

FRANK WARD STRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL

PARENT / FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025-2026



"Strong Students Shape Tomorrow"

P.O. BOX 435

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General Office Telephone (860) 349-7222

Guidance Office Telephone (860) 349-7255

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ADMINISTRATION

Dave Kimball, Principal
Noelle Durkin, Assistant Principal

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Maura Caramanello
Christine Cowan
Lindsay Dahlheimer
Linda Darcy
Stephen DeVecchio
John Mennone
Robert Moore
Lucy Petrella
James Roraback
Jason Stone

CENTRAL OFFICE

Dr. Sydney Leggett, Superintendent of Schools
Kimberly Neubig, Business Manager
Jennifer Keane, Director of Student Services & Special Education
Liza Siegel, Assoc. Dir. of Learning, Innovation, and Accountability
Kevin Brough, Human Resource Specialist
Patty Smith, Operations Manager
Eric Proia, Facilities Manager
Ken Pietrasko, Director of Information Technology

Welcome Message from the Administration

Dear Strong Middle School Parents, Guardians, and Students:

Welcome to the 2025–2026 school year! We are thrilled that we get to begin this year together at Frank Ward Strong Middle School. Whether you're new to our community or returning for another year, we're glad to have you as part of the Strong family.

The purpose of this *Student/Family Handbook* is to support a strong partnership between home and school. It includes important information about our policies, expectations, and procedures. We encourage you to review it together as a family. A shared understanding of this information helps us maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where all students can thrive. This year our work will focus on the following:

Culture and Climate Work:

A strong culture and climate will build the foundation for all other learning and professional work we want to do. The basis of this will be district-wide Restorative Practices training and implementation. You'll get more information about Restorative Practices and other strategies throughout the year – and it looks a little different at each age/developmental level – but please remember these key principles:

- This provides a framework for a positive culture and climate and problem solving strategies that make us stronger as individuals and as a community.
- This framework is meant to be 80% proactive (how we act every day) and 20% reactive (resolving conflicts)
- There's an important saying in Restorative Practices: "We repeat what we don't repair." In order to build a better future, we focus on solving problems well so they don't keep happening.

Core Ethical Values Revisited:

Throughout all our work, we plan to re-engage in meaningful dialogue to reaffirm and strengthen the core ethical values that define who we are as a district: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, and Courage. These foundational principles will inform our short- and long-term practices and plans – consider them a "quality control" check that we'll refer to in everything from curriculum development to student discipline, with students and learning at the core of all decision making.

Development of a Strong Strategic Plan:

Throughout this year we'll be developing – collaboratively – a strategic plan for RSD 13. This work requires carefully structuring a process, gaining feedback and input from all school community voices through the analysis of existing data plus new data from surveys, and then revising and refining the plan itself until it's ready for approval. I know people are survey-weary (it seems we can't do much these days without being asked to do a survey!), but if you choose any to answer, please be prepared to set aside some time to answer this one, scheduled to come out in November. The strategic plan is the compass that provides us direction.

You can access the handbook anytime on our school website. Please also take a moment to log into PowerSchool to verify and update your contact and emergency information. Keeping this information current is essential to ensuring we can reach you quickly when needed.

If you have any questions about the handbook or need assistance, feel free to contact the main office at 860.349.7222, or reach out to me directly at dkimball@rsd13.org.

We're looking forward to a year filled with meaningful learning, growth, and connection. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Respectfully,

Dave Kimball, Principal

Noelle Durkin, Assistant Principal

Frank Ward Strong Middle School

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Regional School District 13 Mission and Core Values

Mission Statement

Empowering Students to Thrive and Contribute as Global Citizens

Regional School District 13's Core Ethical Values: Rooted in a caring community, we uphold these core ethical values as the foundation of our shared commitment to learning excellence, collaboration, integrity, and continual growth.

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Courage

Respect:

We will recognize the inherent worth of every person and appreciate our differences.

Responsibility:

We will make good choices, take ownership of our actions, and consider the impact we have on others.

Honesty:

We will be truthful and authentic with ourselves and others.

Kindness:

We will choose to treat others with care and compassion through both our thoughts and actions.

Courage:

We will take healthy risks and stand up for what is right, even when it's hard, scary, or unpopular.

FRANK WARD STRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

To email any member of the FWS faculty/staff Use their first initial and full last name followed by @rsd13.org (for example, Dave Kimball would be dkimball@rsd13.org) *Denotes Team Leaders

ADMINISTRATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS			
Dave Kimball	Principal	Noelle Durkin	Assistant Principal
Lynn Davis	Secretary	Karen Buckley	Secretary
FACULTY & STAFF			
Meg Smith (Sub)	Grade 5	Jessica Biancardi*	Grade 5
Kris Koba	Grade 5	Colleen LaRochelle	Grade 5
Gloria McClure	Grade 5	Maura Broggi*	Grade 6 - Science
Kim Mach	Grade 6 - English	Lynann Troiano	Grade 6 - Math
Maryellen Zastawsky*	Grade 6 - Social Studies	Lindsay Banas*	Grade 7 - Social Studies
Renee Brajczewski	Grade 7 - Math	Carly Ehlman	Grade 7 - Science
Amy MacKay	Grade 7 - English	Dan Carcaud*	Grade 8 - Social Studies
Jen Penney*	Grade 8 - Math	Amy Ryan	Grade 8 - English
Paul Sinusas	Grade 8 - Science	Heather Almondovar	World Language
Jeannie Gugliemino	World Language	Amanda Smith	World Language
RELATED ARTS			
Amy Schaefer*	Art	Pamela Longley	Art
Carolyn LaRosa	Enrichment	Kirsten Deitz	Health
Tracy Earnshaw	Library/Media	Lisa Killian	Music
Jessica Boccola	Music	Michael Meurs	Music
Nick Barbieri	Physical Education	Greg Morrone*	PE/Health
Scott Mongillo	Technology	Bridgette Schlicker*	Technology
STUDENT SERVICES			
Toby Rascati	Counselor	Rebecca Sinusas	Counselor

Anne Juncadella	R.N. Medical	Melissa Snyder	School Psychologist
Karen Bransfield	Guidance Secretary	Brianna Schock	School Psychologist
Kathy Bottini	Social Worker	Hannah Burkins	Speech Pathologist
Victoria Abolafia	Speech Pathologist		
Courtney Dreish	Instructional Coach	Tara Heikkila	Instructional Coach
Leslie Kilroy	Instructional Coach	Gina Lentini*	Instructional Coach
Chris Napoletano	Interventionist	Christina Prekulaj	Interventionist
Michelle Seward	Interventionist		Interventionist
Isabelle Baranski	Special Services	Thomas DiLella	Special Services
Claire Falvey*	Special Services	Martha Jennings	Special Services
Amanda Romano	Special Services	Linda Suravich*	Special Services
Christine Todd	Special Services	Shannon Vendetto	Special Services
Mike Caporale	ABA Therapist	Liz Quinn	ABA Therapist
Jennifer Sienna	ABA Therapist	Broady Ulrich	ABA Therapist
Tracey Asti	Teaching Asst.	Nicole Frank	Teaching Asst.
Amity French-Wilson	Teaching Asst.	Karen Kean	Teaching Asst.
Lore Lena	Teaching Asst.	Barbara Mielke	Teaching Asst.
Myrna Pastrana-Rooney	Teaching Asst.	Leanne Slawinowski	Teaching Asst.
Donna Sperl	Teaching Asst.	Jennifer Tomer	Teaching Asst.
Meryl Vallone	Teaching Asst.	Cheryl Forbush	Tutor
Amy Schaffer	Tutor	Trooper Mark Hesseltine	School Resource Officer
FOOD SERVICES			
Kelly Gribko	Cafeteria Staff	Lisa Baker	Cafeteria Staff
Nancy Reed	Cafeteria Staff	Rita Van Steenberg	Cafeteria Staff
CUSTODIAL STAFF			
Bill Anderson	Custodial Staff	Bill Baker	Custodial Staff

Tyler Doherty	Custodial Staff	Kevin Moore	Custodial Staff
ATHLETICS			
Todd Petronio	Athletic Director	Becky Glenn	Asst. to Athletic Dir.
Ethan Bankoski	Athletic Trainer		

Marking Periods

Marking Period and Report Card Grades 6-8 Information SY 25-26 Dates subject to change.

