

2025-2026
Petersham Center School



Parent/Student Handbook

**PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL
MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT
R. C. Mahar Regional and School Union 73**

Mission:

The R. C. Mahar Regional and School Union 73 Public Schools mission is to provide all students a challenging, comprehensive learning experience through high quality instruction that supports each student's academic, social, and emotional development to prepare students to thrive in a democratic and technological global society for all of their future endeavors.

Vision:

It is the vision of the R. C. Mahar Regional and School Union 73 Public Schools to prepare and motivate our students for a rapidly changing world by instilling in them critical thinking skills, a call to social justice, a global perspective, and a respect for themselves, their community, the nation, and the world.

Core Values:

Respect
Responsibility
Communication
Integrity
Achievement

OBJECTIVES OF THE PETERSHAM CENTER SCHOOL

1. The students will be provided with a curriculum that introduces them to basic skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve.
2. The students will be provided with challenges and opportunities to expand their knowledge, interests, and cultural awareness lifelong
3. The students will be guaranteed a curriculum that allows achievement for all; a curriculum that provides for individual differences; socially, physically, mentally, and emotionally.
4. The students will be provided with experiences and opportunities to acquire the ability to make responsible decisions and to find positive solutions to problems.
5. The students will be made aware of the importance of being a productive member of our democratic society and will be provided the history, values, and ideals upon which our nation was founded.
6. The student will be encouraged to respect and cherish individual differences among themselves and others; learning to recognize and accept their potentials and limitations.
7. The students will be aided in developing a positive self-image and in becoming self-disciplined.
8. The students will develop an appreciation for using leisure time productively for physical, intellectual, creative, and social activities
9. The students will be encouraged to develop a desire for life-long learning.
10. The students will be provided with experiences that encourage them to love, enjoy, and respect their natural environment.
11. The students will be provided with experiences to prepare them for the transition from the Petersham Center School to Middle/High school.
12. The students will be guaranteed a school administration, faculty, and support staff that will uphold the philosophy and objectives of the Center School.

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

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

THE CODE OF CONDUCT for Orange Elementary, Petersham Center School, and Ralph C. Mahar Regional Schools are based upon the laws, rules, regulations, and policies that seek to allow access to education for all while protecting the due process rights of the individual. Discipline, as defined by the Code, must have the qualities of understanding, fairness, flexibility, and consistency. It is the responsibility of the school personnel, students, parents/guardians, and the community to contribute to a school atmosphere that promotes a safe, healthy, and supportive whole-school environment that is conducive to learning. Preventive and positive discipline is a shared responsibility for students, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians, and the community. The Code of Conduct is intended to be instructive, not punitive, and is based on the principles of preventative and positive discipline (i.e. interventions, skill-building, and consequences) will be aimed at addressing the causes of misbehavior, resolving conflicts, meeting students' needs, and keeping students in school. In addition, the Code is intended to

create clear expectations and graduated levels of support and intervention for all students with consequences for misbehavior that are individualized, consistent, reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and that match the severity of the student's misbehavior. Our schools within the Consolidated Districts recognize the importance of individual student growth and development within a safe environment that supports and encourages learning. To help maintain that environment, the Code of Student Conduct will:

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

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

The Code of Student Conduct is in force:

During regular school hours. Portal to portal including when students are being transported on a school bus. At such times and places including, but not necessarily limited to, school-sponsored events, field trips, athletic functions, bus stops, and other activities where school administrators have jurisdiction over students.

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

WHAT PREVENTIVE MEASURES ARE EMPHASIZED IN THE CODE OF CONDUCT?

The mission of our schools is to support academic achievement and to develop self-discipline. Therefore the measures emphasized in the Code of Conduct are incremental with the goal of using the least extreme measure that can resolve the discipline problem. In the past, disruptive students and the teachers involved in the incident were not given the opportunity to interact prior

to a student's return to the classroom; in fact, teachers often did not know when a student would return from a suspension.

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

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

DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Social Suspension: Exclusion from all extra curricular activities, included but not limited to: field trips, in school events, certain specials classes, extra recesses, special programs, etc.

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

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

Elementary 1-3 school days*

Secondary 1-4 school days

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

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

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

Elementary 3-6 school days*

Secondary 4-9 school days

Long-term suspensions may be served in school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fragrance-Free School: Exposure to perfumes or other scented products can trigger very serious health reactions in individuals with asthma, allergies, migraines, or multiple chemical sensitivities.

Student Discipline – Formal Due Process Procedures

In administering discipline, school staff and administrators will be careful to observe the right to due process under the law for each student. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not constitute a suspension for purposes of applicable disciplinary procedures.

1. Due process rights of students charged with possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of school staff and students charged with or convicted of a felony (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and , M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ - also referred to as "statutory offenses.").

- **Interim Short Term Disciplinary Removal:** In limited situations where a student is charged with a violation of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or is subject to suspension in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2, and is determined by the principal to present an immediate threat to persons, property, or the orderly educational environment of the school such that the student's immediate removal is deemed warranted and appropriate, the student may be removed from school by the principal on an interim, short-term basis for ten (10) school days or less pending a formal hearing to consider the student's long-term suspension or expulsion. Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's interim suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less pending a long-term suspension/expulsion hearing, the student will be given oral notice of the offense with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond. In the event that the principal determines that the student will be suspended from school on an interim, short-term basis pending a formal hearing to consider the student's possible long-term suspension or expulsion, the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing. Such interim, short-term removals shall not be subject to appeal.

- **Disciplinary Sanctions and Appeals:** Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension or expulsion from school for possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault on school staff and/or due to a felony charge, for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the student and the parents/guardians will be given written notice in English and in the primary language of the

student's home of a principal's hearing at which the student and parent/guardian have the right to be represented by an attorney (at private expense), to examine the evidence against the student, and to present witnesses and documentary evidence in the student's defense. Following this hearing, a written decision will be issued.

The student and 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 suspended on a long-term basis or expelled in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For suspensions or expulsions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. If the appeal is not submitted to the superintendent within 5 calendar days, they may deny the appeal or allow the appeal at his or her discretion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed by the principal shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½.

All proceedings conducted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½ shall be conducted by the principal and may not be delegated to a designee. All appeals of suspensions or expulsions imposed by the principal in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and/or 37H ½ shall be conducted by the Superintendent and may not be delegated to a designee.

