



Our **vision** is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Our **mission** is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

Elementary Family Handbook

Including School Policies and Procedures

2018-19 School Year

Blanchard Memorial School
Luther Conant Elementary School
C.T. Douglas Elementary School
Paul P. Gates Elementary School
McCarthy-Towne Elementary School
Merriam Elementary School

www.abschools.org

Notice of Nondiscrimination

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, active military/veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other administered programs and activities. In addition, students who are homeless or of limited English-speaking ability are protected from discrimination in accessing the course of study and other opportunities available through the schools.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or MGL Ch. 76, sec.5 is directed to contact the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Administration Building, 15 Charter Road, Acton, MA, telephone number 978-264-4700, x3265, who has been designated by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with these laws, or write to the Office for Civil Rights, J. F. Kennedy Federal Building, Room 1875, Boston, MA 02203, or the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Program Quality Assurance Services, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148.

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Vision, Values and Mission

Vision: *To provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners*

Values:

- **Wellness** - We partner with families to prioritize social emotional wellness, which is necessary for learning and developing resilience
- **Equity** - We ensure all students have equitable access to programs and curricula to reach their potential
- **Engagement** - We provide engaging educational opportunities where students develop passion and joy for learning

Mission: *To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships*

Elementary School Phone Numbers

School	Principal	Safe Arrival Line	Main Office Line
Blanchard	Dana Labb	978-264-4293	978-263-4569
Conant	Damian Sugrue	978-266-2550	978-263-2591
Douglas*	Chris Whitbeck	978-266-2566	978-266- 2560
Gates*	Lynne Newman	978-263-7425	978-266-2570
McCarthy-Towne	David Krane	978-264-4098	978-264-3377
Merriam	Juliana Schneider	978-264-3373	978-264-3371

**Or use the online form found on the school's website*

2017-18 Elementary School Hours of Operation

Elementary Hours	8:50-3:20
AM Kindergarten Hours	8:50 - 11:50
Thursdays (Early Release)	8:50 - 12:50

General Information

The Main Office serves as the center for a wide range of important activities and is the communication link between home and school. If you need to leave a message for a member of the staff, we will connect you to their voice mail.

Emergency Information

Parents are required to complete online emergency information for every student in PowerSchool. Up-to-date information allows the office to contact parents in case of an emergency, a sick child, or a bus dismissal question. It is **extremely important** to update your emergency information immediately if there is a change in address or telephone number(s) at home and/or at work, as well as your cellphone number. For similar reasons, we also need current addresses and home numbers of childcare providers and at least one person to contact in case of an emergency.

Telephone Use

Students are allowed to use school phones for school-related business only. In order to promote growing independence and appropriate sense of responsibility, students are discouraged from calling home for forgotten homework, band instruments, sneakers, or bus passes.

Student Directory

Each of our elementary schools generally discloses directory information with parental consent. Such information includes each student's name, address, telephone number, and homeroom/class list. In the event families do not want the school to release such directory information, they should indicate this in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. This is located in the School/Parent Group Permissions in the parent portal.

School Visitors

All doors are locked at the beginning of the school day. For the safety of all children, no parent/adult is permitted to go to a classroom without first obtaining permission from the office.

All visitors must buzz in and register at the office. Visitors should sign in the Visitor's Log and wear a Visitor badge while in the building. Visitors not wearing badges will be directed to check in at the school office. Do not park in the emergency vehicle lane at the school entrance. Before leaving, visitors should turn in their pass and sign out.

Security Camera Notification

The Acton Boxborough Regional School District uses video cameras throughout the District for the purpose of enhancing school safety and security. The objective is to promote and foster a safe and secure teaching and learning environment for students and staff, to improve public safety for community members who visit or use our school property, and diminish the potential for personal and district loss or destruction of property. Security camera recordings will be viewable in each building by authorized designees only.

Lost and Found

Lost and found items are placed in a specially designated area. Children are encouraged to label clothing and personal property with their names written in a clear and visible manner. Periodically, all items in the lost and found that are unclaimed are donated to a local charity. The PTO/PTF attempts to notify parents prior to such a donation. Please be sure students have easily found hooks on their coats so that outdoor clothing can be hung neatly.

Lunch and Recess

Hot lunches and other entrees are served every full day of school. Students who choose to bring their own lunches may purchase milk as an a-la-cart item. Ice cream is served on selected days. Monthly, schools will send lunch menus home with students, and they are also published on school and District websites. Free or reduced-price lunches are available for those who qualify. Parents can manage their child's cafeteria account online through School Café, which can be accessed from the District homepage (www.abschools.org) or <https://www.schoolcafe.com>.

With few exceptions (rain, wind chill of less than 20°F, etc.), students should expect to go outdoors for recess.

Student Arrival and Dismissal

Safe Arrival Line

If a student will be absent or tardy, a parent **must** report the absence or tardy through the safe arrival system. If a student is marked absent and Safe Arrival was not notified, a parent volunteer will call a parent at home or at work to verify that the child is safe. If a parent cannot be reached and there is a concern about the safety of that child, the Police Department will be called. You may report your child's absence or tardiness by calling the Safe Arrival Phone Number listed on page 2 for your child's school. Listen carefully to the directions and leave all of the information clearly in your message.

