

# WESTBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL



## 2019 - 2020 Student Handbook

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<http://wms.westbrookctschools.org/>

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The information contained in the student handbook clarifies the day to day expectations and operations at Westbrook Middle School. All of our district policies and procedures are also adhered to at Westbrook Middle School. For specific information related to district policies, procedures, forms, etc. all families should read and become familiar with the information contained in the Westbrook Board of Education Policy Handbook. These documents can be found on the Westbrook Public Schools district website:

<https://web.westbrookctschools.org/policy/>

### THE SCHOOL YEAR

Westbrook Middle School will follow a quarter schedule. Below are the approximate dates for grade closings.

	<u>Grades Close</u>	<u>Grades Finalized</u>
Quarter 1	November 1, 2019	November 7, 2019
Quarter 2	January 17, 2020	January 23, 2020
Quarter 3	March 27, 2020	April 2, 2020
Quarter 4	Last Day of School	

Note: These dates may be adjusted due to school cancellations throughout the year. Check the district or WMS website for the most up to date information.

### Admission, Placement, Residency of Students

Parents of a student enrolling in Westbrook Middle School from another school district or private school should contact the school counselor. In consultation with the student's parents and officials from the previous school, school personnel will determine placement in the proper grade level. A complete review of all academic and health records is necessary prior to this placement. Written authorization from parents to the sending school is required to obtain all academic and health information, including any special education services. Connecticut law requires that all students must show proof of all necessary immunizations, prior to admission to school. Complete health records will be reviewed by the school nurse. Students must be residents of Westbrook. Parents or legal guardians are required to submit a residency affidavit along with pertinent supporting documents to verify residency. If an incoming student is temporarily residing with a family member or a family friend other than a parent or legal guardian, while awaiting housing in Westbrook, a notarized affidavit

must be provided. Additionally, students may enroll on a tuition basis if space is available. The Superintendent of Schools must endorse such an application for enrollment. The tuition rate is established annually by the Board of Education.

### **Student Records; Confidentiality - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5125**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5125-%20Student%20Records%20-%20Confidentiality.pdf>

The Board of Education (“Board”) complies with the state and federal laws and regulations regarding confidentiality, access to and amendment of education records. The Board shall implement procedures that protect the privacy of parents and students while providing proper access to records. Availability of these procedures shall be made known annually to parents of students currently in attendance and eligible students currently in attendance.

### **Open House**

In the fall, parents are invited to attend an evening Open House to gain an overview of the curriculum, meet school personnel and tour the school.

### **Parent Conferences**

Parents are partners in a child’s educational success. Formal parent/teacher conferences take place in the fall and the spring. Conferences are scheduled online, using the conference schedule website School Appointments <https://wms.parentconferences.net/>. The appointments are on a first come-first serve basis and you will be notified via school messenger when the portal is open. Parents can also request conferences during team meetings throughout the year.

## **THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **School Hours**

The official school day runs from 7:45 am to 2:25 pm each day. Students may enter the building at 7:30 am or with specific permission from a teacher through the main entrance. Students are expected to go to their lockers and report to their assigned homeroom or class prior to 7:45. The school day ends at 2:25 pm and students are dismissed at this time unless they are involved in an activity that takes place after school. There is a late bus for all students to utilize which arrives at the Middle School at 3:40 pm (Monday through Thursday only). All school rules and expectations apply before, during and after school hours while students are in the building, on the bus or on school property.

### **Scheduled Early Dismissal**

When school is in session and there is a scheduled half-day, students will be dismissed at 12:15 pm. Lunches will not be served. There is no late bus services on early dismissal days.

