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## **STUDENT POLICIES GOALS**

The student is the focal point of all operations of a school system. This top priority is shared with no one.

Consequently, the School Committee can expect to spend much of its time in study, deliberation, and policy formulation on matters directly related to students.

The Committee and staff will work together to establish an environment conducive to the very best learning achievements for each student through meeting the following goals regarding students:

1. To individualize the learning program in order to provide appropriately for each student according to his/her specific background, capabilities, learning styles, interests, and aspirations.
2. To protect and observe the legal rights of students.
3. To enhance the self-image of each student by helping him/her feel respected and worthy through a learning environment that provides positive encouragement through frequent success.
4. To provide an environment of reality in which students can learn personal and civic responsibility for their actions through meaningful experiences as school citizens.
5. To deal with students in matters of discipline in a just and constructive manner.
6. To provide in every way possible for the safety, health, and welfare of students.
7. To promote faithful attendance and good work.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:00

## **EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, creed, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, and physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law (known as Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971), which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972  
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375  
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972  
M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)  
Board of Education Chapter 622 Regulations Pertaining to Access to Equal Educational Opportunity, adopted 6/24/75, amended 10/24/78  
Board of Education, Chapter 766 Regulations 10/74 - amended through 3/28/78  
603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REF.: AC, Nondiscrimination

## STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the District. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School District property or property within the jurisdiction of the School District, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the District includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

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

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the student, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student has filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 151B:3A

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended  
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

REFS.: "Words that Hurt," American School Board Journal, September 1999  
National Education Policy Network, NSBA

## ATTENDANCE AREAS

When the need arises attendance areas for the various schools of each town and the district will be drawn up by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. The primary considerations that govern the establishment of a school attendance area will be school capacity, and transportation considerations. Generally, students will attend the school in the attendance area in which they live.

In establishing an attendance area, the following general guidelines will also be applied:

1. Use of safe walking conditions consistent with the Committee's transportation policies; where possible, major traffic thoroughfares and natural barriers will be used for boundaries.
2. Honoring community of interest; where possible, school attendance zones will incorporate community patterns.

From time to time an overcrowded condition in an existing school, the development of new residential areas, or the opening of a new school may require the establishment or change of previously established school attendance areas.

The Committee will confer with community representatives prior to setting new attendance lines. However, the Committee's primary basis for judgment must be equality of educational opportunity for all students rather than the personal desires of any one group.

The Superintendent is authorized to make exceptions to attendance lines for individual children in the best interests of the student and/or the school.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J  
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75  
Board of Education Regulations Pursuant to Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, adopted 9/10/74  
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to the Preparation of Racial Balance Plans which Involve Redistricting, adopted 4/24/73

CROSS REF.: JCA, Assignment of Students to Schools

## ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS

Generally, students will be required to attend school in the attendance area in which they reside, unless special permission has been granted by the Superintendent.

Special permission may be granted for the following reasons:

1. If the change involves an exceptional child, a hardship case, or if there are medical considerations.
2. If the change appears to be in the interests of the child, of the schools, and for disciplinary and administrative reasons.
3. If the legal residence of a child changes from one attendance area to another during the school year and the parents wish the child to remain in his/her former school; permission will not extend beyond the current school year.
4. To permit secondary school students to take courses not offered in their assigned schools.

School bus transportation will not be provided for students attending schools outside their attendance area unless they can be accommodated on existing bus routes and schedules; or an exceptional child is involved; or unless specific permission is granted by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37C; 71:37D; 71:37I; 71:37J  
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Section 8 of Chapter 636 of the Acts of 1974, Regarding Magnet School Facilities and Magnet Educational Programs, adopted 2/25/75  
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CROSS REF.: JC, Attendance Areas

**Freetown and Lakeville Public Schools**  
**School Admission/Residency**

The Freetown, Lakeville and Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committees adopt the following policy regarding the residency and admissions of students. The staff is directed to ensure that all forms and regulations are fully executed and conform to this policy.

