma Inhalers and Epinephrine (EpiPen)**

Per Michigan Law MCL 380.1179, Students may be permitted to carry and self-administer certain emergency medications at school with proper authorization from a physician and parent/guardian. Student competency should be reviewed by the school nurse.

- Students, with appropriate written permission from the physician and parent, may possess and use a metered dose inhaler or dry powder inhaler to alleviate asthmatic symptoms. Epinephrine (Epi-pen) is administered only in accordance with a written medication administration plan developed by the school principal and updated annually. Students are allowed to self-carry and self-administer both inhalers and epi-pens with written order/authorization from the provider prescribing the medication.

- **Health Services (Board Policy 5310)**

- The Van Buren County Health Department provides vision and hearing screenings for students on a bi-yearly basis. Parents/guardians will be notified only if results indicate that follow-up medical attention may be needed.
- It is important that the school has accurate health information for each student. Parents/guardians are asked to inform the school of any medical conditions, health concerns, or special needs so this information can be documented and appropriately supported during the school day.

- **Accidents and Illnesses**

- If a student is injured or becomes ill during the school day or at a school-sponsored activity, school staff should be notified immediately.
- Basic first aid will be provided in accordance with district guidelines. If further medical attention is needed, school staff will follow the instructions provided on the student's emergency contact information. Every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians as soon as possible.
- An accident report will be completed and kept on file for any injury that occurs at school or during a school-sponsored activity.

- **Emergency Medical Authorization (Board Policy 5341)**

- All students must have a completed Emergency Medical Authorization Form on file in order to participate in any activity off school grounds. This includes field trips, athletic events, extracurricular activities, and co-curricular activities.
- These forms are provided at the time of enrollment and at the beginning of each school year. Failure to return a completed form may result in a student being unable to participate in off-campus activities.

- **Communicable Diseases (Non-Casual Contact)**

- In cases involving non-casual contact communicable diseases (such as HIV, Hepatitis, or other bloodborne conditions), the school will work in collaboration with the Van Buren County Health Department and follow all applicable state and federal guidelines.
- The school will make decisions that protect the health and safety of all students and staff while also respecting the privacy and rights of the individual. Students will be allowed to remain in school unless there is clear medical evidence requiring exclusion.

- **Bloodborne pathogens**

- In situations where a student's blood or bodily fluids may expose others, the school will follow all required safety protocols.
- Parents/guardians may be asked to have their child tested for bloodborne pathogens (such as HIV or Hepatitis) if exposure occurs. All procedures will follow applicable laws and maintain strict confidentiality.

Individuals with Disabilities (Board Policy 2260.01 and 2460)

Paw Paw Public Schools is committed to ensuring that no individual is discriminated against on the basis of a disability. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, this protection applies to all students, families, staff, and community members who access district programs, services, or facilities.

Students who may qualify for special education services can access support through a formal evaluation process. Parent/guardian involvement is an essential part of this process and is required under federal and state law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Families who have questions about evaluations, eligibility, or available services are encouraged to contact the Regional Supervisors of Special Education at: (269) 415-5200 for more information.

Sensory Tools and Supports

Sensory tools and fidgets are learning supports, not toys. Students are expected to use these items appropriately and only for their intended purpose. If an item distracts a student or others, creates noise, disrupts instruction, or is used inappropriately, staff may remove it. The approval and use of sensory tools are at the discretion of school administration.

Student Records (Board Policy 8330)

Paw Paw Public Schools maintains student records that include both directory information and confidential information. The District protects student privacy in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Michigan law. Personally identifiable information, including Social Security numbers, will not be released except as authorized by law and will only be accessible to staff with a legitimate educational need. When no longer needed, such documents will be securely destroyed.

- **Directory Information may include:**

- Student name
- Major field of study
- Height and weight (for athletic team members)
- Date of graduation
- Awards, honor rolls, and scholarships
- School photographs or videos from school activities

- School-assigned email accounts (used only for educational services and internal systems)

Directory information may be released without prior consent unless a parent/guardian submits a written request to opt out. Additional details can be found in the district's annual FERPA notice.

- **Confidential Records**

- All other student records are considered confidential and are protected by law. These records will not be shared without written parent/guardian consent, except as permitted by law. These may include:
 - Test scores
 - Psychological reports
 - Behavioral and disciplinary records
 - Communications with families or service providers
 - Student name

- **Parent/Guardian Rights**

- Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to:
 - Review and request copies of student records (fees may apply)
 - Request corrections to records they believe are inaccurate or misleading
 - Request a hearing if a correction request is denied
 - File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe their rights have been violated
 - To request access to student records, please submit a written request to the district office

- **Protection of Student Information (PPRA)**

- Per Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), students will not be required to participate in surveys, evaluations, or analyses that reveal sensitive information (such as political beliefs, mental health, religious beliefs, or family income) without prior written consent.
- Parents/guardians have the right to:
 - Inspect any survey or materials before they are administered
 - Opt their child out of participation
 - Be notified annually of any such activities

- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

Paw Paw Public Schools complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which protects the privacy of student education records. Parents/guardians have the right to review their child's educational records. To request access, parents/guardians should contact the school office and submit a written request. The district will respond within the timeframe allowed by law. Student records will not be released or transferred to outside individuals or organizations without prior written consent from the parent/guardian, except as permitted by law.

The Family Policy Compliance Office within the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents/guardians and eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605
www.ed.gov/offices/OM/fpcou

Informal inquiries may also be submitted via email at: FERPA@ed.gov or PPRA@ed.gov

Student Fees, Fines, and Supplies (Board Policy 6152)

The school may charge fees for certain non-curricular activities and programs. These fees are based on the cost of materials, shipping/handling, and any necessary replacement or repair due to loss or damage of school property. The school does not generate profit from these fees. These expectations help ensure that school resources are maintained and available for all students.

Paw Paw Public Schools provides all basic supplies necessary for students to complete required coursework. Families may choose to purchase additional or higher-quality supplies, if desired. Teachers or administrators may recommend optional supplies to support student learning.

Fees may be reduced or waived in cases of financial hardship. Students are responsible for the proper care of school property and equipment. Fines may be assigned for excessive wear, damage, or failure to return items such as library books or Chromebooks. Any fines collected are used solely to cover the cost of repair or replacement.

Students are encouraged to return borrowed materials on time to avoid fines and ensure resources are available for others. Failure to pay assigned fees or fines may result in the withholding of grades, records, or credits as permitted by district policy.

Student Fundraising (Board Policy 5830)

Students participating in school-sponsored groups or activities may engage in fundraising in accordance with school guidelines and district policy. All fundraising activities must be approved and supervised to ensure student safety and minimal disruption to the school environment.

Crowdfunding activities are governed by Policy and Administrative Guideline 6605.

The following expectations apply to all student fundraising activities:

- Fundraising must not interfere with instructional time or other school activities
- Students may only participate in fundraisers for groups or organizations in which they are members, unless approved by a school counselor or administrator
- Fundraising activities conducted off school property must be supervised by approved staff or designated adults
- House-to-house solicitation is not permitted
- Fundraisers involving physical activity (e.g., walk-a-thons, run-a-thons) must be monitored by school staff to ensure student safety
- Fundraising activities conducted on school property by outside organizations (e.g., parent groups, booster clubs, community organizations) require prior approval from the principal

These guidelines are in place to ensure fundraising activities are safe, appropriate, and do not interfere with the school day.

Student Valuables (Board Policy 5513)

Students are strongly discouraged from bringing valuable items to school. Items such as jewelry, expensive clothing, electronic devices, toys, and similar belongings can be easily lost, damaged, or stolen. The school may confiscate such items and return them to the student's parents. The school does not assume responsibility for the safekeeping of personal items and is not liable for any loss, theft, or damage.

Student Water Bottles and Beverages (Board Policy 8510)

Students are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to school each day. To support student health, safety, and learning, students may bring only water in refillable bottles to classrooms, unless otherwise approved by the teacher or administration. Energy drinks, coffee, and other highly caffeinated beverages are not permitted at school. Students who bring prohibited beverages may be required to dispose of them or have them held in the office until the end of the school day.

Emergency Procedures (Board Policy 8420)

Paw Paw Public Schools conducts regular safety drills in compliance with state law to ensure students and staff are prepared for emergency situations. Students are expected to follow all directions given by staff during drills to maintain a safe, orderly environment.

