



Dartmouth Public Schools

This handbook has been designed to familiarize you and your family with the policies, procedures, and programs of the Dartmouth Public Schools.

2015-2016
Elementary
Handbook

Dartmouth Public Schools
8 Bush Street – Dartmouth, MA 02748
Telephone: 508-997-3391 Fax: 508-991-4184
www.dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us

Elementary Agenda Book

This handbook has been designed to familiarize you and your family with the policies and procedures of the Dartmouth Public Schools. A complete listing of all policies can be found on district website at dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us under the “School Committee” side tab.

Information on the Elementary Curriculum (including programs, pacing guides, and standards-based report cards) can be found on district website at dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us under the “Parent Information” side tab.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact your child’s principal.

The Dartmouth Public Schools wish to extend each child and family a happy and healthy school year.

Dr. Bonny Gifford, Superintendent of Schools
Michelle Roy, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
James Kiely, School Business Administrator
Elizabeth Townson, Pupil Personnel Administrator
Tracy Oliveira, Director of Title I, Curriculum & Mentoring
Jonathan Gallishaw, Chief Technology Officer

Melissa McHenry, Early Childhood Director
Cushman School
746 Dartmouth Street
Dartmouth, MA 02748
508-996-3926

Heidi Silva Brooks, Principal
Richard Porter, Assistant Principal
Potter School
185 Cross Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747
508-996-8259

Cathy Maccini, Principal
Catherine Pavao, Assistant Principal
DeMello School
654 Dartmouth Street
Dartmouth, MA 02748
508-996-6759

Colin Grimsey, Principal
Audra Thomas, Assistant Principal
Stephanie Yermalovich, Assistant Principal
Quinn School
529 Hawthorn Street
Dartmouth, MA 02747
508-997-3178

This agenda book belongs to:

Name _____

School _____ Teacher _____ Grade _____

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Every school age child is expected to be in school, attend all classes, and be present during the state and district standardized testing periods. Parents will be notified of all state and standardized testing dates in advance.

In addition to meeting academic requirements, students/parent/guardian must meet state laws (MGL Chapter 76 Section 2 <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/76-2.htm>) and Dartmouth Public Schools' requirements for school attendance. Excellent attendance and school success go hand in hand. The more often a student is absent—even if the absence is unavoidable—the harder it is for the student to keep up with the class. Students with good attendance are more likely to be academically successful in school.

Coordinating with school-based staff, the Dartmouth Public School Attendance Officer investigates attendance problems primarily outside the school environment. The officer works in the community, visits homes, and counsel students and their families. When necessary, the Attendance Officer files and represents chronic cases in Juvenile Court.

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. Dartmouth Public Schools does recognize that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

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

- Illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school verified by a **physician's note**
- Bereavement in family
- Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child (per authorization of the Superintendent of Schools)
- Observance of major religious holidays
- Court Appearances
- College Visits
- Nurse Dismissals
- Suspensions

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

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly. To that end, family vacations during school time are discouraged.

When a child has accumulated five (5) unexcused absences state law requires we notify parents and offer to meet and develop a plan to improve attendance. In the case where absences are chronic (10 days or more unexcused) state law requires us to meet and develop a plan for attendance. In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration will request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Please note: School staff is not responsible for preparing make-up work due to family vacations (and non-authorized absences).

Reporting Student Absences

If a student is ill and unable to school, the parent must notify the school. Kindly note that parental notification of a child's absence is not considered an excused absence (refer to listing of above). **Since voicemail is available, parents may call the school at any time during the night before or during the early morning of the day their child is absent. The message should include the following information: child's name, grade level, teacher's name, and the reason for the absence.**

Once the school day begins and classroom attendance has been submitted to the school office, absences that have been called in by parents will be noted. **If a student is listed as absent, and no parent call has been received, an automated phone call will be sent to the contact numbers on file.**

It is important that parents contact their child's school office with any change of home phone, place of employment, and/or emergency contacts.

The Dartmouth Public Schools asks all parents to please respect the school calendar when planning family vacations. Parents can visit our website: dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us to see the calendar or you can request a copy.

Tardiness

Students are expected to be in school by 9:05 a.m. and ready to start the school day. Tardiness causes a disruption for EVERYONE, including the child. If the child is late due to a situation at home (medical or other), it may be helpful to let school personnel be aware of it. Tardiness is recorded on student report cards and attendance records. Repeat tardiness will be referred to the Attendance Office for appropriate action.