**I. RESIDENCY**

In order to attend the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville, a student must actually reside in the Town of Freetown or Lakeville, unless one of the exceptions (set forth in Part V below) applies. The residence of a minor child is ordinarily presumed to be the legal residence of the child’s parent or legal guardian having physical custody of the child. A student’s actual residence is considered to be the place where he or she lives permanently. In determining residency, the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville retain the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides.

A determination that a student does not actually reside in the Town of Freetown or Lakeville renders the student ineligible to enroll in the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville or, if the student is already enrolled in the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville shall result in the termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency may appeal the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

**II. VERIFICATION OF RESIDENCY**

Before any student is enrolled in the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville, his or her parent or legal guardian must provide:

1. A signed Affidavit of Residency; and
2. Proof of residency in the Town of Freetown or Lakeville (3 documents)

All applicants for enrollment must submit at least one document each from Column A, B, and C and any other documents that may be requested, including but not limited to those from Column A, B, or C (noted below). A parent, guardian, or student who is unable to produce the required documents should contact the Superintendent of Schools.

<b>Column A</b>	<b>Column B</b>	<b>Column C</b>
<u>Evidence of Residency</u>	<u>Evidence of Occupancy</u>	<u>Evidence of Identification (photo ID)</u>
Record of recent mortgage payment and/or property tax bill.	Recent bill dated within the past 60 days showing Freetown or Lakeville address.	Valid Driver’s License
Copy of Lease and record of recent rental payment.	Gas Bill	Valid MA Photo ID Card
Landlord Affidavit <i>and</i> recent rental payment.	Oil Bill	Passport
	Electric Bill	
	Home Telephone Bill (not cell phone)	
Section 8 Agreement	Cable Bill	
	Excise Tax Bill	

The Principal, or his/her designee, shall verify the home address and home telephone number of each student at least once during the school year. Any irregularities shall be reported promptly to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents are required to notify the school of any changes of their address or the address of the student within five days of the change.

III. ENFORCEMENT

Should a question arise concerning any student's residency in the Town of Freetown or Lakeville while attending the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that is returned to the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds.

The Superintendent may request additional documentation, may use the assistance of the School Department's Attendance Officer, and/or may obtain the services of police or investigative agency personnel to conduct investigations into student residence. The Attendance Officer and/or residency investigator(s) will report his or her findings to the Superintendent of Schools, who shall make final determination of residency.

Upon an initial determination by the Superintendent of Schools that a student is actually residing in a city or town other than the Town of Freetown or Lakeville, the student's enrollment in the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville shall be terminated immediately.

IV. PENALTIES

In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law, the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville reserve the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services provided during the period of non-residency.

V. EXCEPTIONS

1. The Residency Requirements Shall Not Apply to the Following:
  - a. Students enrolled in the High School under special programs approved by the School Committee, such as educational exchange programs;
  - b. Children of non-resident employees of the Town of Freetown or Lakeville, who meet the conditions established from time to time by the School Committees in the policy pertaining to such students.
  - c. Students who are entitled to attend the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
2. Extraordinary Circumstances:
  - a. Tuition Basis  
Students already enrolled in the Public Schools of Freetown and/or Lakeville who move out on or after February 1<sup>st</sup> of a given school year, or in the case of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and

Apponequet Regional High School seniors who move out on or after October 1<sup>st</sup> of a given year, may complete the current school year.

VI. POTENTIAL WAIVER WHEN RESIDENCY IS IN TRANSITION

For students whose residency is in transition, the following exceptions to the general policy may apply, with prior written approval from the Superintendent of Schools:

1. Pending Purchase of Dwelling

The children of families who have a signed and accepted Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase and reside in a dwelling in the Town of Freetown or Lakeville may be enrolled up to 30 calendar days in advance of the time actual physical residence occurs. If actual residence occurs later than 30 days after enrollment, students may be asked to leave the Schools until actual residence occurs.