Our school utilizes the Standard Response Protocol developed by The "I Love U Guys" Foundation as our standardized emergency response protocol. The SRP provides consistent, clear, shared language and actions for students, staff, and first responders during a variety of emergency situations. The protocol is based on five actions: Hold, Secure, Lockdown, Evacuate, and Shelter, ensuring a coordinated and predictable response to emergencies. More information can be found at: <https://iloveuguys.org>.

- **Evacuation Drills**

- Evacuation drills are conducted at least five times each year following state guidelines. Students will follow evacuation procedures directed by their teacher, who is responsible for ensuring a safe and orderly exit from the building. The fire alarm includes flashing strobe lights, an audible alarm, and may include instructions over the public address system.

- **Shelter Drills**

- Shelter drills are conducted at least twice each year following state guidelines. During a tornado drill, students will move to designated safe areas as directed by staff. Notification will be provided through a verbal announcement over the public address system.

- **Lockdown Drills**

- Lockdown drills are conducted at least three times each year following state guidelines. During a lockdown, the building is secured and students remain inside classrooms or designated areas. Instructions will be provided through a verbal announcement over the public address system.

- **Hold Drills**

- Hold drills are conducted at least once a year; Hold drill are utilized in the event of a medical emergency. During a Hold drill, students are removed from the hallways and held in a secure place until the emergency has concluded. Instructions will be provided through a verbal announcement over the public address system.

Emergency Closings and Delays

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency conditions, Paw Paw Public Schools may close or delay the start of the school day. Families will be notified through a district-wide phone call, as well as through email, social media, and local television and radio stations.

Parents/guardians and students are responsible for staying informed about school closings and delays and should monitor these communication channels regularly.

Preparedness for Toxic and Asbestos Hazards (Board Policy 8405 & 8431)

The district is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff. The school complies with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations related to toxic hazards and asbestos management. These regulations are designed to minimize risk and ensure proper identification, monitoring, and handling of any hazardous materials.

In accordance with these requirements, the district maintains an Asbestos Management Plan and follows established procedures to address any potential environmental hazards that may arise from building materials or external factors beyond the school's control. A copy of the district's Preparedness for Toxic Hazard and Asbestos Hazard Policy, along with the Asbestos Management Plan, is available for inspection at the administration building via Alisa Clark.

Visitors/Parent Volunteers (Board Policy 9150)

The district welcomes and encourages parent/guardian and community involvement in our schools. To ensure a safe and orderly learning environment, all visitors and volunteers must follow established school procedures. All visitors must report to the main office upon arrival, sign in, and receive appropriate identification before entering other areas of the building.

Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Background Check prior to assisting in any school activities. To minimize disruption to instruction and protect the learning environment, classroom visits must be scheduled in advance and approved by the principal in consultation with the classroom teacher. Visits should be brief, non-disruptive, and aligned with the school's instructional schedule.

The superintendent, principal, or dean of students has the authority to deny entry or remove any individual whose presence is determined to be disruptive or detrimental to the safety, order, or operation of the school. If an individual refuses to comply, law enforcement may be contacted for assistance.

Parents/guardians who are listed on a sex offender registry may be permitted on school grounds only with prior approval of the superintendent and under strict supervision. Conditions may include, but are not limited to: checking in through the main office, remaining under approved escort at all times, limiting access to specific areas or events, and leaving immediately upon completion of their visit. Such visits will not be permitted during the regular school day unless specifically authorized.

Smoke-Free Environment (Board Policy 7434)

Paw Paw Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, staff, and visitors. In compliance with MCL 333.12601 and related state regulations, all school property is designated as tobacco-free. The use of tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, vaping devices, and electronic cigarettes, is strictly prohibited on all school district property. This includes all buildings, school grounds, parking areas, and school vehicles, at all times and during all school-related events.

This prohibition applies to all individuals, including students, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors, regardless of the time of day or whether school is in session. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from school property.

Use of School Equipment and Facilities (Board Policy 7510)

Students must obtain permission from a teacher before using any classroom equipment or materials. Use of any other school equipment or facilities must be approved in advance by the principal or designee. Students are expected to use all school property responsibly, safely, and for its intended purpose. Any misuse, damage, or loss of equipment or facilities may result in disciplinary action and/or financial responsibility for repair or replacement. School resources are shared by all students. Responsible use ensures that materials and facilities remain safe, available, and in good condition for everyone.

Lost and Found

A designated Lost and Found area is located near the front entrance. Students who have lost items should check this area regularly and may claim their belongings by providing an accurate description. Valuable items (e.g., electronics, jewelry, wallets) will be secured in the main office and must be claimed there. Items that are not claimed within 30 days may be donated to a local charity.

Student Sales

Students may not sell any items or services on school property without prior approval from the building principal or designee. Unauthorized sales may result in disciplinary action.

Advertising Outside Activities

Students and outside organizations may not post or distribute announcements, flyers, or advertisements for non-school activities without prior approval from the principal. The principal will make reasonable efforts to respond to requests within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt.

Paw Paw Public Schools Media Release

Throughout the school year, Paw Paw Public Schools may record students through photography, audio, or video during school and classroom activities. These recordings may be used for educational purposes, shared with families, included in district publications, or posted on the district website, app, or official social media platforms. A Photographic/Media Release notice is published annually in the Back-to-School (August) edition of the Pride & Progress newspaper. Parents/guardians who do not wish for their child to be included in school media must notify their child's school to opt out for the current school year.

Animals on School Property (Board Policy 8390)

Animals are not permitted on school property without prior approval from the building principal or designee. Parents/guardians wishing to bring an animal to school must contact and receive approval from the teacher, principal, and the district's animal-assisted intervention coordinator at least one week in advance. She can be contacted via email at: katy.cole@ppps.org.

All approved animals must be properly immunized, supervised at all times, and handled in a manner that ensures the safety of students and staff. Animals are not permitted on school buses. Please refer to the district's Board policy for additional guidance.

- **Service Animals**

- Service animals are permitted on school property in accordance with applicable law. A service animal is individually trained to perform specific tasks for a person with a disability. Service animals are not considered pets and are not subject to the same approval process outlined above.

Section II - Academics

Review of Instructional Materials and Activities (Board Policy 2521)

Parents/guardians have the right to review instructional materials used in their child's education. This includes materials used in core content areas, as well as topics such as health and sex education. Parents/guardians may also request to observe classroom instruction. To ensure minimal disruption to the learning environment, all requests to review materials or observe instruction must be scheduled in advance by contacting the building principal or Director of Curriculum at: (269) 415-5200. All observations and reviews are subject to reasonable guidelines established by the administration, including limitations related to scheduling, frequency, and maintaining a non-disruptive learning environment.

Student Services (Board Policy 2411)

Paw Paw Public Schools provides a range of services to support the academic, social, emotional, and physical well-being of all students.

- **Health Services**

- Vision, hearing, and dental screenings provided by the local public health department (waivers available upon request)
- Vision screenings provided by Michigan Lions Foundation KidSight Program in conjunction with the local public health department
- Information and guidance regarding the treatment of head lice
- Access to MI-Child health insurance programs (fee may apply)
- Student accident insurance (optional, fee-based)

- **Community Support Services**

- Van Buren County Mental Health services
- Youth Services Bureau
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

- **Specialized Student Services (based on individual student needs)**

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Multilingual/Migrant Education Services
- School Social Work Services
- School Psychology Services
- Special Education Instruction and Support Staff
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Vision Services

- **Title I Services**

- Eligible students may receive additional academic support through Title I services. These services are designed to provide targeted instruction in reading and/or mathematics and are delivered by qualified instructional staff.

Parent and Family Involvement (Board Policy 2112)

Paw Paw Public Schools values parents and families as essential partners in student learning. Strong collaboration between home and school supports academic success, positive behavior, and regular attendance. The district is committed to maintaining open communication, providing opportunities for family involvement, and offering resources to support learning at home. Families will receive timely information about school programs, student progress, and ways to stay engaged.

A district Parent and Family Involvement Plan guides these efforts and is reviewed annually with family input to support continuous improvement.

