



**PRIDE & RESPECT**

**Student-Parent Handbook**  
**2025-2026**

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**English:** If you need this, or any other document, translated into a different language please notify the building principal.

**Spanish:** Si necesita una traducción de este documento u otros documentos, por favor notifique Ud, al Director de la escuela.

**Portuguese:** Se necessita isto, ou qualquer outro documento traduziu numa linguagem diferente, por favor notifica o diretor da escola.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Dear SMS Raiders,

We welcome you to a new and exciting academic year at the new Somerset Middle School. We have prepared a comprehensive student handbook/agenda to help you familiarize yourself with every aspect of our school, engage in the school community, and use the daily agenda section to record assignments.

Every student is expected to know and follow the rules in the handbook. Students must also carry their handbook/agenda to all classes and to and from school every day. Students are also accountable for the condition of the handbook/agenda and must record all homework assignments in it. In case of loss, a replacement handbook/agenda will cost \$7.00.

Somerset Middle School provides challenging opportunities to all students in a safe and nurturing environment. We foster a culture of dignity and respect for every individual. Collaboration, open communication with families and the community, and promptly addressing concerns are crucial to our students' success. We encourage parents to communicate their concerns to the respective classroom teacher. We also encourage parents to contact guidance counselors or the administration if the matter persists. Our doors are open, and we strive to promptly respond to emails and phone calls. We take great pride in our school and firmly believe you will soon take advantage of all that Somerset Middle School offers.

### SOMERSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Victor Machado, Chairperson

Robert Gaw, Vice Chairperson

Christine Courville, Jennifer Ashley, John Ventura - School Committee Members

### SOMERSET PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Mr. Jeffrey Schoonover - Superintendent 508-324-3100, Ext. 3215

Ms. Raquel Pellerin - Business Manager 508-324-3100, Ext. 3218

Ms. Elizabeth Haskell - Director of Curriculum 508-324-3100, Ext. 3224

Mrs. Megan Ashton - Director of Special Education 508-324-3100, Ext. 3226

Ms. Jennifer Lazaro - Human Resources Coordinator - 508-324-3100 Ext. 3211

Mr. Stephen Levesque - Director of Technology 508-324-3115, Ext. 1100

Mr. Michael Carreiro - Director of Facilities 508-324-2100

### SUPPORT STAFF

Special Education Coordinator - Mrs. Melynda Antunes

Fine and Performing Arts Coordinator (K-12) - Ms. Jenna Young

Guidance Counselor (A-L) - Mrs. Lori Dutra

Guidance Counselor (M-Z) - Mrs. Jessica Vasconcelos

Adjustment Counselor (A-L) - Mrs. Brianna Longo

Adjustment Counselor (M-Z) - Mrs. Megan Silva

School Psychologist- Mrs. Alexandra Sullivan

Instructional Technologist- Ms. Rebecca Csizmesia

School Resource Officer (SRO)- Eric Lewandoski

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of Somerset Middle School is to respond to each adolescent's intellectual, physical, and emotional needs. Diversity is the basis of a sound middle school program. The function for our educational program is student-centered. The children are the basis for every decision made at Somerset Middle School.

Our efforts will focus on challenging children intellectually. We seek to develop necessary social and civic skills, stimulate emotional growth, and have the children more aware of the physical changes taking place during early adolescence. A commitment to involve parents in all aspects of their child's education is a necessity. The pride and respect the children feel for the school and themselves will be carried by them into the community itself.

### **VISION OF THE GRADUATE**

The Somerset Middle School and Somerset Berkley Regional High School Vision of the Graduate is a culmination of skills and attributes that each individual RAIDER will possess upon middle school and high school graduation. Somerset Middle School Raiders are:

**Resilient** - Students will use healthy coping skills to persevere through challenges, adapt to changes, and manage time effectively.

**Academic** - Students will be critical thinkers and problem solvers displaying academic, financial and technological literacy.

**Independent** - Students will be confident, motivated, and will self-advocate.

**Digital-Citizens** - Students will be technologically proficient and display ethical digital awareness.

**Empathetic** - Students will display empathy, kindness, and inclusiveness.

**Respectful** - Students will be effective communicators who demonstrate global and cultural awareness.

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents/guardians, teachers, community members required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C.

### **FAMILY RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is hoped that parents will share with us the responsibility for their child's success at Somerset Middle School by carrying out the following suggestions at home:

1. Share with the student the responsibility for being prompt.
2. Be sure the student is prepared to buy lunch at school or to bring lunch from home.
3. Make provisions for a suitable place wherein the student may study with no distractions or interruptions.
4. Provide necessary educational supplies for use in completing assignments.
5. Assume the responsibility for checking your child's agenda book and completing assignments. Be sure that all work assigned has been accomplished and written work has been neatly done. In general, home assignments provide the opportunity to practice the subject matter which has been taught in the classrooms. Unless the student actually does the home assignment independently, the value of the lesson has been lost. Students are urged to understand the class work and to seek help at school if they do not understand.
6. Feel perfectly at ease to contact the school as often as you feel necessary regarding your child. Build confidence in your child regarding the opportunities provided by a public

school education, the outcome of which depends largely upon the student's willingness to work.

7. You can help your child in school, by not nagging and pushing – which experts say is the wrong use of “parent power” – but by giving guidance and encouragement.
8. Students are required to conform to the rules of the Student/Parent Handbook during school hours, after school while on school property, and at all school related activities.

***Here are some tips from the National Congress of Parents and Teachers:***

- Help your child think of themselves as one who succeeds. Give them plenty of chances in early life to accomplish things, and praise them when they do well. When they have a discouraging experience, remind them of their successes.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their problems, and be sure to listen.
- Don't make derogatory remarks about their teachers or school to them. If you wonder why they do certain things, inquire at the school. Visit the school and know the teachers. That will give your child a sense of security.
- If you have a problem, always start the solution with the teacher. If this does not prove positive, contact the guidance counselor then the school administration. If this does not resolve the situation, contact the superintendent's office.

**CHAIN OF COMMAND**

If you have a concern with your student, always start the solution with the staff member involved in the circumstance. We ask you to follow the chain of command:

Teacher  
School Counselor/Nurse  
Content Coordinator  
Assistant Principals  
Principal  
Central Office

**SCHOOL REGULATIONS**

Students are the responsibility of the school, under school jurisdiction, and required to follow school rules from the time they leave home for the school bus in the morning until they arrive home at night. Students are not to leave the school grounds without the consent of the principal or delegated representative.

**SCHOOL SAFETY AND VISITORS PROTOCOL**

In order to ensure security at Somerset Middle School, exterior doors will remain locked during the school day. Cameras are on and monitored by the School Resource Officer (SRO) and/or other staff members.

**Visitors:** To maintain an accurate and justifiable record of the presence in the school of people other than paid staff, visitors to the building must:

- Register at the Main Office at the time of entrance into the building,
- Have a driver's license, military ID or state ID and are subject to a background check prior to being issued a visitor's pass.
- Visitors must check out in the Main Office and return visitor passes when leaving the building.
- All visitors will be required to wear a visitor's tag.

Any visitor refusing to comply with such provisions shall be requested to leave the premises. Failure to leave when asked may result in police action in accordance with MGL Chapter 272, Section 40A, and Chapter 266, Section 120.

Parents are welcome to visit the school occasionally to observe classes and tour the building. To ensure the safety of the children and to avoid disrupting the education process, visits must be arranged through the Principal's office. All parents volunteering/observing will be expected to pass a criminal records background check (CORI check) and to complete the form Agreement to Maintain Student Confidentiality. Forms are available in the Main Office.

#### **NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT**

If it is necessary to close school, announcements will be made through the One Call Now system, the school district website, and on local radio and television. Be sure to visit the "One Call Now Update my Info" webpage from the Somerset Middle School webpage. Enter your last name and primary phone number we have on file. (The system will look up your record and allow you to enter additional phone numbers and/or email addresses. Your new contact information will be activated pending approval by your Group's Administrator.)

#### **DELAYED START/EARLY DISMISSAL**

In the event of inclement weather, the Superintendent may cancel school or delay the opening of school if conditions threaten the health or safety of students and staff. In the event of a school delay, parents are expected to use their own judgment in sending children to school.

Announcements will be made through phone and electronic notification, the school district website and on local radio and television stations. When the opening of schools is delayed, schools will dismiss at their normal times. Delayed openings may range from one hour to two hours. Before-school activities are canceled when a delay occurs.

If an early release is required, a One Call Now message will be sent. All afterschool and evening activities will be canceled.

Scheduled early dismissal is 12:00 p.m., except for the day before Thanksgiving which is 11:00 a.m.

#### **EARLY MORNING ARRIVAL**

Students who ride the bus are allowed in the building at 7:30 a.m. Supervision for students who do not ride a district-provided school bus begins at 7:30 a.m. All students report to their grade level morning reporting location or to the cafeteria for breakfast between 7:30 and 7:55 a.m.

#### **MORNING REPORTING LOCATIONS**

Any student, regardless of grade level, who wants to eat breakfast should report to the cafeteria. Any student who does not want to eat breakfast should report to the location for their grade level:

**Grade 6 - Cafeteria**

**Grade 7 - Gymnasium**

**Grade 8 - Auditorium**

All students will be dismissed from their morning reporting locations at 7:56 AM to report to their homeroom.

#### **IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND LANYARDS**

Students are advised to wear their school issued ID badge and lanyard from the time a student arrives at school to the time the student leaves school. Student IDs are advised at school sponsored events, including after school activities unless told otherwise.

### **STAYING AFTER SCHOOL**

The school day ends at 2:40 p.m. For safety reasons, students are only permitted to stay after school for school sponsored activities or if supervised by members of the Somerset Middle School faculty or support staff. Please note after school athletic events have limited supervision.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

If valuables are found, they should be turned in to the Main Office. Lost and found items not claimed by December and the end of school in June will be donated to a local charity.

### **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

In accordance with [Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76](#), students are required to be present in school in order to ensure continuity and consistency in the education process and to prepare them for college and/or career. The Education Reform Law mandates that students be involved in core curriculum work during the entire school day.

#### **SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY**

Official school attendance records including absences, tardies, and dismissals will be kept by the main office. Attendance will be recorded daily. Students with chronic school attendance problems will be identified as early in the quarter as possible. In accordance with [Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76](#), the school principal or a designee will make a reasonable effort to conference with the family of a student who has three to five unexcused absences in a quarter to develop action steps for student attendance.

#### **PARENT/GUARDIANS/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Research shows a direct correlation between a high level of attendance and academic success. Regular and consistent school attendance is the responsibility of students and parents/guardians. Failure to comply with this responsibility violates the legal requirement and may be subject to consequences through the court system.

