THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027



Aim High • Work Hard • Help Someone Else • Do the Right Thing

E. W. Thurston Middle School
850 High Street
Westwood, MA 02090

Main Office: 781-326-7500, x2336
Absence Line: 781-326-7500, x2394
FAX: 781-326-2709

Pursuant to M.G.L. ch.76 §5, no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity. Additionally, federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972); and disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Westwood Public Schools have a commitment to maintaining an educational environment and workplace where bigotry and intolerance, including discrimination on the basis of color, race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or age, are not tolerated. Any form of intimidation, threat, coercion, and/or harassment that insults the dignity of others and interferes with their freedom to learn or work is unacceptable.

General Information

Westwood School District Calendar

2026-2027 Calendar

School Hours

7:45 a.m. - 2:22 p.m. Regular School Days
7:45 a.m. - 1:10 p.m. Early Release Wednesdays

School Cancellation

In the event of a school closure, late start, early dismissal or other unexpected schedule change, an announcement will be made via the district's automated phone call system and posted on the school and district websites. In addition, announcements will be made on local radio and television channels whenever possible.

Visitor Policy

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must sign in at the office and pick up a visitor's badge to wear for the duration of their stay. They must sign out and return their badge at the conclusion of their visit. Please understand that any staff member may ask you to sign in at the office if you are not wearing a visitor badge. They do so for the safety of your child and of all the children in the building.

Food Service

Each grade has a separate lunch period. School breakfast and lunch is free for all students. This means that every student is eligible to receive **one** free breakfast and lunch every day. In order for the meal to be free, students must select all of the components required for a reimbursable meal. This means that students must take a meal that is made up of at least 3 of the 5 food groups (one of which must be a fruit or vegetable).

Second meals or just taking a beverage are not included in this, so those will be charged to student accounts. Here is the link to MySchoolBucks: you may also want to establish and/or replenish your child's MySchoolBucks account for second meals and à la carte items from the cafeteria. Prices vary. Cash will only be accepted at vending machines for water bottles.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties and/or would like to apply for waivers for school-related costs, please access the WPS Food Services website for more information. Even though lunch is free for all, families are strongly encouraged to apply for free/reduced lunch because this application will connect you with additional resources and fee waivers throughout the school year.

Bus Transportation

The purpose of the school bus program is to transport students who live beyond the established walking distance to and from school in an efficient and safe manner. Bus routes are posted on the district website on the Friday before the start of school. Buses pick up and drop off students in the front of the building. Cars are prohibited from the front of the building during posted pick-up and drop-off times.

A late bus is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays for students who are involved in after-school activities at Thurston. The times and stops for the late buses are printed on the activity forms and are available in the main office.

In the event that a bus driver submits a written student bus violation report to the administration, a school administrator will appropriately investigate the incident and contact the parent(s). If the student continues to act inappropriately, his/her bus privileges will be reviewed and may result in temporary and/or permanent removal from the bus. The following rules and

procedures establish a code of behavior for all students riding Westwood Public School buses. In addition, all school rules and behavior expectations also apply on the bus and at the bus stop.

Students are advised not to eat on the bus. There are young students with life threatening allergies who ride the same bus and they may be exposed to allergens on the bus if we allow snacks and food to be consumed.

- Students are expected to ride on their assigned bus, with only the exception of late bus service for after-school activities which is not assigned by the district. (Please contact the Principal if an emergency necessitates alternative transportation for your child.)
- Students must wait for the bus in a safe place, clear of traffic.
- Students must wait in an orderly manner and avoid "horseplay."
- Students shall remain seated, keeping aisles clear.
- Students are permitted to carry objects only if they can be held on their laps.
- Any vandalism will be the responsibility of the student involved.
- Students are prohibited from putting their heads, arms etc., or any object out of the bus windows.
- School and bus rules apply to any other carriers used for field trips or school-related activities.
- Students must respect others (no yelling, swearing, rough-housing, fighting, etc.)
- Students will not eat on the bus.

Car Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Pick-up and drop-off is at the back of the building. Parents should enter the back lot, drive all the way around the loop, and exit via Nahatan Street. Drivers are urged to be alert to student walkers!

In accordance with M.G.L. c71 Section 37, operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, cannot idle such motor vehicles on school grounds.

Textbooks and Supplies

A general supply list is emailed home and posted on our web site before the opening of school. Individual teachers may have additional specific requests. Students should have all supplies by no later than the sixth day of school. **Please check regularly to make sure your student is supplied with basic materials required for learning.**

Each student is given all required texts. Students are responsible for their books. If lost, a replacement fee will be charged. If damaged, a rebinding or replacement fee will be charged

Lockers/Locks

Each student is assigned a locker with a combination lock, and it is each student's responsibility to keep it locked. Students are urged to leave valuable items and large sums of money at home. The school is not responsible for personal possessions that are lost or stolen. School lockers are:

- **considered school property for which administrators retain a right of inspection**
- subject to search in accordance with Massachusetts General Law
- never to be used for storing items such as alcohol, stolen property, weapons, and illegal drugs

Lost and Found

Any student who is missing an item is urged to check his or her classrooms and the lost and found. The lost and found for clothing, backpacks and other large items is in a closet adjacent to the small gym. Small items, valuables (e.g., glasses, earrings) and books are kept in the office. All unclaimed items are donated to charity on a regular basis.

Thurston Parent-Teacher Organization (P.T.O.)

The primary mission of the Thurston Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is to provide a link between parents and the school. The PTO board includes four parent officers who meet on a monthly basis with the Principal and assistant Principal. Board members help fulfill the PTO mission by promoting special events; collecting and managing dues; coordinating volunteers to run events; promoting email, print and telephone communication; and organizing fundraising efforts.

Attendance

Attendance: Policy

***School attendance is required by state law beginning in Grade 1 (or the school year in which the student turns age 6 by the district cutoff date (September 1))*.** Coming to school every day is one of the most important ways students can build strong learning habits and feel connected to their school community. Students who attend school regularly and arrive on time establish routines and habits that are conducive to learning and success in school. When students are at school regularly, they have more chances to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition, tardiness to class is disruptive to the student, the teacher, and classmates. We expect that students will make every effort to be present and on time to school.

Families are expected to arrange vacations during weeks scheduled on the school calendar, as doing so eliminates disruptions in the learning process. Teachers will not provide work for students to complete during family vacations.

Attendance: Expectations

Students who are absent from school may not attend or participate in any extracurricular functions that occur the same day or evening (such as sports events, dances, concerts, plays) without special permission from the Principal. Students absent from school on Friday may not participate in school events that take place during the weekend without special permission from the Principal.

In special circumstances, student absences may be considered excused from school. Upon administrator review, the following types of student absences may be deemed excused absences for reporting purposes:

- An illness documented by a medical provider
- Bereavement or serious illness in family
- Absence due to attendance at a school-sponsored activity
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Suspension from school
- An absence excused by an administrator for other exceptional reasons

Excessive absences–even those that fall under the categories listed above–may be considered truancy and/or require additional documentation and administrator intervention. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year — (18 days). Chronic absenteeism can have a lasting impact on a student's success in school. The school will notify the parent or guardian of any student who is experiencing frequent absences to develop a plan to support regular school attendance. School officials may work with parents/guardians, local agencies, including the police and juvenile court, to improve student attendance and support students and families as needed.

