

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **\*\*\* SURVIVAL ISSUES \*\*\***

The following questions and answers will tell you the kind of information you need to know to be able to play your part in the smooth day to day running of the school. These questions are the most often asked, and knowing the answers to them will go a long way toward relieving your worries about middle school. All of your teachers, and especially your homeroom teacher will be willing and able to guide you to a successful introduction to the middle school.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I'M ABSENT, LATE OR SUDDENLY GET SICK?**

#### **Student Absence**

After having been absent for any reason, you must report directly to the office on the day you return. At that time a note from your parent or guardian explaining the reason for absence must be delivered to the office. If such a note is forgotten by a student, he or she must still report to the office first for an "admit slip". The required note must then be brought to the office the next day.

#### **Punctuality**

Punctuality is a valued habit. Students should make every effort to be on time. Students who are late to school will be required to bring with them, on that day, a note from a parent or guardian excusing their tardiness. Students who are tardy, and who do not have a parental note, will be kept after school for one hour. Students who are late to class during the school day will be required to obtain a note from the teacher who detained them, or they will be kept after school.

#### **Dismissal**

If a student becomes ill during school hours, he or she should report to the office. If dismissal is necessary, the student's parents will be asked to come to the school and sign the student out. Dismissals by telephone are not allowed.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I NEED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM?**

#### **Lavatories**

Students may visit the lavatory before the first bell of the day has rung and before lunch. All other times require the permission of a teacher in the form of a pass.

### **WHAT IF I LOSE SOMETHING?**

#### **Lost and Found**

The school does have a Lost and Found Department. Students who have lost something should come to the office.

### **WHAT IF I MUST LEAVE SCHOOL EARLY FOR A IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT?**

#### **Early Dismissal**

If a parent wishes to have a student dismissed from school for any reason, a note must be brought from home and brought to the office before 7:55 A.M. Your parent or guardian will need to come in to the office to sign you out.

### **MAY I RIDE MY BIKE TO SCHOOL?**

Bicycles may be taken to school, but they must be secured with a lock in the area provided. Upon entering school grounds, each bicycle rider must get off the bicycle and walk it to the storage area. Students are not allowed to ride bicycles on school property during school hours. When you use your bicycle be sure to use common sense and follow safe riding procedures.

### **HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO CHANGE CLASSES?**

On the first day of school your homeroom teacher will provide you with a schedule of classes and a time schedule. These will be thoroughly explained by the teacher on the first day.

For now you should know that students can enter the building at 7:40 A.M. and must be in their homeroom by 7:50 A.M. School is dismissed at 2:25 P.M.

### **WHAT ABOUT LUNCH?**

#### **Lunch Programs**

On the first day of school all lunchtime procedures will be explained in a special meeting early in the day. Our cafeteria will have both hot and cold lunches available for students to purchase. You may also bring your own bag lunch and purchase milk separately.

## **WILL I HAVE A PLACE TO STORE MY THINGS?**

### **Lockers**

Each student is assigned a locker, usually in a location near their homeroom. The following practices with respect to lockers should be strictly followed:

1. Your team of teachers will inform you about when you may go to your locker during the day. Obviously you will need to access your locker first thing in the morning and at the end of the day.
2. Always keep your locker neat and clean.
3. Keep the combination to your locker a SECRET.
4. Never store valuables in your locker. Leave them in the office where they will be kept in the safe.

**Note: Please see School Committee Policy on student lockers on page 9.**

## **HOW LONG WILL I HAVE IN BETWEEN CLASSES TO GET FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER?**

### **Passing**

Students have approximately three minutes to pass from one class to the next. Once you learn the routine this will be more than enough time. At the beginning of the year your teachers will understand if you get lost or have a problem.