[A parent/guardian is required to escort and sign in their tardy child at the school office.]

Dress Code

Students should come to school clean, well-groomed and dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. Any clothing with inappropriate sayings or symbols or which expose the mid-section or are low-cut should not be worn to school. Clothing of this nature can be disruptive to the school environment. All hats and bandanas need to be removed when entering the school building. Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times to ensure student safety. Sneakers are recommended for physical education class. The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines.

Lost and Found

Each school has a Lost and Found. You should label your child's belongings with their full name. In the event the item is missing, your child should check the lost and found box at the school to see if the item was turned in. If the name is on the item, the main office will be able to return it to the child because of the label.

Lunch

Students have the option of buying a nutritious meal at school. Students can also purchase milk, ice cream, and ala carte items (ex. double entrée & dessert) as well.

The Dartmouth Public Schools participates in the 'mySchoolBucks' program, which allows parents/guardians to deposit money into an account for their child(ren) to use when purchasing lunch. Further information can be found on the district website: www.dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us.

The school system shall maintain a process for collection of unpaid charges in food service accounts. Students will be allowed to charge up to five (5) lunches. Once the student reaches the maximum lunches charged, an alternate lunch will be provided, and the parent/guardian will be notified to make a payment and/or submit free/reduced price lunch application. This alternative lunch will be charged to the student's account at the standard lunch rate. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for payment of these meals to the food service program. Alternate lunches will be provided until a payment agreement has been arranged with the parent/guardian.

The alternate food charges are as follows:

- Breakfast will consist of 2 slices of wheat toast, milk, and fruit
- Lunch will consist of a cheese sandwich, milk, fruit and vegetable.

For eligible families, free/reduced breakfast/lunch is available on a confidential basis. Families wishing to receive free/reduced breakfast/lunch must complete a Free/Reduced Lunch Form available at your child's school or on our website: dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us. Families may apply for free/reduced breakfast/lunch at any time during the school year.

School lunch room rules include: no throwing food, no cutting lines, and making sure that their area is clean. No food should be taken out of the cafeteria.

Students are not allowed to share any food/snacks due to potential food allergies.

Fire/Emergency Drills

Your child's teacher will explain proper fire exit procedures on the first day of school, and periodically review these procedures with students. Everyone's primary responsibility when the fire alarm sounds is to exit the building quickly in a safe and orderly manner.

Students should **WALK**, not run, when the fire alarm is on. They should stay with their class. If a student is somewhere other than their classroom when the alarm sounds, he or she should use the closest exit out of the building and report to an adult.

Quarterly fire drills are conducted. There are also other periodic drills that are conducted as well.

Transportation

Bus transportation to and from school for students living more than 1/2 mile radius of the school is a service provided through the Town of Dartmouth. Students are assigned to a bus that picks them up and delivers them as close as possible to their home. Each bus has a limit on the number of students that it can carry. **For this reason, students are expected to ride their assigned bus.** A request to allow a student to take a different bus home will be granted **if a written request is made by the parent/guardian, and there is space available on the requested bus.** All requests must be submitted for approval to the principal.



For any questions about transportation, please call the transportation secretary at Bush Street at 508-997-3391 x1107 between 7:30 am—3 pm.

Transportation Behavior Problems

Students whose behavior on the bus is disruptive to the driver or other students will be considered a hazard to the safety of all on the bus.

For any bus-related behavioral problems, the following policy will be implemented:

After an investigation by the building principal/designee, the student may be removed from the bus for serious infraction of the bus rules. In such cases, parents will be entitled to a written statement of the reason/s for the bus suspension. Parents/guardians have the right to appeal the bus suspension on behalf of the student to the building principal/designee.

If a student continues to violate the bus rules, termination of transportation may result. In that case, parents/guardians will be notified and given the opportunity to meet with the building principal/designee prior to the final decision. Parents may appeal the bus transportation termination to the Superintendent of Schools.

Bus behavioral problems will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the following guidelines:

First Offense:	Warning notice/s
Second Offense:	Loss of transportation for 3 days
Third Offense:	Loss of transportation for 5 days
Fourth Offense:	Loss of transportation for 10 days
Fifth Offense:	Permanent loss of bus transportation

In extraordinary situations, the building principal/designee is authorized to take whatever action is necessary to provide safety on the school bus.

Please encourage your child to behave on the bus and to look both ways before crossing the street.