- **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

- Information and announcements are shared regularly with parents and guardians through a variety of communication methods. These may include:
 - School Apptegy messaging system
 - Paw Paw Pride and Progress
 - Courier Leader
 - District website (www.ppps.org)
 - Social media (Facebook)
 - Weekly phone calls
 - Weekly emails
 - Classroom newsletters
 - Notices to parents/guardians (e.g., parent group meetings, special events)
 - Class Dojo

We encourage families to review these communication sources regularly to stay informed and connected to school events, updates, and student learning.

Specials Classes

All students participate in a variety of learning experiences throughout the school day. In addition to core instruction, students attend special classes including Physical Education/Health, Music, STEAM, and Art.

Paw Paw Early Elementary Library

Students may check out materials from the library and are responsible for returning all items on time and in good condition. Students may be held financially responsible for any materials that are lost or damaged. Students with overdue materials will not be permitted to check out additional items until those materials are returned or resolved. Overdue notices will be sent home with students as needed throughout the school year.

Title I / At-Risk Programs (Board Policy 2261)

Paw Paw Public Schools provides additional support services for students who may need extra academic assistance.

- Title I is a federally funded program that provides supplemental instruction to students who are identified as at risk of not meeting state academic standards.
- Section 31a (At-Risk Program) is a state-funded program that provides additional instructional support to students who are performing below grade level or demonstrate other at-risk factors.

At Paw Paw elementary schools, eligible students in grades K–5 may receive support from certified instructional specialists through small group instruction or in-class support. As a Title I district, Paw Paw Public Schools is required to notify parents of their right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teacher and instructional staff. Upon request, parents/guardians may receive information regarding:

- Whether the teacher meets state certification and licensing requirements for the grade level and subject taught
- Whether the teacher is working under an emergency or provisional certification
- The teacher's college degree(s), major(s), and any additional certifications
- Whether their child receives support from Title I staff and the qualifications of those staff members

Multilingual Learners / Limited English Proficiency

Paw Paw Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all students have equal access to educational and extracurricular programs. Students who are identified as Multilingual Learners (MLLs), or as having limited English proficiency, are provided with additional support to develop English language skills and succeed in the classroom. Students in grades K–12 may qualify for services based on formal language assessments in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These services are designed to support both English language development and academic success across content areas.

Support may include instruction focused on oral language development, as well as assistance in reading, math, science, and social studies. Services are coordinated in partnership with the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) and district staff. Parents/guardians who would like more information about evaluation procedures or available programs may contact the district for assistance. The VBISD also provides supplemental services for eligible migratory children ages 0–21.

Special Education

Paw Paw Public Schools provides a continuum of special education services designed to meet the individual needs of each student. Services may range from support within the general education classroom to more specialized programming, depending on the student's needs. Educational planning is determined through a team-based process that includes parents/guardians, general education teachers, special education staff, and representatives from the VBISD (e.g., school psychologist, social worker, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, and vision/hearing specialists).

The goal of these services is to support students in developing academic, social, and functional skills while building confidence and independence.

Paw Paw District Library

The Paw Paw District Library is a valuable community resource for students and families; hours of operation and location are listed below:

- **Location:** 609 E. Michigan Avenue
- **Phone number:** (269) 657-3800
- **Monday, Tuesday & Thursday:** 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday:** 12:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- **Friday and Saturday:** 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- **Sunday:** Closed

Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety

Paw Paw Public Schools provides students with access to technology resources, including devices, networks, and the internet, to support learning and prepare students for success in a digital world. These resources are provided for educational purposes only and are governed by district policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

• **Student Expectations for Technology Use**

◦ **Students are expected to:**

- Use technology in a responsible, ethical, and appropriate manner
- Follow all school rules when using district technology or personal devices on school property or at school-sponsored events
- Use school-issued accounts for educational communication appropriately
- Only access social media when it is part of an approved instructional activity

◦ **Students may not:**

- Engage in illegal activities (e.g., harassment, vandalism, theft, plagiarism)
- Access, share, or create inappropriate or harmful content
- Participate in cyberbullying or online harassment
- Disrupt the educational environment or misuse district technology resources
- Attempt to bypass or disable district filtering or security systems

• **Monitoring, Safety, and Privacy**

The district uses filtering and monitoring systems to restrict access to inappropriate content in accordance with federal law. It is not possible to guarantee that all inappropriate content can be blocked. Students will receive instruction on digital safety, responsible communication, and protecting personal information. Students should have no expectation of privacy when using district technology resources. The district reserves the right to monitor and review files, communications, and online activity.

- **Use of Personal Communication Devices (PCDs)**

Personal communication devices, including but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, headphones, tablets, personal digital assistants (PDAs), or similar electronic devices, are not permitted for student use during the school day at Paw Paw Early Elementary. Devices must remain powered off and stored in backpacks during school hours. Smartwatches may not be worn or used during the school day.

Use of a PCD may only be permitted if:

- It is required as part of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- It is documented as a necessary medical device.
- It is required by a legal plan.

Any device use outside of these exceptions will result in the device being collected and returned according to school policy. Parents/guardians may be required to pick up their child's PCD at the discretion of the administration. The use of any personal device to record, photograph, or transmit images or audio in areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., restrooms or classrooms) is strictly prohibited. Violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

- **Access and Resource Limits**

- Use of district technology may be subject to limits on bandwidth, storage, and printing
- Technology resources are not intended for personal or non-educational use

- **Consequences**

- Violations may result in loss of technology privileges and/or disciplinary action
- Students may be held financially and legally responsible for misuse or damage
- Serious violations may result in suspension or expulsion

- **Parents/Guardians Responsibility**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to set expectations for appropriate technology use at home. All students and parents/guardians must review and agree to the district's technology use expectations. Responsible technology use helps keep students safe, protects privacy, and ensures digital tools support learning.

Student Textbook Policy

Students are issued textbooks and classroom reading materials throughout the school year to support instruction. These materials may include hardcover textbooks and paperback novels. Students are responsible for the care and return of all materials assigned to them.

- **Student Responsibilities**

- **Students are expected to:**

- Keep books clean, dry, and in good condition
 - Cover hardcover books if requested by the teacher
 - Transport materials safely between home and school when needed
 - Avoid damage such as bent corners, torn pages, or writing in books
 - Return all materials promptly when requested by the classroom teacher

- **If a book is lost or damaged beyond normal use:**

- A replacement fee may be assessed
 - Families will be asked to contribute toward the cost, based on their ability

This ensures that all students continue to have access to the materials needed for learning.

Standards-Based Grading and Reporting (Board Policy 5421)

Paw Paw Early Elementary uses a standards-based grading system to communicate student learning and progress. This approach focuses on what students are expected to learn and how well they are demonstrating those skills over time. Standards-based grading helps students better understand learning expectations and allows teachers to provide more specific feedback aligned to grade-level standards. This system also supports clearer communication between school and home regarding student growth and achievement.

- **What Parents/Guardians can expect:**

- Traditional letter grades/percentages are replaced with proficiency scores (1–3)
 - Scores reflect a student’s progress toward specific learning standards
 - Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning over time
 - Final scores are based on the most recent and consistent evidence of learning
 - Academic performance is reported separately from behaviors that support learning

- **Proficiency Scale**

- 3 - Proficient
 - The student consistently meets the grade-level standard
- 2 - Progressing
 - The student demonstrates partial understanding but is not yet consistent
- 1 - Developing
 - The student is beginning to understand key concepts but needs significant support

- **Understanding Student Progress**

- Learning is a process, and students develop skills at different rates. Some standards may be more challenging and require additional time and support.
 - Scores of 1 or 2 indicate that a student is still developing understanding
 - A score of 3 reflects meeting the expected standard
- Not all standards are introduced at the same time during the school year. By the end of the year, students will be assessed on all essential grade-level standards.

This system allows us to focus on student growth, provide meaningful feedback, and ensure every child is working toward mastering essential skills needed for future success.

Progress Reports (Board Policy 5420)

The reporting of student progress is shared through parent/teacher conferences in the Fall and early Spring, as well as through three report card marking periods. Report cards are available through the PowerSchool Parent Portal following conferences. The final report card will be mailed home at the end of the school year. Additional communication may occur throughout the year through phone calls, emails, and ClassDojo messages. We welcome parents and guardians to contact the school if they wish to speak with a teacher or the principal. Ongoing communication between home and school is encouraged to help each child reach their full potential.