Absence, Dismissal, and Tardiness: Reporting and Documentation

When a child will be late, absent, or dismissed early, parents should call the school absence line at 781-326-7500, x2394 or email the school at TMSoffice@westwood.k12.ma.us by 8:00 a.m. and leave the student's name, grade, and a reason for the absence/tardiness/dismissal in the message. In addition, parents should provide a written note to the office on the day a student returns from an absence stating the reason for the absence.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Sections 1A and 1B, Westwood Public Schools maintains a student absence notification program. In addition to daily absence notifications, the school will notify parents/caregivers when a student has accumulated five (5) absences during the school year. Families will receive additional notification when a student has accumulated ten (10) absences. At these points, the school may request a meeting with the student and parent/caregiver to review the student's attendance, identify barriers to regular attendance, and develop strategies and supports to improve attendance and academic success.

Tardiness: Procedures

Families are required to notify the office of a student who will be tardy following school attendance procedures. Tardy students without a written email, note or call from a parent/guardian will be marked unexcused. Upon arrival, tardy students should enter through the front door and immediately check in at the office to receive a pass to class. Students who are habitually tardy may also be required to attend after-school academic support programs. Students who are late to classes may be assigned consequences by their teacher, team leader, or administration.

Dismissal: Procedures

Families are required to notify the office of a student who will be dismissed following school attendance procedures. Please reserve dismissals for important appointments and emergencies. Families are strongly encouraged to arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Students may only be released to a parent or legal guardian designated on the students' Aspen profile. Dismissing a student to any other individual requires prior written authorization from a parent or guardian explicitly naming the individual picking them up.

If a student is being dismissed from school, please email the TMS Office or have the student bring a note to the office before school that includes the time of dismissal, a reason for the dismissal, and a parent/guardian signature. The student will then receive a pass to leave class at the appropriate time.

When it is time to be dismissed early, it is the student's responsibility to show the pass to the teacher and report to the office to wait for the parent or guardian. The parent/guardian must pick up the child in person in the office. Students will not be dismissed as walkers for any reason. Students must report to the office upon re-entering the building after an appointment. Students are responsible for making up all work missed.

TMS Student Expectations

Student Behavior

Thurston Middle School strives to foster an atmosphere in which all people are treated with respect. Responsible behavior is essential for maintaining an environment that encourages learning and promotes a positive climate. Students should demonstrate appropriate behavior whether in or out of the classroom, and respect the rights of others in the community.

Students will be held accountable for inappropriate behavior. All students should familiarize themselves with school rules and regulations, which are in effect during the school day, in-person and virtually, and at all extracurricular and school-sponsored activities. Students violating these policies will be subject to disciplinary consequences and loss of privileges.

Students must be in good academic/behavioral standing to participate in all activities and sports. If a student does not meet academic/behavioral eligibility requirements, he/she will be removed from activities until the team leader notifies administrators that performance has improved.

Students assigned consequences may be required to fulfill disciplinary obligations before participating in extracurricular activities.

Finally, it is important for students to understand that their behavior in the community at large—walking to and from school, for example, or at local business establishments—is a reflection on their families and their school. We expect that all Thurston students will treat their fellow citizens and community property with courtesy and respect.

Dress Code/Appearance

Two of the core purposes of the Westwood Public Schools are academic excellence and promoting respectful and caring relationships. To that end, we expect students to refrain from wearing clothing that is disruptive to the educational process, poses safety concerns, and/or interferes with an individual's right to learn in a harassment-free environment.

Consumption of Food and Beverages

Food may be consumed in the cafeteria. Only in special cases and/or for educational purposes may food be consumed outside the designated areas, which is at the discretion of the supervising faculty member.

Food may not be delivered to a student at school by an outside party (DoorDash, Grubhub, etc.) during the school day.

Water is always permitted throughout the school building. All water bottles must be capped with a secure lid or top. Other beverages may be consumed during a student's lunch period in the cafeteria only.

Inappropriate consumption of food or beverages may result in confiscation by any faculty member. Subsequent offenses may result in further disciplinary action.

Extracurricular Events

TMS students are expected to adhere to the school behavior expectations at all TMS extracurricular events such as concerts, plays, athletic contests, and other TMS events.

Profanity and obscene or offensive language are forbidden at all times. Students from other schools and athletic opponents are to be treated with respect. Booing, taunting, the use of offensive chants, or "cheers" are forbidden.

School personnel and coaches from other schools, as well as athletic officials and referees, are to be respected and obeyed at all times by TMS students. In particular, name-calling and other remarks addressed to specific individuals are causes for immediate disciplinary action.

Parents should accompany their children to all TMS athletic events. Students without parental supervision may not be permitted to attend an athletic event.

Nuisance Items
Students should not bring anything to school that will disrupt the learning environment. This includes toys, electronic games, gag gifts, rubber bands, laser pointers, pen lights, or any other items that might be distracting in classes. "Nuisance items" will be confiscated and turned into the office.

Fundraising
No fundraising by students for the school, or for any school organization, is permitted without the approval of the Principal. Door-to-door solicitation and plans involving substantial profit for a third party will usually not be approved. All funds raised by students or for students must be deposited into Student Activity Accounts per the appropriate procedures. For any request for exceptions, please contact the Principal or Business Office.

Gambling
Card playing and other games of chance are not permitted at TMS or at any TMS sponsored event. Similarly, any game or activity that involves gambling or the exchange of money or other items of value is also prohibited.

Technology Information and Expectations

Technology and Personal Devices

Technology can be a powerful tool to enhance learning and promote communication. Students may bring personal devices to school, but these devices are *for learning purposes only* during the school day and school-sponsored activities. Personal devices may include tablets, netbooks, laptops, e-readers, cell phones, cameras and portable music players. If a student brings a personal device to school, he or she may bring it only to those classes in which teachers have given specific permission.

Technology and Internet-Enabled Devices

Personal internet-enabled devices, such as cell phones, smart watches, and earbuds, are the responsibility of student owners, who must adhere to the school's expectations in order to foster a safe community where students are present and engaged.

Student use of internet-enabled devices is prohibited during the school day in all locations (morning locations, classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, recess field, bathrooms, etc.). If a parent needs to send a communication to their child during the school day, parents need to contact the school's main office and leave a message with the administrative assistant. If a student needs to contact a parent during the school day, they can ask for permission to use the phone in the TMS Main Office.

Expectations/Guidelines:

1. Before entering the school building, students will power their devices OFF and remove headphones/earbuds.
2. Students will store their devices (cell phone, smart watch, etc.) in their lockers. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure their locker is locked.
3. Students may only use their devices for educational purposes with faculty permission. Using camera, video, or audio features is restricted to approved educational activities. Unauthorized postings of any student, teacher, or faculty member will result in disciplinary action and may have legal consequences.
4. Students must ensure that their online behavior, comments, and postings, during or after school hours, adhere to TMS student expectations and do not violate our school bullying or harassment policies.
5. The administration may grant exceptions. Examples of exceptions include when a device is used to manage a student's health care, when a device is used for educational purposes explicitly outlined in an IEP or 504 Plan, unique academically appropriate uses as determined by the classroom teacher, or other special circumstances explicitly approved by the administration.