Bus Students Returned to School

There have been incidences where there has not been anyone present at the end of the school day to receive the child from his/her bus drop-off location. Parents may provide written authorization for Dartmouth Public Schools/Tremblay's Bus Company to leave the child at the appropriate bus stop without a parent/guardian or adult designee present. (These forms are available at your child's school.) If parental authorization is not on file, the bus driver must return the student to his/her school of origin at the end of the route. This causes a problematic situation for those involved, and unnecessary delay in the transportation of our students. Therefore, if a parent/guardian is not present at the student's drop-off location at the end of the school day, the following procedure will be instituted:

1 st Incident:	Parent is notified and a letter is sent home.
2 nd Incident:	Loss of transportation for three (3) consecutive days.
3 rd Incident:	Loss of transportation for one (1) week.
4 th Incident:	Loss of transportation for two (2) weeks.
5 th Incident:	Permanent loss of transportation for the remainder of the school year.

A notification letter will be sent home with each incident. Any questions regarding this procedure, please contact your child's principal.

Walkers

Parents should ensure that students who walk to school are responsible enough to understand and follow the safety rules while going to and from school. Encourage your child to walk on the sidewalks. If there is no sidewalk, then he/she should walk on the left side of the road facing any oncoming traffic. Use the crosswalks when crossing streets and intersections, or cross with the help from the traffic supervisor. Students in Grades 3-5 who wish to ride their bike to school must have a signed note from their parent/guardian granting them permission to do so. Students are also required to wear bicycle helmets in accordance with Massachusetts state law. Additionally, bikes should be locked on our bike racks at all times.

If a child walks to and from school, we want to encourage that the student walk with a companion unless other arrangements have been made between parent/guardian and school personnel. The student should be aware of the dangers of talking to strangers, and not let strangers talk to them or entice them into their vehicles. The student should report any incident to school personnel immediately.

Student Behavior Expectations

General Behavior

Dartmouth Public Schools expects all students to respect themselves, and respect the feelings, opinions, and beliefs of others. We expect students not to hurt anyone's feelings, and to respect people's differences. We want our students to be themselves, and be able to be heard in an appropriate manner without being interrupted, laughed at, or punished.

Playground Behavior

Students are expected to remain on school grounds and play in assigned areas before school and during recess time. Students should not re-enter the building during recess without permission from school personnel. Students should not play games that might result in torn clothes or bodily harm to others. Students should use playground equipment properly to avoid injuries, and should not litter the playground. Students are asked not to climb fences or backstops, or use hard bats and hard balls.

Suspensions

When students break school rules, school personnel will take appropriate action. School personnel may first start with counseling the student about the infraction. If the problem persists, school personnel may remove the recess privilege, assign a time out, contact the parent/guardian, or assign an after session with the parent's permission. Persistent or more serious violations will be referred directly to the administration for action.

Suspension Procedure

A principal/designee may suspend a student for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days.

When a student is suspended, the following procedure will be followed:

- Students will be suspended only to the custody of their parent/guardian or another adult designated by the parent/guardian.
- Prior to suspension, an informal hearing with the principal/designee will be held. At this hearing, the student will be informed of the reason/s for the suspension and will be given the opportunity to respond. In an emergency situation which requires the immediate removal of a student, the informal hearing will be held as soon as possible after the suspension.
- The principal/designee will send a letter to the parent/guardian confirming the suspension. The letter will contain the reason for suspension, the duration of the suspension, re-admittance date, and the re-admittance conference date and time.
- The student will be given the opportunity to complete any class work including examinations that may have been missed during the suspension. A time limit equal to the number of days of the suspension will be allowed for the completion of such work.
- All IDEA-2004 Regulations will be followed for SPED students requiring suspension beyond ten (10) days.

The principal/designee retains the right to issue penalties for violations of school rules not stated herein as well as alter any penalties listed in this handbook as circumstances warrant.

Expulsions

Parents and students should be aware of the MA General Laws regarding student expulsion. M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H: Gives the building principal authority to expel students for violating school rules such as: possession of a dangerous weapon, controlled substances, and assaults on educational personnel, at school or school-related events.