### **Inclement Weather: Late Openings/Early Dismissals**

Severe weather conditions may cause the cancellation of school or a delayed opening. Please know that every attempt will be made to keep school open, yet safety precautions must also be a priority. You will be notified by the Superintendent of Westbrook Public Schools via SchoolMessenger first with any changes to the status of school. Also consult the media sources and refrain from calling the main office about such closings or delays. Closing or delays are announced on the following television stations: WVIT NBC Connecticut, WTNH News 8, WFSB CBS News, and on our district website <http://www.westbrookctschools.org/>

No School	-	Building is closed
Two Hour Delay	-	School begins at 9:45 am

If a delay of school opening is announced, it is important to continue to check the school website and media reports for a possible later change to cancellation. During a two hour delay, classes will begin at 9:45 am, with the bus running two hours later than usual time. Lunches will be served and dismissal will be at regular time 2:25 pm.

If a storm develops during the school day, early dismissal will be a “last resort”. Parents should check the media reports and the district website about the possibility of an early dismissal. *Please have a clear, specific plan in place in the event of an early dismissal.*

## **SchoolMessenger**

Westbrook Public School uses the SchoolMessenger service for school-to-parent communication, which allows for periodic and personalized messages to be sent by telephone and/or email. Outreach messages include, but are not limited to, information regarding school closures or delays, end of the quarter, medical issues, schedule changes, upcoming events, and other middle school information.

## **Absences**

When a parent/guardian determines that an absence is necessary, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the the main office at 860-399-2010 to report the student's absent. It is crucial for parents and school authorities to cooperate fully about a child's absence. To protect against unauthorized tardiness or truancy from school, an automated phone call and email will be sent through PowerSchool/SchoolMessenger for any student who is unaccounted for. Any notes from a medical professional about absences should be submitted to the main office. Please be aware that these notes become part of a student's cumulative health record.

**Attendance at school is required for any student who plans to participate in an extracurricular activity that day or evening.** School personnel will maintain attendance records. Parents are encouraged to contact any teacher or school counselor with any questions about their child's attendance.

Excessive student absences will result in referral to proper state agencies, such as the Department of Children and Families and/or Juvenile Court.

## **Tardiness**

Students who are not in their homeroom by 7:45 am are considered late to school and must report directly to the main office to obtain a pass. A student who is repeatedly late to school will be considered truant. Students will be expected to make up the missed learning time after meeting with the school counselor or lead teacher, along with their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians should call the main office if they know that their child will be late to school.

After three tardies the student and parent/guardian will be notified regarding the student's current attendance record.

After six tardies, the school counselor or lead teacher will host a meeting with the student and parents. During this meeting the parents, student and school representatives will plan ways to ensure the student arrives to school on time.

## **Student Dismissal**

Parents should make every attempt to schedule necessary appointments after school hours or during vacation periods. If an early dismissal from school cannot be avoided, parents must notify the main office so that the dismissal can be noted on the morning attendance and classroom teachers notified. It is crucial that the main office is made aware, in advance, of any situation that requires a student to leave the building during the school day because we must account for every student at all times, particularly during emergency situations.

Parents and Guardians are discouraged from unexpectedly arriving at the school to pick up your child. It is understood that on occasion, you may need to pick up your child for a last minute appointment, etc. In that case, please call the school as soon as you know you will be dismissing him/her early. It is time-consuming for all to have to track them down, especially when outside for physical education or recess.

## **Family Vacations**

Parents and Guardians are strongly urged to plan their vacations when school is not in session. In cases where parental vacations do not coincide with school vacations, it is the responsibility of the parents and/or guardians to complete the students absence form located on the WMS website under Parent Resources and forms of the intended absence. This form must be submitted to the main office before the student leaves. The main office will notify the appropriate school personnel of the intended absence. While out of school, students should access specific teacher google classrooms, websites, and PowerSchool to keep up with their assignments. There is no way to make up for the loss of actual classroom time and direct instruction. It the responsibility of the student to make up work that was missed during the vacation. Please see section 1 in the Westbrook Board of Education policy 5112R.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5112

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5112%20-%20Student%20Attendance,%20Truancy%20and%20Chronic%20Absenteeism.pdf>

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for ensuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. To assist parents and other persons in meeting this responsibility, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures to implement this policy.