Any student found in violation of these protocols will progress through the following tiered disciplinary actions:

1. ***First Offense:*** **Warning**: The student will be asked to turn the device off and must place their internet-enabled device(s) in their locker. Refusal to comply with the warning will result in additional disciplinary consequences.
2. ***Subsequent Offense(s):*** **Teacher and Administrator Intervention:** The classroom teacher will communicate concern regarding the use of cell phones in the classroom to the student's home. The classroom teacher will also complete a behavior referral to administration for further follow up. Administration will meet with the student and will issue disciplinary follow up for unauthorized use of a cell phone in class. Administrator follow up and discipline for student cell phone use will be based on a review of the current student's disciplinary history and past infractions, including repeated cell phone use violations.
3. ***Continued Offense(s):*** **Device Confiscation:** Repeated misuse of the device(s) may result in administration confiscating the student's device(s). The administration will determine the long-term parameters (such as a phone plan, loss of privileges, parent conference and device pick up, etc.) for any student who repeatedly violates the policy.

TMS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items, including personal internet-enabled devices in the custody of the main office due to the implementation of consequences. Lost, stolen, or damaged items may be reported to the Westwood Police Department.

Members of the TMS community must also adhere to the WPS Technology Contract for Families and Students

CLEAR: Considerate, Legal & Ethical, Appropriate and Responsible

Considerate: People in our community reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Digital communication should be respectful, polite and considerate of others.

Legal & Ethical: Respect copyright laws by copying media including text, music and videos only with permission and by crediting and citing the source where the information was found. It is a good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it. Respect the privacy of others, ask permission before taking photographs, video or audio recordings. Illegally copied or downloaded software, files, pictures, music or games may not be used on WPS computers.

Appropriate: School technology is used for educational purposes and only appropriate words and images may be used and viewed. If inappropriate material is viewed or received, it is the responsibility of the recipient to delete them.

Responsible: Ensure that care is taken with all hardware, software, shared resources (i.e. printers, scanners) and use of the school network, so as to prevent damage or misuse whether intentional or not; your actions should not inhibit the work of others. Personal information and passwords will be kept private.

If you see someone not being CLEAR, report the abuse/misuse to a responsible adult.

TMS Academic Information and Expectations

Curriculum

The Thurston Middle School's curriculum offers core courses in language arts, math, science, social studies, and world language (Gr. 7 & 8). Core classes meet every day. In addition, a variety of exploratory (arts) subjects are offered at each grade level, including art, band, chorus, culinary arts and consumer education, drama, health, technology, music, and physical education. Specific course syllabi are available on the school's web site.

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Westwood Public Schools, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building Principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

Teams

Thurston has a team structure that includes two sixth, seventh and eighth grade teams and an arts team. Teachers and counselors meet as teams several times each week to discuss student progress and to plan team activities. This structure offers children a sense of physical and emotional security and enables students, teachers and parents to work collaboratively. It also facilitates interdisciplinary instruction, which invites students to discover connections and relationships among content areas. To discuss your child's performance in a specific subject, please contact your child's teacher. To discuss broader issues that may affect your child's overall performance, please contact your child's team leader or guidance counselor.

TMS Academic Schedule(s)

TMS 10-Day Rotation Schedule

Daily Schedule

Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
7:35-7:45	Arrival/Grab & Go Breakfast (10)				
7:40-7:45	Transition to Advisory Classes (5)				
7:45-8:00	ADVISORY (15)				
8:00-9:00	CORE CLASS (60)	8:00-9:00	CORE CLASS (60)	8:00-9:00	CORE CLASS (60)
9:00-10:00	CORE CLASS (60)	9:00-10:15 (75)	EXPLORATORIES 9:00-9:37 (37) 9:38-10:15 (37)	9:00-10:00	CORE CLASS (60)
10:00-11:00	CORE CLASS (60)	10:15-11:15	CORE CLASS (60)	10:00-10:40	W.I.N (40)
11:00-11:40	W.I.N. (40)	11:15-12:15	CORE CLASS (60)	10:40-11:55 (75)	EXPLORATORIES 10:40-11:17 (37) 11:18-11:55 (37)
11:40-12:10	LUNCH (30) Recess - 11:40-11:55 Lunch 11:55 - 12:10	12:15-12:45	LUNCH (30) Recess - 12:15-12:30 Lunch 12:30-12:45	11:55-12:25	LUNCH (30) Recess - 11:55-12:10 Lunch 12:10-12:25
12:10-1:07	CORE CLASS (57)	12:45 - 1:42	CORE CLASS (57)	12:25-1:25	CORE CLASS (60)
1:07-2:22 (75)	EXPLORATORIES 1:07-1:44 (37) 1:45-2:22 (37)	1:42-2:22	W.I.N. (40)	1:25 - 2:22	CORE CLASS (57)

Recess (15)		Lunch (15)		Exploratories	
11:40-11:55	Grade 6	11:55-12:10	Grade 6	9:00-10:15	Grade 7
11:55-12:10	Grade 8	12:10-12:25	Grade 8	10:40-11:55	Grade 8
12:15-12:30	Grade 7	12:30-12:45	Grade 7	1:07-2:22	Grade 6

Early Release Schedule

Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
7:30-7:40	Arrival/Grab & Go Breakfast (10)				
7:40-7:45	Transition to Advisory Classes (5)				
7:45-8:15	ADVISORY (30)				
8:15-8:55	CORE CLASS (40)	8:15-9:15 (60)	EXPLORATORIES 8:15-8:45 (30) 8:45-9:15 (30)	8:15-8:55	CORE CLASS (40)
8:55-9:35	CORE CLASS (40)	9:15-9:55	CORE CLASS (40)	8:55-9:35	CORE CLASS (40)
9:35-10:15	CORE CLASS (40)	9:55-10:35	CORE CLASS (40)	9:35-10:15	CORE CLASS (40)
10:15-11:00	W.I.N. (45)	10:35-11:15	CORE CLASS (40)	10:15-11:15 (60)	EXPLORATORIES 10:15-10:45 (30) 10:45-11:15 (30)
11:00-11:30	LUNCH (30) Recess - 11:00-11:15 Lunch 11:15 - 11:30	11:15-11:45	LUNCH (30) Recess - 11:15-11:30 Lunch 11:30-11:45	11:15-11:55	W.I.N. (40)
11:30-12:10	CORE CLASS (40)	11:45 - 12:25	CORE CLASS (40)	11:55-12:25	LUNCH (30) Recess - 11:55-12:10 Lunch 12:10-12:25
12:10-1:10 (60)	EXPLORATORIES 12:10-12:40 (30) 12:40-1:10 (30)	12:25-1:10	W.I.N. (45)	12:25 - 1:10	CORE CLASS (45)

Recess (15)		Lunch (15)		Exploratories	
11:15-11:30	Grade 6	11:00-11:15	Grade 6	8:15-9:15	Grade 7
12:10-12:25	Grade 8	11:55-12:10	Grade 8	10:15-11:15	Grade 8
11:30-11:45	Grade 7	11:15-11:30	Grade 7	12:10-1:10	Grade 6

Advisory

All students are assigned to an Advisory at the beginning of each morning. Advisory provides a "home base" for students, and time is used to develop social-emotional skills, organizational skills, develop goals, and communicate important information regarding school events and policies.