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H 1/2: Gives the building principal/designee authority to suspend/expel students based on issuance of/conviction based upon a felony “criminal complaint” upon a principal/designee’s determination that the student’s continued presence in school would have a detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Section 37H ¾ amends M.G.L. c. 71 by adding a new section that addresses all suspensions and expulsions for reasons other than those covered in section 37H (dangerous weapons, controlled substances, and assaults on education staff) and section 37H ½ (felony complaint). Section 37H ¾ , directs school decision makers at student disciplinary meetings or hearings to: 1) exercise discretion in deciding consequences for the student; 2) consider ways to reengage the student in the learning process; and 3) avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been tried.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has published regulations to implement the law which are set out in 603 CMR 53.0 and can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr53.html> .

Expulsions may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools. The appeal should be submitted in writing to the Superintendent in accordance with state guidelines.

Dartmouth Elementary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Everyone at the Dartmouth Elementary Schools is committed to making our schools safe and caring places for all students. We will treat each other with respect, and we will refuse to tolerate bullying. In addition, cyber bullying, **even if it occurs off school grounds, which creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on their** rights at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school will not be tolerated.

Our schools define “bullying” as the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- 1.) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- 2.) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- 3.) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- 4.) infringes on the rights of the target at school;
- 5.) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyber bullying. Our schools define “cyber bullying” as follows: Using technology or any electronics (e-mail, text messages, social networking sites, and so on) to bully.

Our schools define “**retaliation**” as follows: Engaging in acts of bullying toward a person as revenge because he or she reported bullying or provided information during a bullying investigation.

Reporting Bullying

Adult receiving a report from a student. First, assess the child's safety by asking questions about what he or she needs to feel safe now. Second, affirm the student's feelings. Third, ask questions about the suspected bullying. Finally, tell the child that you will be making a report and offer support.

Adult reporting to administration. School staff that witness bullying or receive a report of bullying from a student must tell the principal or assistant principal immediately. Be prepared to report on the following information: **date and time of incident, who was involved, where the incident occurred, the behaviors witnessed, if there are immediate safety needs, specific concerns for the child who was bullied or the child who did the bullying, and what immediate action was taken. This information must be reported on the school *Bullying Incident Report* form.**

Protecting students who report. Retaliation against students for reporting bullying is prohibited. Students who retaliate against others will receive appropriate consequences as outlined in our school discipline code. Students may report bullying anonymously. No disciplinary action will be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report unless substantiated by further investigation. False accusations of bullying against others are not allowed and will result in consequences outlined in our school discipline code. When interviewing the student accused of bullying or other students about the bullying, do not name the student who reported if possible. In some cases, however, the bullying may be too severe to protect confidentiality. In these cases, assure the student that adults will do everything they can do to protect them from retaliation.

Consequences of Bullying

When a confirmed report of bullying is received the *Bullying Incident Report* must be completed. The student who bullied (aggressor) will face appropriate consequences as outlined in our school discipline code. If a law is believed to have been broken, law enforcement will be notified by the school as well. The target of the bullying will receive **additional supports and referrals as necessary.**

Parent Notification

The parents and/or guardians of both the child who was bullied (target) and the child who bullied (aggressor) will be notified of all incidents of bullying that involve their child. The parents and/or guardian of the child who was bullied will also be notified of the action taken by the school to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation toward their child.

Staff Education and Responsibilities

Each year, our school will provide written notice to all school staff of the bullying prevention plan. Staff will be trained annually on the plan and curriculum chosen by our schools. The training will cover ways to prevent and intervene in bullying, information about the complex nature of bullying, research on bullying and children who may be more vulnerable to bullying by others, and information on cyber bullying and internet safety.

Staff at our school will do the following things to prevent bullying and help students feel safe at school:

- Closely supervise students in all areas of the school and playground
- Watch for signs/signals of bullying and (preceding bullying when possible) stop it when it happens
- Teach lessons that support social and emotional skills
- Teach students about bullying
- Respond quickly and sensitively to all reports of bullying

- Take families' concerns about bullying seriously
- Teach and incorporate the Second Step program
- Complete the Dartmouth Elementary School suspected bullying incident report
- Report suspected bullying to the administration

Parent Education

Our schools will use the following evidence-based bullying prevention curriculum to help address bullying at our schools: *Second Steps/Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program*. Each year, our school will provide parents and/or guardians with information about this program and how they can reinforce the curriculum at home and in the community. Parents will also be provided with information describing the dynamics of bullying and cyber bullying and information about Internet safety.