2. Due-process rights for students charged with other school rules violations (Non-Statutory Offenses - M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ ; 603 CMR 53.00)

(i) Applicable Definitions:

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

Principal: The instructional administrative leader of a public school or the principal's designee for purposes of school disciplinary matters.

School-wide Education Service Plan: The document developed by a principal, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, § 21, that includes a list of education services available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days.

Superintendent: The chief executive officer of the District employed by the School Committee or the Superintendent's for purposes of conducting a student disciplinary appeal.

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than 90 school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½ for:

- (a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
- (b) possession of a controlled substance;

(c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or

(d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H½.

In-school Suspension: The removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall constitute a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes.

Short-term Suspension: The removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in their discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Long-term Suspension: The removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. A principal may, in their discretion, allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H(a) or (b), or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

(ii) **Due Process Requirements A. In-School Suspension** A principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses. Prior to imposing an in-school suspension, the principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense(s) of which the student is accused 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 ten (10) school days cumulatively or consecutively in the school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parents/guardians orally as soon as possible of the disciplinary violation, the

reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the parents/guardians to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. If the principal is unable to reach the parents/guardians after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parents/guardians of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall further 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 on which the suspension is to be served by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

B. Out-of-School Suspension

(i) **Notice and Principal's Hearing (603 CMR 53.08):** Prior to the imposition of a short-term out-of-school suspension or a long-term suspension, the principal shall provide the student and parents/guardians with oral and written notice of the charges and potential disciplinary sanction and of the student's and parent's/guardian's right to participate in a hearing with the principal, to contest the charges against the student and to provide evidence, including mitigating facts, and witnesses in the student's defense. The hearing may take place without the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) only if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parents/guardians in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification. The written notice of hearing provided by the principal shall comply with 603 CMR 53.08. The purpose of the principal's hearing is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, to provide the student and the parents/guardians an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, to determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences to be imposed for the violation(s).

(ii) Short-term Suspension Hearing

The principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student and the parents/guardians, if present, shall be provided the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer evidence and information, including mitigating circumstances, for the principal's consideration in determining whether the student committed the violation of which the student was accused and, if so, the appropriate consequence for the violations(s). **Students and parents do not have the right under applicable policies and regulations to be represented by an attorney at a short-term suspension hearing.**

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether there is a preponderance of evidence to support a determination that the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, the remedy or consequence to be imposed. In accordance with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, as amended through Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022, and 603 CMR 53.05, the principal shall, when acting as the decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing to consider a student's possible short-term or long-term

out-of-school suspension for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff, and/or felony offenses, first consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal shall not suspend the student from school on a short-term or long-term basis under such circumstances until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would, in the principal's opinion, pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm (upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies for purposes of these requirements may include, but are not limited to, (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving.

The principal shall provide written notice to the student and parents/guardians of the principal's findings and determination and the reasons for it and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of the suspension, as well as the student's right to complete their regular school work and to make up assignments, tests and quizzes and such other schoolwork as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The principal's determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing.

In the event of a short-term or long-term out-of-school suspension of a student in grades K-3, the principal shall also send a copy of the principal's written determination to the Superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing the out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect

(iii) Long-term Suspension Hearing

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student and parents/guardians shall also have the opportunity, prior to the hearing, to review the student's student record and the documents upon which the school may rely at the disciplinary hearing; the right to be represented by an attorney or a lay person of the student's choice (at the student's/parent's/guardian's expense); the right to produce witnesses on the student's behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident and any mitigating evidence (although the student may not be compelled to testify); the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school; and the right to request that the hearing be recorded 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 recording will be made and that a copy will be provided to the student and parents/guardians upon request.

Based on the preponderance of evidence presented at the hearing, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, the remedy or consequence to be imposed. The principal shall send the written determination in English and the primary language spoken in the student's home to the student and parent/guardian by certified first-class mail and by email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent/guardian. The principal's written determination shall comply with the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08

If the student is suspended for more than ten (10) school days for a single infraction or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the notice will include written notification of the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The principal's written determination shall also inform the student and parents'/ guardians of the student's right to access educational services during the suspension to ensure the student's continued academic progress while suspended from school on a long-term basis. If the student is suspended in excess of ten (10) consecutive days, the principal shall notify the student and parents/guardians of the student's right to select and access educational services through the District's Education Services Plan while suspended in excess of ten (10) consecutive days and shall, provide the parents/guardians with a copy of the District's Education Services Plan.

Except as provided for under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and/or 37H1/2, no student may be suspended for more than ninety (90) school days for one or more violations of school rules ("non-statutory offenses") within a school year.

(iv) Emergency Removal for Non-Statutory Offenses (603 CMR 53.07)

The principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a violation of school rules in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, 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 presented. The emergency removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal. 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.

In the event of an emergency removal, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parents/guardians of the emergency removal and the reason(s) therefore. The principal shall also provide written notice to the student and parents/guardians and provide the student an opportunity for a disciplinary hearing with the principal, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, to be conducted before the expiration of the two (2) school days following the Student's emergency removal, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

The principal shall render a decision orally on the same day as the disciplinary hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

(v) Appeals (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4)

Students do not have the right to appeal an in-school or short-term out-of-school suspension imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4. Students and parents/guardians do, however, have the right to appeal a long-term suspension imposed by the principal to the Superintendent. The student and/or the parents/guardian shall have five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the long-term suspension to submit a written request for an appeal to the Superintendent but may be granted an extension of time of up to seven (7) calendar days upon written request.

If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal.

The Superintendent will hold a hearing with the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) within three (3) school days of the student's request for an appeal. The time may be extended by up to seven (7) calendar days if requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Superintendent's hearing may proceed without the parent(s)/guardian(s) only 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 the Superintendent 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/guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing in both English and in the primary language of the student's home. Pending the Superintendent's appeal hearing, the Superintendent's decision thereon, the terms and conditions of the sanction imposed by the Principal will remain in effect.

At the appeal hearing, the Superintendent shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student was accused, and if so, the appropriate consequence therefore. The student shall have all of the rights afforded to students at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension, including the right to be represented by an attorney at private expense. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the appeal 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 may not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.