WIN Block

This is an academic time built into the TMS schedule that allows students to receive instruction at their individual instructional level(s). During this time students will be flexibly grouped by teachers to meet their specific needs.

Physical Education Guidelines

We strongly recommend students wear appropriate clothes and sneakers for physical education.. If a student is unable to participate, a note from a parent/guardian is required. Nonparticipation for a period in excess of three days requires a note from a physician.

Homework

Homework is regularly assigned to all Thurston students. Its purpose is to revisit concepts previously taught, reinforce concepts introduced in class, to promote independent study and time management skills, and to prepare students for the demands of a rigorous, college-preparatory high school. Teams regularly monitor homework load and make an effort to schedule tests and project due dates in order to provide students with the opportunity to give their best effort.

No homework for credit will be assigned during school vacations or during recognized religious holidays, including Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, February Break, April Break, and Good Friday. Work may be assigned during other three-day weekends (e.g., Columbus Day weekend). A modest load of summer reading and math work is also assigned each year.

In keeping with the goal of developing increasing independence, we recommend direct contact between students and teachers about any homework-related questions or challenges. As students move through middle school, we aim to shift the responsibility for communication and advocacy more and more toward students themselves in order to prepare them for a successful transition to high school.

When appropriate, students will be encouraged to use school vacations to catch up if they are behind on school work, including work missed due to a planned or unplanned absence.

TMS Grades and Progress Reports

Reports to Parents

TMS Reporting Dates for: ELA/Math/Science/Social Studies/World Language/Special Education
Culinary Arts Consumer Education/Physical Education/ Health.

SEMESTER 1 (90 days): First day of the semester: September 2nd
Last day of the semester: January 29th

Progress Reports Published to Students and Families: Friday October 30th after 3:00 PM

Semester Grades Published to Students and Families: Friday January 29th after 3:00 PM

SEMESTER 2 (90 days): First day of the semester: February 1st
Last day of the semester: Last Day of School

Progress Reports Published to Students and Families: Friday, April 16th after 3:00 PM

Semester Grades Published to Students and Families: Available after 3:00 PM on the day following the last day of school.

TMS Reporting Dates for Rotating Arts: Art/ Drama/Engineering/Computer Science

Semester	Rotation	Code	Duration	Parent Contact if in danger of failing	Rotation Grades Available in Aspen Portal
Semester 1	Rotation 1	S11	9/2 -10/16 (29 days)	9/25	Friday, 10/23 after 3PM
Semester 1	Rotation 2	S12	10/19-12/4 (31 days)	11/13	Friday, 12/11 after 3PM
Semester 1	Rotation 3	S13	12/7-1/29 (32 days)	1/8	Friday, 2/5 after 3PM
Semester 2	Rotation 1	S21	2/1-3/19 (30 days)	2/26	Thursday, 3/25 after 3PM
Semester 2	Rotation 2	S22	3/22-5/7 (29 days)	4/16	Friday, 5/14 after 3PM
Semester 2	Rotation 3	S23	5/10 - 6/18 (29 days)	5/28	Available after 3:00 PM on the day following the last day of school.

*Rotating Arts Grades will not appear as a published report until the end of the semester, however they will be available for viewing under the Academics Tab. If you need assistance with this please contact aspen@westwood.k12.ma.us

Student Services

School Counselors

Every student is assigned a counselor to help him/her through the year. The counselor's role is varied, and important functions include: acting as the student's advocate, providing direct (counseling) services, and helping parents maintain contact with the school. If you have questions about your child's academic or social progress in school, please call your child's counselor.

School Psychologist

Services through the school psychologist (x2388) are available to students and parents, including psychological services and testing for Special Education.

Access to Mental Health Services

In the following emergency situations, a school psychologist, counselor or school nurse may provide assistance to a student without prior parent/guardian consent: 1) if there is reason to believe a student may pose a danger to others or is at risk for self-harm; 2) if a student has been a victim of injury, exploitation or maltreatment, or 3) if a student is in danger of injury, exploitation or maltreatment. In such cases, the parent/guardian will be contacted and informed of the nature of the intervention as soon as possible.

English Language Learners

The district ensures that students with limited English language proficiency, English Language Learners, fully access the general education curriculum. English Language Learners participate in the regular classroom where teachers adapt instruction, materials and assessments to make grade level content comprehensible. In addition, ELL teachers promote English language development in a one on one or small group setting. The district provides bilingual translators or interpreters, when needed, to facilitate communication between ELL families and the school.

Special Education

Special education, under federal and state mandates, provides services to children from the ages of 3 to 22 who have diagnosed disabilities that meet state-mandated eligibility criteria. These services may include, but are not limited to, specialized instruction, classroom support, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. All learners are included in general education classrooms to the fullest extent possible. Many special education services are provided through collaboration between classroom teachers, special education teachers, and in some cases, instructional assistants.

A student may be referred for a special education evaluation by a parent or any person in a care-giving or professional position concerned with the student's development. The criteria for special education require that the child have a disability as defined by law; that the child is not making effective progress in school as a result of the disability; and that he or she requires specialized instruction or related services in order to access the general curriculum.

For questions regarding special education, please contact the Department Head of Student Services. Additional information is also available online at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals website: http://www.doe.mass.edu/bsea.

Student Organizations & Activities

Tuesday and Thursday Activities at Thurston

Offerings change each year based upon teacher expertise, supervisor availability, and student interest. Information about activities is announced to students and parents and posted on the Thurston website each Fall and Spring. Late buses are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays to students participating in after-school programs at no cost.

Interscholastic Sports

Thurston has several competitive sports teams: football (grade 8), field hockey (grade 8), and volleyball (grade 8). For grades 6-8, there is cross-country in the fall and track in the spring. Sign ups take place online in the fall and spring. There are no try-outs. Students must meet academic and behavior eligibility requirements to participate in sports.

Musicals/Plays

Thurston students may participate in either a 6th grade play or a $7^{th}/8^{th}$ grade musical. Tryout and rehearsal schedules are shared with students and parents via announcements, posters and email each year. Participating students must meet academic and behavior eligibility requirements and be able to attend all performances.

Community-Sponsored Activities

Some after-school programs are offered by *Westwood Youth and Family Services* (781-320-1006).
Many school year and summer programs are offered by the *Westwood Recreation Department* (781-461-0070).

Health Services and Wellness

Overview

The purpose of the Health Room is to provide support for ongoing student health concerns and to assist families in the event of an emergency or the onset of illness during the school day. The Health Room provides advisory and emergency care only. It is not a diagnostic clinic. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any medical condition that may affect a student's health during the school day. Please call the school nurse at x2334 if you have any questions regarding health issues. Information may also be obtained on the Westwood Public Schools website.

Illness, Injuries, and Accidents Occurring in School

Students should report to the Health Room if an illness, injury or accident occurs in school. After first aid has been administered, parents are responsible for contacting their family physician for diagnosis and follow-up care. If a student needs to be dismissed for these reasons, a parent or guardian will be called. In emergency situations, students may be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance.

Emergency Contacts and Health Insurance

Please update your child's emergency contact information as soon as possible at the beginning of each school year. This critical information is used by office and health room staff members to reach you or someone you trust in the event of an emergency. Emergency contacts should be people available to pick up your child when you are not. They should have access to a car and live nearby. **Please contact Thurston's Health Office if a student does not have health insurance.** The state offers low-cost insurance for all children through the age of 18. All information about income is confidential.