## **ARE THERE RULES ABOUT WHAT YOU MAY WEAR TO SCHOOL?**

### **Dress Standards**

A School Committee regulation states: "Dress patterns may change with varied style trends: however, unattractive, extreme and questionable fads have always been frowned upon. Clean, neat appropriate clothing, along with basic good grooming, are recommended." Accordingly, we consider clothing that over-exposes parts of the body or which shows poor taste (i.e. tee-shirts that advertise alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or sexually suggestive material) to be unacceptable for school wear. With this definition in mind and as a guide to parents, we consider overly tight clothing, short shorts, beachwear, tank and cropped tops to fall into the category of inappropriate and unacceptable dress for

school. Clothing designed for outdoor use should be stored in your locker. Students are not allowed to wear outside jackets, hoods, hats or other headwear in class. The Principal is the final authority on this matter.

## **WILL I NEED A NOTEBOOK?**

### **Notebooks**

Several teachers will require that students in their classes keep a notebook. However, students are advised to wait until after the first meeting of a class to purchase such items as teachers may have more specific requirements.

## **WILL I HAVE TO TAKE A SHOWER IN GYM?**

### **Showers**

The physical education department encourages you to take a shower after class for both health and social reasons.

**\*\*\* HELP \*\*\***

### **Make-up Work/Extra Help**

Work missed because of absence must be made up. Reasonable time will be provided for this purpose, as determined by teachers concerned. It must be emphasized, however, that responsibility for getting the make-up work completed rests with the individual student. Upon return to school, each student must determine what work has been missed and when it is due. Subject teachers will give students the needed information.

If anyone is going to be absent for more than a few days, and if work can be done at home, a parent should call the school and arrangements for assignments will be made. You are strongly encouraged by all members of the staff to seek out extra help before or after school, or at some other mutually agreeable time. Your teachers welcome you, so don't hesitate to talk with them about your academic progress or any other problem you might be having.

### **Student Services**

Each of us, both student and adult, experience problems of one kind or another.

The school counselor and school psychologist are aware of the various academic, personal, and social situations that a middle school student encounters.

#### Health Services

A "Health Room" is located near the office, and a nurse is either in the building or not far away. Should you suffer any kind of injury, or if you simply do not feel well, report to the office. Band-aids are available for self administration.

#### EMERGENCIES

##### Accident Procedures

Whenever any student becomes injured in school or on school grounds, that student should immediately go to the nearest teacher or to the office and report the injury. If an injured student is not able to report an accident, the first student to learn of the accident should notify the nearest teacher or the office. NEVER attempt to move anyone who has been injured.

##### Fire Drills and Safety Plans

During your first day at school your teachers will explain the proper procedure for evacuating the building in the event of fire or other emergency. In addition, signs are posted in each room. Every student should become familiar with the route and exit to be used in each class. To ensure that everyone knows how to evacuate the building in the most orderly and efficient manner possible, fire drills will be held from time to time - usually unannounced. Students should remember to move out of the building quickly and without talking, walk away from the building, staying on walkways not in driveway areas. It is imperative during any situation concerning safety that all students follow the directions of the staff. WALK - - NEVER RUN!

#### \*\*\* SPECIAL TIMES, PLACES, AND PROGRAMS \*\*\*

##### Assembly

Assemblies in the auditorium are scheduled periodically throughout the school year. Some programs may be presented by

paid professionals, and others may be presented by the students themselves. In any case, all assemblies are a part of the school program. During any assembly program, every member of the audience should remain quietly attentive.

##### Library/Media Center

The Library/Media Center is open during school hours for reading, research, book selection and study. Students may come to the Library when they have study time. All they need do is obtain a "Library Pass" from the Library/Media Specialist before school that day.

During the course of the year, special classes are taught in research skills. The Media Specialist works with your classroom teacher to conduct these classes.

A full explanation of library procedures will be given to you early in the year.

##### Student Council

An important aim in school is the preparation of students for life in our American democratic society. To help in this effort the school has a Student Council. Members of the council are elected, and campaign for student votes in much the same way as elected officials campaign for public office.

Each student will have an opportunity to run for council office. Everyone is encouraged to take an active part, either as a candidate, a campaign manager, a campaign worker, and - of course - as a voter.