In considering said the student's appeal and the sanctions for the violation(s) of school rules found to have occurred, the Superintendent shall not impose/uphold a suspension from school as a consequence until alternative remedies have been tried, except:

(1) where the Superintendent documents specific reasons why alternative remedies are unsuitable or counterproductive; or

(2) where the Superintendent or designee determines that the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documented concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm to another person while in school.

The Superintendent's appeal decision shall constitute the final decision of the Petersham Center School District.

(vi) Suspended or Expelled Students Students who have been suspended or expelled from school shall not be eligible to participate in any school functions for the duration of such disciplinary action. Students who are suspended or expelled and return to school grounds or school sponsored events may be suspended an additional day and may be referred to the police or other proper authorities for trespassing. The period of suspension ends as of the beginning of the school day on which the student returns to school. r

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVENTIONS AND TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

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

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

DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

APPENDIX B

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Petersham School District is committed to providing a secure and stimulating environment in which to work and learn. We provide a climate that promotes healthy, human relationships and enhances the quality of life for children as well as adults. We believe that:

1. Everyone has the right to be physically safe.
2. Everyone has the right to be treated with courtesy and respect.
3. Everyone has the right to a clean, positive, and safe learning environment.

These rights go hand-in-hand with the responsibility to contribute positively to the school environment and to strive for excellence at all times.

Petersham Center School students are expected to observe the following code of conduct throughout the school day, including lunchroom, bus, and playground activities.

Code of Conduct

Everyone has the right to be safe. Hurtful behavior will not be tolerated.

Physical threats and injury to ourselves and others will be avoided by:

- ❖ Keeping our hands, feet, bodies to ourselves, except when being helpful.
- ❖ Keeping hurtful comments to ourselves.
- ❖ Facing forward while walking in the building.
- ❖ Using school equipment carefully and appropriately.

I'll ensure each person's physical safety by not:

- *hitting*
- *kicking*
- *fighting*
- *tripping*
- *pushing*
- *throwing objects*
- *inappropriate touching*
- *play fighting*
- *attempting to hurt*
- *biting*

Everyone has the right to feel respected and free of fear. Disrespectful or threatening behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show respect for ourselves and others by:

- Using appropriate words and tone of voice.
- Taking charge of my work and behavior, letting others take charge of theirs.
- Including others in our conversations and activities.
- Respectfully express our own ideas, opinions, and feelings and listen respectfully to others.
- Accepting responsibility for our own actions.

I'll ensure each person's right to be respected by not:

- *Swearing*
- *teasing*
- *making threatening remarks*
- *Saying put-downs*
- *Ignoring speakers*
- *Acting rudely*
- *Disrupting*
- *Yelling or screaming*
- *Bullying*
- *Encouraging aggression or violence*
- *Using vulgar language/gestures*

We take care of our environment, our property, and the property of others. Destructive behavior will not be tolerated.

We will show care and respect for our environment and property by:

- Leaving work areas and eating areas clean.
- Enjoy bulletin boards and displays by looking and not touching.
- Touching only personal property or property of others with permission
- Recycling

We will ensure respect for our environment and property by not:

- Stealing
- touching or borrowing others' property without permission
- climbing on furniture
- defacing walls, displays, or furniture
- Misusing equipment
- jumping up to hit doorways, flags, or signs
- Jumping downstairs
- chewing gum (at teacher's direction)

BULLYING

The State has enacted legislation regarding bullying. Bullying is defined as repeated use by one or more students or staff 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... §370 a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or perpetrator" in a bullying report

The Petersham Center School Committee developed an official Bullying Policy that will address prevention and intervention as required by the State. Bullying is prohibited at school, on school vehicles, and during school events. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for all bullying issues.

The Petersham Center School Bully Policy and Facebook Policy are attached.

Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, *An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*, was signed into law on May 3, 2010, and took effect immediately. The law requires each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved day or residential school, and collaborative school to develop and implement a plan to address bullying and intervention. The statute directs the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to promulgate regulations addressing a Principal's duties under one of the ten required elements of the bullying and intervention plan, namely, notification to parents or guardians of the victim and the perpetrator of bullying or retaliation and the action taken to prevent further bullying, and notification to law enforcement of bullying or retaliation, when the perpetrator's conduct also may result in criminal charges. The law further provides that the regulations must be promulgated by September 30, 2010.

Definition of Bullying:

Pursuant to M.G.L. C71, S 370, means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electron 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 damage to his or her 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. Bullying shall include cyberbullying. Amendments were made to the Massachusetts anti-bullying law, which became effective July 1, 2013. The amendments extend protections to students who are bullied by a member of the school staff. As defined in M.G.L. C71, S370, as amended, a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the “aggressor” or perpetrator” in a bullying report.

Bullying is a major distraction from learning. Continued bullying may be defined as harassment that has severe consequences. The fear generated from bullying can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully. As a rule bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in the middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Most bullying by students starts out verbally, teasing, and put-downs, and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Petersham School District will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions.

Examples of bullying include but are not limited to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological.
2. Threats or assaults of any kind stated or implied, in any form.
3. Misuse of student property.

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

The Principal will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of bullying. The Principal will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging bullying. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

References:	National School Safety Center Maine Project Against Bullying The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women
Legal Reference:	Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 194 as amended Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Cross Reference:	AC Nondiscrimination

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The Consolidated District has established policies and procedures for receiving and responding to reports of bullying or retaliation. These policies and procedures ensure that all members of the school community, including students, parents, and staff know what will happen when incidents of bullying occur.

A. Reporting bullying or retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents/guardians or others may be oral or written. Oral reports made by, or to, a staff member must be recorded in writing. All employees are required to immediately report to the Principal (or designee) any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of, or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents/guardians, or other non-employees may be made anonymously. The district will make reporting forms available to the community in each school office, counseling and nursing offices, and on the district website.

At the beginning of each school year, the district will provide the school community, including administrators, staff students, and parents/guardians with notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the Principal (or designee), will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the district website, and in information about the Petersham School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is made available to parents/guardians. Principal. Telephone # 978-724-3363, Petersham Center School, 31 Spring St., Petersham, MA 01366

1. Reporting by staff: Staff members will immediately report to the Principal (or designee) when they witness or become aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the Principal (or designee) does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with the school's policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.
2. Reporting by students, parents/guardians, and others. The district expects students, parents/guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the Principal (or designee). Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents/guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member or with the Principal (or designee).