New Students, Health Records, and Transfers

All new students are required to have the necessary immunizations and a current physical exam. Students transferring from out of state/country have four (4) months to provide a recent physical exam. Health records of students transferring to another school district will be sent without parental release if the receiving district requests them. If your child is transferring, please inform the school nurse prior to the move (x2334).

Medications

All medication, including over-the-counter medication, must be administered by the school nurse according to the following procedures:

a. A physician's medication order and parental consent form must be on file in the Health Room. These forms must be renewed at the beginning of each school year. A small picture for identification purposes is required for each student receiving medication in school.
b. Medications should be delivered by an adult. If you are unable to bring the medication to school, please call the nurse to arrange delivery. The persons delivering will be required to sign and verify the medication and amount being delivered. No more than a 30-day supply should be delivered.
c. Short-term prescriptions (10 days or less) may be contained in a pharmacy-labeled container in lieu of a doctor's order. A parental consent form is still required.
d. Inhalers and Epi-pens may be carried by students, provided there is a physician's order form and parental consent form on file in the Health Room. Students will be asked to demonstrate proficiency using their inhaler.
e. Lactaid tablets, nasal sprays, eye drops and digestive enzymes may be carried and self-administered by students. Please inform the school nurse if your child is taking one of these.
f. Students requiring an Epi-pen for severe allergic reactions are required to provide the medication, order form and parental consent by the first day of school. All students with an Epi-pen are required to have an Individual Health Plan that is renewed each year.
g. All medication needs to be picked up by the last day of school or it will be destroyed.
h. No student is allowed to carry medication (prescription or over-the-counter) in school unless it falls into categories d. and e. above.

Contagious Disease

A sick student cannot effectively learn and is unable to participate in class in a meaningful way. Keeping a sick child at home helps prevent the spread of illness in the school community and allows the child an opportunity to rest and recover. The recommendations below will help families determine when a sick child should return to school. Please contact the school health office with any questions.

Chicken Pox/Shingles: Notify the school nurse immediately if your child has been diagnosed with having either of these conditions. There are Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines that must govern your child's return to school.

Conjunctivitis: Students may return to school 12 hours after starting antibiotic medication has been started, and as soon as the symptoms of redness and discharge are greatly improved. There are different types of conjunctivitis: viral (no treatment) or bacterial (antibiotic eye medication/drops). Your child should remain home if they develop a fever or continue to have eye symptoms (drainage, redness, itching).

Fever: Fever is defined as 100 degrees or higher. Fevers that are associated with a virus are the lowest in the morning. If your child has a fever in the evening or during the night, they should not attend school the next day. Students should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Student may return to school when:

- Their temperature is below 100 degrees AND
- They have not taken medication to reduce the fever for 24 hours.

Fifth Disease: No isolation period. Please notify the school nurse if it is suspected or diagnosed.

Mononucleosis: No isolation period. Please notify the school nurse if it is suspected or diagnosed.

Pediculosis (Head Lice): Students with lice should go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after beginning appropriate treatment. Nits may stay in hair after treatment, but successful treatment will kill crawling lice.

Immunizations

All immunizations must be up to date as specified by Massachusetts General Law. Parents will be notified by mail of immunizations that are due and the date when documentation must be received. Students without the proper documentation will be excluded from school, in accordance with state law.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has announced that influenza immunization will be required for all children 6 months of age or older who are attending Massachusetts child care, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, and colleges and universities.

Parents/guardians should email documentation of their child's flu shot to their school nurse. We understand that some pediatricians are already scheduling flu shots several weeks out. It may be prudent to contact your pediatrician's office soon or locate a flu clinic. For more information, please see this FAQ provided to districts by MA DESE.

Required Physicals

All grade six students and students transferring to Westwood Public Schools are required to submit a physical dated 6 months prior to entry or within 5 months after entry. Any student who has not submitted a physical by February 1 will be excluded from school. Students participating in interscholastic sports must have documentation of an up-to-date physical exam on file in the health room.

Screenings

The following screenings are performed during the school year. They are required under Massachusetts General Law. If there is any reason a student should not be screened, please notify the school nurse in writing.

Scoliosis: all grades, usually done Jan/Feb in gym classes.
Height, weight and BMI: grade 7, done with scoliosis screening.
Hearing and Vision: all grades

District and State Policies

Code of Conduct

Respect and responsibility make a school an inviting place to learn and grow. There are student expectations to support a climate in which mutual respect and trust can flourish.

Student Responsibility

- I am in school to learn.
- I will be on time and be prepared.
- I am responsible for what I do and say.
- I understand there are consequences for my actions.

Student Respect

- I will show respect for others.
- I will respect the learning process.
- I will show respect for the property of others.

Student Rights

- The classroom is a place for learning.
- School is a safe place, free from physical, verbal, and emotional harm.

Learning about respect and responsibility involves learning to make ethical and moral decisions. These decisions involve thinking about what actions to take and the consequences of those actions.

The following lists of some behaviors that reflect a lack of respect and responsibility for self and others. Disciplinary action may include assignment of detention, loss of privileges, suspension, or exclusion. Grounds for such action include, but are not limited to:

Arson
Assault
Bullying
Cheating
Cutting class
Cutting detention
Destruction of property
Disrespectful behavior/insubordination
Disrupting a school activity or the educational process
Endangering the safety and well-being of others
Fighting
Forgery or fraud
Harassment
Hazing/initiation
Leaving school grounds without permission or without following dismissal procedures
Lying to a faculty member
Plagiarism
Possession, sale, purchase or use of tobacco, nicotine delivery products (e-cigarettes/vaporizers), alcohol, or drugs
Possession of a weapon or dangerous item
Presence in unauthorized areas
Profanity/inappropriate language
Roughhousing
Theft
Truancy
Vandalism
Violation of a school policy

Detention

Teachers can detain students after school for disciplinary matters. Students and parents should have advance notice of detention. For more serious infractions, office detention may be assigned. Detention takes priority over that day's extracurricular activities. Detention begins immediately following the end of the regular school day and ends at 3:30 p.m., unless otherwise arranged with the teacher or Principal.

Saturday School

Students may be assigned a Saturday School session as a consequence for violating school rules. A Saturday School session may only be assigned by a school administrator and is considered a significant disciplinary action. Parents or guardians will be given advance notice when their student has been assigned a Saturday School session. Saturday School sessions last four hours and are run on specific predetermined dates throughout the school year. Students attending Saturday School may bring school work to be completed during the session and/or reading materials. Students may not access their cell phones during Saturday School.

Suspension

A suspension is a short term or long term removal from regular classroom activities. Short-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for 10 consecutive days or less. Long-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than 10 consecutive days, or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year.

A suspended student is restricted from entering the school buildings, or coming onto school grounds; and a suspended student may not participate in any school sponsored activities or functions during the suspension period. The Principal or his/her designee has the sole responsibility for determining who is suspended. The suspended student may not be permitted to return to school until a parental conference has been held.

In-school suspension

At the discretion of the Principal, in-school suspension may also be imposed for violation of the student code of conduct. In-school suspension means the student is removed from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than 10 consecutive school days. In-school suspension for less than 10 days shall not be considered a short-term suspension. An in-school suspension of more than 10 days shall be deemed a long-term suspension.