In addition, the Board of Education takes seriously the issue of chronic absenteeism. To address this issue, the Board of Education, through its Superintendent, will adopt and maintain procedures regarding chronic absenteeism in accordance with state law.

### Legal References:

- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c
- Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d
- Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)
- Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family with Service Needs (August 4, 2009)
- Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences (June 27, 2012)
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Guidelines for Implementation of the Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences and Best Practices for Absence Prevention and Intervention (April 2013)

### Policy Adopted:

Rev 6/00, Rev 3/08, Rev 7/11, Rev 5/12, Rev 7/12, BOE Approved 6/12/2013, **Revised and Approved: 6/13/2017**

## 5112R - ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS REGARDING ATTENDANCE, TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

### I. Attendance and Truancy

#### A. Definitions for Section I

1. "Absence" - any day during which a student is not considered "in attendance" at his/her assigned school, or on a school sponsored activity (e.g. field trip), for at least one half of the school day.
2. "Disciplinary absence" - Any absence as a result of school or district disciplinary action. Any student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. Such absence is not considered excused or unexcused for attendance and truancy purposes.
3. "Educational evaluation" - for purposes of this policy, and educational evaluation is an assessment of a student's educational development, which, based upon the student's presenting characteristics, would assess (as appropriate) the following areas: health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.
4. "Excused absence" - a student is considered excused from school if the school has received written documentation describing the reason for the absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school, or if the child has been excluded from school in accordance with section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (regarding communicable diseases), and the following criteria are met:
  - a. Any absence before the student's tenth (10th) absence is considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate written documentation in accordance with this regulation.
  - b. For the student's tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are, with appropriate documentation in accordance with this regulation, considered excused only for the following reasons:
    - i. student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);
    - ii. religious holidays;
    - iii. mandated court appearances (documentation required);
    - iv. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's

family;

v. extraordinary educational opportunities preapproved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation;

vi. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.

c. A student, aged five (5) to eighteen (18), whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parental leave or deployment. In the case of such excused absences, the student and parent or legal guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teacher prior to any period of excused absence, and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.

5. "In Attendance" - Any day during which a student is present at the student's assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, for at least half of the regular school day.

6. "Student" - a student enrolled in the Westbrook Public Schools.

7. "Truant" - any student five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

8. "Unexcused Absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for at least one half of the school day, which is not excused or considered a disciplinary absence. The determination of whether an absence is excused will be made by the building principal or his/her designee. Parents or other persons having control of the child may appeal that decision to the Superintendent or his/her designee, whose decision shall be final.

#### B. Written Documentation Requirements for Absences

1. Written documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absence within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school. Consecutive days of absence are considered one incidence of absence.

2. The first nine (9) days of absence will be excused upon receipt of a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.

3. For the student's tenth (10th) absence, and all absences thereafter documentation of the absence must be submitted in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and must also include the reason for the absence and the following additional information:

a. student illness:

i. a signed note from a medical professional, who may be the school nurse, who has evaluated the student confirming the absence and giving an expected return date; or

ii. a signed note from school nurse who has spoken with the student's medical professional and confirmed the absence, including the date and location of the consultation.

b. religious holidays: none.

c. mandated court appearances:

i. a police summons;

ii. a subpoena;

iii. a notice to appear;

iv. a signed note from a court official; or

v. any other official, written documentation of the legal requirement to appear in court.

d. funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family: a written document explaining the nature of the emergency.

e. extraordinary educational opportunity pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this policy: written pre-approval from the administration, in accordance with this regulation.