Student Assessment

Assessment in an elementary school is an ongoing process that helps teachers monitor student learning, guide instruction, and support individual growth. A variety of assessment methods are used throughout the school year, including classroom observations, teacher-created quizzes and assignments, district benchmark assessments, and state-required assessments for eligible grade levels.

Students also participate in the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment three times each year—at the Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of the Year (EOY). The NWEA MAP assessment provides valuable data on individual student growth and achievement, helping teachers identify learning needs, measure progress over time, and adjust instruction to meet the needs of each learner.

Teachers also use formative assessments, such as exit tickets, small group discussions, and student work samples, to identify strengths and areas where additional support is needed. Assessment data, including NWEA results, is regularly reviewed by teachers and instructional teams to make informed decisions about instruction, intervention, and enrichment. This comprehensive approach ensures that every student receives targeted support while allowing educators to measure progress toward grade-level standards and academic goals.

Student Placement

Each spring, students are assigned to classrooms for the upcoming school year. The district carefully considers a variety of factors to create balanced and supportive learning environments for all students. Parents/guardians who have information that may assist in the placement process (e.g., learning style, personality, or specific academic or behavioral needs) are encouraged to share this information with their child's teacher prior to the end of Spring Break. Requests for specific teachers will not be accepted. Families will be notified of classroom placements by mid-August.

Field Trips (Board Policy 2430)

Paw Paw Public Schools recognizes that field trips, when connected to classroom learning, are an important part of the instructional program. Field trips provide opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom and enrich student understanding through real-world experiences. In most cases, students will visit local facilities or educational sites. Out-of-district field trips must be approved by the principal and require a signed parent/guardian permission slip. All relevant information, including trip details and any associated fees, will be included with the permission form.

Field trips are considered a privilege. Students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times. Students who do not follow school or classroom expectations may not be allowed to participate. All volunteers and chaperones must complete a Volunteer Background Check prior to participation.

Make-Up Work (Board Policy 2330)

Students who are absent from school are responsible for completing missed work. For planned absences, such as family vacations or other events, families are asked to notify the office and teacher as soon as possible. In the case of illness, parents/guardians may request schoolwork by contacting the school office. Please allow time for teachers to prepare assignments to minimize disruption to classroom instruction. Requested work is typically available for pickup within 72 hours.



Section III - Student Conduct

The primary objective of student discipline is to produce a school environment in which complete attention may be directed to the teaching/learning activities. Discipline may be defined as the control of conduct by the individual or by external authority.

Since behavior is a learned discipline we do not expect students at this age to be without fault in this area. We do, however, expect that students take responsibility for their own actions. When parents/guardians are notified of an inappropriate behavior, it is not meant as punishment, but as information to parents/guardians that there has been a problem. It is the interest and intent of the elementary staff that a proper educational environment be maintained, that the health and safety of the students and staff be protected, and that the integrity of the property of the school be preserved. Discipline is within the sound discretion of the school's staff and administration. Discipline shall be administered in a firm, fair, consistent, expedient, and equitable manner, recognizing individual differences and relevant circumstances as they relate to the education of all students in each case.

A major component of the educational program at Paw Paw Early Elementary is to prepare students to become responsible workers and citizens by learning how to conduct themselves properly and in accordance with established standards.

Student conduct is governed by the rules and provisions established in the Student Code of Conduct.

Expected Behaviors

Each student shall be expected to:

- abide by national, state, and local laws as well as the rules of the school;
- respect the civil rights of others;
- act courteously to adults and fellow students;
- be prompt to school and attentive in class;
- work cooperatively with others when involved in accomplishing a common goal, regardless of the other's ability, gender, race, religion, height, weight, disability, or ethnic background;
- complete assigned tasks on time and as directed;
- help maintain a school environment that is safe, friendly, and productive;
- act at all times in a manner that reflects pride in self, family, and in the school.

Common Area Expectations

Students are expected to uphold the school-wide values from our PRIDE matrix:

- Personal Responsibility
- Respect
- I Am A Learner
- Demonstrate Safe Behavior
- Excellence in Attitude

These values help create a positive, structured environment where all students can learn and feel supported. Students are explicitly taught what these expectations look like in different areas of the school and are expected to apply them throughout the school day.

Dress Code (Board Policy 5511)

While fashion trends may change, the purpose of school remains the same: learning. Student dress and appearance should support a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment.

Students and their families should consider the following questions when dressing for school:

- Does my clothing provide appropriate coverage?
- Does my clothing contain inappropriate, obscene, profane, violent, drug-related, alcohol-related, tobacco-related, or gang-related messages or images?
- Is my clothing appropriate for school activities and the weather?
- Does my appearance promote a positive learning environment?

The following are not permitted at school:

- Muscle shirts with excessively large arm openings
- Tank tops with straps narrower than two finger-widths
- Clothing that exposes undergarments or private body areas
- Clothing with inappropriate words, images, or messages

If a student's clothing disrupts the educational environment or creates a safety concern, we may ask them to change or have a parent/guardian bring appropriate attire. Student dress code concerns will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the school administration.

Care of Property (Board Policy 5513)

Students are expected to respect and properly care for school property, materials, technology, and facilities. Students are also responsible for the care and security of their personal belongings. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. Valuable or irreplaceable items should not be brought to school. Students who intentionally damage, destroy, or misuse school property may be subject to disciplinary action and may be required to pay for repair or replacement costs.

Student Discipline Code

The Board of Education has adopted the following Student Discipline Code. The Code includes the types of misconduct that will subject a student to disciplinary action. The Board has also adopted the list of behaviors and the terms contained in the list.

It is the school staff's responsibility to provide a safe and orderly learning environment. Discipline is within the sound discretion of the school staff and administration. Due process ensures that disciplinary action is imposed only after review of the facts and/or special circumstances of the situation.

Explanation of Terms Applying to the Student Discipline Code

Each of the behaviors described below may subject the student to disciplinary action including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

- **Use of drugs:**

A student's use or sale of a performance-enhancing substance is a violation that will affect the student's athletic eligibility and extracurricular participation.

The Department of Community Health periodically distributes to the district the list of banned drugs based on bylaw 31.2.3.1 of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Use of any drugs or substances appearing on this list will affect the student's athletic and extracurricular participation.

- The school has a "Drug Free" zone that extends 1000 feet beyond the school boundaries as well as to any school activity and transportation. This means that any activity, possession, sale, distribution, or use of drugs, alcohol, fake drugs, steroids, inhalants, or look-alike drugs is prohibited. Attempted sale or distribution is also prohibited. If caught, the student could be suspended or expelled and law enforcement officials may be contacted. Sale also includes the possession or sale of over-the-counter medication to another student.

- The sale, distribution, possession, or use of drugs, alcohol, fake drugs, steroids, inhalants, or look-alike drugs that have a negative effect on the school environment is prohibited. Attempted sale or distribution is also prohibited. This includes nonalcoholic beers and wines, and the like. Many drug abuse offenses are also felonies. Sale also includes the possession or sale of over-the-counter medication to another student.

- **Use of Breath-Test Instruments:**

The Principal may arrange for a breath test for blood-alcohol to be conducted on a student whenever the Principal has individualized reasonable suspicion to believe that a student has consumed an alcoholic beverage.

The student will be taken to a private administrative or instructional area on school property with at least one (1) other member of the teaching or administrative staff present as a witness to the test.

The purpose of the test is to determine whether or not the student has consumed an alcoholic beverage. The amount of consumption is not relevant, except where the student may need medical attention.

If the result indicates a violation of school rules as described in this handbook, the student will be disciplined in accordance with disciplinary procedures described in this handbook. If a student refuses to take the test, the student will be advised that such denial will be considered an admission of alcohol use with the consequent discipline invoked. The student will then be given a second opportunity to take the test.