Parents/Guardians and students should use the ASPEN portal to view the student's attendance records for excused and unexcused absences, tardies, and dismissals. It is important for parents/guardians to have frequent discussions with the student regarding their class and daily attendance responsibilities. All students will be bound by school attendance and extracurricular policies and procedures. Students are required to enter the school building upon exiting the bus or a private vehicle.

#### **ABSENCES**

All absences must be verified by the parents/guardians calling the attendance secretary in the main office by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the absence (508) 324-3140. If no call is made, the school will notify the parents/guardians that day. (In accordance with [MGL Chapter 76](#), Section 1A and 1B, Pupil Absence Notification Program.)

Parents'/Guardians' phone calls or notes do not excuse absences unless stated below.

##### **Excused Absences**

- Illness (with a Doctor's Note)
- Court appearances (with court documentation)
- Bereavement of family members (with Parent/Guardian note)
- School-sponsored field trips/events

- Religious observances (with Parent/Guardian note)
- Absences, dismissals, and tardies by School Nurse, Administration, or School Designee
- Absences due to suspension or school exclusion

#### Unexcused Absences

Any absence from school not listed in the aforementioned section will be counted towards students' unexcused absence limit.

#### **VACATIONS**

Student absences resulting from vacations taken at times other than the days/weeks identified in the school calendar are highly discouraged and unexcused due to their impact on time on learning. For make-up work, see the Homework Policy section.

A meeting may be scheduled with the Principal or designee with the parents/guardians and the student to develop an action plan to improve the student's attendance. (Pupil Absence Notification Program in accordance with [MGL Chapter 76](#), Section 1B).

#### **TARDY**

The Administration considers punctuality at school to be a basic responsibility of each student and his/her parents/guardians. Students who do not report to school by 8:00 a.m. must sign in and obtain a tardy slip from the Main Office before going to class.

The following regulations will govern unexcused tardiness to school:

- Unexcused tardies to school result in extracurricular ineligibility for that day
- 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent offenses per term will result in a detention

Anything other than the aforementioned excused school absences is considered an unexcused tardy.

#### **DISMISSALS**

Anything other than the aforementioned excused school absences is considered an unexcused dismissal.

Medical dismissals will be excused by the School Nurse or Administrator. Students who are ill will be dismissed by the Nurse to the custody of parents/guardians or an emergency contact.

For the safety and security of our students, a copy of the appointment card must be submitted in the case of medical appointments. Dismissal notes should include parents'/guardians' home phone, work number, and if available, the cell number. Efforts will be made to contact the parents/guardians to verify notes.

Students are not permitted to use cell phones to contact parents related to illness. Students are to go to the health office with a pass from their classroom teacher to be evaluated by the School Nurse. The School Nurse will then contact the parents/guardians when deemed appropriate. This procedure prevents confusion regarding student's whereabouts and expedites appropriate medical intervention.

Verification of students who need to be routinely dismissed for medical/psychological services will remain confidential and processed by the School Counselor or School Nurse and communicated to Administration.

#### **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY**

Any extracurricular is defined as, but not limited to, athletics, school clubs, intramurals, music groups, performances, non-curricular field trips, and school dances.

In order to be eligible for extracurricular activities students must be passing all of their classes.

Eligibility is determined quarterly based on report card grades.

Unless there is a verified excused school absence, students must attend a full school day including arriving at school on time to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities for that day.

### **TRUANCY**

Students with chronic school attendance problems will be identified as early in the quarter as possible. School officials will utilize resources, including counseling, conferences and discipline, when appropriate, to help students improve his/her attendance. Absences from school are included for each quarter on the quarterly report cards. Parents/Guardians may contact the school if they have questions relative to their child's attendance record.

The penalty for school truancy will follow progressive disciplinary consequences and parental conferences. Habitual truancy, as defined by eight absences per quarter, may result in the filing of a [Child Requiring Assistance \(CRA\)](#) with Bristol County Juvenile Court.

Official school attendance records will be maintained in the Main Office. Daily attendance in school is taken and subsequently updated throughout each day as necessary to show late arrivals and early dismissals. The school shall notify parents/guardians in writing of attendance problems and their consequences.

### **TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES**

#### **RULES FOR STUDENTS RIDING SCHOOL BUSES**

Bus riding is a privilege extended to students as a means of transportation to and from school. Bus regulations apply from the time a student arrives at the bus stop. They remain in effect until the student leaves the bus stop on the return ride home. Any student who fails to follow bus regulations or who endangers the safety of other students' renders himself/herself liable for suspension of bus riding privileges. Referrals by a bus driver could result in the following: warning and parent notification, detention, and/or suspension of bus riding privilege.

##### Behavioral Expectations at the Bus Stop

- Students must not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus. Students should leave home early enough to arrive at the bus stop five minutes before the bus is due. When the bus approaches the stop, students shall remain a safe distance from the street and remain at the bus stop until the bus comes to a complete stop. There will be no pushing or shoving while boarding the bus. While waiting for buses, students are to wait at designated pick-up points. Be courteous of private property.
- Parents are not allowed to board a school bus without the expressed permission of the bus company.

##### Behavioral Expectations on the Bus

- The bus driver is in charge of the bus and is responsible for the safety of all bus riders. Students are to follow instructions promptly and without question.
- Any inappropriate conduct that distracts the driver and/or endangers the safety of self or others is prohibited. When it is necessary to cross the road, cross in front of the bus and use extreme caution to be sure no traffic is approaching from either direction.

- Be seated promptly without disturbing others and remain seated at all times. No student shall sit in the driver's seat at any time.
- Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus.
- Outside of ordinary conversation, classroom conduct must be observed at all times. Shouting, making loud noises, or using vulgar language are not allowed.
- Aisles are to be kept clear of backpacks, books, sports equipment, and musical instruments. Objects of any kind are not to be thrown either from or on the bus.
- Students are to take only the bus designated for them by the school department. Parents may obtain permission from the school's main office for a student to ride another bus.
- No student shall be permitted to leave the bus except at his or her designated stop.
- Each student may be assigned a seat in which he will be seated at all times, unless permission to change is given by the school principal and/or driver.
- State law (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 90, Section 78 as amended by Chapter 71, Section 2A) prohibits the use of any tobacco products on school buses.
- Students are expected to help maintain the cleanliness of the bus-no papers or other articles should be thrown on the floor. There should be no writing on graffiti drawn or written on any part of the school bus. Food of any kind should not be eaten on the school buses. Only water may be consumed while on the bus.
- Should any students damage the bus, the parents of the students damaging school buses will be responsible for proper reimbursement to the school district.
- Students must leave the bus in an orderly manner and must obey the rules and regulations for entering and exiting a bus. Students are not to cross the roadway until consent by the school bus driver has been given and the student has double-checked for safety conditions. When boarding or leaving the bus, students should be in view of the driver at all times. Any misconduct or disregard for these rules will be reported to the building principal or designee. When necessary to cross the road, cross in front of the bus and use extreme caution to be sure no traffic is approaching in either direction.
- Students shall not open or close bus windows without the permission of the driver.
- Students will report any accident or unsatisfactory conditions to the bus driver and/or principal.

In addition to the Bus Regulations, students are expected to comply with the Student/Parent Handbook while traveling on school buses and during the course of any school provided transportation. Violations of the Student/Parent Handbook under this section may result in discipline separate and apart from losing bus riding privileges.

#### **STUDENTS WHO ARE PICKED UP BY PARENT/GUARDIAN AT END OF SCHOOL DAY**

Students being picked up are dismissed at 2:45 p.m. and are to leave the building by way of the Main Office. Parents may not park in the fire lanes or in the bus loop as this interferes with the bus dismissal.

#### **LATE BUSES**

Late buses are available to transport students from after school activities and students who are receiving extra academic support, Monday through Thursday at 3:45 p.m. from the end of September to the end of May. All students who are not picked up by a parent/guardian prior to

the late bus will be directed to board the late bus. All bus regulations apply to students riding late buses.

#### **TRANSPORTATION RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

The responsibility of transporting students to and from school each school day requires the cooperation of the parents of the students transported.

A complete understanding of the parents' vested interest in school transportation is very helpful in aiding the School Administration and School Committee to maintain a successful transportation program.

1. Parents will cooperate with school authorities and bus drivers in promoting efficient service.
  - a. The purpose of school transportation is to provide safe, comfortable, and economical transportation for those students living beyond walking distance to the school. It is not intended to be door to door service for children, parents or unauthorized persons. Parents should not expect the bus to operate over roads that are not properly maintained, on private lanes leading from the residence to the highway, or on roads where adequate turnarounds are not provided.
  - b. Students shall be picked up and returned to their designated bus stops only.
2. Parents will have children at the bus stop on time and ensure proper conduct of their children going to the bus stop, at the bus stop, and going to and from the bus stop.
3. Parents will make suggestions in writing to the bus company and school for the improvement of school transportation.
4. Parents will ensure the cooperation of children with the authorities responsible for transportation. Parents should understand that children riding on school buses must obey all regulations governing school transportation or shall be subject to disciplinary action by the School Administration or designee and may forfeit their right to ride on the bus.
5. Bus complaints should be handled in the following manner:
  - a. Discipline problems reported to the Assistant Principals or designee in writing.
  - b. Eligibility for bus transportation inquiries should be referred to the Assistant Principals or designee.
  - c. Routing problems referred to the Bus Company.
  - d. In the event satisfaction is not received in any of the above cases, contact the Principal.

#### **TRAFFIC PATTERNS**

##### **MORNING DROP-OFF**

Students can be dropped off starting at 7:35 AM. Parents will enter SMS from Brayton Ave and line-up with the first car stopping adjacent to the main entry doorway. Parents will not block crosswalks or the entry/exit to the North faculty parking lot. Parents will be instructed that students must exit the car and utilize the sidewalk once their car is just South of the North parking lot (auditorium on your right) and when their car cannot proceed any further due to other vehicles in front of them that are stopped. Once the student is dropped off the parent is to proceed to the exit on Brayton Ave near 2nd Street. Parents can utilize the left or right turn lane depending on their direction of travel. Parents dropping off students are not permitted to circumvent the traffic pattern by traveling through the East faculty parking lot adjacent to the main entrance, OR by traveling through the North faculty parking lot. Parents dropping off students are NOT permitted to enter Somerset Middle School via the Reed Street entry/exit.

Students should have their belongings ready prior to being dropped off and must exit the car promptly so other students can be dropped off in a timely manner. Lastly, in order to prevent any accidents, students should not exit the vehicle from the driver's side.