- f. lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends: none.
- 4. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. In rare and extraordinary circumstances, a building administrator may, using his/her own discretion, accept the delivery of written documentation through a scanned copy sent by email.
- 5. The Westbrook Public Schools reserves the right to randomly audit written documentation received, through telephone and other methods of communication, to determine its authenticity.
- 6. Any absence that is not documented in accordance with this regulation within ten (10) school days after the incidence of absence will be recorded as unexcused. If documentation is provided within ten (10) school days, but is incomplete, the building principal may, at his/her own discretion, grant up to a five (5) school day extension for provision of the completed documentation.

### C. Extraordinary Educational Opportunities

- 1. To qualify as an extraordinary educational opportunity, the opportunity must:
  - a. be educational in nature and must have a learning objective related to the student's coursework or plan of study;
  - b. be an opportunity not ordinarily available to the student;
  - c. be grade and developmentally appropriate; and
  - d. include content that is highly relevant to the student. While some opportunities will be relevant to all students, others will contain very specific content that would limit their relevance to a smaller group of students.
- 2. Family vacations do not qualify as extraordinary educational opportunities.
- 3. All requests for approval of extraordinary educational opportunities must:
  - a. be submitted to the building principal in writing prior to the opportunity, but no later than ten (10) school days prior to the opportunity except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the building administrator;
  - b. contain the signatures of both the parent/guardian and the student;
  - c. include an outline of the learning objective of the opportunity and include detail as to how the objective is linked to the student's coursework or plan of study; and
  - d. include additional documentation, where available, about the opportunity.
- 4. The building principal shall provide a response in writing and include the following:
  - a. either approval or denial of the request;
  - b. brief reason for any denial;
  - c. any requirements placed upon the student as a condition of approval;
  - d. the specific days the student will be absent
  - e. the understanding that the building administrator may withdraw its approval if the opportunity is canceled or the student fails to meet the agreed-upon requirements of the approval.
- 5. All decisions of the building principal relating to extraordinary educational opportunities shall be final.
- 6. Students who are granted excusal from school to participate in extraordinary educational opportunities are expected to share their experiences with other students and/or school staff upon their return.
- 7. Approval for an extraordinary educational opportunity is determined on a case-by-case basis and the analysis of individualized factors. An opportunity approved for one student may not be approved for another.

### D. Truancy Exceptions

- 1. A student five (5) or six (6) years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or guardian has appeared personally at the school district office and exercised the option of not sending the child to school at five (5) or six (6) years of age.
- 2. A student seventeen (17) years of age shall not be considered truant if the parent or guardian having control over such student consents to such student's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form indicating such consent. Such withdrawal form must include an attestation from a guidance counselor or school administrator from the school that the district provided the parent or guardian with information on the educational options available in the school system and community.
- 3. If a parent or guardian of an expelled student chooses not to enroll the student in an alternative

program, the student shall not be considered to be "truant".

#### E. Readmission to School Following Voluntary Withdrawal

1. Except as noted in paragraph 2 below, if a student voluntarily withdraws from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) and subsequently seeks readmission, the Board may deny school accommodations to the student for up to ninety (90) school days from the date of the student's withdrawal from school.
2. If a student who has voluntarily withdrawn from school (in accordance with Section D.2, above) seeks readmission within ten (10) school days of his/her withdrawal, the Board shall provide school accommodations to the student not later than three (3) school days after the student requests readmission.

#### F. Determinations of Whether a Student is "In Attendance"

1. A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion shall be reported as absent unless he or she receives an alternative educational program for at least one half of the regular school day. In any event, the absence is considered a disciplinary absence, and will not be designated as excused or unexcused.
2. On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered "in attendance."
3. Students placed on homebound instruction due to illness or injury in accordance with applicable regulations and requirements are counted as being "in attendance" for every day that they receive instruction from an appropriately certified teacher for an amount of time deemed adequate in accordance with applicable law.

#### G. Procedures for Students in Grades K-8\*

##### 1. Notification

- a. At the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall notify the parent/guardian having control of the student enrolled in grades K - 8 in writing of the obligations pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-184 to ensure that such a student attends school regularly or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction in the studies taught in the Westbrook Public Schools.
- b. At the beginning of the school year and upon the enrollment of any child during the school year, the administration shall obtain from the parent or other person having control of the student in grades K-8 a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or other person during the school day.