2. Construction of New Dwelling

Children of families which are building a primary residence in Freetown or Lakeville may enroll in the Schools at the beginning of the school year if they have obtained a certificate of occupancy from the Town.

3. Residence in Rental Properties

Children of families who plan to rent a primary residence in Freetown or Lakeville may enroll in the Schools 30 days prior to taking possession of the rental property, as evidenced by a signed lease and evidence of financial commitment.

4. Brief Residence Outside the Town

Freetown and/or Lakeville Schools students whose families must briefly live outside the Town because they are (a) moving from one residence to another, or (b) renovating a current Freetown or Lakeville residence, may continue to attend the Freetown and/or Lakeville Public Schools. Evidence of the intention and ability to resume residency in Freetown or Lakeville within 90 days may be required.

VII. NOTIFICATION

The Public Schools of Freetown and Lakeville residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in the Freetown and Lakeville Public Schools Policy Manual, and published in each school handbook.

Legal Reference: M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5.

**Approved by the Freetown, Lakeville and Freetown-Lakeville Regional School Committees  
February 28, 2008.**

***Freetown Public Schools/Lakeville Public Schools/  
Freetown-Lakeville Regional School District***

## ENTRANCE AGE

In an attempt to permit children to enter kindergarten or first grade at the time most appropriate for them individually, the Freetown-Lakeville School Committee establishes the following policy on entrance age:

1. Children who will be five years of age before August 31 of the school year during which they wish to enroll will be eligible to enter kindergarten in September.

All entering children be evaluated by appropriate staff for readiness for school, and discussions will be held with parents if it is believed that the children would benefit were admission postponed until the following year.

2. Initial admission of children to the first grade (or other grades) will involve a consideration of both chronological age and the ability as demonstrated by their achievement of the children to do the work of those grades. In all cases, children entering grade one must be six years of age by August 31 of the year of entering. Exceptions may be made by the Principal for those children who attend a public school kindergarten in their previous school district and have relocated into Freetown or Lakeville.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G  
Board of Education Regulations for Entrance to First Grade and Kindergarten,  
adopted 7/20/71

## **SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

All children of school age who reside in the town will be entitled to attend the public schools, as will certain children who do not reside in the town but who are admitted under School Committee policies relating to nonresident students or by specific action of the School Committee.

Advance registration for prospective kindergarten students will take place by April 30. Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age acceptable to the Principal, proof of vaccination and immunizations as required by the state and the School Committee. Proof of residency may also be required by the school administration.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A  
603 CMR 26:01; 26:02; 26:03

CROSS REFS.: JLCA, Physical Examination of Students  
JLCB, Inoculations of Students  
JFBB, School Choice

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS: ENROLLMENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES**

To the extent practical and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs.

Homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

The superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff person to be the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families resident in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

LEGAL REFS.:        McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act – Section 725(2) of the Act

## **SCHOOL CHOICE**

By April 1 of every school year, the administration will recommend to the respective School Committee whether or not the school district should participate in school choice. Should the School Committee vote to approve school choice, the following terms and conditions will be followed:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.
2. That by June 1 of every school year, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the choice law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision.
3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the district.
4. That the selection of non-resident students for admission when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces be in the form of a random drawing. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.
5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the district until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:6; 71:6A; 76:6; 76:12; 76:12B

## **STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee does recognize, that 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.

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

1. Illness or quarantine.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. For observance of religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

A student's understanding of the importance of day to day school work is an important factor in the shaping of his/her 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 and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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. Specific guidelines are published in each school's respective student handbooks

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:16; 76:20

## **EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### Denial of Admission

Denial of admission means the withholding of the privilege of enrolling in a school of the District.