#### **AFTERNOON PICK-UP**

Parents are not permitted onto any section of the property prior to 2:20 PM for a student being picked-up at normal dismissal time. After 2:20 PM parents may enter the property via Brayton Ave with the first car stopping and staging just prior to the North faculty parking lot. At 2:35 PM the first car staged may move forward stopping in front of the main entrance doorways. Parents are not permitted to block any crosswalks or the North faculty parking lot when moving forward for pick-up. Students can be picked up on the sidewalk area in between the main entrance and the entry/exit for the North parking lot. After the student is picked up, parents are to proceed to the exit on Brayton Ave near 2nd Street. Parents can utilize the left or right turn lane depending on their direction of travel. Parents picking up students are not permitted to circumvent the traffic pattern by traveling through the East faculty parking lot adjacent to the main entrance, OR by traveling through the North faculty parking lot. Parents picking up students are NOT permitted to enter Somerset Middle School via the Reed Street entry/exit.

#### **EVENTS AFTER SCHOOL**

This policy is to implement procedures for after school events at the Somerset Middle School, to include parking, entrance into the school, and egress after the event. Special events that deviate from this procedure will be implemented and disseminated by the Principal or his/her designee.

#### **PARKING**

Parents or visitors to the Somerset Middle School for after school events will utilize the North Faculty parking lot for events taking place in the gymnasium or auditorium. The parking lots designated for overflow parking will be the East Faculty parking lot and the South Faculty parking lot. The South Faculty parking lot can be accessed via the Read St. entrance.

#### **PARENT & TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Parents will be allowed to utilize the North and East Faculty parking lot for parent/teacher conferences that are NOT during regular school hours. Parents meeting with staff members during school hours are to utilize the visitor parking spots in the East faculty parking lot closest to the main entrance.

#### **SCHOOL DANCES**

Parents are not to enter into the pickup line until 20 minutes before the event ends. (Example: event ends at 5 PM you may enter onto SMS property and enter pickup line at 4:40 PM). There will be two pickup lines designated by the grade of the student attending the event. 8th grade students will be picked up in front of the school's main entrance with the first car staging just past the main entry doorway. At no time should a parent block the entry/exit ways into the North Faculty parking lot when staging for a pickup. Parents picking up 8th grade students will exit onto Brayton Ave at 2nd Street. 6th and 7th grade students will be picked up in front of the gymnasium and parents will utilize the entrance on Read St then proceed straight along the West

access road with the school being to your right. The first car will stop and stage at door W12. Upon pickup, parents will then travel through the North parking lot and will turn left at the stop sign and exit onto Brayton Ave.

### **ENTRANCE INTO THE SCHOOL FOR EVENTS**

The entrance into the school will require a staff member to be present at that associated doorway. If that designated doorway is to be unlocked, a staff member must always be present at that entrance. Events inside the gymnasium and auditorium will require the double-doors, just South of the Nurse's Office, to be closed unless instructed by the Principal. Entrance for events taking place inside the gymnasium or auditorium will utilize door N3.

Entrance for events inside the cafeteria, media center, art and technology will utilize door E6 (Main Entrance). Double-doors in the academic wing on all three floors and the double-doors just South of the Nurse's Office will be closed unless instructed by the Principal.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY DRILLS**

#### **FIRE DRILLS**

Signal – At the sound of the fire alarm, all persons in the building must evacuate the building immediately.

Procedure – Each classroom teacher will announce, during the first three days of school, the proper exits to be used for immediate departure at the time of a fire drill. Students are to walk silently in a single file from the building to the area designated by the members of the faculty. Faculty members are to accompany each group of students from the building; books will be left inside the rooms; windows and doors are to be closed and the lights turned off. Teachers should check attendance once outside the building.

All Clear - Students are to report back to their classrooms when notified.

#### **LOCKDOWN/STAY IN PLACE/EVACUATION DRILLS**

Signal – An announcement will be made indicating the drill.

Procedure – Teachers will close and lock all doors and windows, students and teachers should be out of sight. Students who are out of classrooms will return to classroom OR proceed to the nearest occupied room. If a student reports to an area other than the classroom they left from, if possible the adult in charge will contact that teacher and the Main Office reporting the student's location. No student should be allowed to exit their classroom during a lockdown drill until the all clear is indicated.

All Clear – An announcement will be made indicating "All Clear, Drill is completed".

### **MAIN OFFICE INFORMATION**

#### **MAIN OFFICE**

The Main Office is an important and very busy place. Unless called to the Main Office, at no time should a student report to the office without a pass.

#### **RESIDENCY**

It is the policy of the Somerset School Committee that "...all children who register and attend Somerset Public Schools at the expense of the citizens of Somerset be legal residents whose actual principal domicile is in Somerset."

Parents should understand that enrolling their child in the Somerset Public Schools is contingent upon the conditions of the Residency Policy. It should be understood that violation of this policy may result in termination of the child's enrollment and parents may be liable for tuition reimbursement based on the number of days the student was enrolled in the Somerset Public Schools.

## TRANSFER STUDENTS

Any student who is transferring to another school is requested to have his/her parents bring a note to the main office where withdrawal and transfer papers will be prepared. The note should indicate the expected day of departure and destination school.

Authorized school personnel of the school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer may have access to student records without the consent of the eligible student's parent, provided that the school the student is leaving, or has left, gives notice that it forwards students records to schools in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such notice may be included in an information letter required under 603 CMR 23.10.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER

Parents and/or students are requested to notify the office administrative assistant of any change of address or telephone number made during the school year.

## SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM INFORMATION

## **SCHOOL NURSE**

The school nurse is on duty during school hours, Monday through Friday, in the Health Office. When a student becomes ill, he/she must receive permission from a teacher to report to the nurse with a pass. The teacher may call for an escort or assign a student to assist the ill student to the nurse.

## SPORTS PHYSICALS

All students participating in a school sport must have an updated physical within the previous 13 months on file in the Health Office prior to participation in tryouts.

## PHYSICALS

All grade 7 students are required to provide documentation of a physical dated after July 1 of that school year. Students will not be allowed to enter Grade 8 without a physical on file in the Health Office.

## HEALTH RECORDS

The cumulative health record, which the school health office keeps on each individual student, follows the students from K – 12. It is state law that the immunizations for certain communicable diseases are kept up-to-date. Before entrance to grade 7, all students must have written proof from his/her physician on their school health record of the following immunizations (as well as all immunizations required for previous school years):

1. Tdap (tetanus, pertussis and diphtheria) within the last 5 years
2. Varivax 2 (Chicken Pox second booster or history of the disease)

State mandated screenings as follows:	Postural (scoliosis)	Grades 6, 7, 8
	Vision & Hearing	Grade 7
	BMI (Body Mass Index)	Grade 7

## **MEDICATION**

Medication forms will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Please note that the form requires a signature from the parent and the physician for the legal dispensing of prescription and over the counter medication. All medications should be brought to the Health Office by the parent/guardians and delivered to the school nurse. Students will be allowed to carry inhalers, providing that a signed medication form is on file in the Health Office. At the end of the school year, medications must be picked up by the parents/guardians. Any medications not retrieved will be discarded.

## **SERIOUS ACCIDENTS**

All accidents that occur on the way to school, in school, or on the way home from school should be reported to the Principal or designee for the school records. If the student is enrolled in the school accident insurance program, a form must be completed and submitted to the main office within 48 hours.

## **STUDENT ACADEMIC INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

The function of the Guidance Department is to provide every student with information and assistance regarding academic performance, proper course of study for high school, career planning, job opportunities, testing, and other areas of interest and concern. The guidance counselors will help the student to enjoy a successful and rewarding academic and social environment while at Somerset Middle School.

### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

Students at Somerset Middle School will be placed in the appropriate grade level. All students must meet minimum academic standards in order to be promoted to the succeeding grade level.

The promotion or retention of a student will be evaluated on an individual basis. However, students who fail two or more subjects will be considered for retention by the building principal.

### **PROGRAM OF STUDIES**

The program of studies is organized to provide a wide range of experience for each and every student. This reason has been established to provide the opportunity to challenge each individual scholastically, while maintaining a feeling of accomplishment.

### **GRADE REPORTING**

- Please use our on-line grading system found at [www.somerschools.org](http://www.somerschools.org)
- Numerical grades from 1 to 100 will be used for most classes.
- Pass (P), Fail (F) will be used for designated classes.
- Grade averages with a fraction of .5 will be rounded off to the next higher average.
- Teacher comments may be used on the electronic report cards to give greater understanding.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are distributed electronically at the close of each of the four terms. Within a few days of the term officially closing, report cards will be distributed via the Aspen Student Management System.

## **ASPEN STUDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Both the student and parent/guardian will be given a username and password to log into the Aspen Student Management System used by the Somerset Public Schools. This will provide information related to class grades, assignments, and attendance. Teachers update Aspen frequently. In order to help students take responsibility for their own grades, it is highly suggested that they, and their families, check Aspen at least weekly to have the most current information.

## **HONOR ROLL AND HIGH HONOR ROLL**

The academic achievement and citizenship requirements are recognized as follows:

1. All subjects are included in determining Honor Rolls status.
2. A student must attain no grade lower than 80 to receive Honors and no grade lower than 90 to receive High Honors and a "P" for passing on non-numeric grading classes.
3. A school citizenship deficiency may disqualify a student from inclusion on the Honor Roll.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students who cheat, plagiarize, or forge in connection with academic endeavors and/or school procedures may be subjected to disciplinary consequences both from the classroom teacher and administration. This may include an assigned detention and the completion of a plagiarism assignment.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) USE**

Guidelines for student use of AI will be disseminated for the 2025-2026 school year. These guidelines will be added to an updated version of the Handbook and posted on the Somerset Middle School website at <http://middle.somersetschools.org/Students/index.html>

## **FIELD TRIP/SCHOOL SPONSORED OVERNIGHT TRIP ELIGIBILITY AND PROTOCOL**

Field trips which are an extension of a student's educational program, may be planned and carried out under the direction of a teacher or group of teachers with the consent and approval of the principal. Students must be in academic good standing to attend the field trip. While on a trip, all students are considered to be in school and are expected to meet the same conduct and standards as always (particularly in regard to behavior and dress code standards). Therefore, the following criteria are in place for field trip participation.

Students will place themselves in jeopardy of being disqualified from participation in the field trip if they meet the following criteria:

- have received more than 5 office referrals
- have been assigned to the Restorative Learning Center, in-school or out-of-school suspension
- are chronically truant
- are academically ineligible

For students who are disqualified from field trip participation, an appeal process is available. A written request from the student, including why he/she is disqualified and why he/she should be allowed to participate, must be forwarded to the assistant principal(s) no less than seven (7) school days prior to the field trip. It will be the responsibility of the Assistant Principals, in collaboration with the Principal and faculty, to make a final determination as to whether or not the student will be able to participate.