##### II. Monitoring

Each school shall implement a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences of students in grades K-8. Whenever such a student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day, school personnel under the direction of the building principal [or his/her designee] shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian such student by telephone and by mail of the student's absence, unless school personnel have received an indication that the parent or other person is aware of the student's absence. [Reasonable efforts shall include two (2) attempts to reach the parent or other person at the telephone number provided by the parent or other person. Such attempts shall be recorded on a form provided by the Superintendent.] Mailed notice of the student's absence shall include a warning that two unexcused absences from school in a month or five unexcused absences in a school year may result in a complaint filed with the Superior Court pursuant to section 46b-149 of the Connecticut General Statutes alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the child are such that the child's family is a family with service needs. Any person who, in good faith, gives or fails to give such notice shall be immune from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceeding which results from such notice or failure to give notice. [\*Note: State law mandates notification and monitoring only with regard to students in grades K-8. Boards of Education are free, however, to extend the application of monitoring and intervention procedures to

students at all grade levels.]

## H. Procedures applicable to students ages five (5) to eighteen (18)

### 1. Intervention

- a. When a student is truant, the building principal or his/her designee shall schedule a meeting with the parent (or other person having control of such student) and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy. This meeting shall be held no later than ten (10) days after the student becomes truant. The district shall document the details and outcome of the meeting, and if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is otherwise nonresponsive, that fact shall also be documented and the meeting shall proceed with school personnel in attendance.
- b. When a student is truant, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate. The district shall document efforts to contact and include families and to provide early intervention in truancy matters.
- c. If the parent or other person having control of a student who is truant, fails to attend the meeting held pursuant to subsection H.1.a., above, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the Superintendent shall file, within fifteen (15) calendar days of such failure to attend the meeting or other failure to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, for such truant a written complaint with the Superior Court pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 46b-149 alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.
- d. In addition to the procedures specified in subsections a through c above, a regular education student with attendance problems should be referred to the building Child Study Team [or other appropriate school based team] to consider the need for additional interventions and/or assistance. The team will also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A PPT meeting will be held for any special education student with attendance issues for program review.
- e. If a Family with Service Needs petition is filed and the court orders an educational evaluation of the student, the district shall conduct an appropriate educational evaluation if no such evaluation has been performed within the preceding year.
  - i. For a regular education student, the educational evaluation will be conducted or arranged for by appropriate school personnel and coordinated through the Child Study Team [or other appropriate school based team]. Upon completion of the evaluation of a regular education student, the Child Study Team [or other appropriate school based team] shall review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations for alternative procedures, programs or interventions. Such recommendations may include a referral of the student for further evaluation and/or consideration for special education eligibility.
  - ii. In the case of a student who requires or may require special education and related services, the district shall convene a PPT to determine what evaluations may be appropriate to assess any specific areas of concern. The PPT shall reconvene to review the evaluations and make appropriate recommendations regarding the student's need for special education services and the need, if any, to write and/or revise the student's individualized education program ("IEP").

## I. Attendance Records

All attendance records developed by the Board shall include the individual student's state-assigned student identifier (SASID).

## II. Chronic Absenteeism

### A. Definitions for Section II

1. "Chronically absent child" - a child who is enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Westbrook

Board of Education and whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than ten percent (10%) of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during such school year;

2. "Absence" - (a) an excused absence, unexcused absence or disciplinary absence, as those terms are defined by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-198b of the general statutes and these administrative regulations, or (b) an in-school suspension, as defined in section 10-233a of the general statutes, that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day;

3. "District chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent children under the jurisdiction of the Westbrook Board of Education in the previous school year divided by the total number of children under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education for such school year; and

4. "School chronic absenteeism rate" - the total number of chronically absent children for a school in the previous school year divided by the total number of children enrolled in such school for such school year.