Dartmouth Elementary School Anti-Bullying Activities

All instructional staff, Preschool through Grade 5, within the district has had training in and currently uses *Second Step*, a violence prevention curriculum. This program is research-based and meets federal and state requirements and is top-rated by the U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other highly recognized organizations.

This program uses hands-on, activity-based lessons to captivate our young learners. Children gain language and communication skills while learning to identify feelings, solve problems and get along with others. Research indicates that children who are socially competent perform better academically.

Second Step lessons give students tools to help them become socially skillful and to form healthy relationships. Students learn how to respond to others empathetic ally and how to calm down, reduce irritating behaviors and solve problems. This research-based program promotes an increased knowledge of social skills while decreasing levels of disruptive behavior.

Social skills are building blocks for respectful behavior, healthy relationships and school connectedness. These skills also relate to paying attention, focusing on academics, following directions, and achieving in school. The *Second Step* lessons not only teach social and emotional skills but give practical, step-by-step strategies for thinking through problems. By implementing this program, we are once again attempting to meet the needs of the whole child.

Discrimination

The Dartmouth Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation, in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities. Discrimination will not be tolerated.

If anyone feels that he or she has been discriminated against, he/she should follow the procedure below. Protection from retaliation, harassment, and intimidation is expressly assured throughout the process:

1. Report the violation to the building principal. Within one week, the Principal will meet with you and other people who might have information about the issue. They will attempt to resolve the situation. The decision will be issued in writing by Principal.
2. If the issue has not been resolved, it can be appealed to the School Department's Equal Opportunity/Title IX Coordinators: Assistant Superintendent and School Business Administrator; and/or the Section 504 Coordinator/Pupil Support Services Administrator; at the Administration's Office, 8 Bush Street, Dartmouth, MA 02748. This appeal must be in writing describing the

circumstances and the relief you seek. The appeal should be submitted within one week after receipt from the Principal's decision.

3. Within one week, the Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504 Coordinators will meet with you. Following a review of the materials presented to the Principal and any additional investigation required, the Coordinator will make a final determination if a violation has occurred. If there has been a violation, the Coordinator will indicate the steps taken to correct it.

For further inquiries, please contact the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, US Dept. of Education, J.W. McCormack POCH, Room 222, Boston, MA 02109.

General Parent Information

Change of Address/Phone Numbers

Please inform your child's school of any changes to your address, including temporary address changes and phone numbers. In the event of an emergency, it is important that the schools have up-to-date information readily available.

Homelessness

In compliance with the McKinney Vento Act and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Dartmouth Public Schools acknowledges the following definition of homeless children and youth:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence or have a primary night-time residence in a supervised (publicly or privately) operated shelter for temporary accommodations including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill.
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Unaccompanied youth (a homeless youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, and not in the custody of a state agency).

Students who are considered homeless will be able to attend his/her school of origin (the school where the child/youth attended when permanently housed or last enrolled), and fully participate in all school activities and services including preschool programs, Title 1, Special Education, English Language Learner Program, School Nutritional Programs and all other programs available to resident students.

If you have any questions about McKinney Vento, please contact the Assistant Superintendent/Homeless Liaison at 508-997-3391 x1109. All information is kept confidential.

Non-Custodial Parents

As required by General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student records in accordance with law and Department of Education regulations. The implementation of this policy will hopefully encourage parents to be involved in and informed about the education of their children while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

School Cancellations/Delayed Opening

The Superintendent may cancel school, delay the start of school for up to two (2) hours, close schools, or dismiss students early in the event of hazardous weather and/or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. If conditions only affect a single school, then closing that school may be considered.

If school is cancelled or dismissed early due to inclement weather, all student extra-curricular activities will be canceled. When a delayed opening occurs, morning preschool classes will be canceled.

It is parents' responsibility to listen for school cancellations or delayed opening information. An automated phone call will be sent to the contact numbers on file. Information will also be available, starting at 6 a.m., from the following sources: 1420 AM, 1480 AM, 107.1 FM, 93.3 FM, 98.1 FM, 92.3 FM, Channels: 6, 10, 12, Fox 25, DCTV Cable 18, www.cancellations.com, and our district website: www.dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us.

School Conferences

Each school schedules parent-teacher conferences to help parents learn about their child's educational progress. It is important that parents attend these conferences. Please notify the school or teacher if you cannot attend.

Parents may want to discuss the parent-teacher conference with their child. If you do discuss the conference, be sure to point out both strengths and what needs to be improved.