Students are subject to school rules and regulations while on a field trip sponsored by Somerset Middle School. Any student who violates school rules and regulations will be subject to disciplinary action as prescribed in the Student/Parent Handbook. Any student guilty of using, possessing and/or distributing drugs, alcohol, tobacco/vaping or of being in the presence of drugs, alcohol, tobacco/vaping and not reporting it, will be disciplined in accordance with the Student/Parent Handbook. When the alcohol/drug policy is violated on an overnight trip (example: Washington DC grade 8 trip), parents will be notified immediately by the advisor and will be required, at their expense, and as soon as possible, to pick up their son/daughter at the site of the trip. This may be waived at the discretion of the administration if or when the distance is prohibitive. In addition, when there is reasonable suspicion, an administrator or designee may search a student's luggage.

Students should be aware of the following:

- Field trip participation by students is voluntary.
- Students are responsible for making up all work missed.
- Parental permission slips must be completed and returned to the sponsoring teacher at least two days prior to the date of the field trip.
- A student who does not return a parental permission slip will not be allowed to participate.

### **GENERAL CURRICULUM INFORMATION**

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

### **DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES**

#### **WELLNESS DEPARTMENT STUDENT STATE AND FEDERAL SURVEYS**

Since 1991, all grade 6-12 students in Somerset schools have been involved in a very important survey regarding drug abuse issues. This survey is given every other year and is an important part of the school's counseling and intervention program in place to help at-risk students. This survey is strictly anonymous. The results are available to the community through the Safe & Drug Free Advisory Committee.

#### **WELLNESS DEPARTMENT FAMILY LIFE POLICY**

The Somerset School Committee officially adopts the following policy regarding Family Life Education in Somerset Public Schools:

Parents will be notified every year regarding the instruction of the Family Life Education units. Parents will be given the opportunity to exempt their children from any portion of said curriculum. No student shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. Program instruction materials for said curriculum shall be made reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, educators, school administrators, and others for inspection and review.

#### **SCIENCE DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR LAB SAFETY**

The Science Department at Somerset Middle School is committed to providing a safe, active, and engaging scientific learning environment for all of its students. Please read and review the following *Guidelines for Safety in the SEPUP Classroom* with your child.

*Before the Investigation*

- Listen carefully to your teacher's instructions, and follow any steps recommended when preparing for the activity.
- Use only those materials or chemicals needed for the investigation.
- Know the location of emergency equipment, such as a fire extinguisher, fire blanket, and eyewash station.
- Tie back or remove dangling or bulky items, such as long hair, jewelry, sleeves, jackets, and bags. Do not wear open-toed shoes in the science lab.
- Tell your teacher if you wear contact lenses, or have allergies, injuries, or any medical conditions that may affect your ability to perform the lab safely.
- Make sure both the work surface and floor in your work area are clear of books, backpacks, purses, or any other unnecessary materials.

*During the Investigation*

- Follow all written and spoken instructions.
- Read the activity procedure carefully.
- Don't eat, drink, chew gum, or apply cosmetics in the lab area.
- Wear safety goggles when using chemicals.
- Do not wear contact lenses when using chemicals. If your doctor says you must wear them, notify your teacher.
- Read all labels on chemical bottles and be sure you are using the correct chemical.
- Keep all chemical containers closed when not in use.
- Do not touch, taste, or smell any chemical unless you are instructed to do so by your teacher.
- Mix chemicals only as directed.
- Use caution when working with hot plates, hot liquids, and electrical equipment.
- Follow all directions when working with live organisms or microbial cultures.
- Be mature and cautious, and don't engage in horseplay.
- Report any accidents to your teacher immediately.
- Not sure what to do? Ask!

*After the Investigation*

- Dispose of all materials as instructed by your teacher.
- Clean up your work area, wash out trays, replace bottle caps securely, and follow any special instructions.
- Return equipment to its proper place.

SEPUP. (2012) *Issues and Life Science*, Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkley. Published by Lab-Aids ©, Inc. Ronkonkonma, NY

**MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT CALCULATOR POLICY**

To follow the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum Frameworks and to meet our school's academic expectations, it is necessary to utilize technology as an essential tool in the teaching of mathematics. In keeping with the District's Core Values and Beliefs Statement that each student comes to school ready to learn and to maximize learning success, an appropriate calculator will be needed for math class to complete work at home and in school starting in Grade 7.

Students are to provide their own calculator for use in school and develop proficiency with them. A scientific calculator (TI-30) at minimum is needed for Grade 7 and Grade 8 mathematics at the middle school. Students may choose to provide themselves with a graphing calculator, (TI-84) as an alternative option at the middle school level.

In addition, students taking the math calculator portion of the Grade 7 & 8 MCAS, the PSAT, ACT, and the SAT at the high school will be required to have their own calculator and be proficient with it. A graphing calculator (TI-84) is required for taking the Calculus AP exam and the AP Statistics exam at the high school level.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

Participation in athletic and extracurricular activities is considered a privilege granted to students. Since students participating in interscholastic teams and other extracurricular activities represent Somerset Middle School, their academic performance and behavior will affect her/his rights to participate in such activities. In order to participate in interscholastic teams or in extracurricular activities, all subject grades must be "P" or 65 or above during the previous marking term. In addition, at the time of tryouts students must be academically eligible based on current grades. After being selected for a team or activity, any student who receives a grade of "F" or below a 65 in any subject during the next marking term will be removed from the team or activity on the date the report cards are posted on Aspen (usually within two days after the term ends). Students must be marked present and arrive at school on time to participate in extracurricular activities that day. If an emergency situation occurs which requires a student to be absent on the day of an extracurricular or athletic activity, the principal may allow that student to participate in such activity. Such an emergency might include a funeral or a doctor's appointment. If a student is serving a suspension, he/she may not participate in any school sponsored athletic or extracurricular activities on that day. Any student receiving a detention must fulfill his/her detention obligation before being able to participate in any school-sponsored activity.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Intramurals	Athletic Competitive Teams
Homework Club**	Unified Sports
Best Buddies	Volleyball - Fall
Community Service Club	Cross Country - Fall
Robotics (ROV) Club	Cross Country - Spring
Math Team	Soccer - Boys
Green Team	Soccer - Girls
Student Government	Field Hockey
Drama Production Club	Cheerleading - Fall & Winter
Yearbook Club	Basketball - Girls
Newspaper Club	Basketball - Boys
Peer Tutoring **	Softball
Peer Leadership	Baseball
Grade 8 Washington DC Trip	
Book Club	
Chess/Game Club	
Art Club	

\*\*Students who are academically ineligible for extracurricular activities may still attend homework club and receive assistance from peer tutors.

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

#### **HOMEWORK FOR STUDENTS**

Homework assignments depend on the individual teacher and are also dependent upon what is being done in class at that time. However, all middle school students should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All students are to write all of their assignments in their agenda book.
- The school agenda book should be taken home each night for review.
- Homework may include written assignments, study and review of materials, reading assignments, preparation for an upcoming exam, or a long-term project.

Homework may be assigned daily. However, assignment time may vary in length each night and depends upon the student's needs.

### **HOMEWORK FOR STUDENTS ON VACATION**

Somerset Middle School strongly discourages students missing school to go on vacation. Students are obliged to attend school and have a responsibility to be present in order to be part of the learning process. There is no way to recreate or replace the quality interactions and discussions that take place in lessons presented during the school day. Teachers may provide reading or long-term assignments; however, they might not produce specific worksheets, written assignments, or tests in advance.

If parents choose to take students from school, they must understand that students will be responsible to make-up any and all work assigned. One day will be allowed for each day's absence except in extenuating circumstances when more time may be allowed by the teacher. It is the student's responsibility to ask the teacher for make-up work. Failure to return to work will result in a zero.

### **HOMEWORK AND MAKE UP WORK POLICY FOR STUDENTS ON HEALTH-RELATED ABSENCES**

- Students should check Google classroom and/or contact via email the teacher for missed classwork and homework.
- Students are responsible to return assigned work to classroom teachers within two days of returning to school. Failure to return this requested work may result in a zero.
- Please contact teachers with extenuating circumstances. Additional time may be provided only at the teacher's discretion.
- Students who skip school will receive a zero for any assignment or assessment missed.

### **HOMEWORK, MAKE UP WORK, FOR STUDENT ON SUSPENSION**

Work for suspended students must be turned in the day they return from the out of school suspension. For in-school suspension, the work must be completed and turned in that day.

### **HOME HOSPITAL TUTORING**

**AVAILABLE TO:** A public school student, who due to documented medical reasons is confined to home or hospital for not less than fourteen (14) school days during the school year, is entitled to receive home/hospital educational services as described in 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c).

**PROCEDURE:** It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school if their child is ill and his/her physician feels that the illness is such that an extended absence may be possible. The school will provide the parents with a 28R/3 form, which is to be completed by the student's physician. All parts of the 28R/3 must be completed in order that it may be approved. If the 28R/3 form is not received by the Special Education Office properly completed and signed, no home or hospital tutoring can be offered.

It is the intent of tutoring to keep the student connected with the education that is taking place during the student's absence. Make-up work and additional instruction necessary to bring the child in line with the class will be completed by the regular education staff upon his/her return.

If you have additional questions, please call: Somerset School District – Special Needs Office – 508-324-3103.

## **MEDIA CENTER INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Students should come to the media center with a purpose: to borrow a book or to do research. When students come to the media center, they must have a signed pass and sign in upon entering. They should not bring food, drinks, or gum into the media center. They should plan to work there quietly. Any student who does not comply with the behavior expectations will be sent back to the classroom. Media Center passes may be obtained from classroom teachers.

### **BORROWING PROCEDURES**

No more than two books may be checked out at any time. Books may be kept for a maximum of two weeks.

### **OVERDUE BOOKS**

Students are expected to return books on time. Students who fail to return a book when due are not allowed to borrow another book until the overdue book is returned.

### **LOST OR DAMAGED BOOKS**

Students should notify the media center teacher of all lost books immediately. Students are required to pay for all books that are not returned or books that are returned damaged.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

### **SCHOOL STAFF**

All school staff, including administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, administrative assistants, custodians, and cafeteria personnel, play a very important role in your education. Appreciation will be shown by respectful behavior. Pride and Respect are expected to be mutually demonstrated between adults and students at Somerset Middle School.