Once elected, members of the Student Council have the opportunity to direct and carry out a variety of programs which affect everyone in the school. BE INVOLVED!

##### Peer Leaders

Students who wish to become active volunteers within the school and their community may wish to join this group. Its aim is to foster and organize student leadership in the area of community service. All students may apply and participate in the selection process that requires a written application and teacher recommendation.

### \*\*\* GENERAL POLICIES \*\*\*

Over the years, teachers, parents, and the school administration have reached many agreements about the way in which different aspects of the school will work. These agreements, called policies, should be read and clearly understood by everyone. They will be strictly followed throughout the year.

#### Courtesy and Responsibility

Much of what you may or may not do in public places such as your school is directly related to your consideration of others. Everyone should be treated respectfully out of thoughtfulness for their personal feelings. It is your responsibility to demonstrate nothing less than the highest standards of courtesy at all times. The staff, our parent community, and the student body have embraced RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY as CORE VALUES. During the course of the school year, these values will be emphasized as we go about our daily lives as at school.

#### English Language Usage

Learning how to use English properly, in both conversation and written work, is an important objective in education. Written work should always be neat and carefully done, and great attention should be given to English usage and spelling. How well a student writes will have an effect upon how highly the work is regarded by teachers in all subjects, not just in English class.

#### Homework and Study Habits

Generally speaking, middle school students may expect homework on a regular basis. Homework is an extension of the school day - not punishment. Assignments are designed to allow you time to practice skills learned in class, prepare for the next day's work, or to provide enrichment.

Missed, sloppy or incomplete homework will not be allowed. The assignments MUST be done satisfactorily or you will be required to come after school to do it over. Students who frequently turn in poor quality home

assignments can expect disciplinary action. At the beginning of the year your homeroom teacher will work with you to help you develop proper study habits. Your classroom teachers will also carefully outline their requirements for homework assignments.

#### Study Periods

Study periods are exactly what the name implies. Valuable school time is set aside to allow students to study, do research, or write. This time will not be wasted, and all teachers will insist that students use study period time for the purposes intended. The playing of games, socializing, and inactivity will not be permitted. Students have the responsibility of coming to study periods with enough work to keep themselves busy for the full time.

#### Substitute Teachers

It is sometimes necessary to have substitute teachers take charge of classes. The substitute teacher will conduct the class according to a plan given to him by your classroom teacher. Students are expected to cooperate fully and be on their best behavior. All work assigned by the substitute "counts" and will be graded by your regular teacher.

#### Visitors

Generally, students are not allowed to have visitors during school time. However, in very special circumstances and with the permission of the Principal and parents, arrangements can be made to have a visitor accompany you to school. Be sure and have your parents contact the Principal before extending any invitations

#### Telephones / Cell Phones

There is a pay telephone ( \$.50 ) available for student use before and after school in the lobby. During the school day, students must obtain permission of a staff member to use the phone. Students are prohibited from using the school telephone except in an emergency situation. The following are not emergencies: forgotten items, obtaining a ride home or arranging social situations.

Cell phones should not be used during school hours. All communication between home and school during school hours should be conducted through the office.

#### Valuables

The school cannot be responsible for lost valuables, and such items should not ordinarily be brought to school. If it is necessary to bring such items into school, they should be brought to the office where they will be placed in the school's safe. Never keep cash or valuable articles in your locker. By way of Example, students are encouraged not to bring personal stereos (i.e. Walkman) to school.

#### Grades

##### Grading and Report Cards

The marking system is based on the quality of a student's work for the particular marking period. Grades assigned are A, B, C, D, and F, and a grade of D is the lowest passing mark. Students will also receive effort and conduct grades in each subject. Report cards are issued four times a year, and students will receive two copies to be taken home at the end of each quarter; one copy is to be signed by the parent and returned to school.

Any course that meets three or more times in a six day cycle will receive a letter grade. Any course that meets less than three times in a six day cycle will receive a pass/fail grade.