School Councils

Each school has a school council. The Council is co-chaired by the building principal. It includes a parent representative, teachers, and community members. If anyone is interested in participating in the school council, please call the school directly.

The Council is created using a fair and open process. Parent members are selected in elections held by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

Release of Student Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law, requires that Dartmouth Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain parents written consent prior to disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. These exceptions include designated "directory information" without your written consent, unless you have advised the school to the contrary in accordance with the Dartmouth Public Schools procedures. The primary purpose of directory information (student's name, address, photograph, grade level and date of birth) is to allow us to include this type of information in certain school publications. Examples of certain school publications are: a school drama program showing the student's role; publications of student work; recognition lists; and moving up programs.

Directory information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. If you do not want Dartmouth Public Schools to disclose any directory information from your child's education records, please complete the form at the back of the handbook and return to your child's school.

Videotaping and Photographing

Occasionally, there are school events that are videotaped for local television (DCTV) and pictures taken for school web pages and/or newspapers about the school event or awards given to student. **If you do not wish your child to be photographed or videotaped, please complete the required form at the back of the handbook and send it to your child's school.**



Asbestos

The Dartmouth Public Schools is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act) to notify parents about Asbestos.

Each school has an Asbestos Management Plan. These plans are available at each school and the Administration Building at 8 Bush Street. If you have any questions, please call the School Business Administrator at 508-997-3391 x1106.

Health

Emergency Forms

All parents are required to complete an Emergency Contact Form. It is important that you fill out the form and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. The information is vital in case of an emergency. If you have any changes, i.e. work change, new phone number, etc, please notify the school in writing of the changes.

If your child needs to be dismissed due to illness, it is your responsibility to provide transportation. If it is deemed necessary that emergency medical attention is needed, he/she will be transported to St. Luke's Hospital. The school will also need information about the person responsible for the child/ren while parents are on vacation.

- **Parents should notify the school nurse of any medications and medical conditions your child has.**

We ask that you not send your child to school if he/she:

- is suspected or has a contagious illness such as: chicken pox, strep throat, the flu, or whooping cough.
- has had a fever within the past 24 hours.
- is vomiting or has diarrhea.
- has red/pink eyes or has drainage from the eyes.
- has head lice.
- has a frequent cough or wheeze.

School nurses manage the school's medication program, provide emergency care to students who are ill or injured and coordinate health services between teachers, guidance counselors, administrators and health care providers in the community. It is also the nurse's job to monitor compliance of state mandated regulations regarding student immunizations. They are responsible for implementing the mandated health screening programs, e.g. vision, hearing, postural and body mass index (BMI) screening. **If you would prefer that your child does not receive the BMI screening, please inform the nurse in writing.**

Head Lice

Lice Information can be found on the individual school's website under Health Services. Please re-educate your child yearly about sharing hats, clothes and brushes and conduct routine head checks at home to help prevent infestation.

Policy Relative to Dispensing Medication in the Dartmouth Public Schools

No medication will be given to a student and no medication can be taken by a student without written orders from a physician. This includes over the counter medications such as aspirin and Tylenol. In cases where it is necessary for medication to be given during school hours, the physician's order must be accompanied by a parent's written request that it be given. The medication must be brought to school in the original pharmacy labeled container by an adult and kept in the nurse's office.

Nut/Other Life-Threatening Allergies

The Dartmouth Public Schools wish to keep all of our students safe and healthy. Throughout the system, we have students who suffer life threatening allergies to nut products and other allergens. The Dartmouth Public Schools have established a policy regarding the use of nuts or nut products. Special seating arrangements are made for students with allergies and elementary-age children are discouraged from food sharing. Children who bring peanut butter or nut products should be mindful of those with allergies and take proper precautions.

If a student in your child's classroom has a severe allergy to nut products or another allergen, a separate letter will be sent to all parents of children in that class. This can only be done with the permission of the parent of the affected child so we may request that no nut product or the specific antigen is sent into the class for parties or other occasions. Parents with any questions about the peanut/peanut product allergy or other life threatening allergies should contact either the school nurse or the Pupil Personnel Administrator at the 508-997-3391 x 1114.