### **GENERAL STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

- Conform to reasonable standards of speech, conduct, and dress
- Will be respectful of others personal space, belongings, and boundaries
- Refrain from violating or impairing the civil rights of others
- Avoid conduct that deprives other students of an orderly study atmosphere
- Appreciate the opportunity for the education offered to them
- Apply all school rules from arrival at the bus stop in the morning to departure from the bus stop at the end of the school day, as well as any school sponsored activity or field trip
- Demonstrate responsible behavior and citizenship
- Respect themselves and others
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with others
- Arrive to school on time, when tardy, sign in at the Main Office
- Attend school unless ill or there is an emergency
- Arrive to class on time
- Report to the Nurse when ill
- Don't congregate in restrooms or hallways
- Attend all classes
- Students are required to come to the Main Office when called

## **CAFETERIA**

- Students are expected to practice good table manners.
- Quiet socializing is permissible throughout the lunch period, but students must remain at their own table, except for the discarding of waste materials in the receptacles provided.
- Lunch may be purchased in the cafeteria or brought from home. Fruit, snacks, milk, or water may be purchased separately. Students are not permitted to bring soda, drinks with caffeine such as energy drinks or coffee, into school.
- No food may be taken from the cafeteria.
- All students have a collective responsibility to leave their area clean and trash free.
- At the discretion of the Principal and School Nurse, various locations throughout a school may be designated as peanut/tree nut free zones. Families are expected to adhere to these safeguards to help protect all of our students.

## **SCHOOL LUNCH INFORMATION**

Breakfast and lunch has been free to all students for the past few years, but is still being determined for the 2025-2026 school year. However, families can also add money to their students' accounts via MySchoolBucks, or direct payment to the cashier at the school via check or cash. Parents are invited to pre-pay their child's account by personal check (checks to be made out to Somerset School Lunch). The cafeteria also utilizes a "point of sale" system. Parents/Guardians may go online to [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) at any time to view their child's balance, add money to their account, or to view what their child has been purchasing during lunchtime.

## **LOCKERS**

Students are assigned a locker for their personal use during the school year. Each student is held responsible for the condition of the locker. The school department cannot be held responsible for thefts or losses from the lockers. Students do not have an expectation of privacy in their school lockers or in school property.

### Locker Expectations:

- Since these lockers are school property, they should be kept neat and clean at all times.
- Students are not allowed to share their locker with another.
- Students must use their assigned locker.
- Students should not give their locker combination to anyone.
- A student may go to his/her locker only before school, at designated times assigned by teams, and at the close of school day.
- Permission must be obtained from a teacher/staff at any other time.

## **HALLWAY RULES**

- Walk safely and keep to the right.
- Talking is restricted to a conversational level of sound. Yelling is inappropriate and distracting.
- Students are not allowed to congregate in the hallways during lunch time, prior to school, or after school.
- All directions of school staff are to be followed.
- Students are not allowed in the hallways during class period without permission.

Students who leave the classroom for the purpose of going to the restroom or in the hallway for any reason are required to use the appropriate classroom lanyard to identify

the requested destination. The standard hallway pass may still be used by the Main Office, Guidance Office, and Media Center.

### **ASSEMBLIES**

Assemblies are a regularly scheduled part of the curriculum and, as such, are designed to be an educational as well as an entertaining experience. Regardless of the type of program, courtesy demands that the student body be respectful and appreciative. Talking, stamping of feet, whispering and outbursts are discourteous and will not be tolerated.

- Do not take books or coats to the assembly unless instructed otherwise.
- Proceed to the assembly area quietly and promptly.
- When the presenter of the assembly asks for your attention, give it to the person immediately.
- Be respectful and applaud in keeping with the occasion.

### **DRESS CODE POLICY**

Students should be dressed in a manner that does not interfere with their health or safety, does not distract from the educational process, and does not interfere with the health and safety of their classmates. Proper dress by students in school helps to create good attitudes, atmosphere, and impressions. School attire should be neat, clean, and appropriate. If at any time, a student's dress or appearance does not reflect school expectations, then he or she will be requested to make any necessary changes.

Examples of what is unacceptable at SMS:

- Undergarments of any kind should not be visible
- Hats/coats worn in school (exception school-sponsored hat days)
- No sleepwear of any kind are allowed (exception on denoted spirit days)
- Clothing that exposes areas of the body that should be covered under other provisions
- Any item that names, displays or advocates the use of illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco products, contains profanity, or vulgar language or images, and containing sexual messages, or messages that may have a double meaning, inferred or otherwise
- Clothing must be free of hate speech or imagery that targets groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other classification.
- All clothing should be school-appropriate in length allowing freedom of movement while maintaining modesty appropriate in a school or work setting

### **CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTIES**

Common sense and respect for others dictates that we must exhibit care in the use of the schools and their resources. Marking, scratching, or any other type of destructive act tending to destroy or spoil the building or equipment will not be tolerated. A student who damages or mutilates school property intentionally will be required to make full restitution.

In public education, books are supplied by the school system. They are very expensive and it is too costly to replace them every year. Therefore, the books that are loaned must be kept in good condition. Marking in books or damaging it or any other act that limits the use of the book will result in the student buying a new one.

### **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EXPECTATIONS**

Somerset Middle School supports the mission of the Somerset School District through the use of technology as an integrated tool to enhance learning and teaching. When used in a responsible, efficient, and ethical manner, technology offers unique teaching and learning opportunities that promote education excellence.

This policy includes personal electronic devices and the appropriate use of school owned electronics such as cell phones, desktop computers, laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, e-readers, smart watches, and iPads.

1. Electronic devices not permitted
  - Any item which may distract from the learning process must be properly stored, out of sight, and powered off.
  - Students are not permitted to play electronic devices for entertainment purposes. (Including but not limited to video cameras, cameras, and game playing devices).
2. Inappropriate use of electronic devices
  - Students are reminded that cyberbullying is the willful and repeated use of cell phones, computers, and other electronic communication devices that harass and/or threaten others. Instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mails, and messages posted on websites are the most common methods of this type of bullying. Students are reminded of the possible legal consequence of violating personal privacy and related laws, including federal and state bullying, harassment, and or sexual harassment regulations.
3. Students' inappropriate use of electronic devices include, but are not limited to:
  - Class time without teacher directive
  - Ignoring or disrespectfully responding to a directive from a staff member
  - Taking and/or disseminating unauthorized photos or videos
  - Using electronic devices in bathrooms, locker rooms, or other areas with an expectation of privacy
  - Creating a loud, unpleasant, or disruptive climate for other students, staff members, and/or visitors
4. Lost & Stolen Personal Devices
  - Somerset Middle School is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal belongings brought onto school grounds. If an electronic device is lost or stolen, the student should report it to the Administration and may choose to file a complaint with the Somerset Police Department.
5. Cell Phones
  - Talking on a cell phone is prohibited during the school day. Any and all calls, which need to be made, must be made in the Main Office. Students should make arrangements for afterschool activities prior to the scheduled day. Cell phone usage is not permitted during the school hours. They should be kept out of sight (in a backpack or a locker) and in the off mode during school hours (7:30 a.m. – 2:40 p.m.). Please note! If it is necessary for a Parent/Guardian to contact a student, it must be done through the Main Office. Talking on a cell phone during the school day will result in the same consequence as engaging in disruptive behavior and will include the confiscation of the cell phone.
6. Texting:
  - Texting or communication with anyone via an electronic device is prohibited during school hours. The expectation is that electronic devices are to be used solely for academic purposes.  
Please note! If it is necessary for a Parent/Guardian to contact a student, it must be done through the Main Office. Talking on a cell phone during the school day will

result in the same consequence as engaging in disruptive behavior and will include the confiscation of the cell phone.

7. Music
  - Students are not permitted to listen to music on personal electronic devices unless used for educational purposes with teacher approval and following teacher directive.
8. Pictures & Video
  - Students are not permitted to take pictures or videos with an electronic device, unless used for educational purposes with teacher approval and following teacher directive.

### **SMS COMPUTER CARE, MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT AGREEMENT**

The Somerset School District has initiated a program to provide each student with a Chromebook while the student is actively enrolled in Somerset Middle School (SMS).

This agreement relates to the computer issued to the student while enrolled at SMS. By accepting possession of the computer, software, and related peripherals such as cables, chargers, and cases we hereby agree to the following terms and conditions. We understand that by signing this agreement, we agree to participate in the SMS Chromebook Loaner Program. Please note that wired headphones are necessary for use with Chromebooks as bluetooth devices will not work.

As a student, I agree to:

1. Use the Chromebook as a tool for learning.
2. Bring a fully-charged Chromebook to school each day.
3. Follow the direction of teachers for when and if Chromebooks should be open and used in class.
4. Utilize device for academic work only
5. Abide by all provisions of the Somerset School District Acceptable Use Policy/Internet Safety Policy (AUP/ISP).
6. We DO NOT allow, with or without permission, the streaming of Netflix, Hulu, Vimeo, Pandora or Spotify.
7. Get permission from all people involved before making audio or video recordings.
8. Make my own backups of the data on the Chromebook on external storage devices or network-based backup services.
9. Only download large files and software updates while at home.
10. Keep my Chromebook with me, or in a secure location, at all times.
11. Keep the Chromebook in the school issued protective case at all times.
12. Close my Chromebook and carry it in a protective sleeve or backpack when moving. I understand that walking with an open Chromebook is more likely to cause damage and loss of data.
13. Not mark the Chromebook in any way with markers, stickers, etc.
14. Not insert foreign objects (paperclips, pens, etc.) into the ports (openings) of the Chromebook.
15. Not eat or drink near the Chromebook, or use it with food or drink nearby as it may cause damages.
16. Not leave the Chromebook in a car or any other location in conditions of extreme heat or cold, with can damage the Chromebook.
17. Not use water or other cleaning solutions on the Chromebook. I will wipe the surfaces lightly with a clean, soft cloth. I will avoid touching the screen.
18. Not loan my Chromebook to someone else.

19. Not damage, degrade the performance, or abuse my Chromebook or anyone else's Chromebook in any way.
20. Not try to repair it myself. I will bring Chromebook problems to the SMS IT Department.

#### **STUDENT BEHAVIOR CODE**

The School Committee affirms that the Administration, in order to implement high expectations, has the inherent and statutory responsibility and power to maintain order and discipline in the schools and to remove the privilege of school attendance temporarily from any member of the student body whose conduct is detrimental to the best interest of the whole school community. Public education is the means that has been chosen to train young people in citizenship and in the development of their talents so as to insure a productive life for themselves and a progressively better society for all; since education benefits the individual as well as society, it is to be considered a great privilege as well as an obligation to attend a free public school.