Early Student Arrivals

Students may not arrive at school any more than 15 minutes before the official beginning of the school day, as we do not allow unsupervised children in the building. There is no supervision provided for a child prior to this time unless parents have previously arranged for their child to attend after-school or extended day programs.

Parent Drop Off and Pick-Up Procedures

If you drive your child to school, please follow the individual school procedures. A parent may not enter the bus loading/unloading zone during arrival or dismissal times. Under no circumstance may a parent pass a school bus with its stop sign displayed out on the side.

Dismissal

For the safety of each child, the school must be aware of the dismissal plans for all students. Students are expected to go home on the bus after school. Classroom teachers will dismiss walkers, bicyclists, and students to be picked up by parents. Students being picked up should meet their parents in the school's designated drop off/ pick-up area.

Bus Passes and Walkers

Bus passes or dismissal passes must be submitted for both permanent changes (such as going to daycare or walking home), or for one-day changes (such as taking a bus to a friend's home or being picked up for an appointment). The bus pass or dismissal pass should be filled out completely and signed by a parent/guardian.

Students Leaving School Early

A written request to have a student excused from school early should be sent with the child on the morning of the dismissal, including the time and reason for leaving. Early dismissal is discouraged, as important learning takes place throughout each day. Medical appointments should occur outside of school hours whenever possible.

A sick or injured student will be dismissed from school through the health office. In any serious emergency, every attempt will be made to contact the parent or his/her designee. In cases where parents or their designees cannot be contacted, the school's administrator and/or nurse will take whatever emergency action is deemed necessary. Parents must be able to pick up a child within 60 minutes of receiving a call from the school. If parents are unable to arrive within that time frame, they must ensure that they have designated a trusted adult to pick up their student.

For purposes of safety, a child will be released only to their parents/guardians unless the school has been notified in writing by the parents that they have granted permission for someone else to pick up their child. The parent, or authorized person, **MUST** come to the office to sign out the child. Students will be called from their classroom after they have been signed out in the office. We may ask to see a form of identification of the non-custodial adult who is picking up your child. Please communicate with them so that they bring identification.

Parents must notify the school office before any student is removed from the school at any time. *It is the family's responsibility to notify any daycare providers of a student absence.*

Extended Day Programs

Our Extended Day programs, available to families for a fee, provide supervised exercise, play and study before school from 7:00 a.m. and after school until 6:00 p.m. for preschool through Grade 6. Extended Day staff provide a safe, creative and supportive environment. Extended Day is in session in accordance with the school calendar, and there are also programs offered during the District's April, February, and summer vacations.

Students Remaining After School

No student is to remain after school without the consent of their parent or guardian. Parents must arrange for transportation if they have agreed to have their child stay after school. Teachers will contact parents if there is a need for children to remain at school after the normal school hours.

Bicycles

Bicycle racks are located on the school grounds. All bicycles should be locked when placed in the racks. Any damage to bicycles should be reported to the office. Students should put their bikes in the rack that is closest to their arrival point to avoid riding across the pick-up/drop off or bus lines.

School Cancellation

It is a parent/guardian responsibility to monitor school cancellations, closings, and delayed openings. In cases of cancellations, closings, or delayed openings due to inclement weather or other emergencies, the District will notify local radio and television stations. Parents are advised to listen carefully to radio/TV announcements to determine whether school will be cancelled for the day. The District will also notify families by Blackboard Connect® and post it on the District website (www.abschools.org).

Delayed Opening

In the case of a delayed opening, students attending half-day preschool and half-day kindergarten will not be expected to come to school. Students attending the full day preschool and kindergarten classes will follow the same schedule as the upper grades, depending on the number of hours of the delay. In the event of a delayed opening, ALL before-school activities are cancelled.

Emergency Closing/Dismissal

If the weather is threatening and parents will not be home that day, they should make arrangements for their children in the event that school dismisses early. In the event that school is dismissed prior to the regular dismissal time due to emergency conditions, we must know each student's destination without having to contact parents. Students will be dismissed to the location parents designate for emergencies. Families should review and discuss the planned emergency dismissal location with their children, and should not count on being able to reach school by telephone in these instances, as the school lines are usually quite busy. In the event of an emergency school closing, ALL after-school activities are cancelled.

Attendance

In order for children to have a successful learning experience and feel that they are integral members of the class, it is important that they be present when school is in session. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76I, Section 1 states a student "may be excused up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months." One of the keys to academic improvement is good attendance with consistent participation in school.

Parents, as well as students, have the responsibility to ensure that attendance at school is regular and timely. Schools are required by law to keep track of attendance and are also required by law to address any problems. This may be simply notifying parents of the issue and working together to improve the student's attendance. In extreme instances, it may require the assistance of the Department of Social Services.

Tardiness

Students are discouraged from coming in late to school, as work for the day begins as soon as buses unload. It is difficult for students who are tardy to get oriented and work through the expectations of the day.

Truancy

In order for children to have a successful learning experience and to feel included in all of the social and academic activities of the classroom, it is important that they be present when school is in session. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 1 states a student "may be excused up to seven day sessions or fourteen half day sessions in any period of six months." One key to student success is good attendance and consistent school participation.

Parents have the responsibility to ensure regular student attendance. If student absences appear excessive, the principal will schedule a parent-teacher conference. If absences continue, we may require the assistance of the school resource officer and/or the intervention of the Department of Children and Families.