B. Responding to a report of bullying or retaliation

1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal (or designee) will assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/ or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the Principal (or designee) contacts parents/guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations 603 CMR 49.00. Responses to promote safety could include: creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The

Principal; (or designee) will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of, and after, the investigation as necessary.

2. The Principal (or designee) will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation of a student who has witnessed or reported bullying or retaliation or provides information during an investigation. The confidentiality of students and witnesses reporting alleged acts of bullying will be maintained to the extent possible given the school's obligation to investigate the matter

C. Obligation to Notify Others:

1. Notice to parents/guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal (or designee) will promptly notify the parents/guardians of the target and the aggressor of the incident and discuss the planned response.
2. Notices to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the Principal (or designee) of the other school/s of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR>
3. Notices to law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal (or designee) has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the Principal (or designee) will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED FOR VIOLATIONS OF CENTER SCHOOL RULES:

The goals of these consequences are to help children:

1. Identify the behavior and discuss why it is inappropriate.
2. Take responsibility for the behavior.
3. "Give back" to the community the calm and peace that has been disrupted, by making amends and repairs.
4. Discuss alternatives to inappropriate behavior.

Minor Offenses

Each will be dealt with according to the seriousness of the offense, the age of the student, and whether or not the behavior is a one-time or repeated event. Specific consequences are at the discretion of the supervisory adult. Whenever possible, consequences will include a community service/repair component.

Over the past few years, we have observed a decline in student behavior throughout the building. This is occurring primarily when students are not in classrooms; in the hallways, during special classes, lunch, and at recess.

In addition , we have seen an increase in disrespectful attitudes, behaviors, and language toward staff. These disrespectful behaviors have continued to escalate and are negatively impacting the learning of other students.

We will be explicitly teaching all students the expected behaviors for all classroom and school settings the first week of school.

Going forward, after those expectations have been taught, if a student cannot follow our expectations for respectful behavior, or if they are not following the guidelines for any area of the building, the following consequences will occur.

1. The student will first be redirected quietly and privately in the setting and reminded of the expected behavior.
2. If a student continues disregarding expectations and has been warned multiple times in a specialist class, gym, unified arts, lunch, or recess, they will be removed from that class or activity to allow the remainder of the students in the class to participate positively.
3. Staff members will continue to work with the student to reteach expected behaviors and to address how their behavior is impacting their learning and the learning of other students. The student will be allowed to rejoin the class or activity with their peers in the future as long as they can follow the expectations for that class or activity.
4. Parents will be notified following any event where a student needs to be removed from the general setting for more than 1/2 of the scheduled time.

Major Offenses

These would include but are not limited to, physical aggression (actual or attempted), the threat of physical harm, verbal assaults, and gross destruction of property/equipment. These offenses require an automatic Discipline Report. Repeated rude or defiant behavior, repeated use of vulgar language, and repeated disruptions of class, which continue after a specific warning from the supervisory adult, would also result in a Discipline Report.

For each offense, a supervisory adult will complete a Discipline Report. The report will be sent to the Principal and remain on file in the office. The Principal will contact the supervisory adult (and the classroom teacher, if not the same person) and the Counselor to discuss the reported offense. The Principal will speak to the child involved as soon as possible.

Consequences for Major Offenses are:

First Report

1. Loss of 2 days recess, with time spent on community service/repair.
2. Student completes a Behavior Report describing his/her behavior and reasons why it is

unacceptable.

3. Parent/Guardian is contacted and the report is carried home by the student for a parent to read, sign and return to school. If necessary, the classroom teacher will follow up.

Second Report

1. Repeat all consequences for the first referral.
2. Principal will make personal contact with the parent/guardian. The classroom teacher and supervisory adult will be notified of this contact.
3. Student and parent/guardian will be reminded of the consequences if a third report is necessary.
4. Social Suspension at the principal's discretion.

Third Report

1. Repeat all consequences for the first and/or second referral..
2. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to meet with the Principal, classroom teacher, supervisory adult, and the student to discuss the discipline issue.
3. In-school suspension (all assignments completed in a supervised space other than a regular classroom) may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Additional Reports

In-school or out-of-school suspension may be administered at the discretion of the Principal.

Note:

Some offenses are of such a serious nature that it becomes necessary to circumvent the stated procedures. Possession or distribution of tobacco, drugs, alcohol, and dangerous weapons, as well as major physical aggression, are examples of such offenses. Consequences for these and similar offenses will result in the Principal taking immediate action which may include suspending the student and/or notifying the police.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Petersham School Committee consists of three members. They are responsible for setting overall policies and establishing programs and procedures that will best allow the individual educational achievement of each student. The Committee also proposes a budget and oversees the spending of money allocated to the school.

The Petersham School Committee meets once a month. Meeting times and dates are posted before each meeting at the school, and the Town Office. Meetings are open to the public.

TOYS AND ELECTRONICS DEVICES

Toy weapons and sharp instruments of any kind are not permitted at recess or in school. We do not allow electronics (for example, Nintendo Switch, iPads, DS, or cell phones) to be used in school, in class, at recess or lunch, or on the school bus.

Any cell phones or other cellularly connected devices (watches) must be turned off during school hours. If a student brings an expensive toy or electronic device to school to use after school, that item must stay in the student's backpack during the school day and on the bus. The school will not assume responsibility for loss or damage to any such item. Please refrain from sending in any other toys as well (action figures or stuffed animals in grades 1-6). They create unnecessary distractions during the school day and often lead to otherwise avoidable situations.

CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

Petersham Center School does not have a formal dress code. Clothing should be comfortable, safe, and clean, and should not distract others. We ask that students adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Hats may be worn at recess but must be removed in school.
2. Clothing should not contain obscenities, incitement, defamation, or sexually implied material.
3. Clothing designed to be underwear is not appropriate as outerwear.
4. If Students come to school wearing inappropriate clothing, PCS will contact the family.
5. Students wearing shoes with high heels will be asked to wear more practical shoes in the future and to stay off the structures at recess.
6. When students wear boots or other heavy footwear to school, they must also bring in an alternative pair of footwear to wear indoors. Having an extra pair of socks at school is always a good idea. At no time may students go barefoot or wear only socks in school, as per fire regulations.
7. All students need appropriate shoes for gym class.
8. Students wearing flip-flops or open-toed shoes will be asked to sit out during gym class, to stay off of structures, and to refrain from running during recess.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENTEEISM

Regular attendance is essential to a student's success in school. Most subjects are taught in sequence, requiring the understanding of each concept in order of its presentation. Persistent absenteeism creates a genuine hardship for a child and is regarded as a very serious problem.