Marking Period	MP1 (45)	MP2 (45)	MP3 (45)	MP4 (45)
Start Date	September 3, 2025	November 8, 2025	January 27, 2026	April 2, 2026
Mid Point	October 6, 2025	December 15, 2025	March 2, 2026	May 11, 2026
End Date	November 7, 2025	January 26, 2026	April 1, 2026	June 12, 2026
Report Cards Issued	November 12, 2025	January 30, 2026	April 8, 2026	June 17, 2026

Grade 5 2025-2026 School Year 9/3/2025- 6/12/2026*		
Term 1 9/3/25 - 12/5/25	Term 2 12/8/25 - 2/27/26	Term 3 3/2/26 - 6/12/26*

Report cards will be sent home electronically each quarter (grades 6-8) and each trimester (grade 5).

***Dates may change to adjust for school closings due to inclement weather.**

2025-2026 School Calendar



REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 13 CALENDAR 2025-2026

July 2025							August 2025							September 2025							IMPORTANT DATES	
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa		
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6	July 3 & 4	4th of July Holiday - District Closed
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	July 7-31	Summer School
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	August 26	District / School Professional Learning
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	August 27	Convocation/Faculty Mtgs
27	28	29	30	31			24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					September 1	Labor Day - District Closed
																					September 2	Staff Prep Day
																					September 3	First Day for Students - Half Day for Students
																					September 4	Half Day for Students
																					September 26	Durham Fair / No School For Students
																					October 8 & 9	Early Release/Parent Conferences
																					October 13	Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day - District Closed
																					November 4	Election Day/No School for Students/Prof. Learning
																					November 26-28	Thanksgiving Recess - District Closed
																					December 23	Early Release
																					Dec 24 - Jan 1	Winter Recess
																					December 24-25	District Closed
																					Dec 31 - Jan 1	District Closed
																					January 19	Martin Luther King Day - District Closed
																					February 13	No School for Students/Prof. Learning
																					February 16	President's Day - District Closed
																					March 11 & 12	Early Release/Parent Conferences
																					April 3	Good Friday - District Closed
																					April 13-17	Spring Recess
																					May 25	Memorial Day - District Closed
																					June 10 & 11**	Transition/Early Release
																					June 12**	Last Day of School/Early Release/CRHS Graduation
																					June 15 & 16^	Professional Learning
																					June 19	Juneteenth Day - District Closed

Legend		Approved by BOE - 6.11.25	
	Summer School		Holidays / District Closed
	No School For Students		Early Release
	First Days for Teachers		180 Student Days
			187 Teacher Days

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**The last day of school is contingent on inclement weather closings.

^Actual Professional Learning activities may occur prior to this date in accordance with bargaining agreement.

2025 - 2026 School Hours

Regular & Emergency School Day Hours

School / Program	Regular Start Time	Regular Dismissal	2-Hr Delay Start Time	Early Release Time
Coginchaug High School	7:25 a.m.	2:02 p.m.	9:25 a.m.	11:30 a.m.
Strong Middle School	8:00 a.m.	2:35 p.m.	10:00 a.m.	12:05 p.m.
Lyman Elementary	8:50 a.m.	3:20 p.m.	10:50 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
Brewster Elementary	8:50 a.m.	3:20 p.m.	10:50 a.m.	12:30 p.m.
PreK* (3 yr olds)	9:00 a.m.	1:15 p.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:10 p.m.
PreK* (4 yr olds)	9:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:10 p.m.
Middlesex Transition Academy	8:30 a.m.	2:30 p.m.	10:30 a.m.	12:05 p.m.

* Please note the PreK program does not meet on Fridays.

2025-2026 Daily Schedule

Grades 6-8

Period	DAILY BELL SCHEDULE MONDAY - FRIDAY
1	8:00 – 8:55
2	8:56 -9:46
3	9:47 – 10:37
4	10:38 - 12:00
5	12:02 - 12:53
6	12:54 -1:44
7	1:45 – 2:35

Grade 5 will follow a traditional elementary school model.

Grade	Lunch Schedule
5	Recess 11:15 - 11:45 11:45 - 12:15
6	11:10 - 11:40
7	10:38 - 11:08
8	12:23 - 12:53

Academic Information

AGENDA BOOKS

Every student at Strong School receives an agenda book on the first day of school. Students are expected to bring the agenda book to every class, record all assignments and follow teacher and team rules regarding the signing of the agenda book.

1-TO-1 CHROMEBOOK INITIATIVE

Strong School students will be issued a district-owned Chromebook device for school-related work. Said device will be used in school and can be taken home. RSD13's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be in

effect at all times when any student is using their (or any) district owned device. "Optional Damage Protection" is available to all students/families for a fee. Seventh and eighth grade students who are returning to Strong School will continue to use the device that was issued to them. All 5th and 6th graders, and newly enrolled 7th and 8th graders, will be issued a new device at the start of the school year. All students and a Parent/Guardian will be required to sign off on a form entitled, "RSD 13 K-12 Technology Permission Slip" that will be accessible on ParentSquare.

Students are responsible for the safe storage of their district-issued device. Non-compliance with school/classroom rules as they apply to technology and the AUP may result in consequences including, but not limited to, suspension of network user account and loss of device use privilege (short and/or long-term).

GRADING POLICIES

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students will receive report cards four times per year and will be graded in all subjects. In each subject, students will be evaluated on the academic work completed during the marking period (letter grade), as well as on progress toward content and lifelong learning benchmarks (demonstrates responsible behavior, interacts effectively with others and demonstrates responsibility for learning). Grades are computed numerically and then assigned the appropriate letter grade:

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F = 0-59
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	

Report cards for fifth grade are issued three times a year and are completely standard-based. This means teachers have identified from the broader curriculum the essential knowledge and skills that students must master to be successful at the next grade level. Progress towards these benchmarks is reported using a four-point rubric. Academic benchmarks relate to specific skills and goals developed in each academic area. Academic benchmarks and related arts are evaluated using the numerical key listed below.

- 4 – Student is consistently meeting grade level expectations
- 3 – Student is approaching but has not yet met grade-level expectations
- 2 – Student is developing an understanding of grade-level expectations
- 1 – Student is beginning to demonstrate or has not yet demonstrated grade-level expectations
- N/A – Skills and concepts were not assessed at this time

Hard copies of report cards do not go home. Families have access to the report cards through ParentSquare. Teacher/family conferences are held two times a year (fall and spring). It is very important for families to attend conferences. If families have any questions at any point about their child's progress, they can contact the child's teacher.