Absences Due To Vacation During School Time

Teachers are not responsible for providing work in advance for students who miss school due to vacations taken during school time. Teachers will maintain a collection of assignments completed in class during the child's absence and provide a reasonable period of time for the student to make up work missed. Although missed assignments can be made up, it is not a substitute for the missed learning opportunities that occur in the classroom. Families should schedule vacations during school breaks.

Religious Holidays

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee recognizes the diverse nature of our growing community. Our District's has a diverse population of families whose heritage and culture vary greatly. ABRSD shares a commitment to respect individual religious beliefs.

Families are responsible for notifying teachers regarding any religious holidays that will affect their child's regular school program. Students will not be expected to complete daily homework assigned the evening before or the day of the religious holiday. If a student is affected by a religious holiday that is not observed with a schoolwide closing, the student will be allowed to have additional, reasonable time to complete assignments and assessments that conflict with their holiday observance, even in the event that the student attends classes on that day. Typically, on the eve of significant religious holidays, teachers will not give tests, homework, or introduce major new concepts and/or applications, nor will they plan field trips on the religious holiday itself. However, long-term assignments may still be due the day before or the day after the religious holiday.

Family Involvement

Parent-Teacher Conferences

We rely upon conferences between teachers, students, and parents to exchange information, share expectations and concerns, and engage in solving problems. Teachers schedule at least two conferences— one in the fall and one in the spring. Additionally, teachers, parents, and students may initiate other conferences as needed.

PowerSchool's Parent Portal

PowerSchool is our web-based student information system. This system's Parent Portal allows us to collect emergency contact information, school/PTO/PTF related permissions, and to notify parents/guardians of their child's classroom placement. Prior to the start of the school year, parents/guardians receive email notification that includes Parent Portal web access information, username, and family password to allow them to enter all necessary student information and complete other forms online. Once parents/guardians have completed all the necessary forms, they will gain access to their child's classroom placement and class lists.

Whom to Contact with Concerns

The staff at each school is ready to address and help resolve all issues that arise in the school day. We believe that concerns are best addressed with the individuals most directly connected to the issue. Voicemail and email are the most direct and efficient means of contact.

It is inevitable that some parents will encounter concerns, issues, or questions that need to be resolved. Our *Parent Communication Map* (located in the “Families” menu on the District website at www.abschools.org) is a tool to guide families and other stakeholders to the information needed to effectively resolve concerns related to a wide-range of aspects of our school district.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are an integral part of our school community. At the beginning of the school year, please watch for volunteer forms sent home for families to indicate areas of interest. Some volunteering opportunities are recurring, while others involve a one-time effort.

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Check for Volunteers

According to state law, anyone who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children must have a CORI check done *prior to* volunteering in the school. All CORI information is confidential. CORI forms are available to parents through the school main office. Parents interested in volunteering must complete and return the form. Completing a CORI check also requires a picture identification, which must be provided in person to the office staff.

Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO/PTF)

All parents and teachers are encouraged to participate in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or Parents, Teachers, Friends (PTF) at their school. The PTO/PTF offers each parent/guardian the opportunity to meet new people and work together to enrich educational experiences at the school. The general goals of the PTO/PTF are to provide:

- support to programs and teachers through fundraising and volunteer activities
- an opportunity for social interactions among the entire school community
- education-related information to the parents
- a forum for communication between parents and faculty

School Council

Each of our elementary schools has a school council. The school council is an advisory body that works together to provide ideas to help the principal. School council members assist by providing recommendations relevant to the educational needs of students, reviewing the budget with the principal, and participating actively in the identification of annual school improvement planning process. For more information, visit the school’s website.

Classroom Placement Process

The student placement procedure occurs in the spring. Our goal is to make the best possible placements for each of our students. We believe that the best way to do this is to create heterogeneous and balanced classes. Creating these groupings for each grade level is a complex process. Our professional staff members spend a great deal of time carefully weighing each student’s academic, social, and emotional needs, as well as more individual issues such as those regarding particular peer relationships, neighborhood situations, or siblings’ experiences.

The principal, sending and receiving teachers, and the other specialists meet as a team to create balanced class sections, after which a teacher is assigned to each of the sections by the principal. ***We absolutely do not accept or honor specific teacher requests.*** If parents have any relevant, compelling information that they feel is important to include in our placement procedure, please communicate that information in writing to the principal by May 1st.

Homework

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee has developed a district-wide homework policy that each of our elementary schools follows. This policy can be found on our website under School Committee Policy IKB. This policy supports balance for our students while still engaging them in deep learning experiences. The District recognizes the need for students and families to have playtime, downtime and family time (PDF) to promote wellness. Social-emotional

wellness and balance in the lives of our students leads to better learning. Better balance also allows students to engage in activities of their choice, including independent reading. Assigned homework will fall within the following frequencies:

- **Grades K-2:** Students will have no homework except for an occasional activity that may include other people
- **Grades 3-4:** Students will occasionally have an assigned activity
- **Grades 5-6:** Students may expect homework more frequently, Monday through Thursday

Student Support Services

The ABRSD Student Services Department encompasses the following divisions: Counseling and Psychology, Early Childhood, Health and Nursing, Special Education, and the English Language Education (ELE) program.