**To view all of our health-related School Committee Policies, please visit our website:
www.dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us under School Committee Policies.**

Special Education Student Services

The Dartmouth Public Schools is mandated to comply with IDEA and Chapter 766 rules and regulations governing identification and servicing of Special Education students. When parents are concerned that effective academic progress is not being made, they should request a meeting with the teacher/s, principal and/or guidance counselor to discuss their concerns. At any time in the process, the parent may request an evaluation to identify any suspected learning disability. Any medical and/or educational evaluations previously conducted are helpful in assisting the school in screening for and identifying a learning disability. If the student is found ineligible for specialized instruction but is found to have a disability, a 504 team may be convened to determine whether the student meets the eligibility criteria for a 504 Accommodation Plan. If the student is identified as eligible for a 504 Plan, the team will determine the necessary accommodations, aids, and/or services which provide the student with an opportunity to benefit from school programs and services equal to that offered to non-handicapped students.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. The individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, Section 16-18, and Chapter 71, Section 37H provide eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in the context of student discipline. The IEP plan for a student must indicate whether a student cannot be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's disability requires modification of the rules and regulations as outlined in the student handbook. Any modification will be described in the IEP.

Procedures for Suspension of Students with Disabilities

1. All students, including eligible students with disabilities, receive prior written notice regarding the schools' Code of Conduct.
2. Any eligible student may be suspended up to ten days in any school year.
3. After a student with a disability has been suspended for ten days in any school year, during any subsequent removal, the public school provides sufficient services for the student to continue to receive a free and appropriate public education.
4. The school provides additional procedural safeguards for students with disabilities prior to any suspension beyond ten cumulative days in any school year such as:
 - a. Suspension of longer than ten consecutive days or a series of suspensions that are shorter than ten consecutive days but constitute a pattern are considered to represent a change in placement.
 - b. Prior to a suspension that constitutes a change in placement of a student with disabilities, the Team convenes:
 1. To develop or review a functional behavioral assessment of student's behavior, to modify a behavior intervention plan or develop an assessment plan;
 2. To identify appropriate alternative education settings;
 3. To determine the relationship between the disability and the behavior "a manifested decision". If there was a behavior plan, was it implemented? Does the student understand the impact of the consequences of his/her behavior? Can student control behavior?
 - c. If the Team determines that the behavior is NOT a manifestation of the disability, then the district may suspend or expel the student consistent with the policies applied to any student without disabilities, except that the district must still offer all appropriate education programs to the student disabilities which may be in some other setting.
5. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days;
 - a. If the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at the school or school function.
 - b. If the district provides evidence that the student is "subsequently likely" to injure him/herself or others, and a hearing officer orders the alternative placement;
 - c. The interim alternative education setting enables the student to continue in the general curriculum, to continue receiving services identified on the IEP, and provides services to address the problem behavior.
 - d. If the Team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the district takes steps with the consent of the parent/guardian to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan.
 - e. The school district provides written notice to a parent/guardian of all rights to appeal and to an expedited hearing. If the parent/guardian chooses to appeal, during the appeal, the student stays put in the placement, unless the parent/guardian and the school district agree otherwise.

6. Procedural requirements applied to students not yet determined to be eligible for Special Education.
 - a. If prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined, the district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
 1. The parent/guardian had expressed concern in writing,
 2. The parent/guardian had requested an evaluation,
 3. School district staff had expressed concern that the student had a disability.
 - b. If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent/guardian requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.
 - c. The school district has developed procedures consistent with the federal requirements to expedite evaluations.

Suspension Procedure

When a student is suspended, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A student will be suspended only to the custody of his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). If this occurs during the school day, the parent(s)/guardian(s) may be required to transport the student home.
2. Except in exigent circumstances, the student shall be verbally informed of the disciplinary violations with which the student is charged and shall be allegations of misconduct prior to the imposition of a suspension of less than ten (10) consecutive school days. Prior to imposing a suspension in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days, the student shall be provided with a formal hearing at which the student may be represented by an attorney at his/her own expense and may present witnesses and evidence in the student's defense.
3. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will also be informed of the reason for the suspension as well as the duration of the suspension and the re-admittance date.
4. The Superintendent will receive a report relative to the suspension and a copy is added to the student's record.
5. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have complete custody and jurisdiction of their child during the suspended period.
6. The suspension may be appealed by the parent to the building principal. Following implementation of a suspension of more than ten (10) consecutive school days, the student shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent of the Dartmouth Public Schools.

A suspended student may not appear on school property or at any school-sponsored activity at or away from school. He/she will be required to make up all work and tests missed to avoid receiving a zero. It is him/her responsibility to make arrangements with individual teachers to do so. The student will have a length of time equal to the suspension to complete this task.