- **Use of tobacco:**

Smoking and other tobacco uses are a danger to a student's health and to the health of others. The school prohibits the sale, distribution, use, or possession of any form of tobacco () or electronic cigarettes or similar devices during school time or at any school activity. This prohibition also applies to the use or possession of tobacco product by students in District buildings, on District property (owned or leased), on District buses, and at any District- related event and when going to and from school and at school bus stops. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

‘Use of tobacco’ shall mean all uses of tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, or pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or any other matter or substance that contains tobacco, in addition to papers used to roll cigarettes, inhaling, exhaling, burning, or carrying any lighted or heated cigar, cigarette, or pipe, or any other lighted or heated product containing, made, or derived from nicotine, tobacco, marijuana, or other plant, whether natural or synthetic, that is intended for inhalation (use of a tobacco product includes using an electronic smoking device). The display of unlighted cigars, cigarettes, pipes, other ‘smoking’ paraphernalia or tobacco products on one’s person is also prohibited by this policy. The term “tobacco” includes any product containing, made of, or derived from tobacco or nicotine (including synthetic nicotine) that is intended for human consumption or is likely to be consumed, whether inhaled, absorbed, or ingested by any other means including, but not limited to, a cigarette, a cigar, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus; any electronic smoking device and any substances that may be aerosolized or vaporized by such device, whether or not the substance contains nicotine; an e-cigarette (including, but not limited to, “JUUL”, “NJOY,” “BREEZE,” “Puff Bar,” etc.), e-cigar, e-pipe, vape pen, or e-hookah; but does not include any cessation product approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for use as a medical treatment to reduce or eliminate nicotine or tobacco dependence.

- **Student Disorder/Demonstration:**

Students will not be denied their rights to freedom of expression, but the expression may not infringe on the rights of others. Disruption of any school activity will not be allowed. If a student (or students) feels there is need to organize some form of demonstration, the student is encouraged to contact the Principal to discuss the proper way to plan such an activity. Students who disrupt the school may be subject to suspension or expulsion.

- **Possession of a Weapon:**

A weapon includes, but is not limited to, firearms, guns of any type whatsoever including air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded), knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons and explosives. It may also include any toy that is presented as a real weapon or reacted to as a real weapon. Criminal charges may be filed for this violation. Possession of a weapon may subject a student to expulsion and possible permanent exclusion. It makes no difference whether or not the weapon belongs to someone else, unless the student can provide convincing evidence that the weapon was placed in the student’s possession without the student’s knowledge. If it can be confirmed that a weapon was brought on District property by a student other than the one who possessed the weapon, that student shall also be subject to the same disciplinary action.

State law may require that a student be permanently expelled from school, subject to a petition for possible reinstatement if the student brings onto or has in their possession on school property or at a school-related activity any of the following:

- any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas including bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines, or device that can be converted into such a destructive item
- any cutting instrument consisting of a sharp blade over three (3) inches long fastened to a handle
- any similar object that is intended to invoke bodily harm or fear of bodily harm (e.g. air gun, blow-gun, toy gun, etc.)

- **Use of an Object as a Weapon:**

Any object that is used to threaten, harm, or harass another may be considered a weapon. This includes but is not limited to padlocks, pens, pencils, laser pointers, jewelry and so on. Intentional injury to another can be a felony and/or a cause for civil action. [] This violation may subject a student to expulsion.

- **Knowledge of Dangerous Weapons or Threats of Violence:**

Because the Board believes that students, staff members, and visitors are entitled to function in a safe school environment, students are required to report knowledge of dangerous weapons or threats of violence to the Principal. Failure to report such knowledge may subject the student to discipline.

- **Purposely Setting a Fire:**

Anything, such as fire, that endangers school property and its occupants will not be tolerated. Arson is a felony () and will subject the student to expulsion.

- **Physically Assaulting a Staff Member/Student/Person Associated with the District:**

Physical assault at school against a District employee, volunteer, or contractor which may or may not cause injury may result in charges being filed () and subject the student to expulsion. Physical assault is defined as “intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence.”

- **Verbally Assaulting a Staff Member/Student/Person Associated with the District:**

Verbal assault at school against a District employee, volunteer, or contractor or making bomb threats or similar threats directed at a school building, property, or a school-related activity will be considered verbal assault. Verbal threats or assault may result in suspension and expulsion. Verbal assault is a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on another person, with a present intent and ability to act on the threat.

- **Extortion:**

Extortion is the use of threat, intimidation, force, or deception to take, or receive something from someone else. Extortion is against the law. Violations of this rule will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

- **Gambling:**

Gambling includes casual betting, betting pools, organized-sports betting, and any other form of wagering. Students who bet on an activity in which they are involved may also be banned from that activity. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Plagiarism/Cheating:**

Plagiarism and cheating are also forms of falsification and subject the student to academic penalties as well as disciplinary action. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **False Alarms, False Reports, and Bomb Threats:**

A false emergency alarm, report or bomb threat endangers the safety forces that are responding, the citizens of the community, and persons in the building. What may seem like a prank is a dangerous stunt. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Explosives:**

Explosives, fireworks, and chemical-reaction objects such as smoke bombs, pipe bombs, bottle bombs, small firecrackers, and poppers are forbidden and dangerous. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Trespassing:**

Although schools are public facilities, the law does allow the school to restrict access on school property. If a student has been removed, suspended, or expelled, the student is not allowed on school property without authorization of the Principal. In addition, students may not trespass onto school property at unauthorized times or into areas of the school determined to be inappropriate. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Theft:**

When a student is caught stealing school or someone's property, the student will be disciplined and may be reported to law enforcement officials. Students are encouraged not to bring anything of value to school that is not needed for learning without prior authorization. The school is not responsible for personal property. Theft may result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Disobedience:**

School staff is acting "in loco parentis," which means they are allowed, by law, to direct a student as would a parent. This applies to all staff, not just teachers assigned to a student. If given a reasonable direction by a staff member, the student is expected to comply. Chronic disobedience can result in expulsion.

- **Damaging Property:**

Vandalism and disregard for school property will not be tolerated. Violations could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Persistent Absence or Tardiness:**

Attendance laws require students to be in school all day or have a legitimate excuse. It is also important to establish consistent attendance habits in order to succeed in school and in the world-of-work. Excessive absence could lead to suspension from school.

- **Unauthorized Use of School or Private Property:**

Students are expected to obtain permission to use any school property or any private property located on school premises. Any unauthorized use shall be subject to disciplinary action. This includes use of the internet and communication networks in a manner not sanctioned by policy and administrative guideline. Violations of this rule could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Refusing to Accept Discipline:**

The school may use informal discipline to prevent the student from being removed from school. When a student refuses to accept the usual discipline for an infraction, the refusal can result in a sterner action such as suspension or expulsion.

- **Aiding or Abetting Violation of School Rules:**

If a student assists another student in violating any school rule, they will be disciplined and may be subject to suspension or expulsion. Students are expected to resist peer pressure and exercise sound decision-making regarding their behavior.

- **Displays of Affection:**

Students demonstrating affection between each other is personal and not meant for public display. This includes touching, petting, or any other contact that may be considered sexual in nature. Such behavior may result in suspension from school or possibly expulsion.

- **Violation of Individual School/Classroom Rules:**

Each learning environment has different rules for students. Individual rules are for the safe and orderly operation of that environment. Students will be oriented to specific rules, all of which will be consistent with the policy of the school. Persistent violations of rules could result in suspension or expulsion.

- **Violation of Bus Rules:**

Please refer to Section IV on transportation for bus rules (or please refer to bus rules.

- **Disruption of the Educational Process:**

Any actions or manner of dress that interferes with school activities or disrupts the educational process is unacceptable. Such disruptions also include delay or prevention of lessons, assemblies, field trips, athletic, and performing arts events.

- **Harassment (Board Policy 5517):**

Harassment of students is prohibited and will not be tolerated. This includes inappropriate conduct by other students as well as any other person in the school environment, including employees, Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers. It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students. This policy applies to all activities on school property and to all school sponsored activities whether on or off school property.

Harassment is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student's educational, physical or emotional well-being. This would include harassment based on any of the legally protected characteristics, such as sex, race, color, national origin, religion, height, weight, marital status or disability. This policy, however, is not limited to these legal categories and includes any harassment that would negatively impact students.

Harassment through any means, including electronically transmitted methods (e.g., internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), computer or wireless hand held device), may be subject to District disciplinary procedures. Such behavior is considered harassment whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle if it is considered to have a negative impact on the school environment.

Any student that believes they have been/or is the victim of harassment should immediately report the situation to the teacher, the Principal, or assistant principal, or may report it directly to the teacher, Dean of Students, or the principal. Complaints will be investigated in accordance with AG 5517.