Counseling

The goal of the counseling department is to ensure a successful school experience for all students. Our counselors work closely with students, parents, teachers, administrators and specialists to help students develop a positive self-image, the skills to work collaboratively with others, and the ability to make friends. Parents are encouraged to utilize the counselor to discuss concerns. The counselor is familiar with therapists, providers, and other resources in the community that families can access outside the school setting. The Counselor is also the 504 Coordinator in the building and works with families to determine eligibility for 504 plans based on federal guidelines.

Literacy and Math Support Programs

The general education mathematics and reading programs at the elementary level are designed to meet the needs of all learners. Some children, however, benefit from additional small group instruction in or out of the classroom. The mathematics and reading support programs provide strategies to help these children become independent learners.

English Language Education (ELE) Program

The ELE program is an instructional program based on federal and state guidelines for language-minority students. By identifying students whose home language is a language other than or in addition to English, the ELE Program helps English learners gain equal access to our educational programs, as mandated by federal and state laws.

Health and Nursing Services

There is a fulltime registered nurse at each elementary school. Our school nursing program mission is to promote the safety and wellness of students and staff during the school day in order to optimize learning. School nurses provide a variety of services including assessment, direct care, health care plan development, screening, and education.

Special Education Services

Our elementary schools offer a wide range of identification, educational, therapeutic and support services for students in Kindergarten through Grade 6. When students are referred for a special education evaluation, special education team members assess them to determine eligibility. This team collaborates with other school staff and parents/guardians to write Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students who qualify for special education services.

Programming for eligible students with disabilities may include a variety of services, such as specialized instruction in reading, math, social, and/or emotional areas, speech language pathology services, psychological services, or occupational or physical therapy. For more information on our special education services, please visit:

<http://www.abschools.org/departments/student-services/elementary-secondary-programs>.

Student Records

State and federal regulations govern student records. A student's record consists of his or her school transcript and temporary record. The temporary record includes all information that is relevant to the educational needs of the student and is kept by the school. A student's parent or guardian, or a student who is at least 14 years old or has entered the ninth grade (an eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the record upon request to the school principal.

Confidentiality of Student Records

No individual or organization other than the parent, guardian, eligible student, or school personnel working directly with the student is allowed access to a student's record without specific written consent of the parent or eligible student, except in limited instances as specified by the state and federal regulations governing student records.

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34, a parent who does not have physical custody of his/her child (non-custodial parent) must provide certain written information to the principal in order to access the student's record. A description of the information that the non-custodial parent must submit can be obtained from our school office or from the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services (978-264-4700, ext. 3265).

Amendments/Deletions from Student Records

The parent, guardian, or eligible student has the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written material to the student record, to request that information contained in the record be amended or deleted, and to have a conference with the school principal for the purpose of objecting to information on the record. Within a week of such a conference, the principal must render a written decision on the objection. If the parent, guardian, or eligible student is not satisfied with the principal's decision, he or she may appeal such decision to the superintendent.

Transfer of Student Records

To transfer your child's records to another school, a signed *Student Release Record Form* (available in the school office) should be signed by a parent or guardian.

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record shall be destroyed seven years after the student leaves the school system. Students who withdraw, transfer, graduate, or otherwise leave the district will have access to their ABSchools Google account (including Gmail and Drive) until June 30th of the calendar year in which they leave the district, at which point accounts will be permanently deleted. Should the family/student want to maintain any items from the ABSchools account, it is their responsibility to export items contained in the account prior to the June 30th deletion date. A student permanent record, which consists of a high school transcript, may be destroyed no sooner than 60 years after the student leaves the school system.

Student Activities

Band, Strings, and Chorus

Students in the upper grades are provided with opportunities to learn to play instruments or to sing in the school choir. These groups perform several public concerts each year. You can access specific information from your child's school on the offerings, expectations, and schedule.

Birthday Celebrations

In accordance with the District Wellness Policy, food is not permitted to celebrate student birthdays.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned to reinforce various areas of study. They provide an experience not possible within the regular classroom, provide cultural enrichment, and take advantage of many excellent resources outside the classroom. In order to attend the field trip, and prior to any field trip, each student must bring in a permission slip signed by his/her

parent or guardian.

Because field trips are part of our curriculum, each trip is considered to be the lesson plan for the day. All children are expected to participate. If parents/guardians choose not to have their child participate, they must realize that it is not possible for us to provide alternate plans for their child. If a child does not participate in the field trip and comes to school, he/she will be placed in another classroom, generally at another grade level since classes at each grade usually attend field trips together. The child will do the work assigned to students in that class.

Parents/guardians pay the cost of their children's transportation and any other costs, such as entrance fees and lunch. *No student will miss a field trip due to financial hardship.* For information on scholarships, please contact your child's classroom teacher or the main office. For reasons of safety or supervision concerns, teacher(s) or principal may cancel field trips. Fees will be refunded whenever possible.

Health and Safety

The ABRSD recognizes that education and health are closely linked. The school setting offers unique opportunities for children to learn healthy behaviors through education and to receive easily accessible health services. Parents are welcome to speak to the nurse by telephone or in person any time they have a question about a health-related concern or need to communicate new health information to the school. Input from students' parents and guardians is vital to maintaining an atmosphere that supports and promotes health so that students can make the most of the education available to them.