SIGNATURE PAGE & SUMMARIES

It is important for us to know that you and your child have read and understood the rules and policies of the school. Please take the time to review this handbook, sign this sheet, and have your child return it to his/her homeroom teacher.

The Dartmouth Public Schools is required to collect signatures to ascertain that parents, guardians and students have read and understand:

1. *Content of the Student Handbook (including Media Release, Directory Information, and Transfer of Records, etc.)*

Pictures, Names, or Quotes in the Media

Sometimes media (such as newspaper, television, radio, or cable) reporters or photographers would like to be involved in activities in the schools. Having a picture in the paper for participating in a program is usually acceptable to parents, but occasionally, for legal reasons, it is not prudent.

Directory Information Notice

The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Dartmouth Public School to recognize the accomplishments of its students by sharing information publicly with the community at large. These announcements may be the form of press releases to the local media, public announcements at School Committee meetings, and the posting of information on website and social media. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Dartmouth Public Schools obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Dartmouth Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the Dartmouth Public Schools to the contrary in accordance with Dartmouth Public Schools procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Dartmouth Public Schools to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications or organizations that are generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released.

The Public Schools of Dartmouth has identified some examples of information used for directory release:

- Student's name, email address, home address, and home telephone number and email address
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.
- Honor roll or other recognition lists
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook and graduation programs
- Student's district id number (this cannot be used to access education records and is primarily used as an identifier for such things as surveys or library cards)
- Most recent school attended, grade level, dates of attendance/enrollment

Directory information can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s consent as long as the parents are given an “opt out” option. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, Parent teacher organizations (PTO), colleges and universities, companies that provide products such as class rings or yearbooks, and scholarship providers. Additionally, the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires the District to provide all branches of the military with names, addresses, and telephone listings for students unless parents/guardians have advised that they do not want this information disclosed for this purpose.

Notice on Transfer of Records to Another School

Pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07 (g), notice is hereby given that the Dartmouth Public Schools forwards the complete school record of a transferring student to another Massachusetts public school in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Such transfer of records takes place without consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

An Act Relative to Sex Education (M.G.L. Ch. 71 §32A)

Parent Notification

The Health Education and Science programs of Dartmouth Public Schools contain comprehensive K-12 curricula. The goal of the program is to help students acquire appropriate content background to develop the life skills or problem solving, communication, and decision-making abilities to prepare for a healthy and productive future.

Under Massachusetts law and the Dartmouth School Committee policy, you may exempt your child from any portion of a curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

The Director of Health/Physical Education or your building principal is available to meet with you to review curriculum and materials. To review these materials, please call to make an appointment.

To exempt your grade 5 child from the portion of the health curriculum that pertains to “Our Changing Body”, you must complete and return the notification sent out in May from your child’s school.

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP): Student Technology

Internet Access Permitted

A signature permitting Internet access releases the Dartmouth Public Schools, its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from a student's use of, or inability to use, the Dartmouth Public Schools Data Network, including, but not limited to claims that may arise from the unauthorized use of the system to purchase products or services.

The parent/guardian agrees to instruct his/her child regarding any restrictions against accessing material that are in addition to the restrictions set forth in the AUP which can be found on the policy portion of our website at dartmouthps.schoolfusion.us.

Internet Access Denied

A signature denying Internet access will indicate that a parent/guardian does not want his/her child to have **any** access to the Dartmouth Public Schools data network.

SIGNATURE PAGES FOR STUDENTS AND PARENT/GUARDIANS

Student Information	
<i>Last Name:</i> _____	<i>First Name:</i> _____
<i>Home Address:</i> _____	
<i>Date of Birth:</i> _____	<i>Age:</i> _____
<i>School/Grade:</i> _____	

Student Handbook

- I acknowledge that I have read and we have discussed the preceding rules and regulations of this SCHOOL HANDBOOK.

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP): Student Technology

I acknowledge that I have read and we have discussed the Acceptable Use Policy.

- I grant Internet access to my child.
 I do not grant Internet access to my child.

Pictures, Names, or Quotes in the Media

- I wish my child's name to be used or picture to be taken for the media.
 I do not wish my child's name to be used or picture to be taken for the media.

Directory Information Notice

- I grant permission for the release of directory information for my child.
 I do not grant permission for the release of directory information for my child.

Student Signature: _____
Date: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____