##### Student Progress Reports

If a student is not achieving in a satisfactory manner in a particular subject, a notice is sent to his/her parents. Usually these notices are sent home at the middle of each quarter.

##### Student Promotion

It is the policy of the Middle Schools to act on student promotion with a single-minded concern, the best possible educational option for the student involved. Every source of information for this decision making process will be explored.

As a guideline, failure in any academic subject, and/or strong evidence of insufficient skill development will cause a

student to be considered for retention. Failure in two subjects, particularly if one is English, will normally be cause for non-promotion.

### \*\*\* STUDENT RECOGNITION \*\*\*

#### Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is published following the end of each quarter. When a student's name appears on the Honor Roll, it means that his or her grades reflect superior academic work, effort, and acceptable conduct. The basis for earning a place on the Honor Roll is outlined as follows:

1. The student must have an average of 84-86 (quality point equivalent of 3.2) or above.
2. In order to qualify for "High Honors" as student must have a 90-92 (quality point equivalent of 3.7) average.
3. Effort and Conduct must be satisfactory.
4. There must be no failures.

#### Citations

Citations are written for the purpose of recognizing noteworthy performance or contributions by students. Each citation received tells the student concerned that he or she has been outstanding in a subject area, in personal qualities or in some service to the school. Such awards are prepared by subject and homeroom teachers twice a year, and they are generally presented at grade assemblies.

#### Special Awards

At the end of each year, there is a special assembly to publicly recognize noteworthy students. Awards are given to the outstanding eighth grade boy and girl, and to students who have demonstrated remarkable proficiency in various academic areas. There are also awards for self-improvement and personal achievement.

### \*\*\* THE LAW \*\*\*

#### School Rules and Regulations

Each of us is required to live according to some set of standards. Outside of school we call these laws, and in

school we call them rules and regulations. Some rules are made for reasons of safety, some are made to protect property, and others are made to make the learning experience as enriching as possible for everyone involved. When students violate these rules, the school's response will depend on the nature of the incident. In most cases, teachers will handle situations within the classroom. More serious cases will involve the Assistant Principal where, after hearing all sides, he may administer disciplinary action, require a conference with parents, suspend the student or take other action that he deems appropriate. All cases of student misbehavior will be treated individually. However, so that everyone concerned is more fully informed, examples of procedures for certain infractions of school rules have been included in the appendix.

1. Possession and/or use of the following items in school or on school grounds is strictly forbidden:

- a. Cigarettes or any materials used for smoking
- b. Drugs or intoxicants of any kind
- c. Matches, cigarette lighters, fireworks and such items
- d. Knives or weapons of any kind including toy weapons.
- e. Obscene literature and/or pictures

2. For the following behavior you can expect to be severely punished:

- a. Fighting
- b. Vandalism, or any kind or damage to property
- c. Stealing
- d. Gambling
- e. Truancy or leaving school grounds without permission from the office

3. The following behavior will result in disciplinary action:

- a. Disobedience, disrespect, or insolence toward any teacher, member of the staff, custodian, or visitor
- b. Failure to report after school when told to do so by any teacher
- c. Profanity or foul language of any kind
- d. Threatening other students in any way

- e. Harassing or taunting other students
- f. Cheating or copying the work of other students
- g. Plagiarism (using the written work or ideas of someone else without giving the author credit)
- h. Any action between school and home that endangers your safety, or the safety of others ( i.e. throwing snowballs)
- j. Eating or selling candy or gum
- k. Failure to do assigned school work
  - l. Inappropriate use of the Internet.
  - m. Possession of a "personal stereo" or paging device unless approved by the principal
  - n. Possession of "fireworks" or other explosive device

### \*\*\* ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS \*\*\*

#### Notes and Excuses

Good attendance is a prerequisite for student achievement. In no way can absence from school be truly "made up". When absent from school the student misses the clarifying explanation, classroom questioning, and visual materials, all of which bring about real understanding of the information and skills being studied. If a child is to be held from school for any other reason, it is strongly recommended that every possible alternative be investigated by the parent.