The School Committee does recognize, however, that in accordance with state law parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Absences for family vacations will be treated as unexcused absences. **Teachers are not responsible for providing packets of classwork for students who travel or are on vacation during the school year prior to departure.** Please try to not schedule family trips during school days.

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

1. Illness or quarantine,
2. Bereavement or serious illness in the family,
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child and
4. For observance of major religious holidays.
5. A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with the approval of the school

administrator.

Extended vacations during regularly scheduled school time are **discouraged**. If you plan to excuse your child for an extended vacation, the school work they miss will be provided to them upon their return and not provided in advance by the teacher.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day school work is a critical factor in the shaping of character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, **parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child**. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. A phone call or email from the parents to the nurse is required on the day(s) your child is absent. If we have not been informed of a student's absence by 8:30 a.m. on the day the student is out, the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parent or guardian to confirm that the child has not arrived at the school. If a child has missed three or more days for an illness, please bring a doctor's note.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Repeated absence may result in the retention of students in current grade placement.

Parents who wish to pick up an absent child's schoolwork or homework must notify the school in the morning on the third consecutive day the child is absent and may pick the work up at the end of the school day. This will ensure that the child has the exact work that was covered/completed while they were out.

TARDINESS

Prompt arrival at school is expected of all students. Most students find it helpful to arrive at school at 8:15 a.m. This gives them time to settle into the classroom and complete all required morning routines. Students are expected to be in their seats ready to learn at 8:25 a.m. Late arrival, even by a few minutes, disrupts class, causes loss of instruction time, and is often uncomfortable for the tardy student. Any student who arrives at school after 8:25 a.m. is considered tardy and must receive a late pass from the office prior to entering the classroom. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is exhibiting a pattern of tardiness or is frequently tardy.

When absent, the following will happen:

- after three consecutive tardies/absences, the Principal or nurse will call home
- after 9 absences, the Principal will send a letter home
- after 12 absences, the Principal and counselor will meet with parents to discuss potential state agency involvement

These protocols mirror state guidance on absenteeism. The state does not recognize an unexcused absence any differently than an excused absence.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Students should arrive between 8:15 A.M. and 8:25 A.M. for the normal school day, or 8:05 if they are eating breakfast. Students arriving after 8:25 A.M. will be considered tardy. Walkers or students receiving rides to school should not arrive prior to 8:15 A.M unless eating breakfast.

Walkers and riders are dismissed through the front doors of the school. Parents are asked to wait outside the double doors for their children. Riders will be dismissed directly to whoever is picking them up and will not be sent out to the cars. Parents who are picking up their children from school should be at school at 2:45 p.m. for the dismissal time of 2:50.

School staff supervises the playground during the lunch recess. The playground is not supervised before and after school and students are expected to leave for home immediately following dismissal unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Bus students are dismissed through the community entrance near the gymnasium. School is dismissed at 2:50 P.M. for grades K-6.

EARLY DISMISSAL

At times students may need to be picked up from school prior to dismissal time. Parents should send in a note with their child or email office@petershamcenterschool.org.

WALKERS

Students who walk to school should come straight to school. They should remain on the side of the road at all times and use caution when crossing a street. The cross-walks by the school should be used.

Walkers should not arrive before 8:15 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

When walkers are dismissed, they are asked to cross on Spring St in the crosswalk only into the Post Office parking lot.

BICYCLES

Students in grades 2-6 are permitted to ride bicycles to and from school. Bicycles are to be left in the bike rack and may not be ridden during recess periods. The children should observe all bike safety rules when riding their bikes.

The parent or guardian of a student who normally rides the bus must inform the school if his/her child plans to ride a bike. Bike riders should not arrive before 8:15 A.M. There is no supervision before that time.

CHANGES IN GOING HOME ROUTINE

On any day that your child does not follow her or his usual routine for going home, please send a written note to the teacher with complete instructions. Without written instructions, we will help the child follow their regular plan. Please be careful about this; each year we have a good deal of anxiety,

confusion, and lost time because children are not sure whether or not they are to be picked up, go home on the bus, or await some other special arrangement. If you must call the school to change your child's dismissal routine, please do so prior to 2:15 p.m. to help avoid any last-minute confusion.

CANCELLATION AND DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL

Cancellation or dismissal of school takes place only during circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure, or public crisis. We are aware of the hardship which can be caused by abrupt cancellation. Therefore, the school will not be canceled unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances.

In event of a cancellation or delay, all households will receive an automated message from the Superintendent of Schools with information regarding the change in schedule.

Delayed openings and cancellations are posted on Facebook and local TV stations.

On rare occasions, it is necessary to close school early due to rapidly worsening weather conditions or other emergencies.

If school must be dismissed early because of hazardous weather or other emergencies, the office will make every attempt to contact you at the number listed on your child's emergency form. If we are unable to contact you, we will call the emergency contact people listed on your child's form.

Lastly, if school is not closed and you feel road conditions are not adequate for safe bus transportation, it is reasonable that as a parent you may decide not to allow your children to attend a school that day.

BUS RULES

The Petersham Center School currently uses Swift River Bus Company and they may be reached at 978-249-4804.

Approximate pickup times are provided in the Athol Daily News Back to School Edition and posted on the school's website. Bus routes change from year to year depending on the number of students and the area where students live.

All students are expected to remain in their seats and keep conversations at a reasonable volume. Students are expected to follow bus rules to ensure everyone's safety.

Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time. Any such suspensions will be initiated by the school principal. Suspension of riding privileges for a specific period of time is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any one infraction.

PARENT-TEACHER GROUP

The PTG is a very active organization in our school. The purpose of the PTG is to plan programs that are informational and beneficial to parents and teachers and which are under the guidance of the Principal. The most important function of the PTG is to foster the interaction of Parents, Teachers, and Principals

who work together for the success and benefit of the children and of the school. All parents are welcome to attend and participate in PTG activities. Meetings are posted on the monthly PTG calendar and also in the newsletters.