Life-Threatening Allergies

Parents are responsible for notifying the school nurse at the beginning of each school year if their child has an allergy. The District's *Life-Threatening Allergy Policy and Procedures* are designed to minimize the incidence of life threatening allergic reactions and to establish a safe environment at school for students with such allergies. School nurses work closely with families and teachers to develop an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP). If an Epi-Pen is indicated, parents must provide it to the health office the first day of school, along with physician's orders.

Parents of children with allergic conditions requiring emergency medication are encouraged to familiarize their children with the use of an Epi-Pen and the self-injection procedure and/or other emergency procedures. On field trips and other occasions when the class will be away from school, it is strongly suggested that a parent accompany the child who cannot self-inject. Prior to a fieldtrip, parents/guardians should confirm that there is a non-expired Epi-Pen in the nurse's office in the original box with the child's prescription. School staff will not administer Benadryl when a student with an Epi-Pen shows signs of a reaction when away from the school. Rather, the protocol is to inject with the Epi-Pen and call 911 immediately for hospital transport.

Medication

Whenever possible, prescription medication should be administered at home. When a physician specifies that medication be administered during the school day, the nurse should be contacted, and the following guidelines will be used to supervise medication administration in school:

1. Parents or a responsible adult should bring in all medication to the Health Office, accompanied by a signed and dated note giving the nurse permission to administer it.
2. The medication must be in the original container, with a prescription label that includes the following information: child's full name, name of medication, prescription number, dosage, and time to be administered. Do not send more than a 30-day supply (30 school days).
3. Emergency medication will be administered when ordered by the family physician or the school physician.
4. Parents should respond in the designated area of their child's PowerSchool online profile to authorize the nurse to administer medication such as Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, or Tums throughout the year as needed.

Student Illness

The school environment is an excellent medium for the spread of illness. If you know or suspect your child is ill, keep your child at home when s/he presents with any of the following: A **fever** (100 degrees and above), **vomiting**, **diarrhea**, **greenish nasal discharge** or cough production, **red eyes** that itch and/or have a crusty discharge, or any contagious or potentially contagious conditions, as these are reasons to keep your child at home. Students may return to school only when they have:

- 24 hours of antibiotic therapy for strep throat, conjunctivitis, or other contagious bacterial conditions
- 24 hours without fever (many children with a nighttime fever will not manifest it the next morning, yet will be quite ill in the early afternoon)
- Resumed a normal diet without nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Chicken pox lesions that have crusted over (may take 7 days)

Head Lice

If head lice are found on a student, the school will dismiss the child for treatment. On return to school after being treated, the child must stop in for a re-check in the school health office.

Ticks

Being outdoors and active are key developmental needs for children, which is why they go outside daily for recess. Additionally, as part of our elementary science curriculum, they are also required to explore nature outdoors. During warmer weather and when children have been outdoors, parents should ensure that they are doing a “tick check” on younger students and teaching older students to check themselves. For more information, please contact the school nurse, your child’s physician, or the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/index.html>.

Live Animals

No animals are to be on school grounds without prior consent from administration.

Emergency Procedures

The District has adopted an Emergency Response Plan to address a range of emergency situations. The plan is available in the school office for review.

Technology

Empowered Digital Use Student Contract

The ABRSD has an *Empowered Digital Use Student Contract* for computers and the Internet. In order to use any online resource safely and responsibly in a school setting, students must agree to follow the expectations outlined in this contract. Students should be familiar with these guidelines to ensure their understanding of safe and appropriate uses of technology. Parents are encouraged to discuss the contents of this policy with their children. In addition, staff will review it with their students at the beginning of each school year to establish standards for use and reemphasize safety guidelines. Potential consequences may include, but are not limited to, written or verbal warnings, call home, an apology of action, loss of ABSchools access, and a meeting with school administration. The student contract can be found on our website under School Committee Policies in Section I (Policy IJND, Exhibit IJND-E).

Cell Phones and other Electronics

Cell phones are allowed in students’ backpacks, but must remain off during school hours. If a child needs to call their parent, they should ask the teacher or come to the office. Likewise, if a parent needs to contact a child during the day the parent should call the main office. If students have their cell phone on repeatedly during the day, the school office will hold onto it until dismissal. Cell phones may not be used to create personal “hot spots” for Internet access. Students may not receive texts at school on a watch during school hours. If texts are sent during the day, staff will hold the watch until dismissal. Students may not wear watches that have the ability to take pictures, video, or connect to the Internet while at school.

Student Photographs and Images

The ABRSD reserves the right to use images or video recordings of students, faculty or community members for internal use. Annually, the District requests parent consent to use student photos/images for external use.

Sometimes photographs, video footage, or other images of students are taken during school activities by the district or under its direction. The schools/District sometimes use these pictures/video for publicity, fliers, school websites, and social media outlets such as Facebook or Twitter. Because the school welcomes parents and the community to our school events, other parents and/or the media may photograph students, and we are not responsible for the content or posting of these pictures.

Behavioral Expectations and Discipline

We strive to make our schools positive, nurturing environments where students are valued members of a community of learners. We expect that elementary students will behave appropriately throughout their school day on the bus, in the hallways, in their classrooms, in the cafeteria, at recess and on the playground. This means that everyone in our schools—staff, students, parents, and volunteers—work to create learning communities where all children feel safe and respected.