The following shall be the grounds for denial of admission to school or diversion to an appropriate alternative program:

Graduation from the twelfth grade of any school or receipt of any document evidencing completion of the equivalent of a secondary curriculum;

Failure to meet the requirements of age, by a student who has reached the age of six years at a time after the beginning of the school year, as fixed by the School Committee as provided in Massachusetts General Laws;

Having been expelled during the same school year from this district or any district in the Commonwealth;

Not being a resident of the District and the District has opted not to participate in the School Choice Law;

Failure to comply with the provisions of the Massachusetts School Entry Immunization Law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 76:12; 76:12A; 76:12B  
603 CM 26:00

SOURCE: Freetown-Lakeville

## **STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee has the responsibility to afford students the rights that are theirs by virtue of guarantees offered under the federal and state constitutions and statutes. In connection with rights there are responsibilities that must be assumed by students.

Among these rights and responsibilities are the following:

1. Civil rights--including the rights to equal educational opportunity and freedom from discrimination; the responsibility not to discriminate against others.
2. The right to attend free public schools; the responsibility to attend school regularly and to observe school rules essential for permitting others to learn at school.
3. The right to due process of law with respect to suspension, expulsion, and decisions the student believes injure his/her rights.
4. The right to free inquiry and expression; responsibility to observe reasonable rules regarding these rights.
5. The right to privacy in respect to the student's school records.

It is the School Committee's belief that as part of the educational process students should be made aware of their legal rights and of the legal authority of the School Committee to make, and delegate authority to its staff to make, rules regarding the orderly operation of the schools.

Students have the right to know the standards of behavior that are expected of them, and the consequences of misbehavior.

The rights and responsibilities of students, including standards of conduct, will be made available to students and their parents through handbooks distributed annually.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:82 through 71:86

## **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING**

As appropriate to the age of students, class, or school organizations and school government organizations, such as student councils may be formed to offer practice in self-government and to serve as channels for the expression of students' ideas and opinions.

The Committee will take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies that directly affect student programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student sensitivity.

Students will be welcomed at Committee meetings and granted privileges of speaking in line with the privileges extended to the general public.

### Student Advisory Committee

As required by state law, the Committee will meet at least once every other month while school is in session with its student advisory committee, which is composed of five students elected by the high school student body. The Chairperson of the student advisory committee shall be an ex-officio nonvoting member of the School Committee without the right to attend executive sessions unless such right is expressly granted by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:38M

CROSS REF.: BDF, Advisory Committee to the School Committee

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. Clothing shall not be distracting, immodest, obscene or hazardous. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that a student will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as his/her dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The Freetown-Lakeville School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

## STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Within the school setting, students enjoy the constitutional right of freedom of expression, including the right to express their views in student publications, provided such expression does not cause, or threaten to cause by reasonable forecast by school officials, any disruption or disorder in the school. Additionally, such constitutional right of freedom of expression does not include expression which is obscene, defamatory, or advocates violence or illegality where such advocacy is imminently likely to incite the commission of such acts to the detriment of school security, or which can reasonably be forecast to cause substantial disruption or material interference with school activities.

The School Committee will at least annually review their support of student publications, and encourage student publications not only because they offer an educational activity through which students gain experience in reporting, writing, editing, and understanding responsible journalism, but also because they provide an opportunity for students to express their views subject to the limitations as contained in this policy.

Student publications will be encouraged to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Students shall affix their names to all articles or editorials written by or contributed to by them. The Superintendent will establish guidelines that are in keeping with this policy and provide for review of student publications prior to their distribution, to address matters that are not protected forms of expression.

Each student publication shall contain the following: "Pursuant to state law, no expression made by students in the exercise of such rights shall be deemed to be an expression of school policy and no school officials shall be held responsible in any civil or criminal action for any expression made or published by the students."

### Distribution of Literature

The time, place and manner of distribution of literature will be reasonably regulated by the Principal.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:82

## **GANG ACTIVITY/SECRET SOCIETIES**

The goal of the Freetown-Lakeville School Committee is to keep district schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The Principal or his/her designee shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The Superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The Superintendent shall provide information to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources which may help students.