(PLEASE SEE SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY JEA "STUDENTS ATTENDANCE" IN THE APPENDIX)

After a child has been absent for any reason, state law requires that the parents or guardian provide a written excuse for the absence. This should be brought to the school office on the morning the student returns. In the same way, if a parent wishes to have a student dismissed from school, a written note must be brought from home and delivered to the office. Under normal circumstances, a verbal excuse over the telephone will not be acceptable for dismissal of a student.

#### Absentee Verification

If your child is to be absent from school, please call our Absentee Verification number ( 944-1236 ext. 130) before 9:00 A.M. on the day of absence.

#### Student Progress Reports

These notices are issued by teachers if a student is not achieving or progressing in a satisfactory manner in a particular subject. Teachers may issue these notices whenever the need arises, but they are customarily issued at about the middle of each quarter. Commonly called "Mid-Quarter Reports" they are delivered to students by homeroom teachers; they must be taken home and signed by a parent, and returned to subject area teachers.

#### Consultations With Teachers

Parental support of the school's goals and activities is the most important ingredient to your child's success in school. To that end, it is vital that an active communications system be developed between school and home. Members of the staff will often take the initiative to send home a message about student achievement or difficulty. Questions and concerns from parents are encouraged and always welcome. The well being of our children is a mutual goal, and the foundation upon which we wish to develop a fruitful working relationship.

#### Student Services and Guidance

The Student Services Office provides a wide range of services to the entire school population. The purpose of this office is to assist students with academics, personal matters, and career decisions. Our goal is to help each student discover their own abilities and interests.

#### Social Activities

On occasion, throughout the year, the school may sponsor various social activities. Generally, these are initiated by the Student Council and are designed to build school spirit, and, for student enjoyment. Social activities may include: dances, roller skating parties, class trips, movies, etc. All social activities must be approved by the Principal and will be held at a designated time and place. Whenever there is an activity of this kind, there are certain guidelines that the school can be expected to follow. These include:

1. All school rules will be strictly enforced.
2. Students will not be allowed to leave the activity until its conclusion, except by written permission from a parent.

3. Parents are expected to make arrangements for transportation home promptly at the conclusion of the activity.
4. Any student not enrolled at the school may not attend. Attendance at these activities is voluntary and open to all students with the understanding that parents remain the final authority as to the appropriateness of the social activity.

#### Physical Education Clothing

Gym clothing must be worn in physical education classes. Additional information and instructions concerning gym clothing and equipment will be provided by physical education teachers during the first meeting of your class.

#### School Cancellation

During the winter months there may be days when weather conditions make it difficult for students to get to school. On such days, if conditions are extremely severe, school may be canceled. School cancellation announcements will be made by radio stations WEEI, WHDH, WBZ, WEZE, and WNAC.

#### Insurance Programs

In September, every student is given an envelope to take home which contains information and an application for student accident insurance. This insurance is offered at a very reasonable cost, and it is considered to be a good investment by most parents.

If your student has an accident, and if he or she is covered by student insurance, you must obtain a claim form from the office; it must be filled out and mailed to the insurance company as soon as possible after the accident has occurred.

Further information concerning this insurance program will be provided to students early in the year by homeroom teachers.

#### Excuses From Physical Education

If a student is unable to take part in physical education classes for periods longer than one day, a signed medical excuse must be obtained by the parents from a physician. The doctor's note must then be delivered to the school office, where it will be made a part of the student's file.

Requests to be excused from P.E. which are written by parents may be acceptable for limited periods, usually one day.