Parent

The legal guardian of the student. In the case where a student's parents are not married or are separated, the parent, for purposes of this policy, is the parent with legal custody. If both parents have joint custody, then the parent is the one with both legal and physical custody of the student. In the event that the parents have joint legal and physical custody of the student, then the parent, for purposes of this policy, is the parent with regular contact with the schools.

Student Due Process Rights

In administering discipline, school officials will be careful to observe the right to due process under the law for each student. The nature of the violation determines the due process that school officials follow.

1. <u>DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON, POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, ASSAULT ON SCHOOL STAFF AND/OR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH OR CONVICTED OF A FELONY (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½)</u>.

   In-School Suspension:
   For an in-school suspension, the Principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the Principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the

Principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The Principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the Principal is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.

The Principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the Principal, if such meeting has not already occurred. The Principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent.

Short Term Disciplinary Sanctions:
Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less, the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond. In the event that the Principal or designee determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

Long Term Disciplinary Sanctions:
Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parents/guardians will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, a written decision will be issued. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long term suspension or expulsion from school to the Superintendent. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76, §17, M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ½.

2. DUE PROCESS RIGHTS FOR STUDENTS CHARGED WITH OTHER VIOLATIONS (M.G.L. c. 71, §37H ¾)

Notice and Principal's meeting:
For any suspension under this section, the Principal or a designee shall provide notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home. The student shall receive written notice of the charges and the opportunity to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss charges and reasons for the suspension and/or exclusion prior to suspension/exclusion taking effect.

The Principal or designee shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. The meeting may take place without the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) so long as the Principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

The purpose of the Principal's hearing is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

The Principal shall determine the extent of the rights to be afforded the student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the disciplinary offense.

Short-term Suspension
The Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the Principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

Long Term Suspension
In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall also have the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
If present, the Parent shall have an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Based on the evidence, the Principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The Principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the Principal and the parent.

If the student is suspended for more than 10 days for a single infraction or for more than 10 days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the notice will include written notification of the right to appeal to the Superintendent and the process for appealing in English and the primary language spoken in the student’s home. No student will be suspended for greater than 90 days, beginning on the first day the student is removed from the building.

Emergency Removal
The Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The Principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal.

In the event of an emergency removal, the Principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal. The Principal shall provide written notice to the student and parent as provided above, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal as provided above, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing,

before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent.

The Principal shall render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements as described above. In the event of an emergency removal from school, the Principal will not release the student until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Opportunity for Academic Progress During Suspension/Expulsion

Any student receiving in-school suspension, short-term suspension, or long-term suspension shall have the opportunity to make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal from the classroom or school.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive days shall have an opportunity to receive educational services that will enable the student to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the school-wide educational services plan.

Appeal

The parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have 5 calendar days following the effective date of the out of school suspension or expulsion to submit a written request for an appeal to the Superintendent but may be granted an extension of time of up to 7 additional calendar days. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent will hold a hearing with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) within 3 school days or the student's request for an appeal. The time may be extended up to 7 additional calendar days if requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Superintendent's hearing may proceed without the parent(s)/guardian(s) if a good faith effort was made to include parent(s)/guardian(s). The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

At the hearing, the superintendent shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. Students shall have all of the rights afforded to students at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension. The Superintendent will issue a written decision within 5 calendar days of the hearing. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the Principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The Superintendent's decision is the final decision of the district.

Security Cameras

Westwood Public Schools, in accordance with School Committee policy ECAF (see full policy here), maintains security cameras in school district buildings, school transportation vehicles, and on its property to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment, and to monitor unauthorized individuals in or on school property.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras shall be limited to school administrators (Superintendent/designee, School Principal/designee). Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system as the situation requires.

Bullying Policy

The Westwood Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

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

"**Perpetrator**" is defined as a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying or retaliation.

Certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

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

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.
For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber-bullying.
Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the District;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the District if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action. Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible. A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school Principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school Principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged perpetrator, staff members, students and/or witnesses. Support staff shall assess an alleged target´s needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school Principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator, the Principal shall consult with the school´s resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.
Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law.

Retaliation

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

Target Assistance

The Westwood Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and perpetrators, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying. Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.
Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Westwood Public Schools website. The bullying intervention plan is linked HERE.

Academic Integrity

The Thurston community believes in the values of honesty, personal accountability, and respect for the rights of others. The Middle School staff will work in cooperation with parents to help students understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own work. Students should develop a thorough understanding of what academic integrity means, including knowing what plagiarism means and how to use sources correctly. Students must credit all material copied, generated, or gathered from CD-ROM, Internet, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, or software sources, just as they would cite references from printed materials and books. Examples of academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to the following *(Taken from School Committee Policy IA)*:

- communicating with another student during an examination or quiz;
- copying material during an examination or quiz or copying another person's assignment;
- allowing a student to copy from one's examination, quiz or assignment;
- using unauthorized notes, tools (eg. AI), or devices on quizzes, tests, or assignments;
- obtaining, removing or accepting a copy of and/or information about an examination or quiz without the knowledge and consent of the teacher;
- submitting a paper or project which is not entirely the student's work (i.e., plagiarism);
- changing answers and seeking credit on an assignment or examination after the work has been graded and returned;
- altering a teacher's grade system.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to involve parents in every case of cheating, but they must do so in the case of a repeat offense. Repeated offenses can result in disciplinary action, including suspension.

Discipline of Special Education Students

1. Discipline of special education students is governed by state and federal law and the regulations promulgated thereunder. These include the IDEA, 20 USC 1401 et.seq., its implementing regulations, 34 CFR 300 et seq., and M.G.L. c. 71B and its implementing regulations, 603 CMR 28.00.
2. Students eligible for special education who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current educational placement for up to ten school days per year, to the extent that such removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability.
3. Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten school days in a school year, this constitutes a "change of placement" and invokes certain procedural rights including but not limited to:
    i. A review by the IEP Team of the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, which is referred to a Manifestation Determination,
    ii. If the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability the student's Team will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior intervention plan, provided that such an assessment was not already conducted before the behavior occurred. In the situation where an assessment was already conducted and a behavior intervention plan is already in place, the Team will review the plan and revise it accordingly. The student will also be returned to his educational placement unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.
    iii. If the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be removed from his educational placement to the same extent that a regular education student would be removed, provided that the special education student must continue to receive educational services to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP. Additionally, the student should receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan to prevent the behavior from happening again.
4. School personnel may order a change in educational placement of a special education student to an appropriate Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the student's behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability if the student: (i) carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; (ii) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; or (iii) has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.
5. For more information regarding the rights of special education students see the Massachusetts Department of Education's Procedural Safeguards Notice, which is available in many languages, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/. Additionally, copies of the state and federal special education law are available online at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals website, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/bsea/ or can be requested from the Director of Student Services.

Additional Disciplinary Procedures

M.G.L CHAPTER 71, SECTION 37H (EXPULSION/EXCLUSION)

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

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

(c.) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) will be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the Principal.
After said hearing, a Principal may, at his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b)

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

(e.) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

M.G. L. 37H1/2 FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION OF STUDENT; SUSPENSION; EXPULSION; RIGHT TO APPEAL

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter 76:

(1.) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said Principal or headmaster if said Principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process of appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2.) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the Principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such Principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such a decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such a student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

Physical Restraint

The Westwood Public Schools is committed to providing an orderly, safe environment, conducive to learning for all students and staff members. WPS complies with 603 CMR 46.00 regarding the prevention of physical restraint. Visit this website for further information about the policy.