Although a public school system is responsible for the attendance of all students aged 7-16, it may legally deny membership temporarily, if said students refuse to subscribe to the regulations of the school system.

For its part, the School Committee will provide and maintain a suitable environment for learning and expects that the school administration will maintain and facilitate the education program so that the needs of the individual student will be met.

The School Committee affirms that the administration, in order to implement these expectations, has the inherent and statutory responsibility and power to maintain order and discipline in the schools and to remove the privilege of school attendance temporarily from any member of the whole student community.

When the privilege of school attendance is to be removed or curtailed for a specific period of time, the rights of the student and his/her parents or guardians will be fully recognized in compliance with the General Laws, Chapter 71, s.37, s. 37H1/2 , and s. 37H3/4.

Any student expelled for possessing a dangerous weapon or controlled substance or assaulting an educational staff member upon a felony conviction can appeal to the Superintendent within five days from the date of the suspension/expulsion. Any student who is suspended for more than ten school days in any school year or expelled for any other reasons than above can also appeal to the Superintendent within five days from the date of the suspension/expulsion.

Finally, the responsibility for attendance and proper conduct in the Somerset School District rests with the parents. The School Committee recognizes its responsibility to provide whatever services and opportunities are needed to assist the parent in meeting his/her obligation, but maintains the school cannot and should not attempt to do this alone.

Student discipline at Somerset Middle School may consist of but not be limited to lunch retention, teacher detention, office detention, loss of social privileges, the restorative learning center (RLC), in-school suspension (ISS), out-of-school suspension (OSS), and expulsion. In all cases, the Principal and/or designee reserves the right to apportion discipline as deemed to be in the best interests of the student and the overall school environment.

#### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Conduct Infraction	Typical Consequence
<b>Alcohol Possession/Use</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension and police notification
<b>Assault or Threatening Remarks to School Community</b>	Hearing to determine possible suspension or expulsion and potential police notification
<b>Bullying</b>	Hearing to determine possible in-school suspension (ISS) or out-of-school suspension (OSS), safety plan, and possible police notification
<b>Bus Referral</b>	1st offense: warning and written parent notification 2nd offense: office detention 3rd offense: office detention and bus privilege suspension
<b>Cafeteria Misbehavior</b>	1st offense: lunch retention and/or lunch cleanup 2nd offense: office detention, parent notification 3rd offense: assigned table for one week 4th offense: lunch retention in RLC for one week
<b>Cell Phone/Electronic Device Violation</b>	1st offense: warning 2nd offense: office detention, confiscation, and parent notification 3rd and subsequent offenses: office detention, confiscation, loss of social privileges, and possible parent pickup
<b>Cheating/Plagiarism</b>	1st offense: zero on assignment, parent notification, lunch retention 2nd offense: zero on assignment, parent notification, office detention 3rd offense: zero on the assignment, parent notification, loss of social privileges
<b>Chronic Tardiness</b>	Letter sent home to parents and parent conference; inability to participate in athletics and activities
<b>Cut Class</b>	1st offense: office detention 2nd offense: two office detentions 3rd offense: restorative learning center (RLC)
<b>Cut Detention</b>	1st offense: two lunch detentions and reassigned detention 2nd offense: week of lunch retention and reassigned detention 3rd offense: loss of social privileges
<b>Damaging School Property</b>	Hearing to determine ISS or OSS, restitution, possible police notification
<b>Defiant Behavior</b>	1st offense: teacher lunch retention or detention and parent notification 2nd offense: office detention and parent notification 3rd offense: restorative learning center (RLC) and parent notification

<b>Dishonesty/Lying</b>	1st offense: office detention and parent notification 2nd offense: office detention and loss of social privileges 3rd offense: RLC
<b>Disrespectful Behavior</b>	1st offense: teacher lunch retention or detention and parent notification 2nd offense: office detention and parent notification 3rd offense: RLC, parent notification, and loss of social privileges
<b>Disturbance of School Assembly</b>	1st offense: removal from assembly, parent notification, office detention 2nd offense: RLC, removal from future assemblies 3rd offense: RLC, removal from future assemblies, loss of social privileges
<b>Dress Code Violation</b>	1st offense: change of clothes and warning 2nd offense: change of clothes and office detention 3rd offense: change of clothes and loss of social privileges
<b>Drug Possession/Use</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential expulsion or suspension (see MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H and MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/2) and police notification
<b>Excessive Absences</b>	See school attendance policy; filing of a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance)
<b>Inciting a Fight</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension and police notification
<b>Fighting</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension and police notification
<b>Filming an Altercation</b>	1st offense: office detention and loss of social privileges 2nd offense: RLC and loss of social privileges 3rd offense: hearing to determine possible ISS or OSS
<b>Food or Drink Violation</b>	1st offense: warning and disposal of food/beverage 2nd offense: teacher lunch retention or detention 3rd offense: office detention
<b>Harassment, Racial, Ethnic, or Sexual Slurs</b>	Hearing to determine the level of harassment, consequence up to and including suspension and police notification
<b>Horseplay</b>	1st offense: office detention 2nd offense: office detention and loss of social privileges 3rd offense: RLC and loss of social privileges
<b>Horseplay Causing Injury</b>	Hearing to determine consequences
<b>Inappropriate Behavior</b>	1st offense: teacher lunch retention or detention and parent

	notification 2nd offense: office detention and parent notification 3rd offense: office detention, loss of social privileges, parent notification
<b>Inciting a Fight</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension
<b>Intimidation</b>	Hearing to determine consequences, safety plan, possible police notification
<b>Leaving Class without Permission</b>	RLC for remainder of class and office detention
<b>Leaving School without Permission</b>	Parent notification, RLC for remainder of school day, office detention
<b>Profanity</b>	1st offense: lunch retention and parent notification 2nd offense: office detention and parent notification 3rd offense: office detention, loss of social privileges, parent notification
<b>Property Damage Accidental</b>	Restitution
<b>Pushing/Shoving</b>	1st Offense: Office Detention 2nd Offense: 2 Office Detentions and loss of social privileges 3rd Offense: 3 Office Detentions and loss of social privileges
<b>Tardy to Class</b>	1st Offense: Warning 2nd Offense: Teacher Detention or Lunch Retention 3rd Offense: Office Detention and Loss of Social Privileges
<b>Tardy to School</b>	4th Tardy (per semester)--Office Detention
<b>Taunting, Teasing, Annoying Other Students</b>	1st offense: Teacher or Office Detention and parent notification 2nd offense: Office Detention and parent notification 3rd Offense: RLC, parent notification, and loss of social privileges
<b>Threat/Verbal Assault Towards Another Person</b>	Hearing to determine ISS/OSS, safety plan, and possible police notification
<b>Throw/Propel an Object</b>	Office Detention, RLC, ISS, OSS, loss of social privileges
<b>Tobacco Use/Possession</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension and police notification
<b>Theft</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine RLC, ISS, restitution, and possible police notification
<b>Vaporizer Possession/Use</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential suspension and police notification

<b>Wandering</b>	1st Offense: Lunch Retention 2nd Offense: Office Detention 3rd Offense: Two Office Detentions
<b>Weapon Possession/Use</b>	Parent notification and hearing to determine potential expulsion or suspension (see MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H and MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/21/2) and police notification
<b>Wearing a Hat or Hood in School</b>	1st Offense: Warning and direct student to put the hat in a locker 2nd Offense: Teacher or Office Detention, Parent notification, Confiscation of hat 3rd Offense: Two Office Detentions, Confiscation of hat, and Parent Notification

#### Reasonable Suspicion

The student behavior code is reasonable suspicion to believe that a violation of the behavior code has occurred, disciplinary proceedings will be implemented in accordance with the student behavior code.

#### Investigation

In dealing with an alleged misconduct, the Administrator shall investigate the incident and hear all available accounts of it. The student shall be offered the opportunity to raise any defense he/she thinks relevant and shall be permitted to submit a written statement of the facts relating to the alleged misconduct to the administrator.

#### **POLICY REGARDING SEARCHES AND SEIZURES**

The Superintendent, Principal or other designated Administrator may authorize a personal search of a student, a student's property, and a classroom, if there is a reasonable suspicion that health and safety are at risk or that a student has violated or is violating school rules or federal/state laws. Should a student decline to be searched, the student's parent/guardian will be notified and the police may be contacted.

Searches of students, their possessions or lockers will be conducted in a way conducive both to the preservation of individual rights and to an atmosphere supportive of the educational process. If, at any time during the search process, a designated Administrator feels a threat is imminent to any student or other personnel, the SRO and/or police will be contacted.

Whenever a student search is conducted, the following shall apply:

- No search shall be conducted unless there is reasonable suspicion that a violation of law or school rules has occurred;
- Searches shall be conducted by an Administrator, or designated staff person in the presence of at least one other staff member;
- Whenever a personal search is deemed necessary, the student shall be advised of the reason for the impending search prior to its implementation. School officials may examine articles of clothing such as pockets, coats, shoes, book bags, etc.;
- In recognition that right to privacy considerations intensify as a search becomes invasive, no school official shall ever conduct a "strip search" of a student;
- Should a student refuse to voluntarily comply with a request for a search, the student may be detained until parents, and if necessary police, can arrive to assist, as appropriate, in

the investigation. A student who fails to cooperate, lies, misleads or threatens any person during or after a search or questioning, may be subject to additional disciplinary action;

- Should a search uncover any substances or contraband, such shall be turned over to the appropriate authorities or rightful owner, as appropriate, and suitable disciplinary action shall be taken.

Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the right of the School Committee or Administration to make use of external detecting resources should these become necessary or desirable. See District Policy.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S. 2A STUDENT USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Somerset Middle School is a SMOKE FREE school. In accordance with G.L. c. 71, §2A, use of all tobacco products is prohibited within all school facilities, on all school grounds, on all school buses by any individual, including students, visitors, and school personnel. Possession of tobacco products is also prohibited. Tobacco products are defined as any product or substance containing tobacco including chewing or smoking items and including electronic or vaping items. Smoking and the possession of tobacco products are also prohibited at all school-sponsored events regardless of where they are held (Field trips are included as school sponsored events). Violations of the smoking policy may result in one or more of the following: teaching/learning assignment(s) regarding the incident, loss of school privileges, detention, and long or short-term suspension.