Appropriate Dress and Appearance

In an effort to create and maintain an appropriate school atmosphere, students are expected to dress in a way that shows respect for themselves and others. They are not all-inclusive, and teachers and administrators reserve the right to make decisions about attire that is deemed detrimental to a positive school climate and atmosphere. Students may not wear articles of clothing that could be considered offensive, disrespectful, discriminatory, suggestive, unsafe, or in any way disruptive to the learning environment. Although diversity is appreciated and the need for individual expression is respected, the safety and well being of students and staff is of utmost importance.

In the warmer weather, beach attire is not appropriate for school. Shorts and t-shirts are acceptable, however clothing that exposes midriffs, as well as visible lingerie, spaghetti straps, strapless shirts, halter tops, low cut shirts and boxer shorts should not be worn to school. Straps should be at least an inch thick. When measuring the length of skirts and shorts, students should be able to place their arms to their sides and the skirt/shorts should reach halfway down their middle finger.

Please remember that proper attire is required for participation in all physical education classes. Sneakers are required and are the best choice for recess and outdoor activities. Students should not wear hats in the school, and should leave them in their backpacks during the day.

These guidelines have been adapted from the Junior High Handbook to ease the transition between schools.

Student Rights: Due Process Procedures

In-School Suspension For Less Than 10 Cumulative Days During A School Year

An in-school suspension is a removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises. The procedure for an in-school suspension of no more than (10) school days (consecutive or cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year) will be as follows:

1. The administrator will inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged, the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to respond. If the administrator determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the administrator will inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which may not exceed 10 days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

2. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The administrator will also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting will be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the administrator is unable to reach the parent after making and documenting at least (2) attempts to do so, such attempts will constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the parent of the in-school suspension.
3. The administrator will send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The administrator will deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the administrator and the parent.

An in-school suspension of more than 10 cumulative days in a school year will be subject to the procedures for long-term suspension found.

Procedures For Short-Term, Out-Of-School Suspensions (10 Cumulative Days or Less in a School Year)

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal, prior to imposing a short-term out-of-school suspension (10 days or less in a school year) for conduct not covered by M.G.L. c. 71, §37H AND 37H ½, an administrator will provide the student and his/her parent oral and written notice and an opportunity to participate in an informal hearing.

1. **Notice:** The written notice to the student and the parent will be in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate and will include the following:
 - a) the disciplinary offense;
 - b) the basis for the charge;
 - c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
 - d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the administrator concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
 - e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
 - f) the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

Written notice to the parent may be made by hand delivery, first-class mail, certified mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and parent.

2. **Efforts to Involve Parent:** The administrator will make reasonable efforts to notify the parent of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the administrator must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The administrator is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the administrator has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

3. **Format of Hearing:** The administrator will discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student also will have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts that the administrator should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate. The administrator will provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.

4. **Decision:** The administrator will provide written notice to the student and parent of his/her determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up

assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The notice of determination may be in the form of an update to the original written notice of hearing.

The parent or guardian shall be requested to attend a readmission conference with the principal or designee upon the student's return to school. At the principal's discretion, the conference may be held by telephone. Expectations for the student's reentry to school shall be outlined at this conference.

Procedures For Long -Term Suspension

Except in the case of an Emergency Removal, prior to imposing a long-term suspension (more than 10 days of suspension, whether in-school or out-of-school, whether consecutive or cumulative for multiple offenses during a school year), an administrator will follow the procedures for short-term suspension plus the following:

1. **Notice:** The notice will include all of the components for a short-term suspension, plus the following:
 - a) in advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the administrator may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
 - b) the right to be represented by counsel or a layperson of the student's choice, at student's/parent's expense;
 - c) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so;
 - d) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
 - e) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the administrator, and a copy of the audio recording provided to the student or parent upon request; and
 - f) the right to appeal administrator's decision to impose long-term suspension to the superintendent.

2. **Format of Hearing:** The Hearing will afford the rights set forth in the notice above. The administrator will also provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the administrator should consider in determining consequences for the student.

3. **Decision:** Based on the evidence, the administrator will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to long-term suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The administrator will send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the school and the parent. If the administrator decides to suspend the student on a long-term basis, the written determination will:
 1. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
 2. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached;
 3. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
 4. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school (if more than 10 cumulative days);
 5. Inform the student of the right to appeal the administrator's decision to the superintendent or designee. Notice of the right of appeal will be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and will include the following information stated in plain language:
 - a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that
 - b) the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the administrator's determination on appeal.

No long-term suspension will extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

Exception For Emergency Removal

Notwithstanding the provisions for short or long-term suspension set forth above, a student who is charged with a disciplinary offense may be removed temporarily from school if the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the administrator's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The administrator will immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger [or disruption] by the student. The temporary removal will not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the administrator will provide the following, as applicable to the length of suspension:

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other applicable matters;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent, as applicable;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the administrator, as applicable, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the administrator, student, and parent.
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day.