HONOR ROLL

Outstanding work in all areas, for grades 6-8, is recognized by an honor roll. Honor roll distinction is indicated on each child's report card. All subject areas are included in determining honor roll status.

- High Honor Roll: all "A's" with one "B+"
- Honor Roll: All "A's" and "B's" with one "C+"

HOMEWORK (Updated BOE Policy [6141.2](#) as of April 2025)

PURPOSE

The purpose of homework is to reinforce learning, encourage responsibility, and provide opportunities for students to practice and apply what they have learned in school. This policy is designed to guide students, parents, and teachers in the effective use of homework to enhance academic achievement while recognizing the evolving role of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), in education.

INSTRUCTION

HOMEWORK REGULATIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

1. Kindergarten to Grade 5:

- Homework should be manageable and relevant to the skills being taught in class.
- Typically includes reading, practice of foundational skills, and creative assignments that connect to classroom activities.
- The frequency of these assignments will be left to the teacher's discretion, usually not to exceed four times per week.
- Parents are encouraged to support their child's learning but not to complete the homework for them.

2. Grades 6 to 8:

- Homework assignments will vary in difficulty and length, but should be manageable within a reasonable timeframe.
- Includes research, projects, and independent practice.
- Use of digital tools, such as educational apps or websites, is encouraged to support learning.

Artificial Intelligence and Technology Use in Homework

As AI and digital tools become more integral to education, students are encouraged to use technology responsibly to enhance their learning. However, it is important to distinguish between tools that support learning and those that do the work for students. The following guidelines are provided:

1. Ethical Use of AI:

- AI tools (such as chatbots, writing assistants, and research platforms) may be used to assist with brainstorming, clarifying concepts, or improving language skills.
- AI-generated content should not be submitted as the sole or primary work of the student. Students must ensure that the work they submit reflects their own understanding and effort.
- Plagiarism, including the uncredited use of AI-generated tools, are prohibited. Students are expected to properly cite any resources, including AI tools, used in their

homework.

2. Guidelines for AI-Enhanced Learning:

- Research: AI may be used to access reliable and relevant information quickly. However, students are expected to critically evaluate sources for accuracy and credibility.
- Writing Assistance: AI tools can help students with spelling, grammar, and structure. However, students should ensure that their own voice and ideas are central to any writing.
- Math and Problem Solving: AI tools for solving mathematical problems or equations may be used for practice. However, students are expected to understand the underlying concepts and show their problem-solving process.

3. Parental Role:

- Parents should ensure that their children are using AI and digital tools appropriately and in a way that aligns with educational goals.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children the importance of independent work, ethical use of AI, and the value of developing personal skills over time.

Monitoring and Enforcement

Teachers will review homework for understanding, effort, and originality. If there are concerns about the inappropriate use of AI tools, such as excessive reliance on AI-generated content, teachers may address the issue with the student and provide guidance on ethical technology use. Additionally, the school may incorporate digital literacy lessons into the curriculum to teach students how to use technology responsibly and effectively.

Conclusion

Homework should be a valuable learning experience that helps students build knowledge, skills, and independence. As students are exposed to more technology, including AI, it is essential for them to develop critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills regarding how and when to use these tools in their academic work.

INSTRUCTION - Diversity (Updated BOE Policy 6001 as of July 9, 2025)

The Board of Education endorses an educational program that honors and embraces cultural diversity and informs the inherent value of dignity of each person. The curriculum will acknowledge, support, and respond to the unique needs of all students while encouraging a deep understanding and respect of the individual cultural differences.

STUDENT SUPPLIES

The school district provides students with basic school supplies (i.e. pens, pencils, markers, notebooks, etc).

SERVICES AT STRONG SCHOOL

GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Guidance and counseling services are available to all students. These services include assistance with educational planning, interpretation of test scores, home, school, and/or social concerns, or any question the

student may feel he/she would like to discuss with a counselor. Our school has psychologists, social workers and counselors on staff to assist students. They are trained, skilled, mental health professionals who work individually, in small groups, and in classrooms on the social emotional curriculum or individual goals/needs. Parents are encouraged to call 860-349-7255 during the school day to speak to a counselor or schedule an appointment.

HEALTH SERVICES

Students who feel ill should report to the school nurse. If the nurse is not available, students should report to the main office. Students must not call/text a parent/guardian or leave the building because of illness without authorization by the nurse or an administrator. Students with significant injuries or illness will be required to have a physician's note to return to Physical Education and sports. Students requiring the use of crutches at school must provide a physician's note allowing their use at school.

All medications are to be delivered to the school nurse or the principal by the parent. A doctor's written order is required for school personnel to dispense medications, including over the counter medications (like Tylenol) and topical preparations. Doctor order forms are available from the school nurse and on the school's website. New orders are required each academic year. All medications must be properly labeled from the pharmacy. A parent must pick up all medications by the last day of school, or they will be discarded.

An important note Regarding Administration of Epinephrine at Public Schools:

Effective July 1, 2014, Public Act 14-176 (An Act concerning the Storage and Administration of epinephrine at Public Schools) amended the law to include the administration of epinephrine as emergency first aid to students experiencing allergic reactions, not previously diagnosed, by qualified unlicensed personnel who are trained annually in the administration of epinephrine.

This Act applies only during the absence of a school nurse, on school grounds, during regular school hours. Please notify the school nurse and medical advisor in writing annually if you do not wish your child to receive epinephrine as emergency first aid by qualified school personnel in the absence of a school nurse. This opt-out will not apply when the nurse is available or to students with known, diagnosed allergies with existing orders.

State health requirements mandate a sixth grade physical exam be completed prior to entry into seventh grade, including blood work (Hct/Hgb), a second measles immunization, Hepatitis B immunization, immunity to Varicella (chicken pox), Tdap vaccine and Meningococcal immunization. Those who qualify on the basis of financial need may obtain the services of the Regional District #13 physician.

Students participating in interscholastic sports must have a physical examination on file in the health office. A student is eligible to practice and play interscholastic sports for exactly 13 months from the date of the last physical examination on file in the health office. A doctor's note saying a student is healthy and eligible to play is not accepted in lieu of an actual physical examination.

State mandated health screenings will be performed during the school year, per current state regulations.

For any questions, please call Ann Juncadella, R.N., B.S.N., Strong School Nurse, at 860-349-7257.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

Students are welcome to use the media center for print research, independent reading and computer access. Students are expected to show respect for the facility, materials, staff and other students. When help is needed, students are encouraged to ask the library media specialist or assistant for help. Please see the guidelines for the library media center that are listed below.

- No food or drink allowed.
- Discussions relating to school assignments are permitted but must be quiet so others may do their work.
- Damaged or lost books must be replaced or paid for at the discretion of the library media specialist.
- Students must come to library tutorials prepared. If homework is finished, students are expected to read from their independent reading book.
- Materials may be checked out for three weeks and renewed two more times. Detention will be assigned if late books are not turned in after two warnings.
- Students wishing to use the computers in the lab must sign in at the front desk.
- Computer use is limited to school assignments.