Harassment and Discrimination

The following laws are the basis for the non-discrimination and harassment policies: M.G.L. c. 76 s. 5; M.G.L. c. 151B s.3A; M.G.L. c. 151B s. 4; Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Westwood Public Schools, in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political

affiliation, appearance or life style and language preference in educational programs and activities of the public schools. This policy reflects that:

1. Each person shall be guaranteed the right to an education consistent with the goals and policies of the school system.
2. Each person shall be guaranteed freedom from harassment, prejudicial comments or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, gender, age, sexual preference, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political affiliation, appearance or lifestyle, and language preference in educational programs and activities of the public school.

The Westwood School Committee is committed to maintaining an educational atmosphere in which every student can pursue scholastic achievement and personal fulfillment. All harassment is considered destructive behavior that interferes with the educational process, and shall not be tolerated. If a school department employee is accused of sexual harassment by a student, it shall be reported, subject to the provisions of Chapter ll9, Sect. 51A of the Massachusetts General Laws, to the Principal or Superintendent of Schools.

The Westwood School Committee maintains a neutral position regarding students' interpersonal relationships. However, the Committee considers embraces, intimate touching and other physical actions of a personal nature as inappropriate in an educational setting. When these actions are unwelcome, they definitely constitute sexual harassment. The purpose of the following policy is to define sexual harassment, establish appropriate standards of behavior for the student body, and set guidelines for recognizing and dealing with sexual harassment. A separate policy dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace for school department employees was approved by the School Committee on February 11, 1993.
Definition: **Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal and nonverbal actions and physical conduct of a sexual nature when such behavior unreasonably interferes with school performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.**

Sexual harassment may include:

- Assault, threats, inappropriate touching, intentionally blocking movement, comments, gestures, looks or written communications of a suggestive or derogatory nature;
- Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome;
- Leering, voyeurism, or stalking, obscene gestures, actions or materials;
- Displaying lewd or sexually explicit photographs or other materials, including clothing.

This is not a list of all possible types of sexual harassment; it is examples of actions that may be defined as sexual harassment. Of course, there are other actions not listed here that may be sexual harassment. In most cases, the student who feels sexually harassed makes the judgment that the actions are sexual harassment. That individual's feelings and reactions to inappropriate behavior determine whether sexual harassment has taken place.

Standards of Conduct
The School Committee expects students to demonstrate a standard of conduct based on respect for all other students, regardless of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion or creed, disability, choice of association, political affiliation, appearance or life style, and language preference. Harassment is a violation of an individual's personal dignity. Anyone who engages in harassment violates School Committee policy.

General Guidelines
1. Problems and complaints regarding sexual discrimination and harassment should be resolved quickly and fairly. When possible, such problems and complaints should be resolved directly between the student and harasser.
2. Students who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against should inform an advocate of the incident first. Any adult staff member in the building may serve as an advocate for a student reporting harassment or discrimination. The names and telephone numbers of advocates will be published yearly in the Student Handbook. For a complete listing of staff members, please see pages 1 and 3 of the Student Handbook.
3. Advocates must immediately inform the Principal of any complaint of harassment or discrimination. Also, if one student tells another student or school department employee about sexual harassment, the student or school department employee should inform an advocate of the incident.
4. Retaliation in any form for the filing of a complaint or the reporting of sexual harassment is prohibited and will result in serious disciplinary action.

Procedure for Dealing with Harassment and Discrimination

Any individual subjected to harassment or discrimination may, if he or she chooses, confront the harasser directly in order to resolve the complaint on a personal level.

If the student does not want to deal directly with the harasser, or cannot resolve the matter with the harasser, the student should **immediately** report the conduct to an advocate. The advocate must always take every report of harassment/discrimination seriously and respond immediately. In appropriate circumstances, the advocate may suggest sitting down with the harasser and the student together to work out a resolution.

If the student decides not to meet the harasser, the following steps may be taken:

1. The student may choose to write a letter with an attached response sheet listing:
    a. The exact description of the behavior, including when and where it happened;
    b. A description of how the behavior made the student feel (for example embarrassed, humiliated, angry);
    c. A request that the behavior stop because it is harassment/discrimination and is against the law;
2. The advocate should assist the student in drafting the letter.
3. The letter should be signed and dated by the student. The student or the advocate should deliver one copy of the letter to the harasser and one copy to the Principal's office.

The alleged harasser should have an opportunity to respond in writing. The advocates will be available to assist the alleged harasser as well.

If the behavior does not stop, or if the student chooses not to write a letter or confront the harasser directly, the school administration will conduct an investigation. During the investigation, the school administration shall:

1. Provide the student and the alleged harasser an advocate at all discussions regarding the case;
2. Keep the investigation group as small as possible to protect the rights of both parties and to prevent the investigation from becoming overly publicized.

If the harassment/discrimination does not stop after the harasser has been disciplined, the advocate should coordinate with the Administration in order to impose more severe disciplinary sanctions.

The Administration has the right to report a complaint of harassment/discrimination to the appropriate authorities outside the school department.

Further information about the procedures for response to Harassment or Discrimination can be found in the Westwood Public Schools Protocol for Reporting and Investigating Harassment, Discrimination and Retaliation.

Student Hazing Policy

M.G.L. C.269, S.17, Crime of Hazing: Definition; Penalty
Whoever is a Principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.
The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or any other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage or drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.
Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action. Added by St.1985, c.536; amended by St.1987, c.665.

C.269, S.18. Duty to Report Hazing
Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law

enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars. Added by St.1985, c.536; amended by St. 1987, c.665.

C.269, S.19. Hazing Statutes to Be Provided; Statement of Compliance and Discipline Policy Required
Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgment stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams, or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of regents and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report. Added by St.1985, c.536; amended by St.1987, c.665.

Section 504--Student and Parent Rights in Identification, Evaluation and Placement

The following is a description of student and parent rights granted by federal law. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO…

1. Have your child take part in and receive benefits from public education programs without discrimination based on a disability.
2. Have the school district advise you as to your rights under federal law.
3. Receive notice with respect to identification, evaluation or placement of your child.
4. Have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with other students to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make reasonable accommodations to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities.
5. Have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to students without disabilities.
6. Have your child receive special education and related services if s/he is found to be eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (PL101-476), or to receive reasonable accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Have evaluation, educational and placement decisions made based upon a variety of information sources, and by individuals who know the student, the evaluation data and placement options.
8. Have transportation provided to a school placement setting at no greater cost to you than would be incurred if the student were placed in a program operated by the school district.
9. Give your child an equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities offered by the school district.

10. Examine all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program and placement.
11. Obtain copies of educational records at a reasonable cost if the fee would effectively deny you access to the records.
12. Receive a response from the school district to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of your child's records.
13. Request amendment of your child's educational records if there is reasonable cause to believe that they are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy rights of your child. If the school district refuses this request, it shall notify you within a reasonable time and advise you of the right to a hearing.
14. Request mediation or an impartial due process hearing related to decisions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, educational program or placement. You and your child may take part in the hearing and have an attorney represent you.
15. Ask for payment of reasonable attorney fees if you are successful on your claim.
16. File a local grievance.