An administrator may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

Appeal To The Superintendent

If a decision by an administrator, following the parent meeting, results in suspension of a student for more than 10 cumulative school days for the school year, the student may appeal the decision to the superintendent. In order to do so the student or parent must file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days with a seven (7) day postponement option. The superintendent must hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days. If the appeal is not filed within this time frame, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The following apply:

- The superintendent will make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent will be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent will send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- The superintendent will conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence will be. The superintendent will arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent will inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
- The student will have all the rights afforded the student at the administrator's hearing for long-term suspension.
- The superintendent will issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing that meets the requirements for a long-term suspension. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the administrator, but will not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the administrator's decision.

The decision of the superintendent constitutes the final decision of the school district.

Schoolwide Education Service Plan

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Sections 37H, 37H ½, and 37H ¾, the District must provide opportunities for students to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her in school suspension, short-term suspension (10 days or less), long-term suspension (10 days or more) or expulsion.

Any student who is expelled or long-term suspended from school, for more than ten (10) consecutive days, may access tutoring services for the duration of the school suspension. Students are expected to attend tutoring sessions at a designated public site identified by the school district. Qualified ABRSD personnel or contracted service providers will provide tutoring.

The academic work will be consistent with the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under G.L. c. 69 §§1D and 1F. A student's tutoring schedule is by appointment and arranged weekly. Based upon the availability of qualified tutors, tutoring services may only be available before or after school hours. If parents/guardians have any questions, they should contact the building principal.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and related regulations provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline.

In general, students with disabilities who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current placement for up to ten (10) consecutive school days to the extent that such a removal would be applied to students without disabilities. This removal can occur without a prior determination of whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability. Students may be removed for additional periods for up to ten (10) consecutive school days in the same school year for separate incidents of misconduct without a manifestation determination, as long as the removal does not constitute a "change in placement" as described below.

If the IEP Team, including the parents, determines the behavior was not a direct result of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, if the Team determines that the behavior was a direct result of the disability, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury) until the Team develops and parents/guardians consent to a new Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The Team also must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop or revise a behavioral plan for the student as necessary.

A suspension of longer than ten (10) school days or a series of shorter-term suspensions that constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement. Whether a pattern exists must be decided on a case-by case basis, considering such factors as the length of each suspension, the nature of the alleged conduct, the proximity of the suspensions to one another, and the total amount of time the student is excluded from school. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement, the student's Team must meet to determine whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability. In making this determination, the Team must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents, to determine if the conduct was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability or was the direct result of any failure by the school to implement the IEP.

Any student who is removed from school for a disciplinary offense for more than ten (10) consecutive days will have an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress during the period of removal under the school-wide education service plan, and will so be informed at the time of the suspension/expulsion. When a student with a disability is excluded from their program for more than ten (10) school days in the school year, the district must provide the student with services to the extent necessary for progress in the general curriculum and/or towards Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals, as determined by the principal in consultation with at least one staff person who is a member of the student's IEP Team.

If an administrator imposes an out-of-school suspension for a student in preschool or in grades K through 3, the administrator will send to the superintendent a copy of the written determination and an explanation of the reasons therefore, before the out-of-school suspension takes effect.

In the event a student possesses, uses, sells or solicits a substance or possesses a weapon, or seriously injures an individual at school or a school function, the District may place a student in an interim alternative education setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate IAES for up to 45 school days upon determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent disagrees with the Team's decision on the manifestation determination or with a decision regarding placement, the parent has a right to request an expedited due process hearing with Bureau of Special Education Appeals. Additional information regarding the procedural protections for special education students can be obtained from the Director of Special Education at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

Discipline of Students Subject to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Discipline of students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides students with disabilities certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. Prior to imposing a "significant change in placement" for disciplinary reasons, the district must determine whether the conduct is a manifestation of the student's disability. A significant change of placement results not only from an exclusion for more than 10 consecutive school days, but also from a pattern of shorter suspensions accumulating to more than 10 school days during a school year. Whether a pattern exists must be decided on a case-by case basis, considering such factors as the length of each suspension, the nature of the alleged conduct, the proximity of the suspensions to one another, and the total amount of time the student is excluded from school.

Prior to any significant change in placement for disciplinary reasons, a group of individuals with knowledge of the student, the evaluation data, and the school program must determine whether the conduct at issue is related to the student's disability. If the conduct is directly related to the disability, the district will not impose the discipline and will develop an individual behavior management plan if the behavior significantly interferes with the student's ability to benefit from his/her education. If the conduct is not directly related to the student's disability, the district may discipline the student as it does general education students. Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students eligible for services under laws providing for services for students with disabilities under Section 504 can be obtained from the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

Discipline of Students Not Yet Determined Eligible

The IDEA protections summarized in this policy for students who are eligible for special education also apply to students who have not yet been found eligible for IEPs if the school district is deemed to have knowledge that the student was eligible for special education before the conduct that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

The IDEA provides that a school district is "deemed to have knowledge" if: (1) the child's parent/guardian had expressed concern in writing to district supervisory or administrative personnel or the child's teacher that the child needs special education and related services; (2) the child's parent/guardian had requested an evaluation of the child to determine eligibility for special education services; or (3) the teacher of the child or other school district personnel had expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior by the child directly to the district's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel. However, a school district is not "deemed to have knowledge" if the district evaluated the student and determined that the child was not eligible for special education services or the child's parent refused an evaluation of the child or IDEA services.