RELATED ARTS CLASSES

The classes noted below are those that students will rotate through during each marking period. The order of the classes below is not necessarily the same as the rotation your child will follow:

- **5th Grade:** PE, Health, Art, Music, Technology, Library
- **6th Grade:** General Music, Enrichment, French, Spanish,
- **6th, 7th & 8th Grade Related Arts Rotation:** Art, Health, PE, Technology & Innovation (TI).
- **7th & 8th Grade World Language:** Classes meet all year and do not rotate.
- Students also have the opportunity to sign up for electives in each grade level, including but not limited to Band and Chorus.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Strong School provides services and programs to meet the particular educational needs of students whose disabilities have resulted in learning difficulties. Parents who are concerned about their student's progress in school should contact a counselor or administrator. "A Guide to Special Education in Connecticut for Parents and Students" will be mailed to parents to explain the Special Education processes. Placement in Special Education Services will begin only after an evaluation has been conducted to determine if a student has a disability and the extent of services needed has been assessed. A PPT (Planning and Placement Team) will determine if an evaluation is warranted, and then, once an evaluation is completed, if services are appropriate.

There are many regulations regarding Special Education, so parents are advised to contact a school counselor and read the guide for helpful information.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

As a part of the RSD 13 Early Intervention Program, the Student Assistance Team meets weekly to discuss children whose academic, social, emotional, or behavioral needs raise a concern with one or more faculty members.

Members of the team are the: principal, school psychologist, social worker, special education teacher(s), school nurse, regular education teacher(s), reading and math interventionists, and speech pathologist. Physical and occupational therapists also join the team periodically to discuss student concerns.

The main purpose of the team is the early identification of any academic or behavioral concerns exhibited by a child. This early identification can prevent a concern from becoming a more significant problem later. The first step is a teacher/parent contact to discuss the concerns. Next, a teacher will bring the child's name to the team for discussion. The team will then develop an action plan that will include strategies to try in the classroom. It

also may include observations of the child in class, parent conferences, team meetings, or any number of other options. Parents are a vital part of any plan to assist a child. Parents and teachers working together consistently can resolve many early difficulties. We all have the same goal; helping our children be successful.

ACTIVITIES

A variety of clubs and activities run throughout the year for students in grades 5 through 8. These include but are not limited to Art Club, Chess Club, Jazz Band, Yearbook, Intramural Sports and many others. Clubs and activities meet after school and are open to any/all students based on grade level of the program. Clubs and activities may change based on student interest.

Students who have been suspended in or out of school on a day of any student activity or dance will not be allowed to attend. All school rules are in effect for evening activities. Students may not arrive early and must leave when the event is over. Students are not permitted to loiter in the parking lot or on school grounds. Students must adhere to the dress requirements stipulated by the event sponsors. Students not cooperating will be refused admittance.

Parents and appropriate authorities may be contacted immediately if a student is involved in any of the following:

- Drug and/or alcohol use either before or during a school event
- Insubordination (Not following directions of adult supervisor)
- Fighting
- Any violation of school rules or civil law

ATHLETICS: INTRAMURAL

The intramural program provides student engagement at a lower level of competition for students in 6th-8th grade. At the same time, students have an opportunity to build self-esteem and friendships as they interact with others in the building. Family ID registration is required. Programs available based on student interest and appropriate staffing.

ATHLETICS: INTERSCHOLASTIC

Interscholastic sports are a part of the middle school experience as well. These sports will be open to all students in grades 6, 7 & 8. Student athletes will compete at Strong and travel to other schools to compete. Many of these sports teams have a try out associated with them. Athletic programs provide students with strategies and teamwork dynamics coupled with a higher level of competition.

Sports offered by Season

Fall Season begins shortly after school starts and continues until late October or early November.

- Boys and girls soccer
- Boys and girls cross country

Winter Season starts in early December and ends in late February. While the basketball teams compete against other schools, the cheerleading squad works hard to support the student body for both boys and girls sports.

- Boys and girls basketball
- Cheerleading (**When there's enough interest*)

Spring Season will start in late March and continue until early June. Both sports compete with other middle schools.

- Baseball
- Softball

In order to participate in any interscholastic sport at Strong, the following requirements must be met prior to try-outs, practices or contest for each individual sports:

1. Completion of Family ID Registration at <http://www.familyid.com/regional-school-district-13>
2. A Health Assessment Form (Physical Exam) completed by the Physician and Parent/Guardian must be submitted directly to the Strong School nurse. In order to be considered valid, the date of the physical examination can be no more than 13 months old. Please note that it is the responsibility of the parent(s) and/or the student to be sure that the physical exam is up to date. Physical exam information will be indicated on FamilyID once registered. The school is not obligated to notify students or parents when updated physicals are needed or when FamilyID registration has been completed. Emergency medications (inhalers, epipens, insulin) and MD orders must also be on file with the school nurse. The parent must provide the medication for use during sports and notify the coach directly.
3. Student athletes in their first season with that sport must have a completed baseline ImPact test prior to the first date of competition. This will be administered by our Athletic Trainer.

In addition, in order to participate in any interscholastic sport, a student must:

- Be covered by a comprehensive accident insurance policy
- Have been examined by a physician and declared fit
- Maintain a passing average in at least four academic subjects
- Cover cost for loss or damage to uniforms
- Maintain an acceptable discipline and behavior record
- Conform to team rules for conduct, sportsmanship and fair play as outlined by coaches
- Attend all practices and games. Each head coach will establish team rules in regards to attendance that students/parents must adhere to.
- Participate in P.E. class on game days
- Be present in school that day. If a student is absent, they may not return to attend practices or games. Also, if a student leaves school sick, they may not return.

Students will be excused (no penalty) from practice for the same reasons as excused absences from school.

Penalties for unexcused absences and/or any behavior violations will be determined by coaches/principal.

Current health physical from a physician – submit to nurse's office

- Athletes must check with the school nurse to confirm that their physical is current. As a reminder, a sports physical form must have a physical date within the last 13 months in order to be eligible to practice or play sports.
- State law requires complete primary immunizations of our students. District 13 requires these immunizations in 6th and 10th grade. A physical and blue State of CT Department of Education – Health Assessment record must be completed and submitted for all 7th grade students prior to entry into Grade 7 at Strong Middle School.
- All “Blue” Health Assessment forms can be found in the nurse's office or on the RSD13 website under “Health Services”. Please pick up these forms PRIOR to going to your scheduled physical appointment. These can be found on the Athletic website.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

The rules of Strong School exist to support the district's educational philosophy and programs; they are subject to change by the school administration and Board of Education. In all behavior, students are expected to use common sense and to respect all members of the school community. The school rules apply to students whenever they are on Regional District 13 property or when representing RSD13 at school-sponsored events off campus (including but not limited to athletic events, field trips, etc.).

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

PowerSchool information allows parents to access academic information including grades and attendance. The original information sent to parents includes the PowerSchool web address, a user ID number, and a password. It is the responsibility of the parent and child/student to access the information in order to keep track of student progress and attendance information. Information about grading and report cards is located in the Academic Information section of this handbook.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child.

- **Any absence before the student's tenth absence is considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence in accordance with [RSD 13 Policy 5113](#). Significant changes have been made to the State Attendance Policy that impacted the District Attendance Policy.**

Level	Total # of Days Absent*	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to Be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves.	Parent or guardian note only.
2	10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student illness (<i>Note: to be deemed excused, an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length.</i>) • Student's observance of a religious holiday. • Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. • Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). • The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). • Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators. (Opportunities must meet certain criteria. See below for details). 	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason).

* Note: The total number of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be final.