Every student should, and every staff member must report any situation that they believe to be improper harassment of a student. Reports may be made to those identified above.

If the investigation finds harassment occurred it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action. This may include up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employee, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers and contractors, and removal from any officer position and/or a request to resign for Board members.

Retaliation against any person for complaining about harassment, or participating in a harassment investigation, is prohibited. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as harassment. Intentionally false harassment reports, made to get someone in trouble, are also prohibited. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

The following definitions are provided for guidance only. If a student or other individual believes there has been harassment, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, they should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

◦ **Harassment**

- submission to such unwelcomed conduct or communication is made either an explicit or implicit condition of utilizing or benefiting from the services, activities, or programs of the School District;
- submission to, or rejection of, the unwelcomed conduct or communication is used as the basis for a decision to exclude, expel or limit the harassed student in the terms, conditions or privileges of the School District;
- the unwelcomed conduct or communication interferes with the student's education, creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities. This may include racial slurs, mocking behavior, or other demeaning comments.

◦ **Sexual Harassment** may include, but is not limited to:

- verbal harassment or abuse;
- pressure for sexual activity;
- repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications;
- unwelcome touching;
- sexual jokes, posters, cartoons, etc.;
- suggesting or demanding sexual involvement, accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, or safety;
- a pattern of conduct, which can be subtle in nature, that has sexual overtones and is intended to create or has the effect of creating discomfort and/or humiliation to another;
- remarks speculating about a person's sexual activities or sexual history, or remarks about one's own sexual activities or sexual history.

• **Hazing (Board Policy 5516):**

The Board of Education believes that hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and prohibits all such activities at any time in school facilities, on school property, and at any District-sponsored event.

Hazing shall be defined for purposes of this policy as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act of initiation into any class, group, or organization that causes or creates a risk of causing mental, emotional, or physical harm. Permission, consent, or assumption of risk by an individual subjected to hazing shall not lessen the prohibitions contained in this policy.

Hazing – any type of initiation procedure for any school related activity, which involves conduct such as but not limited to:

- illegal activity, such as drinking or drugs;
- physical punishment or infliction of pain
- intentional humiliation or embarrassment;
- dangerous activity;
- activity likely to cause mental or psychological stress;
- forced detention or kidnapping;
- undressing or otherwise exposing initiates.

• **Bullying and Other Aggressive Behavior (Board Policy 5517.01):**

It is the policy of the District to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for all of its students.

This policy protects all students from bullying/aggressive behavior regardless of the subject matter or motivation for such impermissible behavior.

Bullying or other aggressive behavior toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, including Board members, parents, guests, contractors, vendors, and volunteers, is strictly prohibited. This prohibition includes written, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, including hazing, gestures, comments, threats, or actions to a student, which cause or threaten to cause bodily harm, reasonable fear for personal safety or personal degradation.

Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

This policy applies to all “at school”; activities in the District, including activities on school property, in a school vehicle, and those occurring off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or athletic events where students are under the school’s control, or where an employee is engaged in school business. Misconduct occurring outside of school may also be disciplined if it interferes with the school environment.

- **Notification**

Notice of this policy will be annually circulated to and posted in conspicuous locations in all school buildings and departments within the District and discussed with students, as well as incorporated into the teacher, student, and parent/guardian handbooks. State and Federal rights posters on discrimination and harassment shall also be posted at each building. All new hires will be required to review and sign off on this policy and the related complaint procedure.

Parents or legal guardians of the alleged victim(s), as well as of the alleged aggressor(s), shall be promptly notified of any complaint or investigation as well as the results of the investigation to the extent consistent with student confidentiality requirements. A record of the time and form of notice or attempts at notice shall be kept in the investigation file.

To the extent appropriate and/or legally permitted, confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation process. However, a proper investigation will, in some circumstances, require the disclosure of names and allegations. Further, the appropriate authorities may be notified, depending on the nature of the complaint and/or the results of the investigation.

- **Reporting**

The District shall report incidents of bullying to the Department of Education on an annual basis according to the form and procedures established by the Department of Education.

Should this policy be amended or otherwise modified, the district shall submit a copy of the amended or modified policy to the Department of Education no later than thirty (30) days after adopting the modification.

- **Implementation**

The Superintendent is responsible to implement this policy, and may develop further guidelines, not inconsistent with this policy.

This policy is not intended to and should not be interpreted to interfere with legitimate free speech rights of any individual. However, the District reserves the right and responsibility to maintain a safe environment for students, conducive to learning and other legitimate objectives of the school program

- **Procedure:**

Any student who believes they have been or they are the victim of bullying, hazing, or other aggressive behavior should immediately report the situation to the Principal or assistant principal. The student may also report concerns to a teacher or counselor who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate administrator or Board official. Complaints against the building principal should be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent should be filed with the Board President.

Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation that they believe to be aggressive behavior directed toward a student. Reports shall be made to those identified above. Reports may be made anonymously, but formal disciplinary action may not be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Principal (or other administrator as designated) shall promptly investigate and document all complaints about bullying, aggressive or other behavior that may violate this policy. The investigation must be completed as promptly as the circumstances permit () and should be completed within three (3) school days after a report or complaint is made.

If the investigation finds an instance of bullying or aggressive behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial action. This may include up to expulsion for students, up to discharge for employees, exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers and contractors, and removal from any official position and/or a request to resign for Board members. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement or other appropriate officials.

The individual responsible for conducting the investigation shall document all reported incidents and report all verified incidents of bullying, aggressive or other prohibited behavior, as well as any remedial action taken, including disciplinary actions and referrals, to the Superintendent.

- **Non-Retaliation/False Reports:**

Retaliation or false allegations against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of bullying or aggressive behavior (as a witness or otherwise), or is the target of the bullying or aggressive behavior being investigated, is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of Board policy, independent of whether a complaint of bullying is substantiated. Suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as bullying/aggressive behavior.

Making intentionally false reports about bullying/aggressive behavior for the purpose of getting someone in trouble is similarly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

RUDE

IS WHEN SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES
SOMETHING UNINTENTIONALLY
HURTFUL ONE TIME.

MEAN

IS WHEN SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES
SOMETHING INTENTIONALLY
HURTFUL ONE TIME.

BULLYING

IS WHEN SOMEONE SAYS OR DOES
SOMETHING INTENTIONALLY
HURTFUL AND THEY KEEP DOING IT,
EVEN AFTER YOU'VE TOLD THEM TO
STOP.

◦ **Definitions:**

The following definitions are provided for guidance only. If a student or other individual believes there has been bullying, hazing, harassment or other aggressive behavior, regardless of whether it fits a particular definition, they should report it immediately and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action.

“Aggressive behavior” is defined as inappropriate conduct that is repeated enough, or serious enough, to negatively impact a student’s educational, physical, or emotional well-being. Such behavior includes, for example, bullying, hazing, stalking, intimidation, menacing, coercion, name- calling, taunting, making threats, and hitting/pushing/shoving.

“At School” is defined as in a classroom, elsewhere on school premises, on a school bus or other school related vehicle, or at a school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is held on school premises. It also includes conduct using a telecommunications access device or telecommunications service provider that occurs off school premises if either owned by or under the control of the District.

“Bullying” is defined as any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts – i.e. internet, telephone or cell phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), or wireless hand held device) that, without regard to its subject matter or motivating animus, is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more students either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

- substantially interfering with educational opportunities, benefits, or programs of one (1) or more students;
- adversely affecting the ability of a student to participate in or benefit from the school district’s educational programs or activities by placing the student in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress;
- having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a student’s physical or mental health; and/or
- causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological, or a combination of all three (3). Some examples of bullying are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, pulling; taking and/or damaging personal belongings or extorting money, blocking or impeding student movement, unwelcome physical contact.
- Verbal – taunting, malicious teasing, insulting, name calling, making threats.
- Psychological – spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, coercion, or engaging in social exclusion/shunning, extortion, or intimidation. This may occur in a number of different ways, including but not limited to notes, emails, social media postings, and graffiti.

“Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, any act which subjects an individual or group to unwanted, abusive behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written or physical nature, often on the basis of age, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability, but may also include sexual orientation, physical characteristics (e.g., height, weight, complexion), cultural background, socioeconomic status, or geographic location (e.g., from rival school, different state, rural area, city, etc.).