If the school district has no knowledge that a student is an eligible student under the IDEA before taking disciplinary measures against the student, the student may be disciplined just as any other student may be. If, however, a request is made for an evaluation to determine eligibility while the student is subject to disciplinary measures, the district must conduct the evaluation in an expedited manner. Pending the results of the evaluation, the student must remain in the educational placement determined by the school authorities, which may include suspension or expulsion without

services. If the student is determined eligible for an IEP as a result of the evaluation, the school district must provide the student with special education and related services in accordance with the IDEA.

Additional information regarding the procedural protections for students with special education services can be obtained from the Director of Special Education at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

Additional District Policies (Including Regulations On Student Handbooks, Weapons, Smoking, Expulsion)

There are a number of additional School Committee policies related to student discipline, which can be found online at: https://www.abschools.org/school_committee/policies in Section J.

Harassment, Bullying, and Physical Restraint

Harassment (Policy JBA, Procedure JBA-R)

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District is committed to maintaining a school environment where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. The District's policy (Policy JBA) prohibiting harassment can be found online at: <https://tinyurl.com/JBA-Harassment>.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention (Policy JICFB, Procedure JICFB-R)

The AB District recognizes that safe school environments are necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. The District's bullying prevention and intervention policy and procedures can be found online at: <https://tinyurl.com/JICFB-Bullying>.

Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures (Policy JKAA, Procedure JKAA-R)

<https://tinyurl.com/JKAA-Restraint>.

For more information about harassment, bullying, or physical restraint, please contact the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services at 978-264-4700, extension 3265.

Transportation

Parents can find information relative to bus routes from the Transportation Office by calling 978-263-3451 or on the District website.

School Bus Behavior

School buses are an extension of the school, so students are under the District's jurisdiction while riding the bus.

- Parents of student(s) must assume liability for any bus vandalism
- Bus drivers are not responsible for articles left on buses
- Bus rules apply to the regular daily buses to and from school and all field trips

Students shall observe the safety procedures below.

Riding the Bus

To ensure your safety while riding an ABRSD bus, we expect you to:

1. Follow the driver's instructions at all times.
2. Remain in your seat, facing forward, at all times.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
4. Keep all body parts, voice, and objects inside the bus at all times.

5. Use a quiet voice to speak to others sitting in a seat near you.
6. Use school-appropriate language.
7. No food, snacks and drinks on the bus at anytime.
8. Open the window only when the driver has indicated it is safe to do so.
9. Ride only your assigned bus to and from your assigned stops.

Getting On or Off the Bus

To ensure your safety while getting on or off the bus, we expect you to:

1. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their students while waiting at the bus stop.
2. Line up single file to board the bus.
3. Wait until it has stopped completely and the driver signals (Thumbs Up) it is safe before approaching the bus. Walk to the bus. If you need to cross in front of the bus please walk at least 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can see you at all times.
4. Find an appropriate vacant seat quickly and sit down.
5. Elementary students shall be seated by grade with youngest students in the front of the bus and oldest in the rear.
6. To exit the bus, wait until the bus has come to a complete stop. Leave your seat quickly and quietly, and wait patiently until it is your turn to get off the bus.
7. Use only the front exit of the bus. Exit the bus using the emergency door at the rear of the bus *only in the event of an emergency*.
8. Once you have gotten off the bus, walk away from it, not along the side of the bus.
9. If you must cross the street after getting off the bus, cross in front of the bus, at least 10 feet in front so that you and the driver can see each other. Look both ways and to the driver for the “Thumbs Up” before crossing the street for your own safety.

Students must also follow these guidelines:

1. Students may not light matches, smoke, vape, or consume alcohol on the bus per state law.
2. Parents/guardians shall assume liability for any bus vandalism.
3. Objects that create a hazard on the bus will not be permitted such as sharp objects, animals, or excessively large items which cannot be transported safely, or which cause an inconvenience to other passengers due to insufficient seating space. The Transportation Office reserves the right to make this determination.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Students will be given the opportunity to express their views to their building administrator prior to any disciplinary action being taken as a result of a formal complaint from a bus driver.

Students will be transported to their designated destination until such time that disciplinary action is taken. Drivers cannot make arbitrary decisions to discharge a student at a location other than the student's authorized destination.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR BUS BEHAVIOR

Bus drivers have been instructed to prepare formal reports in the event of student misconduct on the bus. The following procedure will be followed after the report has been received by the building Principal:

1. First Offense — Principal speaks to the student and a first notice is sent home to parents. In addition, the Principal will speak with the parent and/or send notice home explaining the situation and the potential consequences of a subsequent offense. In serious incidents, the Principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.
2. Second Offense — Principal speaks to student and a second notice is sent home. In serious incidents, the Principal may elect to suspend bus privileges.
3. Subsequent Offenses — Principal speaks to student and parents regarding suspension of bus privileges.
4. Violation of State Laws — (i.e., smoking, lighting matches, etc.) will result in a one (1) week suspension of bus privileges.

The Principal will determine the time of suspension of bus privileges in all cases, based on the seriousness of the offense. In the case of an offense where a one-week suspension is required, he or she may decide to increase the length of the suspension.

If your child needs to report a bus incident, please encourage them to tell the bus driver as soon as possible so that the driver can fill out the formal report. Parents should encourage their children to report any incident to the adult receiving students at bus arrival.