VOLUNTEERS

All parents, guardians, family members, and community members are encouraged to volunteer their time in various areas including but not limited to, library, individual classroom, or readers.. All adults who volunteer at the school are required to complete a CORI (criminal offense record investigation) as well as other forms; these forms can be obtained at the school office. If you are interested in doing volunteer help, please contact any teacher or call the school. Your help will be warmly accepted and we guarantee your efforts will be most rewarding.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted legislation that calls for the establishment of a School Council for each elementary, secondary, and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. Each council is to have the following categories of membership: principal, teachers, parents of students attending the school, and community representatives who are not parents, teachers, or students at the school.

Councils are to assist principals in adopting educational goals for each school, identifying the educational needs of the students attending the schools, and formulating a school improvement plan. Parent representatives on this council must be selected through a lottery process.

REPORT CARDS/CONFERENCES

In September or October there will be an evening Open House to share information about the general nature of your child's classroom and to answer questions you may have about the school program.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held in November for grades K – 4 and December for grades five and six. At this meeting your child's progress is reviewed, questions and concerns shared, and goals established for the school year.

Report cards will be issued three times a year for grade 1-6 and twice a year for kindergarten. Please carefully review your child's progress and contact the school if you have questions regarding grades. Report cards should be returned within one week of receiving them. They may be kept upon completion of the grade level.

ADMISSION

All children who reach the age of five years on or before September 1st of the current school year are eligible for Kindergarten in September. Children are registered for Kindergarten in the school office. Proof of birth date (birth certificate, passport) is required, and Massachusetts law requires proof that each child has been immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, measles, polio, Hepatitis B, and Chicken Pox. Effective March 1, 1990, Kindergarten children must have had a screening for lead poisoning.

KINDERGARTEN SCREENING

Each child who enters Kindergarten will be given a "screening" in fulfillment of the requirements of Massachusetts Chapter 766 regulations and to help us know the child and plan appropriately for his or her needs.

The screening gives us information about a child's strengths and needs. For example, the gross motor items on the screening help us identify children who will profit from activities designed to develop their coordination in tasks using large muscles (such as running, throwing a ball, etc.). This screening occurs just before the start of the school year. Parents are notified if there are any concerns regarding their child's development.

SPECIALS

Physical Education
Unified Arts

*Please be sure your child is dressed in appropriate clothing and sneakers for P.E.

HOMEWORK

Homework is important. It is an extension of the learning that takes place in school. In an effort to increase students' study skills the school has the following homework policy. The average times of the homework assignments are as follows:

Grade 1 -- 15 minutes
Grade 2 -- 15-20 minutes
Grade 3 -- 20-30 minutes
Grade 4 -- 45 minutes
Grade 5 -- 45 minutes
Grade 6 -- 45 minutes - 1 hour

In order to help your child develop and increase his/her study skills, the following suggestions are provided.

1. Establish a homework time and area in your household. Choose a time and place each day that will minimize interruptions and that will be the best for your family.
2. Eliminate distractions. Research suggests that children can concentrate more easily when the television, radio, and stereo are not in use. If you have more than one child, establish a quiet time for all. Younger children could look at a picture book or perhaps play a quiet game. Children in lower grades could read, write a letter to a grandparent, draw, etc.
3. Be available. Don't expect your child to go to his/her room and return later with everything completed. Encouragement, praise, and occasional help let your child know that the work he/she is doing is important and that you care.
4. Time. If your child completes the assignment quickly there is probably a long-term assignment such

as a book report or report that could use attention or he/she could review for a test. Encourage your child to go beyond the assigned work and use the extra time for pleasure reading and for letter and creative writing. This helps develop study skills and a lifelong enjoyment for learning.

5. Ask. If you have a question, please call or email your child's teacher at school. Let the teacher know if the assignments are taking considerably longer than expected or if your child fails to bring home an assignment.

Homework provides practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning and provides opportunities for independent study, research, and creative thinking. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that all materials needed to complete assignments are brought home at the end of the school day.

FRAGRANCE-FREE SCHOOL

Exposure to perfumes and other scented products can trigger very serious health reactions and individuals with asthma allergies migraines or multiple chemical sensitivities.

The health effects of fragrances – range in severity from mild to debilitating – can include: headaches migraines dizziness nausea fatigue shortness of breath and wheezing. For some people especially those with asthma and other respiratory disorders exposure to fragrance to trigger the need for emergency medical treatment.

Perfumes and colognes are considered the most concentrated form of fragrance. These can also be found in scented soaps, lotions, and even some natural substances.

To protect our students and staff with chemical sensitivities, we are asking for your cooperation in creating a scent-free environment:

- Please avoid wearing any scented personal care products including, but not limited to, perfume, cologne, aftershave, scented lotions, or creams for the body, face, and hands, or hand soaps. Most brands have fragrance free products available

INSURANCE

School insurance will be offered at the beginning of each school year. Information and envelopes for school insurance will be issued to each child. If you wish for school insurance, please place the exact amount in the envelope and return it according to the directions given. Checks should be made out to the insurance company.

RECESS

Your child will have outdoor recess every day unless there is rain, heavy snow, extreme cold, or wind chill causing extreme cold. All children who are able to attend school are to participate in outside recess whenever it is offered, except in extraordinary circumstances. If children are not able to go outside for twenty minutes, it seems wiser that they are not in school. If there is a severe condition, we shall be glad to make necessary exceptions. Such requests must be cleared through the principal's office and the school nurse.

Please remind your child to dress warmly during the winter months. Boots, mittens, a hat, a jacket, and

snow pants are essential. Children who have not dressed appropriately for the weather will not be able to participate in outdoor recess. Students should not wear their boots during the school day; they should have other footwear for the classroom. It is helpful for both student and teacher if all outer clothing worn to school is marked with your child's name, especially in the primary grades.

RECORDS

Records are kept on each student by the administration and classroom teacher. Parents may make an appointment to review the records or test scores by calling the office. Student records are released to a new school when the school receives a signed transfer form or when the parent completes a transfer form at the Center School.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

On the first day of school, your child will bring home information regarding an emergency information packet which will include important information the school will need if an emergency arises. If there are any changes in the information contained on the form during the school year, please contact the office or your child's teacher.