“Intimidation/Menacing” includes, but is not limited to, any threat or act intended to: place a person in fear of physical injury or offensive physical contact; to substantially damage or interfere with person’s property; or to intentionally interfere with or block a person’s movement without good reason.

“Staff” includes all school employees and Board members.

“Third parties” include, but are not limited to, coaches, school volunteers, parents, school visitors, service contractors, vendors, or others engaged in District business, and others not directly subject to school control at inter-district or intra-district athletic competitions or other school events.

For further definition and instances that could possibly be construed as:

Harassment, see Policy 5517;

Hazing, see Policy 5516.

M.C.L. 380.1310B (Matt’s Safe School Law, PA 241 of 2011)

Policies on Bullying, Michigan State Board of Education

Model Anti-Bullying Policy, Michigan State Board of Education

- **Possession of a Firearm, Arson, and Criminal Sexual Conduct:**

In compliance with State law, the Board shall permanently expel any student who possesses a dangerous weapon in a weapon-free school zone or commits either arson or criminal sexual conduct in a District building or on District property, including school buses and other school transportation.

A dangerous weapon is defined as “a firearm, dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife with a blade over three (3) inches in length, pocket knife opened by a mechanical device, iron bar, or brass knuckles” or other devices designed to or likely to inflict bodily harm, including, but not limited to, air guns and explosive devices.

Students shall be subject to disciplinary action (Suspension/Expulsion) as required by statute for such specified offenses as physical and verbal assault (see Policy 5610.01).

Students with disabilities under IDEA or Section 504 shall be expelled only in accordance with Board Policy 2461 and Federal due process rights appropriate to students with disabilities. A student who has been expelled under this policy may apply for reinstatement in accordance with guidelines which are available in the Principal’s office.

Criminal Acts:

Any student engaging in criminal acts at or related to the school will be reported to law enforcement officials as well as disciplined by the school. It is not considered double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same crime), when school rules and the law are violated.

Students should be aware that state law requires that school officials, teachers and appropriate law enforcement officials be notified when a student of this District is involved in crimes related to physical violence, gang related acts, illegal possession of a controlled substance, analogue or other intoxicants, trespassing, property crimes, including but not limited to theft and vandalism, occurring in the school as well as in the community.

- **Safety Concerns**

Students should not use roller blades, bicycles, skateboards scooters, or any other form of personal transportation device in school hallways or District pedestrian traffic areas. Exceptions may be made to reasonably accommodate students with mobility impairments. Use of any means of travel within buildings and on grounds by other than generally accepted practices where appropriate is prohibited. Students violating this expectation will be subject to disciplinary action.

- **Profanity**

Any behavior or language, which in the judgement of the staff or administration, is considered to be obscene, disrespectful, vulgar, profane and/or violates community held standards of good taste will be subject to disciplinary action.

Discipline:

It is important to remember that the school's rules apply going to and from school, at school, on school property, at school-sponsored events, and on school transportation. In some cases, a student can be suspended from school transportation for infractions of school bus rules.

Ultimately, it is the Principal's responsibility to keep things orderly. In all cases, the School shall attempt to make discipline prompt and equitable and to have the punishment match the severity of the incident.

Two (2) types of discipline are possible, informal and formal.

- **Informal Discipline:** Informal discipline takes place within the school. It includes:

- Verbal warning/redirection;
- Change of seating or location;
- Re-teach expectations;
- Time-out/Time owed;
- Lunch-time detention;
- Writing assignments;
- In-school suspension;
- Restitution;
- Restorative Practices.

- **Formal Discipline:** Formal discipline removes the student from school.

Formal discipline removes the student from school. It includes emergency removal for up to seventy-two (72) hours, short-term suspension for up to ten (10) school days, long-term suspension for more than ten (10) school days but less than a permanent expulsion, and expulsion from school. Suspensions and expulsions may carry over into the next school year. Removal for less than one (1) school day without the possibility of suspension or expulsion may not be appealed. Suspension and expulsion can be appealed.

A student-teacher conference and/or parent contact/conference will be made as deemed necessary. Parents/guardians may be required to meet with the administrator following any student suspension. The student will not be allowed to return to school until the meeting has taken place.

Students being considered for suspension or expulsion are entitled to an informal hearing with the building administrator, prior to removal, at which time the student will be notified of the charges against him/her and given an opportunity to make a defense.

If a student is suspended, the parents/guardians may appeal the suspension, in writing, to the building principal and a formal appeal hearing will be held.

When a student is being considered for expulsion, a formal hearing is scheduled and the parents/guardians will be given written notice of the hearing and will be expected to attend. The Superintendent then takes testimony and determines if a recommendation to expel is to be made to the Board of Education. This decision may also be appealed. In the case of expulsion, the student remains out of school during the appeal period. Work missed during an expulsion cannot be made up and usually results in a loss of credit.

Students involved in co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as band and athletics can lose their eligibility for violation of the School rules.

If a student commits a crime while at school or a school-related event, the student may be subject to school disciplinary action as well as to action by the community's legal system. These are separate jurisdictions and do not constitute double jeopardy (being tried twice for the same crime).

- **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are entitled to the rights and procedures afforded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Due Process Rights (Board Policy 5600 and 5611):

Before a student may be suspended or expelled from school, there are specific procedures that must be followed.

- **Suspension from School:**

When a student is being considered for a suspension of ten (10) days or less, the administrator in charge will notify the student of the charges. The student will then be given an opportunity to explain his/her side and the administrator will then provide the student and their family the evidence supporting the charges. After that informal hearing, the principal will make a decision whether or not to suspend. If a student is suspended, they and their parents/guardians will be notified, in writing within one (1) day, of the reason for and the length of the suspension. The suspension may be appealed, within two (2) school days after receipt of the suspension notice, to the Superintendent. The request for an appeal must be in writing.

During the appeal process, the student shall not be allowed to remain in school.

The appeal shall be conducted in a private meeting and the student may be represented. Sworn, recorded testimony shall be given. If the appeal is heard by the Board of Education, the hearing is governed by the Open Meetings Act. Under the Open Meetings Act, the hearing must be public unless the parents/guardians request that the meeting be conducted in a closed session.

When a student is suspended, they may make-up work missed while on suspension. Any learning that cannot be made up such as labs, field trips, skill-practices, or any learning that the student chooses not to make-up may be reflected in the grades earned.

A student being considered for suspension of more than ten (10) days will be given due process as described in the expulsion section below.

- **Long-Term Suspension or Expulsion from School:**

When a student is being considered for long-term suspension (more than ten (10) days) or expulsion, the student will receive a formal letter of notification addressed to the parents/guardians which will contain:

- the charge and related evidence;
- the time and place of the Board meeting;
- the length of the recommended suspension or a recommendation for expulsion;
- a brief description of the hearing procedure;
- a statement that the student may bring parents, guardians, and counsel;
- a statement that the student and/or parent may bring a translator or request a translator for hearing impaired students or parents/guardians;

- a statement that the student may give testimony, present evidence, and provide a defense;
- a statement that the student may request attendance of school personnel who were part to the action or accused the student of the infraction;
- the ability of the student and/or parent to request, potentially at their own cost, a transcript of the hearing, if the Board/hearing officer approved.

Students being considered for long-term suspension or expulsion may or may not be immediately removed from school. A formal hearing is scheduled with the building principal during which the student may be represented by his/her parents/guardians, legal counsel, and/or by a person of his/her choice.

Within 2 days (as in AG 5610) after notification of long-term suspension or expulsion, the long-term suspension or expulsion may be appealed, in writing, to the building principal. The appeal will also be formal in nature with sworn testimony before official(s) designated by the Board of Education. The appeal will be heard in an open session unless the student or the student's parent or guardian requests a closed session. Again, the right to representation is available. All opportunity to earn grades or credit ends when a student is expelled.

Paw Paw Early Elementary makes a sincere effort to have disciplinary actions take place that will allow the student to remain in school. If a disciplinary action does not result in removal from school, it is not appealable. Should a student or parent have questions regarding the propriety of an in-school disciplinary action, they should contact the building principal.