The person in the school district who is responsible for Section 504 compliance is: the K-12 Director of Student Services (781-326-7500 x1345). You may contact any of the following state and federal agencies:

1. The United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights 33 Arch Street Boston, MA 02110
2. The Bureau of Special Education Appeals, 350 Main St. Malden, MA 02149
3. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place 6th Floor, Room 601 Boston, MA 02108
4. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, John F. Kennedy Federal Building, 475 Government Center Boston, MA 02203

Technology (Acceptable Use)

Purpose

The Westwood Public Schools will provide access for employees and students to the system/network, including access to external networks for educational purposes. Educational purposes are defined as classroom activities, career and professional development, the formation of learning networks over the web and high quality self discovery activities of an educational nature. The purpose of the system/network is to assist in preparing students for success in life and work by providing access to a wide range of information and applications as well as the ability to communicate and collaborate with others. The system/network will be used to increase communication (staff, parent, and student), enhance productivity, and assist staff in upgrading existing skills and acquiring new skills through a broader exchange of information. The system/network will also be utilized to provide information to the community, including parents, government agencies, and businesses.

Availability

The Superintendent or designee will implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes. Access to the system/network, including external networks, will be made available to employees and students for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations and procedures. Access to the system/network is a privilege, not a right. All users will be required to acknowledge receipt and understanding of all administrative regulations and procedures governing use of the system and will agree in writing to comply with such regulations and procedures. Noncompliance with applicable regulations and procedures may result in suspension or termination of user privileges and other disciplinary actions consistent with the policies of the Westwood Public Schools. Violations of law may result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Westwood Public Schools. The Superintendent or designee will develop and implement administrative regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with the purposes and mission of the Westwood Public Schools as well as with law and policy governing copyright.

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources by students and employees are not considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes. Furthermore, the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email is a public record. Consequently, copies of all sent and received emails are retained for review and retrieval by designated school officials as needed.

Filtered Access

The Westwood Public Schools will use available technology to filter inappropriate materials. Although this filtering technology is useful and, in most cases effective, staff will need to provide on-site supervision, to the best of their ability, of students using the Internet. The filtering technology is not a substitute for staff supervision. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Education
The Superintendent, Principals, or designee will ensure that age-appropriate training is provided to students who use the Westwood Public School system/network. The training provided will be designed to promote the district's commitment to:

The standards of acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the Westwood Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy;
Student safety with regard to:
safety on the Internet;
appropriate behavior while online, on social networking web sites, and in chat rooms;
and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Compliance With The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the District's acceptable use policies.

Liability
The Westwood Public Schools will not be liable for users' inappropriate use of electronic resources or violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The Westwood Public Schools will not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on external networks.

Student Records

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school district to maintain information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parents or legal guardian and/or the student in accordance with law, and be protected as confidential information.

The Superintendent provides for the proper administration of student records consistent with federal and state law requirements. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and corresponding regulations is a federal law that provides two basic rights to parents in regards to student records (20 U.S.C. § 1232; 34 C.F.R. § 99):

1. The right to inspect and review their child's education records
2. The right to prevent unauthorized persons from seeing the same records

The Commonwealth also has promulgated state regulations governing student records
(603 CMR 23.00) that are designed to ensure parents and students of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of said records, and to direct the school district personnel regarding their responsibilities under state law.

Under federal law, FERPA, education records are defined as those records, files, documents, and other materials which contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution.
Under state law and regulations 603 CMR 23.00, school records are defined as the transcript and the temporary record, including all information recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public school.

Transcript and Temporary Records

The following is a summary of the current Student Records Regulations. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure parental and student rights are protected regarding the confidentiality, inspection, amendment and destruction of student records. For students aged 14-17, or in ninth grade or above, these rights shall be exercised by the student and his/her parent, or by either acting alone. If a student is 18 or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights, although a parent may continue to exercise them until expressly limited by a student who has filed the appropriate form. The student record shall consist of the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript shall contain records that constitute a minimum amount of data and shall be limited to the name, address and phone number of the student and of the parent or guardian, the student's birth date, course

titles, grades, grade level completed and year completed. The temporary record shall consist of all information not in the transcript that is of importance to the educational process. The transcript shall be maintained by the School Department and may only be destroyed sixty years following a student's graduation, transfer or withdrawal from the school system. The temporary record shall be destroyed within seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system.

Access

The eligible student and his/her parent, or either one as applicable, shall have access to the student record and may obtain copies of any information in the record. Authorized school personnel shall also have access to student records. In general, no information in a student record shall be disseminated without the specific, informed, written consent of the eligible student or the parent. Please note that federal student record regulations under FERPA also apply. A log shall be kept to record the dissemination of any information in the student record. A parent has the right to see a copy of his/her student's academic record and can exercise this right by writing to the school Principal or guidance counselor.

Amendment

The eligible student and his/her parent, or either one, has the right to add information or other relevant material to the record. They also have the right to request the deletion or amendment of any information in the record. The school Principal or his/her designee is required to make a decision regarding such a request which may be appealed first to the Superintendent and then to the School Committee.

"Parent" shall mean a student's father, mother, guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother or guardian. The term, as used in these regulations, shall include a divorced or separated parent, subject to any written agreement between parents or court order governing the rights of such a parent that is brought to the attention of the school Principal (M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H). Unless notified by the custodial parent to the contrary, and subject to the specific regulation below, the noncustodial parent may have access to the same information as the custodial parent.

Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

1. A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:
    a. the parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
    b. the parent has been denied visitation, or
    c. the parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
    d. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
2. The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
3. In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school Principal.
4. Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the Principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).
5. The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
6. Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

Release of Student Information

The school may release for publication a student's name, class, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, honors and awards. Parents who do not wish to have such information released to the news media should indicate "No" in Aspen.

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(g), the school may provide student record information (including the special education record) to a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer without the consent of the eligible student or parent, so long as the parent receives annual notification of this law/regulation.

Right to Request That Student Information Be Withheld From Armed Forces Recruiters
The National Defense Authorization Act requires that school officials provide military recruiters with student information including names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Parents and students of majority age have a right to request that their information be withheld from military recruiters. To do so, notify in writing your request to your child's Principal.

Complaints
Parents and eligible students have a right to file a complaint concerning alleged failures of a school district to comply with the requirements of the student records laws and regulations with the Massachusetts Department of Education, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148.

Complaints relative to federal statutes and regulations governing student records may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-5920.

Memorandum of Understanding

The Westwood Public Schools has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Westwood Police Department. This document is available by contacting the Superintendent's Office at 781 326-7500 x1341.

Drug Free Zone

By Massachusetts law, the area within one thousand yards of the school is a drug free zone by agreement between the Westwood Police Department and the School Committee. Any drug offenses in this area carry special and severe penalties including suspension and being reported to the police.

Though possessing or being under the influence of a controlled substance and/or alcohol on school grounds or at school-sponsored events is forbidden, no student who voluntarily seeks aid or assistance in dealing with a substance abuse problem from any school staff member shall be subject to suspension or other disciplinary action on that account, provided that the student immediately avails himself/herself of the appropriate aid and assistance.