Please Note:

- The State of Connecticut Board of Education defines present as "in attendance for half of the regular school day."
- Regional School District 13 reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
- Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at his/her own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.
- Students are responsible for obtaining all work missed due to absences. Homework may be requested when a student is absent for two or more consecutive days. Students and parents must recognize that class work missed cannot be replicated. It is the student's responsibility to arrange to complete all work missed. While teachers may suggest work be done while a student is with their family on vacation, they are not responsible for preparing lessons prior to the teaching of those lessons. (See BOE Policies)

**** Written documentation from a parent/guardian will not excuse an absence after the first nine (9) days absent from class/school. Official and appropriate documentation, in accordance with this regulation, will be required to consider an absence excused after the first nine (9) days. ****

Attendance is recorded each period for students in sixth through eighth grade. If you miss a class for any reason other than a school activity, you will not have perfect attendance in that class.

TRUANCY

State law requires school districts and schools to have specific policies and procedures regarding students who are truant. A truant is defined as a student who has had 4 unexcused absences from school in one month (30 consecutive calendar days) or 10 unexcused absences in one school year.

If a student becomes truant, their school is required to have a meeting with the student's parent/ guardian within 10 school days. In this meeting, the school should work with the student and guardian to help the student return to school. Schools should also work with community agencies providing child and family services to address the student's barriers to coming to school.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive at school after 8:00 am are considered tardy and should report to the office. Excessive tardies to school will result in progressive disciplinary action by the administration. Students who arrive after instruction has begun will receive a consequence from the teacher. Students who are chronically tardy will be referred to the office.

At 3 tardies: A warning email will be sent to the student.

At 5 tardies: The student will receive disciplinary consequences.

- Lunch detention
- Athletic coaches and extracurricular advisors notified of potential loss of eligibility and participation if the pattern of tardiness continued.

At 10 tardies: The student will receive increased disciplinary consequences.

- After school detention
- 1 week suspension from extracurricular clubs and activities
- At 10 tardies, suspended from athletic activities (practice/games) on Day 10. Meeting with administration and athletic director.

Beyond 10 tardies: The student will receive in addition to the above:

- A lunch detention for each day that the student is late
- Suspension of extracurricular clubs and activities
- Athletics: Each subsequent tardy results in suspension of athletic activities (practices/game) for each day tardy moving forward. Patterns of chronic tardiness may impact eligibility for continued participation in practice.
- Parent/Guardian Meeting

If patterns of chronic tardy arrivals are observed: An SAT (Student Assistance Team) referral will be made to implement further interventions.

ARRIVAL

Please be aware that we cannot supervise students before 7:40 am. Please do not drop students at school before that time. Staff members are on duty at 7:40 am daily. Families dropping off students may enter Strong School via Main Street/Route 17 and drop off along the curved sidewalk in front of the school.

Do not drop off on Pickett Lane, as we do not have a sidewalk that connects to the main entrance, unless students walk around and follow the main street sidewalk. Having students walk across the lawn is not suitable for inclement weather and creates a possibility for injury. Faculty/staff will be on duty beginning at 7:40 am to help with the process. Please remain in your car and watch for students, staff, and traffic.

Once students enter the building, they should drop their belongings at their locker, then go to their first period class (homeroom teacher for fifth grade). If they'd like, students can grab breakfast in the cafeteria on the way.

BEVERAGES

Students are not to bring the following beverages to Strong School: coffee, hot chocolate, energy drinks and any other beverage with high sugar and/or caffeine content. Students are permitted to carry water bottles to and from class and the cafeteria throughout the school day. There are two water bottle filling stations, cafeteria and gymnasium, that students can use to refill water bottles.

BUS

Dattco is the transportation provider for RSD13. The phone number for Dattco is 860-349-8479. Parents of **fifth grade students** will need to indicate on the bus form if the child is allowed to be left at the bus stop if an adult is not present. Otherwise the child will be brought back to school.

If you have a bus change during the school year, please remember that it may take up to 48 hours for a bus change to be processed. You must complete a [bus form](#) with the change and submit it to the school. These forms can also be found online. You will be notified when the bus change will go into effect.

When waiting at the bus stop, plan to be at the stop 10 minutes before and after the scheduled time of bus arrival. There are many things that make a bus run off schedule including several students not attending school on a particular day, or the driver encounters traffic. You should call the school, not the bus company, if the time of pick up and drop off is extremely inconsistent. **Students may only ride their regular assigned bus.**

Bus Conduct

These rules of conduct are established to ensure student safety and are for the benefit of each individual student. Students are encouraged to comply with these Rules of Conduct which contribute significantly to safety and the efficient operation of our transportation system. These rules apply at bus stops, loading zones, while riding the bus to or from school, and during school related activities.

Please be advised that electronic monitoring devices may be present on school buses.

Rules of Conduct:

- Ride the assigned bus only at your assigned bus stop.
- Board the bus respectfully without pushing or crowding of other students.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to one's self and not on anyone else or their property.
- Keep all parts of your body and all objects inside the bus.
- No food or drinks on the bus.

- Remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion. Seating assignments may be made at the discretion of the bus driver or school administrator.
- Do not swear, use rude gestures, or tease anyone on the bus.
- All items must be kept in backpacks.
- Arrive at their bus stop ten (10) minutes before the bus arrives.
- Do not litter, write on, or damage the bus in any way.
- Exit through the front door only, unless otherwise directed by the bus driver.

Students who do not follow these rules will be written up and receive appropriate consequences. If a student continues to misbehave he/she may lose the privilege of riding the bus for a period of time. It will be the parent's responsibility to provide transportation.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal begins daily at 2:35 pm with faculty and staff on duty. Students being picked up will exit the main front doors. Students riding a bus will exit in the rear to the bus loop.

Families may text their child to let them know where they are in the pick up line. For safety, all adults should remain in their vehicles during pick-up. Once your child is safely in the car, please pull out slowly and stay alert for students, staff, and other vehicles. Strong School personnel will be out front to assist and guide traffic.

To support a smooth, safe, and orderly dismissal, we will follow a staggered release schedule from Wednesday, September 2 through Friday, September 19. This will allow us to closely monitor dismissal traffic and make any adjustments needed to maintain safety and efficiency. Students will be dismissed *by grade level* in 5-minute intervals. Siblings will be dismissed together based on the youngest student's dismissal time. Please review the times below for both full school days and early (half) dismissal days.

Grade Level	Half-Day Dismissal (12:05 p.m.)	Full-Day Dismissal (2:35 p.m.)
5th Grade	12:05 p.m.	2:35 p.m.
6th Grade	12:10 p.m.	2:40 p.m.
7th Grade	12:15 p.m.	2:45 p.m.
8th Grade	12:20 p.m.	2:50 p.m.

CAFETERIA

Breakfast and hot lunch are available for purchase through the school cafeteria beginning on the first day of school. Please [click the link](#) to the School Lunch Information page on the district website for more information.

Parents can access their child's lunch account [online](#). Money to purchase lunch or drinks can still be sent to school on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and will be applied to the student's account. Account sign-ins will be shared later in the school year.

Students are expected to show respect and responsibility in the cafeteria. This is shown by leaving their tables clean, disposing of all litter, and returning their trays. Students who leave behind food or garbage

may be required to clean the area as a result of their actions. Throwing food is considered a serious offense and can result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or loss of cafeteria privileges.

Students residing in households with income at or below the Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or free milk. **The application form and instructions are available on the RSD 13 website: www.rsd13ct.org in the School Lunch Information Section.** To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households should fill out the application and return it **to any RSD 13 school. Additional copies are available at the main office of each school.** Only one application is required per household and an application for free or reduced-price benefits cannot be approved unless it contains complete eligibility information as indicated on the application and instructions.