Smoke/vaping detectors may be used to monitor smoking on the premises. Programs are available to any student who would like to try to stop the use of such products. (see School Counselor)

Drug Free School Zone

- The area within one thousand yards of the school has been declared a drug free zone by agreement between the Somerset Police and the School Committee. Any drug offenses in this area carry special and severe penalties.
- School owned property and buildings.
- School controlled property and building
- Jurisdiction over a student who is on any vehicle designated by the school for transportation of students to and from school.
- Any school sponsored activity.

Please note: When a student leaves a "school zone" the school's obligation ends, however, the school's rights continue. For example:

- Administration has the right to investigate any incident involving a student occurring outside of the school zone.
- Administration has the right to gather information and exchange information in at least oral fashion with the police department regarding actions of school students.
- Administration has the right to make a determination whether actions of the student creates a clear danger/disruption connecting back to and upon the safe and orderly educational atmosphere of the school.

**POLICY REGARDING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Overview: Students are expected to behave in accordance with the School District's rules and regulations and to remove themselves from situations which involve illegal activity or the possession or use of illicit drugs or alcohol. Students who put themselves in these situations or who do not report, or remove themselves from these situations mabe be subject to disciplinary

action including suspension or expulsion. It is the policy of Somerset School District to maintain a safe, alcohol-free and drug-free environment.

Policy: A student shall not knowingly possess, use, transmit, or be under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, controlled substance, alcoholic beverages or intoxicant of any kind on school grounds at any time, or off school grounds at any school activity, function or event. Possession shall include being or remaining at a site, or in a room, building, or vehicle on school grounds or at a school activity, function or event, in which a controlled substance or alcohol is being used, consumed or possessed, including alcohol consumed or possessed by a person under the age of 21; provided, this "Presence Rule" shall not apply to activities which a student attends with his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s) where alcohol is consumed as long as the student does not personally consume alcohol. Use of a drug authorized by a medical prescription from a registered physician for the student shall not be considered a violation of this regulation. The nurse's office must be used to hold a student's prescribed drugs for the school day for obvious reasons.

#### **POLICY ON HANDLING DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROBLEMS IN SMS**

While recognizing the fact that school personnel are in no position to make valid judgments regarding causes of student's aberrant behavior, it is obvious that wide deviations from a student's normal behavior are observable and are a cause of concern regarding the student's mental, emotional, and physical health on the part of all parents or guardians and school personnel. In keeping with this conviction and awareness of our responsibilities to the welfare of students, parents or guardians, and schools, we enforce the following policy:

##### Possible User in School

- Should a student's behavior in school be such that there is reason to be concerned for his/her well-being, the student's name should be referred to the Principal or to the Assistant Principals.
- The Administration will ask the school nurse to examine the student for possible cause.
- After consultation with the school nurse, if the Principal or designee feels the child should be excused from school in the care of his/her parent/guardian, the student's parent/guardian is to be notified by the Principal or designee that the student is not well, and a conference will be held with the parent/guardian. If deemed appropriate, the Principal should suggest that the student be seen by competent medical authorities.
- Should there be repetitions of the referral and consequent dismissals from school, the Principal or designee shall, by phone and later in writing, invite the parent/guardian to school for a conference with the Principal or designee as a precondition to the student's reentry. During this interview the Principal should make the parent/guardian aware of any circumstances of which he/she has knowledge that may help to account for the exhibited behavior. It is also expected that the parent/guardian will have made efforts to determine the causes of and remedies for the problem. If the parent/guardian has no evidence of having provided the student with assistance either medically, through a family doctor, or through referral to an outside agency for an evaluation, the student may be suspended until such evidence is presented. Said suspension is governed by School Committee policy. In the event that an outside agency is to be notified, then the parent/guardian shall be notified prior to such referrals.
- If, after the referral, there is evidence of the student refusing to receive help, and the student is a juvenile, the school will consult with the juvenile probation officer to ascertain whether the case should be brought to juvenile court for the purpose of rehabilitation

rather than criminal action. The parent/guardian shall be notified of the referral prior to its being made.

- A student who is in possession of drug paraphernalia or alcohol shall be considered a possible user and the parent/guardian contacted.

#### User in School

The parent/guardian of a student who uses harmful or potentially harmful drugs or controlled substances or alcohol in school will be notified. It is also expected that the parent/guardian will have made efforts to determine the causes of and remedies for the problem. If parent/guardian has no evidence of having provided the student with an evaluation, the school will require that a referral be made to an outside agency for an evaluation. The student is to remain out of school until such evidence is presented. If it is determined that the user is also in possession, then Section IV will also apply. Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to said referral being made.

#### Possible Possession

If the Principal or designee has reason to believe that a student may be in possession of harmful drugs or controlled substance or alcohol, the student will be called to the office and questioned concerning this matter. If, after talking to the student and further investigation, the Principal or designee has reason to believe that the student is in possession of a harmful drug or alcohol or a controlled substance, the parent/guardian will be contacted for a conference, and the police will be called to the school at this time.

#### Possession, Student Seller, or Distributor in School

The parent/guardian of any student who has a controlled substance, alcohol, or harmful drug in his/her possession will be called to the school immediately. Possession and/or distribution of drugs/alcohol on school premises, or substantiated involvement, or under the influence of, drugs and/or alcohol on school premises – Five (5) days suspension, parental referral and referral to Principal for possible further disciplinary action. (See Grounds for Expulsion)

### **STUDENT CONDUCT MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH.71, S. 37H**

Publication of School Committee Policies Relative to the Conduct of Teachers and Students.

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or a school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.  
After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten

days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated provisions of the section.

- (e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.
- (f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.
- (g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

#### **POLICY AGAINST USE/POSSESSION OF WEAPONS**

Possession of any weapon is strictly forbidden. A weapon is any object that may be used to assault or intimidate, such as a knife, mace, or sharp spiked jewelry. Canes or other similar devices are not to be used or carried unless the school nurse has on file a physician's recommendation that a student use them. The administration will take disciplinary action commensurate with the violation.

School staff are required to file written reports on any incidents, regardless of whether or not they occur during school hours, involving a student's possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises. A Principal receiving such a report will file copies with the local Chief of Police, the Department of Social Services, and the school district's Office of Student Services (or its equivalent). The filing of such a report triggers an assessment of the student, referral to a counseling program, and a follow-up assessment.

Any student who is involved in a weapons "incident" whether expelled or not, is entitled to receive information on available counseling services. Such services can include counseling available within the district and provided by district personnel and/or counseling available through other agencies. Information provided to the student must include information regarding the cost to the student. The school district is required to provide counseling services at no cost to the student only if such counseling services are available on a regular basis to other students within the district.

Students transferring to a new district must provide that district with complete school records containing information on suspensions, violations of criminal acts, and incident reports filed against the student.

**Firearms**

Whoever, not being a law enforcement officer, and notwithstanding any license obtained by him/her under the provisions of Chapter 140, carries on his/her person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any building or on the grounds of any secondary school without written authorization of the board or officer in charge of such secondary school, shall be punished by a fine not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearms" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school will be disciplined in accordance with G.L. c.71, s. 37H.

**Firecrackers**

Firecrackers and any other explosive devices are illegal and prohibited on school property. Discipline will be handled at the discretion of the administration.

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S.37H1/2**  
**FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION OF STUDENT/SUSPENSION; EXPULSION; RIGHT TO APPEAL**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section eighty-four and Sections sixteen and seventeen of Chapter seventy-six:

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

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

- (2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster

of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CH. 71, S.37H3/4 SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION ON GROUNDS OTHER THAN THOSE SET FORTH IN SECS. 37H OR 37H1/2**

- (a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H ½.
- (b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. The principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school-or district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however, that school-or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS RIGHTS**

Consistent with the Massachusetts student discipline law (MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H 3/4) and the student discipline regulations (603 CMR 53.00), Somerset School District's student discipline policy includes specific procedures related to student suspensions and expulsions under Section 37H 3/4 and is designed to provide students who are suspended or expelled the opportunity to make academic progress. Our goals are:

1. To keep schools safe and supportive for all students while ensuring fair and effective disciplinary practices;
2. To promote engagement of a student and a student's parent or guardian in discussion of the student's misconduct, and the options for responding to it;
3. To assure that every student who is expelled or suspended, regardless of the reason for suspension or expulsion, has the opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion; and
4. To limit the use of long-term suspension as a consequence for student misconduct until other consequences have been considered and tried as appropriate.

Student discipline at Somerset Middle School will consist of teacher retention, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, restorative learning center, exclusion and revocation of class privileges. In all cases, and consistent with G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H 1/2, and 37H 3/4, the Principal reserves the right to apportion discipline as he/she deems to be in the best interests of the student and the overall school environment.

### **DUE PROCESS**

Except in cases of emergency or when the student's continued presence poses a danger to person or property, the principal may not impose a suspension without first providing the student and the parent or guardian oral and written notice of the offense, the basis for the charge and the potential consequences, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the alleged offense and the parent or guardian an opportunity to participate in the hearing. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent or guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. A hearing may be conducted without the parent or guardian present if, after reasonable, good faith efforts to include the parent or guardian, the Principal is unable to secure their participation.

This section does not apply to the suspension of a student for: (a) possession of a dangerous weapon; (b) possession of a controlled substance; (c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or (d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction of adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.. c. 71 §§37H or 37H1/2.

### **PRINCIPAL'S HEARING (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37 H 3/4)**

The Principal shall determine the extent of the rights afforded to a student at a disciplinary hearing based on the anticipated consequences for the offense. Students facing a long-term suspension will be afforded greater minimum rights than students facing a short term suspension. For additional information refer to 603 CMR 53.08.

**Emergency Removal:** Nothing in these rules and regulations shall prevent the Principal from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially alters and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, consistent with M.G.L. . 71, Section 37H 3/4. The Principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to notify the student and the student's parent or guardian of the emergency removal, the reason(s) for the removal and other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- Provide written notice to the student and parent or guardian pursuant to 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing and the parent or guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for the hearing is agreed to by the principal, student and parent or guardian.
- A decision must be rendered (orally) on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. A student may not be removed from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

**Short-term Suspension:** At a minimum, the Principal or designee shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies or consequences (other than suspension) may be sufficient and appropriate. If present, the parent or guardian shall be provided an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and other information, including mitigating circumstances that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student. Following the hearing, the Principal shall notify the student and parent or guardian of the determination, the reasons for the determination, and length of any suspension being imposed. The determination shall be in writing. Students shall be provided with the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

**Long-term Suspension:** At a minimum, a student facing a long-term suspension shall be afforded all of the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing. In addition, a student facing a long-term suspension shall have the following additional rights:

- In advance of hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making his/her determination;
- The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the student's choice and at the student's/parent's or guardian's expense;
- The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf;
- The right to cross examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
- The right to request that the hearing be recorded

The Principal's determination shall be in writing and sent to the student and parent or guardian. If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- Identify the offense, the date on which the hearing took place and the participants at the hearing;
- Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the Principal;

- Identify the length and effective date of suspension;
- Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the suspension;
- Inform the student of the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent (or designee). Appeal to the Superintendent is only provided in those cases where the Principal has imposed a long-term suspension.