Food Services

Children need healthy meals to learn. The Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 operates the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) which are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered in Massachusetts by the Massachusetts Department of Education, Food and Nutrition Service. The USDA maintains, and frequently updates, rules and regulations on nutritional standards and meal pattern requirements for NSLP & SBP that we must meet every day.

Universal Free Schools Meals

Universal free school meals for all students is now permanent in Massachusetts! To qualify for a free school meal, at all school levels, students must take a 'Complete Reimbursable Meal' that meets all nutritional requirements. Otherwise, a la carte prices apply. You can view your student's transaction history for Free through your account on MySchoolBucks.com

Reimbursable Meals

A USDA Reimbursable Breakfast occurs when a student selects 3 items from the offered selection of whole grains, milk, and fruits, and where at least one of the three items selected is a ½ cup of fruit. 1 Milk is included with a Reimbursable Breakfast but is not required to be selected. Additional milks are considered 'A La Carte' and are charged accordingly. Each Student is allowed 1 Reimbursable Breakfast per day, a second breakfast or additional 'entree item' is considered 'A La Carte' and is charged accordingly.

Some examples of a reimbursable breakfast are...

1. a small bowl of cereal, graham crackers, an apple, a 100% fruit juice, and 1 milk
2. a granola bar, a 100% fruit juice, and a box of raisins
3. a strawberry cup, a fresh orange, and a milk
4. a large muffin and a 100% fruit juice

Every day for lunch we offer students a whole grain, a meat/meat alternate (plant/animal-based protein), a 1% or skim milk, and unlimited fruits and vegetables. Students may choose to take all 5 components offered for a USDA Reimbursable Lunch, but at minimum they must select at least 3 where 1 component is a ½ cup of fruit or vegetable. 1 Milk is included with a Reimbursable Lunch but is not required to be selected. Additional milks are considered 'A La Carte' and are charged accordingly. Each Student is allowed 1 Reimbursable Lunch per day, a second lunch or 'additional entree item' is considered 'A La Carte' and is charged accordingly.

Some examples of a reimbursable lunch are...

1. a grilled chicken filet, steamed brown rice, roasted squash, fresh apple slices, and a milk
2. a slice of pizza and a strawberry cup
3. corn & black bean salad, a fresh orange, and a milk
4. a single yogurt, granola, and blueberry parfait

Pick 3 Free

Bringing food from home? Avoid a warm beverage from home and/or an A La Carte Milk charge when we can provide it for free. We offer five meal components at Lunch, but your student only must pick three to get it all free. All our fruit, veggie, and milk options are great add-ins to your home lunch which makes for a nutritious meal and helps to fuel your student for a full day of learning.

Share 'Table'

Petersham Center School is approved by the Local Board of Health agency to operate a 'Share Table'. The 'Share Table' allows for the safe reuse of unopened or wrapped foods and beverages that students must take to complete their USDA Reimbursable Meal but choose not to eat. The 'Share Table' helps to reduce waste and ensure students have access to additional food when needed, like morning snack time.

Lunch Menus & Nutrition Info

For all levels, parents, guardians, and students can access daily interactive menus on the school website at <https://u73.rcmahar.org/Food-Services>. Each lunch or breakfast menu item includes full nutritional

information, including allergens. An 'A La Carte' price list is also posted on your school's website and may be subject to change annually.

Payments

The Ralph C. Mahar Regional & School Union 73 recommends prepaying for any a la carte purchase through an account at [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com). The money placed on your students [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com) account will be accessible at both Petersham Center School and Ralph C. Mahar Regional School. [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com), accepts credit card payments, each student has an individual account, and parents/guardians may make a deposit that applies to as many of their children as they like. Each deposit requires a \$3.25 program fee that goes to our third party vendor, Heartland.

While a contactless check out system through [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com) is our preferred method of payment, we do also accept personal checks and cash on site in our schools and cafeteria's.

Special Dietary Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), P.L. 110-325 amended the Federal definition of disability, broadening it to cover additional individuals. A "person with a disability" means any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more "Major Life Activities" and/or "Major Bodily Functions", has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment.

Some food allergies are classified as a disability while others require special dietary accommodations. The Nine Major Allergens Include: Milk, Eggs, Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Wheat, Soybeans, Sesame, Fish, and Shellfish. If your student requires a meal accommodation due to a disability, such as a food allergy, please be sure to complete the Meal Modification Request Form found on our website. This form should be signed by a licensed physician, or a State recognized medical authority and returned to your school's nurse who will then communicate it to the food services department.

Civil Rights in the USDA

Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of these protected classes: race, color, national origin, sex, disability and age. Massachusetts state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of the federal protected classes, but also includes religious creed, gender identity, mental illness, genetics, active military, criminal record, and ancestry.

Any person alleging discrimination based on a protected class, in regard to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), has the right to file a complaint within 180 days of

the alleged discriminatory action. Complaints can be accepted verbally, in writing, anonymously, and from third party representatives to the Food Service Director.

The School Nutrition Team looks forward to providing your student with a delicious and nutritious meal. If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback please reach out to us your Food Service Director at:

Katrina Bressani

R.C. Mahar Regional School District
Orange Elementary School
Petersham Center School
P.O. Box 680
507 South Main Street
Orange, MA 01364
Office Phone: 978-544-2542, then press 8
kbressani@rcmahar.org

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Petersham Center School will treat all persons equally and will ensure that its programs are open to all. The committee and its agents will not discriminate in any manner against employees, applicants, or students on account of race, color, religion, national origin, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and/or handicap.

The Petersham School district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, gender identity, disability, religion, marital status, pregnancy, or age in any of its policies, procedures, or practices, in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (pertaining to race, color, and national origin), Title VII (pertaining to employment), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (pertaining to sex), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (pertaining to disability), the Americans with Disabilities Act (pertaining to disability), and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (pertaining to age).

Persons designated to coordinate compliance under Title IX:

Dr. Philip Saisa, Director of Student Services
Ralph C. Mahar School District, 507 S. Main St., Orange, MA 01364
978-544-2535

Person designated to coordinate compliance under Section 504:
Mr. Aaron O'Connor, Principal

HARASSMENT

The Petersham Center School maintains a learning and working environment, which is free from harassment. It is a violation of this policy for any student to harass another student or staff member, or for a staff member to harass another staff member or student, through conduct or communication of an inappropriate nature. A staff member may be identified as the aggressor or perpetrator in a bullying report.