### Symbols

The School Committee finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The School Committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the Principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

### Prevention Education

The School Committee realizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

## **SECRET SOCIETIES**

Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner.

A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

## **PROHIBITION OF HAZING**

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 269:17, 18, 19

## HAZING

### CH. 269, S.17. CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### CH. 269, S.18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

### CH. 269, S.19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

CROSS REF.: JICFB, Bullying

## **BULLYING**

Bullying and harassment are major distractions from learning. The grades of the victims can suffer. Fear 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. Also, sexual harassment is, in fact, often a form of bullying.

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 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. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that will affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extracurricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day.

Examples of bullying include but are not exclusive to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological
2. Threats of any kind, stated or implied
3. Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological and emotional
4. Attacks on student property

The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors 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 grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment, including bullying. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment, including bullying.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended  
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission  
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

REFS.: National School Safety Center  
Maine Project against Bullying  
The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JICFA-E, Hazing

## **TOBACCO USE BY STUDENTS**

Effective June 18, 1993, smoking, chewing, or other use of tobacco products by staff, students, and members of the public shall be banned from all district buildings. All forms of tobacco use shall be prohibited on all district property. In addition, tobacco use by students is banned at all school-sponsored events, even though this use does not take place on school grounds.

### Procedures

Procedures are identified in each school's student handbook.

LEGAL REF:           M.G.L 71:37H

## DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

### PHILOSOPHY

The primary purpose of the Freetown-Lakeville Public Schools is to provide those services and facilities which create an environment that encourages each student to identify and achieve his/her full potential. Drug and alcohol use and abuse among students interferes with the students' and the schools' achievement of this purpose. The Freetown-Lakeville Public Schools are committed to designing programs that educate the students regarding the harmful effects of drug and alcohol abuse. To these ends, the following Drug and Alcohol Policy will be-enforced by all school personnel.

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Drug: A substance which by its chemical nature alters the function of the living organism. A drug is any chemical substance, including alcohol, which alters mood, perception or consciousness and is misused to the apparent injury of self or society. A drug is a controlled substance as designated by Chapter 94C of the Massachusetts General Law.

Assessment Team: The Assessment Team is a group of key school personnel, functioning as an evaluative support service to the student and the family at risk.

Administrator: Principal, Assistant Principal

### PROCEDURES

- I. Suspected Users of Drugs
  - A. Whenever a school personnel member has reason to suspect that any student is under the influence of or in possession of, selling or distributing a drug in school, on school grounds or during any school sponsored activity, he/she will orally and in writing (a referral form) notify a building administrator.
  - B. The school administrator will then question such student for the purpose of determining:
    1. The kind and amount of drug consumed and/or involved.
    2. When, where and from whom such drug was obtained last and/or the quantity consumed, sold or distributed.
    3. Whether the student still has in his/her possession or subject to his/her immediate control more of such drug. If a search is necessary to determine possession, the following will occur:

- a. A witness will be present at all times
  - b. Search of the student's person, the area under his/her immediate control, and his/her locker
  - c. Seize and retain possession of any drug still in the possession, or subject to the immediate control of the student, or found in the locker
- C. In the event that a school personnel member observes a student with a substance that might be intended for drug use, or in passing or selling such a substance to another student, will require the student to accompany him/her to an administrator with the substance either in the teacher's or student's possession. The teacher will not accuse the student of having drugs in his/her possession since the substance has not been legally identified.
- D. The administrator will:
- 1. Require the student to turn over the substance
  - 2. Upon receiving the substance:
    - a. Initial and date the container in which the evidence is placed for safekeeping
    - b. Immediately contact police and release the evidence
    - c. Contact the parents
  - 3. In the event the student refuses to surrender the substance:
    - a. Contact the parents
    - b. Contact the police
    - c. Conduct a search with the police present, if necessary
  - 4. In each case, retain his/her responsibility to safeguard the interest of the student and his/her parents by keeping them informed at all stages of the procedure,
- E. In the event the student appears to be under the influence, the administrator will:

1. Inform the student that he/she is suspected of possessing, using, selling or distributing a drug
  2. Determine if the student is in need of immediate attention and if so, refer him/her to the school nurse, call an ambulance, and/or call the police.
- F. When the use of alcohol is involved, the police may be requested to take protective custody of a student (as permitted by the Massachusetts General Law, 111B):
1. If parents cannot be reached
  2. If parents are unwilling or unable to pick up the student.
- II. Students Violating the Drug and Alcohol Policy
- A. When the facts have been reasonably established that the student has violated the Drug and Alcohol Policy (in school, on school grounds or during any school sponsored activity), the administrator shall suspend the student for a period of up to five (5) days for the first offense:
1. Law enforcement will be involved
  2. The Assessment Team will be notified and will meet at the earliest possible time to discuss appropriate support systems for the student and family
  3. Parents will be asked to meet with the school Assessment Team to consider the best means of helping the student
  4. Following any instance of suspension and prior to a student's readmission to school, it is important that the administrator be assured by both the student and his/her parents that positive steps have been taken to find appropriate solutions to the drug related problems.
  5. In the event the parents do not cooperate with the school authorities in the adoption and execution of a specific plan for helping the student, a "Child in Need of Services" petition may be filed in the Juvenile Court. This petition will allege that the student lacks the proper attention of his/her parents or that the student's behavior violated the lawful and reasonable regulations of his/her school. The "Child in Need of Services" is to be filed by the truant officer, police officer, a parent/guardian.

- B. Any student found to have distributed or sold drugs will be treated in the same manner as a student who has violated the drug policy for the second time.
  - C. When the facts have been reasonably established that the student has violated the Drug and Alcohol Policy for the second time, the administrator shall suspend the student for ten (10) days:
    - 1. Law enforcement will be involved
    - 2. Parents will meet with the Assessment Team to review the case
    - 3. The Assessment Team will give the student the option:
      - a. Entering and completing an approved treatment program
      - b. If the student chooses not to enter a program, he/she will be referred to the School Committee for the purpose of exclusion from the Freetown-Lakeville Schools.
  - D. During any period of suspension or expulsion, the student is prohibited from coming onto any school property, except for the purpose of keeping appointments. The student and his/her parents will be given a hand-delivered written notice that the coming onto school property is a violation of this policy and will be considered a criminal trespass in accordance with Section 120 of Chapter 266, Massachusetts General Laws. A copy of the hand-delivered written notice will be sent to the police.
- III. The administrator, immediately after finding a student to have violated the Drug and Alcohol Policy, will furnish the police department with a complete report, including the controlled substances and other physical evidence obtained. To the extent permitted by law, the police department will inform the school department of the disposition of the case. A copy of this report will at the same time be submitted to the Superintendent of schools.
- IV. Search of Students and School Property
- A. All parents and students must understand that:
    - 1. Every administrator may conduct a search of a student on school premises if he/she has reasonable grounds to believe that the student has in his/her possession any item, the possession of which constitutes a criminal offense under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or violates the written policies of the Freetown-Lakeville School District.

2. Every administrator may conduct a search of the physical plant of the school and appurtenance thereof, including student lockers since lockers are school property. Any and all means, within the law, will be used to obtain evidence.

V. Students Seeking Voluntary Drug Assistance

- A. The school will provide, without penalty, assistance to any student voluntarily seeking drug and alcohol treatment or advice. If a student voluntarily seeks information or assistance about illegal substance uses and has not been apprehended for any such violation by school authorities, or staff, will take the following actions:
  1. The Assessment Team will immediately consider the best possible resources for helping the student
  2. Parents are an important factor in helping the individual student and may be involved if it is considered appropriate.

## **REPORTING DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

In accordance with Chapter 71, Section 37L of the Massachusetts General Laws, "...any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor (Principal) an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local School Committee. Said Superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of social services, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program, provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment..."

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 71:37L