#### Health Services

A "Health Room" is located near the office, and the school nurse is either in the building or not far away. Students are instructed to come to the office should they suffer any kind of injury, or if they simply do not feel well. We have band aids, antiseptic, and if necessary a place for them to lie down. We cannot administer medication of any kind, including aspirin, unless the following procedures have been followed:

1. The medication must be prescribed by a physician.
2. The medication must be left in the office; it may never be carried around school by a student. (No more than a six day supply should be brought to school.)
3. The school must have received written medical orders from the attending physician, and these orders must include a statement describing the diagnosis, the name of the drug or medication, the dosage to be administered, and the possible toxic effects associated with the medication.
4. The school must have written permission from parents allowing school personnel to administer the medication.
5. The medication container must be clearly labeled, showing the student's name, the name of the medication, and the prescribed dosage. (The label is in addition to the written medical orders from the doctor.)

#### Parent Access To Student Records

Parents may have complete access to their children's records. Any parent wishing to examine these records should contact the Student Services Office. Should parents wish copies of student records they may request them from the school office. There will be a charge of ten cents per page.

#### Homework

Homework is a vital part of the learning process. Therefore, the staff of the school will be quite strict about homework. (Please see General Policy On Homework in the student's section of this handbook.)

There are several things that parents can do in support of our effort:

1. Monitor your child's homework - insist on knowing what is assigned and then check on the work when it is finished. **Each student is provided with a school agenda notebook at the beginning of the year. Teachers will require students to write all assignments in this agenda on a daily basis.**
2. Set aside specific time for homework and a distraction free location. Many people suggest the kitchen table since it is away from the radios and television. It also places students in a visible location where parents can observe work habits.
3. React strongly should you receive notice from school that homework and/or effort is not up to par. Your support is essential if we are to do much with poor achieving students.

#### \*\*\* Appendix \*\*\*

Walter S. Parker Middle School

#### EXAMPLES OF PROCEDURES STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR

The following are examples of procedures that will be followed by the school administration when students break school rules.

#### Smoking

Actual smoking in school, on the school grounds, or on the school bus:

#### First Offense

Student is suspended - in school - until parents accompany pupil to a conference with the Assistant Principal. Parents are notified via telephone and/or a letter.

#### Second Offense

Parents notified via telephone and/or letter, Pupil is kept in school, suspended from class, until dismissal. Pupil may be suspended for three or five days or longer.

#### Third Offense

Parents notified via telephone and/or letter, Pupil may be treated as habitual school offender. Request to the

School Committee to exclude pupil from school if over 16 years of age. Possible suspension for five days or longer and/or court action if under 16 years.

#### Possession of Cigarettes in School

##### First Offense

Confiscation of cigarettes, Discipline Report, warning and parents notified via telephone and/or letter.

##### Second Offense

Same as actual smoking.

##### Third Offense

Same as actual smoking.

Insolence, Blatant Disobedience, etc.

##### First Offense

Discipline Report - parents notified via telephone, by the staff member involved.

##### Second Offense

Discipline Report - Assistant Principal will request a conference with the parents and parties concerned, possible suspension.

#### Vandalism

##### First Offense

Suspension until parents are notified via telephone and/or letter.

Parents will come in for conferences and arrangements made for restitution. Payment in full for damage, Court action if nature of vandalism is serious.

##### Second Offense

Suspension until parents are notified via telephone and/or letter. Parents will come in for conference and arrangements made for restitution. Court action and/or possible request to the School Committee to exclude pupil from school.

#### Truancy

##### First Offense

Suspension until parents are notified via telephone and/or letter. Parent conference is arranged. Pupil will be allowed to make up work only by special arrangement. Pupil is required to make up all time lost.

If truant is a member of the Student Council, it will be recommended that he/she be dropped from the Council for a period of time. Loss of privileges to participate in extra-curricular activities for a period of time.

##### Second Offense

Student is suspended. Parent is notified by phone and/or letter. Parent accompanies pupil to school for conference with the Assistant Principal. Student must make up all time lost and will not be allowed to make up lost work. Loss of school privileges, class or school offices and extra-curricular activities, pending later performance.

##### Further Offense

Response similar to second offense and a conference with parents, the possibility of a school evaluation and/or outside referral will be considered.