Students who allege harassment by other students are encouraged to immediately indicate to the harasser that his or her behavior is unwanted and unacceptable. If the student because of fear of reprisal or for any other reason is unable to address the alleged harasser, or if the behavior does not cease, then the student is encouraged to report the incident or incidents to any staff member. That staff may assist the student in resolving the problem or may assist the student in sharing the incident with the Principal, Counselor, or another staff member the student may choose.

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

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

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

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

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

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved in this meeting, the person against whom the claim is made will be provided a hearing. In conclusion, school records are personal and the Federal Freedom of Information Act of 1974 must be complied with as well as the State Law.

CURRICULUM OPT-OUT

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the R.C. Mahar Regional or Orange Elementary Schools or Petersham Center School Public Schools, through its curricula and instructional materials, promotes 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 regarding curriculum content and may submit a written request to the building principal to opt out of specific portion(s) of the curriculum that conflict with their sincerely held religious beliefs.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

Only School personnel who have completed the comprehensive restraint training shall perform restraints. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. If a restraint is necessary, the office should be contacted as soon as possible. Trained school personnel shall use physical restraint with the following goals in mind: To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from imminent, serious, physical harm; and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint (603 CMR 46.00)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

State and Federal law guarantee a free and appropriate public education for children who have been identified as having a significant handicap that prevents optimum learning or functioning for them within the regular education program. A team of parents, teachers, administrators, and specialists join together to discuss the child's educational needs and create an IEP (Individual Education Plan). Specialists at the Petersham Center School include a Learning Specialist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Behavioral Specialist, and Special Needs Administrator.

Attachment #1

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

On May 3, 2010 Governor Patrick signed an *Act Relative to Bullying in Schools*. This new law prohibits bullying and retaliation in all public and private schools and requires schools and school districts to take certain steps to address bullying incidents. Relevant sections of the law (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O) are described below.

The following information is for Staff throughout our schools – including substitutes, long-term substitutes, volunteers, and other participants in children's education and well-being within our

schools. The Plan includes the requirements of the new law, and also information about the policies and procedures that the school or school district will follow to prevent bullying and retaliation or to respond to it when it occurs. In developing the Plan, schools and districts must consult with school and local community members, including staff, and parents and guardians.

Definitions

The aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

Bullying is defined as repeated use by one or more students or staff 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... §370 a member of the school staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional. A member of the school staff may be named the "aggressor" or perpetrator" in a bullying report

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

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

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.
Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited: (i) on school grounds, the property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is owned, leased, or used by a school district or school and (ii) 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 a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school-related activities, functions, or programs.

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

Responsibility of Staff to Report Bullying

A member of school staff is required to report immediately any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the Principal or to the School Official identified in the Plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Initial reporting is to be with each Building Principal, who will determine the most appropriate next steps. Should a report be made against a Building Principal, then a staff member or member of the public may contact the Superintendent of Schools, another Building Principal, or the local police department.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, an educator, administrator, counselor, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, paraprofessional, or secretary. Staff may be named the aggressor or perpetrator in a bullying report.

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

Professional Development

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

The content of such professional development is to include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and (vi) Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

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

**Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting
Form**

**This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and
Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.**

Directions: Bullying or Retaliation are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. If you are a student, the parent/guardian of a student, or faculty member, and wish to report an incident of alleged bullying or retaliation, complete this form and return it to the Principal or Administrative Designee at the student's school. All school employees are required to report alleged violations. Contact the school for additional information or assistance at any time.

Reported act(s) of bullying will be investigated, and parents/guardians will be informed.

Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: _____

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of the alleged report.)

Check whether you are the: Target of the behavior Reporter (not the target)

Check whether you are a student staff member (specify role) _____
 Parent Administrator Other (specify) _____

Your contact information/telephone number: _____

If you are a student, what grade are you in? _____

Information about the incident:

Name of Target: (of behavior) _____
Name of Aggressor (person who engaged in the behavior) _____
Date(s) of incident(s): _____
Time of Incident : _____
Location of Incident (be as specific as possible): _____

Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it)

Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other	_____
Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other	_____
Name: _____	Student	Staff	Other	_____

Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on the back if necessary.

Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

**This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.
Administrative Use Only**

Signature of Person Filing this Report: _____ **Date:** _____
(Note: Reports may be filed anonymously.)

Form Given to: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Signature: _____ Date received _____

INVESTIGATION

1. Investigator(s): _____ Position(s): _____

2. Interviews:

Interviewed aggressor Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed target Name: _____ Date: _____

Interviewed witnesses Name: _____ Date: _____

3. Any prior documented incidents by the aggressor? Yes No

If yes, have incidents involved target or target group previously? Yes No

Any previous incidents with findings of BULLYING, RETALIATION Yes No

Summary of Investigation:

Please use additional paper and attach to this document as needed)
Petersham Center School Bullying/Retaliation Incident Reporting Form

This form is to be confidentially maintained in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

1. Finding of bullying or retaliation:

- YES NO
- Bullying Incident documented as
- Retaliation Discipline referral only _____

2. Contacts:

- Target's parent/guardian Date: _____
- Aggressor's parent/guardian Date: _____
- District Equity Coordinator (DEC) Date: _____
- Law Enforcement Date: _____

3. Action Taken:

- Loss of Privileges Detention STEP referral Suspension
- Community Service Education Other

4. Describe Safety Planning: _____

Follow-up with Target: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Follow-up with Aggressor: scheduled for _____ Initial and date when completed: _____

Report forwarded to Principal: Date_____ Report forwarded to Superintendent: Date_____

Signature and Title: _____ Date: _____

**Petersham Center School
31 Spring Street
Petersham, Ma 01366
978-724-3363 School
978-544-2535 Superintendent Office**

Stop A Bully

Safe and Anonymous

Date:

Submitted by (optional):

Name of Bully:

Grade of Bully:

Date of Incident:

Details of Incident:

Location of Incident:

Time of Incident:

Number of Witnesses:

Who has been told:

Number of times this has happened:

It is the responsibility of the school to investigate the accuracy of every bully report and then take the steps necessary to stop any further harassment. The Petersham School district agrees to treat reports in a professional manner and respect the person who submitted it in their desire to remain safe and anonymous. This report is considered confidential whether you choose to remain anonymous or not. School staff will show it only to the persons who are directly involved in the incident.