CELL PHONES

Student cell phones are to remain in the student's locker for the entire school day, 8:00 am to 2:35 pm. Students may not take photographs or videos with their devices **unless it is part of a class activity with appropriate permission.**

A cell phone that is in use at an inappropriate time (i.e. not in locker) will be confiscated and brought to the main office. For the first offense, the student will get their device back at the end of the day. Additional offenses will result in escalating consequences.

DRESS AND GROOMING

Our goal is to create an environment that is conducive to learning and does not present students with distractions. It is also developmentally important for students to understand that part of showing self-respect is how we present to others. Young adults (teenagers) may need adult direction in defining themselves in a way that does not interfere with their purpose at school or with how they want to begin to define themselves to their peers and teachers. At all times, students are expected to comply with [RSD13 Board Policy 5132, Student Dress and Grooming](#).

EARLY DISMISSAL

All students are required to be in school from 8:00 am - 2:35 pm. Requests for release of a student during the school day originating outside the schools must be handled by the Main Office to ensure maximum provisions for the safety and welfare of the student. Parents requesting dismissal before the normal end of the school day must make a written request, and/or call the school office prior to the student signing out. Students must sign out at the Main Office and exit the building through the main entrance.

Early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations. Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards issued quarterly. **To be eligible to participate in an extracurricular activity, students are expected to attend school for at least (3.5) hours that day.** Only an administrator can grant an exception.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a wonderful way to enrich a student's academic area of study. Field Trips are learning experiences for students, and chaperones. Siblings can often distract students and chaperones on field trips so siblings are not allowed to attend a field trip or nature walk.

- If your child becomes ill on a field trip, you will be contacted and it will be your responsibility to pick up your child at the trip location.
- When tickets are purchased for field trips, there will be **no refund** for the field trip if your child is unable to attend due to illness or a conflict. This also applies to chaperones.
- Students are expected to ride district transportation to and from all field trips unless otherwise indicated. The field trip for chaperones starts and ends at school unless transportation does not include parent chaperones.
- Please send in the exact monetary amount for your child's field trip (no coins). We cannot make change.
- When chaperoning a field trip please turn your cell phone off or on privacy mode and refrain from calling or texting while volunteering.

LEAVING THE BUILDING OR SCHOOL GROUNDS

If a student becomes ill at school, he/she should be sent to the nurse. The nurse will assess and determine if the student should be dismissed from school. If the nurse feels dismissal is necessary, she will contact the appropriate person. Under no circumstances should the student be dismissed for illness by any other means than the above mentioned. Failure to follow the proper procedure will be considered an unexcused absence, cut, or truancy.

LOCKERS

Lockers are provided to students by Regional School District #13 for the purpose of storage of books, school related equipment and personal belongings. Students should not bring valuable personal property or large sums of money to school. Students are expected to keep the lockers locked (unless in fifth grade) and in good orderly condition. All students are required to keep their personal cell phones in lockers all day from 8:00 am - 2:35 pm.

The lockers remain at all times the property of District 13, and it reserves the right to inspect student lockers at any time. Should District #13 have reasonable grounds for suspecting that a student has violated or may be violating a law or school rule, an individualized search of the student's locker may be conducted in a manner reasonably related to the nature of the infraction. In addition, administration reserves the right to inspect lockers on a regular basis without notification. All students will be assigned lockers in September. Students must sign an agreement that they are accepting responsibility for their lockers and for maintaining them in the same conditions as received. Students are responsible for the condition of the locker assigned to them and the cleanliness of the contents. The cost of repair or repainting locker damage caused by writing on painted surfaces, affixing non-removable stickers, or bending or otherwise damaging metal parts will be charged to the student.

LOST, DAMAGED, OR STOLEN SCHOOL PROPERTY

Necessary books and materials are furnished by the school to each student for every course. **If these books, technology or materials are lost, stolen, or damaged in a manner to prevent reissuance, the student will be charged the replacement cost.** Repair or replacement costs will be charged for damaged books, technology and materials. All financial obligations must be met prior to graduation or diploma may be withheld.

LOST AND FOUND

Any lost and found articles will be stored in a designated area of the school. Items remaining in the lost and

found will be donated periodically throughout the year. Ample notice will be given to the students prior to this donation.

NOTES FROM HOME

Notes from home are to be given to the classroom teacher upon arrival in the morning. If there is a change in afternoon plans, and a note was not sent in, please email Mrs. Buckley (kbuckley@rsd13.org) and Mrs. Davis (ldavis@rsd13.org). They will contact the student regarding the change in plans.

PASSES

All students are expected to use the EHall Pass system. Students will need passes to access the Guidance Office, the Nurse's Office, the bathroom, or the Library. Students must have a pass from any class to these areas. Although use of student lavatories is permissible during class time, abuses of lavatory privileges may result in administrative consequences. The privilege of requesting a pass can be revoked if the student is disruptive, misuses the pass, cuts class or breaks other school rules. An escorted pass can be assigned due to the abuse of the pass system. During the last 10 minutes of the school day, no passes will be distributed unless it is an emergency. Students must create passes on their chromebook, as cell phones will not be permitted for this purpose.

PHONE CALLS

The front office phone may be used by students in an emergency situation. The office staff will relay messages to students only in emergency situations when verified by the administration.

RECESS

Fifth grade students will go outside each day for recess throughout the school year. Students will stay inside for recess if it is raining or if the weather is unusually cold. In the winter months, the temperature is checked before the students go outside. If it is deemed too cold, the students will be kept indoors. However, the staff is a very hearty bunch and the students need physical activity during the day even if the weather is cool. Students are outside for 30 minutes and should be dressed appropriately for the weather.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

RSD 13 faculty and staff are being trained on the Restorative Practices model. Restorative Practices (RP) are a proactive and responsive approach to building relationships, strengthening community, and repairing harm. The focus is on doing things *with* people, rather than *to* or *for* them. The ultimate goal is to foster strong, supportive communities where individuals are accountable, empathetic, and engaged.

Using a fair process is essential to building trust and accountability in a community. By engaging individuals in decisions that affect them, explaining the reasoning behind decisions, and establishing clear expectations and next steps, individuals feel the process is fair. Therefore, they are more likely to accept outcomes and act responsibly.

The Restorative Practices continuum lies in 80% of the work being proactive and 20% being responsive. Some elements of the work include affective statements/questions, conversations, circles, and formal conferences.

Here is a video showing how restorative practices work at RSD13: [CT-RSD13 Restorative Practices](#)

SAFETY DRILLS

As part of our District Crisis Management Plan, each school must have monthly fire drills and periodic safety drills throughout the year. The fire drill and safety drill procedures will be reviewed with students throughout the

school year. The first fire drill will be held during the first week of school. During fire drills, students exit the building and go to a designated area outside where attendance is taken. They remain in their classroom during lockdown drills and modified lockdown drills. The students practice how to shelter in place in case of severe weather and learn where the safe areas of the school are located.

If you have any questions about fire drills or safety drills, please feel free to call the school.

VISITORS

Visitors must bring ID and scan in at the kiosk upon entering the building. Any visitor to the building must be clearly identified with a visitor's badge.