#### Failure to Report to Teacher After School

##### First Offense

Pupil may receive a discipline report and have an after school conference with the Assistant Principal. Pupil will be required to report to the teacher after school the next day and meet conditions set by the teacher.

##### Second Offense

Pupil will receive a Discipline Report. Matter is referred to the Assistant Principal for appropriate action which will include notifying parents via telephone and/or letter and an extended detention.

##### Third Offense

Suspension from school for one to three days.

#### Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs

Any pupil bringing, drinking, in possession of or under the influence of alcoholic beverages in a public school or on school grounds, or on a school bus shall automatically be suspended from school. Parents are notified by phone and/or letter. Parents, student and Assistant Principal conference is held and student is subject to suspension or exclusion from school.

Any pupil bringing, carrying, taking, or under the influence of illegal and/or harmful drugs or narcotics in the public schools or on school grounds shall be automatically suspended from the school and is subject to exclusion from school .

#### Fighting

Acts by students fighting, tending to injure, degrade, or disgrace another student and assault will be handled similar to rules applying to "Smoking". In circumstances where there is a threat to student welfare, the student(s) involved may be suspended for three or five days or longer.

#### Hazing

The Reading Public Schools prohibits hazing. If hazing occurs and is verified by the Building Principal following regular due process procedures, those deemed leaders of the hazing shall be suspended for ten (10) days, and a recommendation of one full semester of suspension from school shall be made to the School Committee for its action. Students deemed as participants in hazing shall be suspended from school for up to 10 days. (See SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY JP)

#### Discipline Policy In Relation To Special Needs Students

When misconduct gives rise to suspension and/or exclusion for more than ten cumulative days in the school year, then the Reading School officials will review the situation to make sure that all policies, regulations, and rules concerning special education have been adhered to prior to a student's suspension for more than ten cumulative school days in a year. Any suspension that will result in an exclusion of more than ten days in a school year will require immediate written notification of the suspension and request for approval of the alternative educational plan from the Massachusetts State Department of Education. The Superintendent's Office will be directly apprised of each request made by the Reading Public Schools for approval of the suspension and an alternative educational plan.

Reading School Committee Policy JEA

#### Student Attendance

The Reading School Committee and the Reading Public Schools believe in the importance of regular attendance by all students.

Students are expected to attend school 181 days since vacation periods are built into the year long school calendar.

Except in cases of illness and extenuating circumstances, students are expected to be present when school is in session. Parents are strongly urged not to schedule family vacations during school days and not to extend the scheduled vacation periods.

Should a parent choose to keep a student out of school for reasons other than illness or extenuating family circumstances, teachers will provide the normal range of assistance upon the student's return to school. However, it is the student's responsibility for identifying and making up missed work. Teachers are not required to provide advance assignments to students, and the school and the individual teacher(s) are not required to assume responsibility for providing individual tutoring or extensive individual help for the student when he/she returns. (Voted 5/11/87)

#### Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of the Reading Public Schools to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment by superintendents, principals, teachers, coaches, students, other employees, vendors, contractors, will not be tolerated. Each employee and student of the Reading Public Schools is personally responsible for ensuring that his or her conduct does not sexually harass any other employee or student in the schools.

Any student who believes he or she is being sexually harassed should notify his or her guidance counselor, assistant principal, or principal as soon as possible. Counselors and assistant principals will notify the principal and superintendent immediately. (see School Committee Policy GDRK)

### Policy on Smoking

The Reading School Committee is dedicated to establishing and maintaining a healthy, safe, comfortable and productive educational work and recreation place for its students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. The Committee therefore endorses the concept of a tobacco-free environment in school department buildings and on its grounds for students, staff, and other users of school facilities.

Students, staff and visitors shall not smoke or use tobacco products in school, on school grounds, on a school bus or in other school vehicles. This ban will apply to all school-related functions, during and beyond the regular school day, as well as to activities sponsored by outside groups renting or using the buildings or grounds.