In every case of misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S HEARING**

A student placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the Principal shall have the right to appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed with five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension. The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent or guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension. A good faith effort will be made to include the parent or guardian in the hearing. The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent or guardian of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parents or guardian upon request. The student shall have all of the rights afforded at the Principal's Hearing for long-term suspension. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. While the superintendent may modify the Principal's decision to reduce the suspension or consequence imposed on the student, under no circumstances may the Superintendent impose a suspension which is greater than that imposed by the Principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.

### **EXPULSION**

Although suspension is limited to no more than 90 school days in a school year under M.G.L. c. 71 s. 37H ¾, Principals continue to have discretion under M.G.L. c 71, sections 37H and 37H ½ to impose a longer suspension or expulsion on a student for one of the statutory offenses, such as possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance on school grounds, or assault on school staff. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.

### **HARASSMENT**

Somerset Middle School recognizes the right of all students to attend school in a safe and comfortable environment that is free of harassment. Verbal, physical and social harassment of others will not be tolerated. Students who harass others may be subject to disciplinary measures that may include suspension from school.

It is the policy of the Somerset Public Schools to provide a working and educational environment free from sexual harassment. The Somerset Public Schools are committed to courteous and considerate treatment of its employees and students at all times as an accepted standard of behavior. Consequently, the Somerset School Committee endorses an atmosphere that is free of tension caused by demeaning or harassing conduct, including animosity engendered by inappropriate religious, racial or sexual conduct or comments.

The Somerset Public Schools prohibits sexual harassment by any of its employees, officers, agents or students and has set forth a process by which allegations of sexual harassment may be filed,

investigated, and resolved. Any employee or student who has been found in violation of this sexual Harassment Policy will be subject to the Somerset Public Schools established disciplinary process for employees and students, up to and including dismissal for employees, and up to and including expulsion for students. Collectively bargained employees shall be subject to the applicable contractual disciplinary procedure.

### **BULLYING BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

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

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan within his or her school. The full policy is located on the district [website](#).

#### **DEFINITIONS (M.G.L. c. 71, §370)**

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

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or school staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

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

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

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed

by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

### **PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION**

Per M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, the Somerset Public Schools and Somerset Berkley Regional School District prohibit acts of bullying, which include cyber-bullying,

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

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

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

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited. As stated in M.G.L. c.71, § 370, nothing in this plan requires the district or school to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

### **STUDENTS AT RISK FOR HARM TO OTHERS**

- Attention shall be paid to past disciplinary issues as they may relate to the current incident.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted. Parents/guardians will have the option to transport students for the purpose of obtaining a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional. The school is not responsible for student transportation to the required location or cost of assessment.
- A re-entry meeting with the parent/guardian, student, and members of the Student Success Team (SST) will occur before a student should return to a regular school day. Plans for readmission will be reviewed and agreed upon.
- For Special Education Students, please refer to existing discipline codes and Federal/State Regulations.

### **STUDENTS AT RISK FOR HARM TO SELF**

- Parents/guardians will be contacted. Parents/guardians will have the option to transport students for the purpose of obtaining a mental health assessment from a licensed mental health professional. The school is not responsible for student transportation to the required location or cost of assessment.
- An assessment must indicate that a student is not harmful to themselves or to others before readmission.

- A re-entry meeting with the parent/guardian, student and members of the Student Success Team (SST) will occur before a student should return to a regular school day. Plans for readmission will be reviewed and agreed upon.
- The SMS will take the appropriate and necessary steps relative to the student's right to educational services.
- For Special Education Students, please refer to existing discipline codes and Federal/State Regulations.

### **DISCIPLINE CODE RELATIVE TO STUDENTS MAKING VERBAL/WRITTEN THREATS TO SCHOOL**

Any student who poses a threat to the school through verbal or written means can be suspended for up to ten (10) consecutive days. Attention shall be paid to past discipline issues as they may relate to the current incident. The Principal can request in writing that the student not return to school until a licensed psychiatrist evaluates the student. Findings by these medical experts will determine the next step. Suspension or expulsion hearing might be considered if the medical clearance is not obtained.

### **POLICY ON HAZING (M.G.L. CH 269, SECTIONS 17-19)**

The term "hazing" 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. Consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action. M.G.L. c. 269 s. 17.

For further information regarding the SPS Hazing Policy, please click [here](#) and reference section JICFA-E.

### **DETENTION**

Students are assigned detention for various offenses. Detention may be held Monday – Thursday after school. Students assigned to detention are to report promptly at 2:45 with their books and materials. The time assigned is for corrective purposes. The postponement of detention does not excuse the student's assigned detention, but must be made up at the next scheduled session. Parents will be informed when a student is detained. Failure to return the signed slip may result in an additional office detention. Failure to attend assigned detention may result in an additional detention. Student's assigned detention or retention may be ineligible to attend or participate in school social or athletic events for that week.

### **SUSPENSION FOR SCHOOL-RELATED CONDUCT**

The school administration at Somerset Middle School shall investigate a student's alleged school-related conduct and shall take disciplinary action when necessary to maintain an environment conducive to a successful educational setting.

The Principal of Somerset Middle School may suspend a student for up to five (5) days for conduct inappropriate to the school setting. The Principal may also suspend a student for additional periods of time if it is determined that the student's presence is not conducive to the educational setting at Somerset Middle School. The Principal of the school shall determine the disciplinary action and the action and the penalty for all school offenses.

A student under suspension may not enter Somerset Middle School or be present on school grounds of any school in the Somerset School District pursuant to Massachusetts law.

#### **POLICY ON THE DISCIPLINING OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. However, students eligible for special education are entitled to certain additional protections under the state and federal law. Specifically, these laws include M.G.L. c 71B and its implementing regulations (603 CMR 28.00) and 20 USC 1401 et. Seq. (the IDEA) and its implementing regulations (34 CFR 300 et. Seq.).

Students eligible for special education who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current educational placement for up to ten school days per school year, to the extent that such removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability.

Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten school days in a school year, this constitutes a "change of placement" and invokes certain procedural rights including but not limited to a review by the IEP Team of the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, which is referred to a Manifestation Determination.

If the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability the student's Team will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior intervention plan, provided that such an assessment was not already conducted before the behavior occurred. In the situation where an assessment was already conducted and a behavior intervention plan is already in place, the Team will review the plan and revise it accordingly. The student will also be returned to his/her education placement unless the parent and the school agree otherwise.

If the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, then the student may be removed from his educational placement to the same extent that a regular education student would be removed, provided that the special education student continues to receive educational services to enable the child to continue to receive his/her special education services in order to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the student's IEP. Additionally, the student should receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plan to prevent the behavior from happening again.

There are certain situations in which school personnel may order a change in placement of a special education student without regard to whether the student's behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability. These situations include when a special education student:

- Carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency;
- Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency;
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.

In these situations, school personnel may remove the special education student to an appropriate Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES) for not more than forty-five (45) school days without regard to whether the student's behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability.

If a special education student commits an offense which causes the student to be expelled from school, the school district continues to be responsible for providing the student with a free appropriate public education in another educational setting.

For more information regarding the rights of special education students, see the Massachusetts Department of Education's Procedural Safeguards Notice, which is available in many languages, at [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb). Additionally, copies of the state and federal special education laws are available online at the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals website, at [www.doe.mass.edu/bsea](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bsea), or can be requested from the Director of Student Services/Director of Special Education at (508) 324-3103.

#### **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS NOT YET ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

A child who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services and who has engaged in behavior that violates a code of student conduct, may assert any of the protections provided for special education students if the school had knowledge (as determined by the IDA) that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

The school district may be considered to have prior knowledge if, before the behavior that resulted in the disciplinary action occurred:

- The parent of the student expressed concern in writing to supervisory or Administrative personnel for the student's school or to a teacher of the student, that the student is in need of special education and related services;
- The parent requested an evaluation of the student; or
- District staff expressed, directly to the special education director or their supervisory personnel, specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The district may not be deemed to have had knowledge if the parent has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student was completed and resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

If the district had no knowledge that the student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary action, the student may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to students without disabilities. However, if an evaluation is requested during the time period in which the student is subjected to these disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation, in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student remains in the educational placement determined by the district which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If after the evaluation, the student is determined to be eligible, the district must provide special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

#### **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS ON 504 PLANS**

School personnel may not suspend a student on a 504 plan for more than ten consecutive school days without a manifestation determination. Procedural protections for eligible 504 students are the same as those afforded to special education students. Please contact the Director of Student Services/Director of Special Education for more information.

### **SOMERSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS**

### **PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY:**

File: JKAA

Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- (a) To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
- (b) To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

Full Physical Restraint of Students Policy is located on the district [website](#).

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Full Policy on student records is located on the district [website](#).

## **SECTION 504, TITLE IX & CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY**

### **STATEMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS POLICY**

The Somerset Public School District recognizes the right of each student and employee to perform in an atmosphere free of harassment, intimidation, ridicule, hostility or offensiveness. The Somerset Public School District extends its policy of non-discrimination to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, domicile, native language, disability, sexual orientation, or religion may register a complaint with the Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator at the Office of the Superintendent, 580 Whetstone Hill Road, Somerset, MA 02726 (508)324-3100.

Please visit the district [website](#) for school committee and district policies regarding Section 504, Title IX, and Civil Rights Policies.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Please visit the District [website](#) for the School Committee and district policies regarding non-discrimination.

Please visit the district website for all other School Committee and School District policies [here](#).

If you are having technical difficulties accessing any of the websites referred to in this document, please contact the school for assistance.

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### **PARENT/STUDENT SIGNATURE FORM**

This is to certify that I have received the Somerset Middle School Student/Parent Handbook/Agenda which includes school rules and regulations for students.

I am aware that violations of policies, procedures, and expectations may result in the consequences detailed in this booklet.

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Name of Student (please print)

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Student's Signature

Date

---

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

**Signed form must remain in the School Agenda throughout the school year.**

## **SOMERSET MIDDLE SCHOOL - STAFF LIST 2025-2026**

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Assistant Principal	Ms. Tanya Benoit	<a href="mailto:tanya.benoit@somersetschools.org">tanya.benoit@somersetschools.org</a>
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