At times students may forget an item at home and ask for it to be brought to school. If you need to drop something off for your child, please label it clearly with their **name** and **grade** and place it in the designated area in the lobby. Our friendly staff will make sure your child receives it promptly, either by delivering it right to their classroom or inviting them to the lobby to pick it up.

DISCIPLINE

School discipline ensures the safety and security of the school community and promotes a productive educational environment. A successful educational experience is directly related to one's ability to exemplify the Core Ethical Values of respect, responsibility, honesty, kindness, and courage. Respect is the cornerstone of all interactions and behaviors. We acknowledge the dignity and worth of one another, and strive never to diminish another by our conduct or attitudes. Each member of the school community has a responsibility to choose behavior that promotes the common good of all.

RSD 13 using Restorative Practices to At times it will be necessary for students to receive one or more of the following consequences to serve as a reminder of these values:

- a. Verbal warning
- b. Completion of a behavioral sheet
- c. Assignment to a new seat in class or the lunchroom
- d. Detention: lunch or after school
- e. Discussion of the problem with teacher or team
- f. Parent notification
- g. Parent conference
- h. Confiscation of illegal or offending item
- i. Financial restitution and/or work in-kind
- j. In school, after school detention
- k. Referral to guidance
- l. Referral to principal
- m. Suspension/removal from school or from bus transportation
- n. Referral to juvenile review board, police or court
- o. Expulsion

Violations of the law **will not be tolerated.** Violators of the law will be referred to the police for appropriate action.

DISCIPLINE SANCTIONS

While the school expects that most students will make appropriate choices regarding their behavior, our

philosophy dictates that inappropriate behaviors will be met with appropriate consequences. The school uses a variety of strategies to promote changes in behavior. To encourage acceptable behavior, the following sanctions will be administered when necessary. Records will be kept of infractions, and repeated or cumulative infractions, regardless of their nature, will result in an escalation of consequences.

DETENTIONS

Teachers or administrators may require a student to stay after school for failure to complete work or for disciplinary reasons. Depending on the reason, detention may be assigned during lunch. Parents will be notified in advance when their child is assigned a detention. After school detention takes precedence over other student activities/obligations. There will be additional consequences if detention is not served.

ACTIONS TO UNDO THE HARM

Depending on the nature and severity of an infraction, students may be required to perform a service (such as cleaning an area, repairing damage, etc.) to undo the harm caused by the misbehavior.

IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

The administration may deny students access to class or school if they are (1) disruptive to the normal educational process, (2) posing a danger to themselves or others, or (3) in violation of school rules. The student suspended is expected to do assignments provided and will receive credit for such work when it is turned in. In determining the length of a suspension period, an administrator may consider evidence of past disciplinary problems. A parent conference, if requested by the Principal or Assistant Principal, must precede the student's return to school following a suspension.

Students may not be allowed to participate in after school activities (including athletic events, music events and dances) the day of or the day following an in-school and out-of-school suspension.

EXPULSION PROCEDURE

Upon recommendation of the superintendent, the Board of Education may expel any student whose conduct endangers persons or property, seriously disrupts the educational process or violates publicized Board policy.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Academic honesty is the cornerstone of an effective education, and cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Unless the teachers specify that the work may be done in collaboration with one or more partners, all work submitted must be the student's own. This includes routine homework as well as tests and papers. Although all cheating is wrong, the punishment for it may vary with the magnitude of the offense. Consequences include receiving a grade of zero on the entire test, paper, project or homework or further disciplinary actions. More serious consequences up to and including expulsion may be implemented. Written referrals of cheating will be entered into your personal files. Students who knowingly help or allow others to cheat are considered to be cheating and are subject to the same consequences as cheating.

Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's work or ideas as your own. Common examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, entire papers or portions of papers which have been written by someone else or downloaded from the internet and papers which contain work of another writer which has not

been properly acknowledged. Note also that papers submitted for one class may not be submitted for another class without prior approval.

Rules about cheating are meant to protect everyone by creating a learning environment which does not give dishonest students an unfair advantage over those who do their own work. Students who cheat deprive themselves of opportunities to perfect skills which will be valuable to them in their future academic and vocational careers.

Please refer to the [Board of Education Homework Policy 6141.2](#) adopted on April 2, 2025 for information regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on assignments.

SEARCH OF PROPERTY AND STUDENTS [RSD13 Policy 5145.2](#)

Students are entitled to the guarantees of the fourth amendment, and they are subject to reasonable searches and seizures. School officials are empowered to conduct reasonable searches of a particular student and school property when there is a reasonable cause to believe that the student may be in possession of drugs, weapons, alcohol and other materials in violation of school policy or state law. School property shall remain under the control of school officials and shall be subject to search.

SECURITY CAMERAS

Security cameras are located in public areas throughout and around our building to record activity that is in view, and to ensure the safety and well-being of our students and staff. School administrators and security personnel have access to this recorded information.

VIDEO RECORDING

Video recording devices are not permitted in school without specific faculty permission. Any student possessing a camera shall be responsible for its care. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property. Video recording in school without specific faculty permission is prohibited and could lead to disciplinary action where warranted.

District Policies

Policies:

Regional School District 13 has a number of policies, all of which can be found by clicking this link to our [Policies](#). In addition, there are a few policies we'd like to highlight so you can easily find the information you need:

General:

- [AEDs](#) – RSD 13 has AEDs located in key locations to protect our community in the event of cardiac events. Click this link to review the policy.
- [Attendance](#): Consistent attendance is critical for a successful education. Click this link for our RSD 13 attendance policy.
- [Non-Discrimination](#) – RSD13 does not discriminate based on any protected class. Click this link to learn more about our non-discrimination policies.

- [Pledge of Allegiance](#) – Click here to review the Pledge of Allegiance policy.
- [Transportation](#) – Click this link to review our transportation policies, including how to make a complaint about transportation.
- [Treatment of Recruiters](#) – Click here to review RSD’s uniform treatment of recruiter policy.

Information and Technology:

- [Student Privacy](#) – We take your child’s private information very seriously. Click this link to review the district’s policy on privacy. Click this link for specific information on [student records](#).
- [Internet and Technology Safety](#) – Keeping children safe with technology is more important than ever. Click this link to review our policies on internet and technology use and safety.

Instruction:

- [Grading](#) – Click here to see how the district policy informs our grading practices at the high school level. Check with your individual school in PK-8 to review specific grading practices.
- [Homework](#) – Click here to review the RSD 13 homework policy. More specific information will come from your child’s teacher/school.
- [Promotion, Placement and Retention](#) – Click here to review our policies on promoting, retaining, and placing students in their classes and grade levels.

Student Health and Safety:

- Illegal Substances: The following links will direct you to our district policies on illegal substances and/or weapons that are not permitted on school grounds, any school building, on school buses, or on any school-sponsored trip.
 - [Drugs and Alcohol](#)
 - [Tobacco](#)
 - [Search and Seizure](#)
 - [Chemical Health for Student Athletes](#)
 - [Psychotropic Drugs](#)
- Conduct: Students must feel safe coming to school, and our administration seeks to ensure that all students behave accordingly. The following two links outline these policies:
 - [School District Climate/Bullying Intervention](#) (*please note this policy will be updated in October of 2025*)
 - [Student Discipline](#)
- [Discrimination Based on Sex/Sexual Harassment](#) – RSD does not condone any discrimination based on sex or any form of sexual harassment. Click this link to review our policies pertaining to these issues. If you have questions or concerns, contact Jenn Keane, our District Title IX Coordinator and Director of Students Services.
- [Food Allergies](#) – RSD 13 is highly aware of food allergies. Click here to learn more, and if you have any allergy concerns or questions, please contact your child’s school nurse.
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#) – These options are used as a last resort *only* when an individual is in danger of hurting themselves or others. Click the link to review the entire policy.