Students or staff who allegedly violate this policy must receive appropriate due process. Repeated confirmed violations of the policy by students or staff will be reported to the Superintendent and will result in disciplinary measures which may include suspension for students and dismissal for employees.

### Policy on Student Lockers

"The Reading School Committee recognizes that School Administrators are under an obligation to insure that reasonable discipline and good order be maintained by and for all students at all times. It also recognizes, however, that students have certain constitutional rights. It is to balance the sometimes conflicting need of school officials to insure order and safety on the one hand, and the need to insure applicable constitutional rights of students on the other hand that this policy is written.

Student lockers and locks are the property of Reading Public Schools and are assigned to students for their use while they are students at the school. Students should not have an expectation of privacy in their school lockers. Master keys to all lockers/locks and lists of the combination to all lockers/locks are kept by the school. It is prohibited to store any illegal items/substances or items/substances in violation of any school rule in a locker. Items/substances prohibited from being in lockers, include: guns/knives/weapons (real

or fake), illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, stolen property, fireworks/explosives, fire/smoke/odor producing products, and any other evidence of a school rule or legal violation. Students should be aware that, at the discretion of a school administrator, a student's locker may be searched and prohibited items/substances will be seized."

### Policy On Weapons

It is the policy of the Reading School Committee that firearms, knives and other dangerous weapons are banned from school buildings, on school grounds, or school sponsored events in the interest of safety of all students, teachers, support staff and general public.

Students who violate this policy will be remanded to the police and subject to suspension or expulsion according to Federal and State law. In the case of firearms a student may be expelled from school for a minimum of one year. The decision rests with the Superintendent of Schools who will review each situation on a case by case basis.

### \*\*\* DISCIPLINE REPORTS \*\*\*

The nature of some student infractions of school rules and policies warrant the immediate attention of the school administration. Incidents that involve a student smoking, being insolent or impudent to a staff member, possessing or using harmful and/or illegal substances, fighting, tormenting another student, and vandalizing property are examples of such infractions of school rules. When a staff member observes student acts of this kind, he or she should immediately accompany the student to the office.

Most of us would agree that the large majority of instances of student misbehavior are most effectively handled by the teacher immediately involved. However, in instances where the behavior problem is continuous and the efforts of the teacher are not bringing improvement, a Discipline Report should be issued. In order that such situations be handled effectively, the teacher should contact the Assistant Principal to explain the circumstances. Unless the situation dictates otherwise, the Assistant Principal should be briefed before the report has been issued to the student.

We want the receipt of a single Discipline Report to be a very serious experience, one which the student will not wish to repeat. A student who receives a Discipline Report can expect to be punished. Punishment may involve a number of days of detention as determined by the Assistant Principal. In situations where a student receives more than one Discipline Report, or the nature of the infraction warrants it, the punishments administered will be more severe.\* The receipt of three such reports will require that the student's parents come to the school for a conference with the Assistant Principal and other staff members involved. Should a student receive six discipline reports, he or she will be subject to suspension for up to three days. Should behavior problems continue, further suspensions and/or legal action will take place.

\*see APPENDIX for explanatory examples.

#### **POLICY ON LOST OR DAMAGED BOOKS**

##### **Books Lost or Damaged Beyond Repair**

Students who lose books, or damage them beyond repair, shall make restitution according to the following:

1. Books two years old or less 100% of original cost
2. Books three years old 75% of original cost
3. Books four years old 50% of original cost
4. Books five or more years old, if damaged maliciously \$3.00

In all cases except where the book is in its first year of use, the condition of the book shall be described on the student book receipt at time of issue. At this time, defects in the book shall be noted, and reasonable adjustment in the amount of the restitution shall be made.

##### **Repair of Damaged Books**

1. If the book is in the first or second year of use and was in good condition, as noted on the student book receipt, the current cost of rebinding will be charged.
2. In all other cases, if the book was in good condition as noted on the student book receipt, the charge will be 60% of the current cost of rebinding a book.