Due Process Appeal Procedure (Board Policy 5600 and 5611):

Teachers and administrators, as representatives of the Board of Education, have the freedom to use a variety of procedures in disciplining students who fail to accept responsibility as an integral part of student behavior in which rights and privileges are enjoyed, but they must carry out their assignments in such a manner as to avoid discrimination. School personnel must act within the law with full recognition of student rights. Their actions must be reasonable and not capricious.

The constitutional rights of individuals assure the protection of due process of law; therefore, this system of constitutionally and legally sound procedures is developed with regard to the administration of discipline in the Paw Paw Public Schools.

- The hallmark of the exercise of disciplinary authority will be fair to all parties concerned.
- Every effort shall be made by administrators and faculty members to resolve problems through effective utilization of school district resources in cooperation with the student and his/her parent or guardian.
- A student must be given an opportunity for a hearing if he/she or his/her parent or guardian indicates the desire for one. A hearing shall be held to allow the student and their parent or guardian:
 - to contest the facts which may lead to disciplinary action, or
 - to contest the appropriations of the sanction imposed by a disciplinary authority; or
 - if the student and his/her parent allege prejudice; or d. if the student alleges unfairness on the part of the school district official responsible for the discipline.
- The hearing authority may request the student and parent or guardian to attempt conciliation first, but if the student and parent or guardian decline this request, the hearing authority shall schedule the hearing as soon as possible.
- The following procedural guidelines will govern the hearing:
 - Written notice of charges against a student shall be supplied to the student and his/her parent or guardian.
 - Parents or guardians shall be present at the hearing.
 - The student, parent, or guardian may be represented by legal counsel.
 - The student shall be given an opportunity to give his version of the facts and their implications. He/she should be allowed to offer the testimony of other evidence.
 - The student shall be allowed to observe all testimony offered against him/her. In addition, he/she shall be allowed to question any witness.
 - The hearing shall be conducted by an impartial hearing authority who shall make his determination solely upon the evidence presented at the hearing.
 - A record shall be kept of the hearing.
 - The hearing authority shall state within a reasonable time after the hearing his/her findings as to whether or not the student charged is guilty of the conduct charged and his/her decision, if any, as to disciplinary action.
 - The findings of the hearing authority shall be reduced to writing and sent to the student and his/her parent or guardian.
 - The student and his/her parent or guardian shall be made aware of their right to appeal the decision of the hearing authority to the appropriate appellate authority.

Search and Seizure (Board Policy 5771):

Search of a student and the student's possessions, including vehicles, may be conducted at any time the student is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education, if there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is in violation of law or school rules. A search may also be conducted to protect the health and safety of others. All searches may be conducted with or without a student's consent.

Students are provided lockers, desks, and other equipment in which to store materials. It should be clearly understood that this equipment is the property of the school and may be searched at any time if there is reasonable suspicion that a student has violated the law or school rules. Locks are to prevent theft, not to prevent searches. If student lockers require student-provided locks, each student must provide the lock's combination or key to the Principal.

Anything that is found in the course of a search that may be evidence of a violation of school rules or the law may be taken and held or turned over to the police. The school reserves the right not to return items which have been confiscated. In the course of any search, students' privacy rights will be respected regarding any items that are not illegal or against school policy.

All computers located in classrooms, labs and offices of the District are the District's property and are to be used by students, where appropriate, solely for educational purposes. The District retains the right to access and review all electronic, computer files, databases, and any other electronic transmissions contained in or used in conjunction with the District's computer system, and electronic mail. Students should have no expectation that any information contained on such systems is confidential or private.

Review of such information may be done by the District with or without the student's knowledge or permission. The use of passwords does not guarantee confidentiality, and the District retains the right to access information in spite of a password. All passwords or security codes must be registered with the instructor. A student's refusal to permit such access may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Student Rights of Expression (Board Policy 5780):

The School recognizes the right of students to express themselves. With the right of expression comes the responsibility to do it appropriately. Students may distribute or display, at appropriate times, non-sponsored, noncommercial written material and petitions; buttons, badges, or other insignia; clothing, insignia, and banners; and audio and video materials. All items must meet the following school guidelines:

- A material cannot be displayed if it:
 - is obscene to minors, libelous, indecent, pervasively, or vulgar;
 - advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law;
 - intends to be insulting or harassing;
 - intends to incite fighting or presents a likelihood of disrupting school or a school event;
 - presents a clear and present likelihood that, either because of its content or manner of distribution or display, it causes or is likely to cause a material and substantial disruption of school or school activities, a violation of school regulations, or the commission of an unlawful act.
- Materials may not be displayed or distributed during class periods, or during passing times between classes. Permission may be granted for display or distribution during lunch periods and after school in designated locations, as long as exits are not blocked and there is proper access and egress to the building.

Students who are unsure whether or not materials they wish to display meet school guidelines may present them to the building principal or Dean of Students twenty-four (24) hours prior to display.

Student Concerns, Suggestions, and Grievances:

The school is here for the benefit of the students. The staff is here to assist each student in becoming a responsible adult. If a student has suggestions that could improve the school, s/he should feel free to offer them. Written suggestions may be presented directly to the principal or to the student government.

When concerns or grievances arise, the best way to resolve the issue is through communication. No student will be harassed by any staff member or need fear reprisal for the proper expression of a legitimate concern. Any suggestions, concerns, and grievances may be directed to the principal or to the student government.

A student may have the right to a hearing if the student believes s/he has been improperly denied participation in a school activity or has been subjected to an illegal rule or standard. A student may not petition to have a change in grade.



Section IV - Transportation

Bus Transportation to School (Board Policy 8600):

The school provides transportation for all students who live farther than 1 mile from school. The transportation schedule and routes are available by contacting the transportation department at (269) 415-5220.

Students may only ride assigned school buses and must board and depart from the bus at assigned bus stops. Students will not be permitted to ride unassigned buses for any reason other than an emergency, except as approved by the principal.

The building principal may approve a change in a student's regular assigned bus stop to address a special need, upon the principal's approval of a note from the parent stating the reason for the request and the duration of the requested change.

Bus Conduct (Board Policy 550 and 8600):

Students who are riding to and from school on transportation provided by the school are required to follow all basic safety rules. This applies to school-owned buses as well as any contracted transportation.

The driver may assign seating/direct students in any reasonable manner to maintain safety.

Students must comply with the following basic safety rules:

- **Previous to loading (on the road and at school):**

- Each student shall:
 - be on time (at the designated loading zone 5 minutes prior to scheduled stop);
 - stay off the road at all times while walking to and waiting for the school transportation;
 - line up single file off the roadway to enter;
 - wait until the school transportation is completely stopped before moving forward to enter;
 - refrain from crossing a highway until the driver signals it is safe to cross;
 - go immediately to their assigned seat and be seated.

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the transportation department when their child will not be aboard school transportation. The bus will not wait. Drivers will not wait for students who are not at their designated stops on time.

- **During the trip**

- Each student shall:

- remain seated while the school transportation is in motion;
 - keep head, hands, arms, and legs inside the school vehicle at all times;
 - not litter in the school vehicle or throw anything from the vehicle;
 - keep books, packages, coats, and all other objects out of the aisle;
 - be courteous to the driver and to other riders;
 - not eat or play games, cards, etc.;
 - not tamper with the school vehicle or any of its equipment.

- **Leaving the bus**

- Each student shall:

- remain seated until the vehicle has stopped;
 - cross the road, when necessary, at least ten (10) feet in front of the vehicle, but only after the driver signals that it is safe;
 - be alert to a possible danger signal from the driver.

The driver will not discharge students at places other than their regular stop at home or at school unless they have proper authorization from school officials.

Rules and updates in the Transportation Handbook will supersede what is listed in this Student Handbook.

Video Surveillance and Electronic Monitoring on School Buses (Board Policy 7440.01 and 8330)

The Board of Education has installed video cameras on school buses to monitor student behavior. Actual videorecording of the students on any particular bus will be done on a random-selection basis.

If a student misbehaves on a bus and his/her actions are recorded, the recording will be submitted to the principal and may be used as evidence of the misbehavior. Since these recordings are considered part of a student's record, they can be viewed only in accordance with Federal law.

Penalties for Infractions (Board Policy 5600 and 8600):

A student who misbehaves on the bus shall be disciplined in accordance with the Student Discipline Code and may lose the privilege of riding on the bus.