- [Sexual Abuse/Assault](#) – Click this link to review the policy against sexual abuse and assault. If you have concerns or need to report an incident, please contact **203-624-KID-Hero (543-4376)**.
- [School Breakfast and Lunch](#) – Click this link to read our policy on how to pay or request assistance for healthy school meals. All information about school breakfast and lunch can also be found on our website [Food Services](#) page.
- [Suicide Prevention](#) – The district believes a strong suicide prevention and awareness program is essential to keeping our youth safe. Click here to read our policy. If you need additional resources, please **call 988**.
- [Wellness](#) – Student wellness is essential to learning. Click this link to review our district's policy on wellness.

Additional State of Connecticut Resources:

[Governor's task force on justice for abused children](#): Click this link to review these guidelines set up by the State of Connecticut to support victims of child abuse.

[DCF's sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program](#): Click here for resources to create awareness, prevent, and protect victims of sexual assault, offered by Connecticut Department of Children and Families.

School District Resolution Procedure

Principle 1:

Problems are most effectively resolved through direct, respectful communication at the most immediate level. Escalation should only occur when initial attempts at resolution have been unsuccessful or when concerns persist.

Principle 2:

When resolving issues, we expect everyone to adhere to the Core Ethical Values of Regional School District 13:

[Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, Courage](#)

General Guidelines

The following general guidelines are proven to help resolve situations positively and professionally:

Maintain respectful, professional communication (adhere to Core Ethical Values)

- Focus on the issue, not people or personalities
- Presume that everyone has positive intentions
- Keep discussions confidential and appropriate
- Document all communications
- Allow reasonable time for resolution at each level

Support Resources:

- Contact the main office or central office for assistance in identifying the appropriate person to address your concern
- Interpreters are available upon request
- Written materials can be available in alternative formats when needed

Special Circumstances - Immediate Escalation Warranted

We understand that special circumstances might warrant a different approach. In the following circumstances, please contact the Building Principal or Superintendent immediately for:

- Imminent Safety concerns
- Suspected abuse or neglect
- Legal violations
- Emergency situations

The Building Principal or Superintendent will be able to deal with the situation immediately or direct you to the appropriate resource.

Law Enforcement

You can also contact law enforcement directly for:

- Threats of violence
- Criminal activity
- Child abuse (also contact DCF)

Prohibited Retaliation

The district prohibits retaliation against any individual who files a complaint or participates in the complaint resolution process in good faith.

Steps for Direct Resolution

Step 1: Direct Resolution (First Level)

Before filing any formal complaint, attempt direct resolution:

- For classroom/instructional issues: Speak directly with the teacher
- For athletics: Please speak directly to the coach
- For school-wide issues: Contact the building principal
- For transportation issues: Contact the transportation coordinator or building principal
- For special services issues: Contact the student case manager

Guidelines for Direct Communication:

- Schedule a meeting or phone call rather than addressing concerns in passing; email is effective to start the conversation but shouldn't be a substitute for the conversation itself; please allow 24-48 hours to respond.
- Clearly explain your concern and desired outcome.
- Listen carefully to the other party's perspective.

- Issues may not be resolved immediately, and it's helpful to "sleep on it" or give both parties some time to think about the issues and potential solutions before making a decision; set a date to get back to each other.
- Document the date, participants, and outcome of the conversation, any action steps that were mutually agreed upon
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for the implementation of agreed-upon solutions (this will vary of course depending on what might need to change).

Step 2: Building-Level Resolution (Second Level)

If Step 1 does not resolve the issue or concerns persist:

- For classroom issues: Contact the building principal
- For athletic issues: Contact the Athletic Director
- For district-wide issues: Contact the appropriate department supervisor (if you aren't sure who this is, please contact any main office)
- Pass along documentation of your Step 1 efforts to the next person
- Clearly state why the initial resolution was inadequate
- Request a meeting and follow the same meeting steps outlined above

Step 3: District-Level Resolution (Third Level)

If Steps 1 and 2 have not resolved the issue:

- Contact the Superintendent
- Submit a written complaint including:
 - Description of the issue
 - Documentation of previous resolution attempts (Steps 1 and 2)
 - Desired outcome
 - Supporting materials/evidence
- The Superintendent will respond to set up a meeting.
- Follow the same steps outlined above

Board-Level Resolution (Final Level)

If district-level resolution is unsuccessful:

- If it is a general issue (not specific to any individual student or employee), anyone in the school community can bring up an issue during the public comment session of any board meeting
- Follow board policies for public comment or formal presentations
- The Board will review the matter according to established procedures; please note that the Board must follow specific legal guidelines on how they hear and/or decide on school issues
- If not brought forward through public comment, the School Board will not hear or act upon complaints until the complainant has brought forth their concern through appropriate and applicable administrative procedures. The Board will allow exceptions to this provision for complainants whose complaint relates solely to School Board actions or operations.

Board Commitment to Direct Problem Solving:

- In the event a complainant registers a concern directly with an individual Board member, the Board member and complainant shall address the concern using the following procedure:

1. The Board Member shall refer the complainant to the Superintendent to register the complaint. The Superintendent may delegate the investigation of the complaint to another, appropriate administrator, or in some cases to legal counsel.
 2. If deemed appropriate, the Superintendent or designee may inform the subject of the complaint of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The Superintendent or designee may also provide the subject of the complaint an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts. After review of the complaint, the Superintendent or designee shall seek to resolve the matter and report the related outcome to the School Board.
 3. If the member of the public will not present the complaint to the Superintendent, the Board Member shall ask the complainant to document the complaint in a signed written document. The Board member will then refer the documented and signed complaint to the Superintendent for investigation.
 4. After the resolution of the complaint has occurred – and the complainant believes the Superintendent, Administrator or legal counsel has not provided a satisfactory response to the complaint – then the complainant may request the School Board hear the complaint.
- After taking reasonable efforts to resolve their complaint directly with the Superintendent, members of the public may bring complaints relating to the Superintendent to the School Board Secretary. The School Board Secretary will bring the complaint to the School Board Chair. If deemed appropriate, the School Board may inform the Superintendent of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The School Board or designee may also provide the Superintendent an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts.
 1. The School Board will hear and act upon the complaint only by majority vote and when the issue is on the agenda for public or executive session, depending on the nature of the issue. The School Board may decline to act on any complaint that, in the School Board's sole judgment, would interfere with the Superintendent's ability to administer the district properly. All School Board decisions shall be final.
 2. In accordance with procedure above, should the School Board decide to hear and act upon a complaint pertaining to District Employees, Contracted Service Providers, Administration, or Students, the School Board shall determine whether they will hear the complaint in public or executive session. This decision will be made in compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to employee, student and family privacy rights.
 3. The Board shall also determine whether it is appropriate to inform the subject of the complaint of the hearing to provide them with further opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of the facts to the Board.
 4. If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the Board shall determine whether the complaint should be heard in public or non-public session in compliance with all applicable laws. If deemed appropriate, the School Board may inform the Superintendent of the nature of the complainant's concern(s). The School Board or designee may also provide the Superintendent an opportunity for explanation, comment, and presentation of facts.