B. Establishment of Attendance Review Teams If the Westbrook Board of Education has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district. If a school under the jurisdiction of the Westbrook Board of Education has a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for that school. If the Westbrook Board of Education has more than one school with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.

If the Westbrook Board of Education has a district chronic absenteeism rate of ten percent (10%) or higher and one or more schools with a school chronic absenteeism rate of fifteen percent (15%) or higher, it shall establish an attendance review team for the school district or at each such school.

C. Composition and Role of Attendance Review Teams Any attendance review team established under these regulations may include school administrators, guidance counselors, school social workers, teachers, representatives from community-based programs who address issues related to student attendance by providing programs and services to truants, as defined under I.A.7, and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall be responsible for reviewing the cases of truants and chronically absent children, discussing school interventions and community referrals for such truants and chronically absent children and making any additional recommendations for such truants and chronically absent children and their parents or guardians. Each attendance review team shall meet at least monthly.

D. State Chronic Absenteeism Prevention and Intervention Plan The Westbrook Board of Education and its attendance review teams, if any, will consider any chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

### III. Reports to the State Regarding Truancy Data

Annually, each local and regional board of education shall include information regarding the number of truants and chronically absent children in the strategic school profile report for each school under its jurisdiction and for the school district as a whole submitted to the Commissioner of Education. Measures of truancy include the type of data that is required to be collected by the Department of Education regarding attendance and unexcused absences in order for the department to comply with federal reporting requirements and the actions taken by the board of education to reduce truancy in the school district.

#### Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-184  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-186  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198a  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198b  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198c  
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-198d  
Guidelines for Reporting Student Attendance in the Public School Information System (Connecticut State Department of Education, January 2008)  
Connecticut State Department of Education Circular Letter C-2, Utilizing Local Support Resources Prior to Referral of Students for Family with Service Needs (August 4, 2009)  
Connecticut State Board of Education Memorandum, Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences (June 27, 2012)

## **Visitors**

All authorized visitors to the middle school must first report to the main office to sign in. Students from other schools may not visit, particularly if their schools are in session, and unauthorized persons are not permitted in the school or on school property. The principal or designee will take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the school or from loitering on school property. Strict security measures will be implemented to ensure the safest possible school setting for students and adults.

## **YOUR LIFE AT SCHOOL - THE DETAILS**

### **Directory Information Release - Westbrook Board of Education Policy #5145.15**

“Directory information” means one or more of the following items: student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, photograph, grade level, electronic mail address, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous public or private school attended by the student.

Directory information or class lists of student names and/or addresses, and telephone lists shall not be distributed without the consent of the parent or legal guardian of the student or by the student who has attained majority status. Directory information may be released to media, colleges, civic or school-related organizations, and military service representatives, as well as published in programs for the athletic, music and theater presentations in our school district.

**IF PARENTS DO NOT WISH THIS INFORMATION TO BE RELEASED, THEY MUST INFORM THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL IN WRITING WITHIN TEN (10) DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THIS STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK.**

### **Student Information Release**

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the National Defence Authorization Act of 2002 require the Westbrook Board of Education to provide, upon request made by military recruiters or an institution of higher education, access to secondary school students’ names, addresses, and telephone listings. In the context of these laws, “higher education” refers not only to colleges and universities but also to post secondary institutions such as Technical, Vocational or Trade schools. A parent who objects to disclosure of such information without prior consent may file a notice of objection with the school district at any time. This information applies to Grade 8 students following their June promotion from middle school.

### **Student Records**

A student’s school records are confidential and are protected by law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student graduates or transfers to another school. This record moves with the student from school to school. By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced have access to the records of a student who is under the age of 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order termination of these rights.

The principal is the custodian of all records for students currently enrolled at the middle school. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours. The principal or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. Parents of a middle school student and school personnel with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have access to a student’s records. Parental consent in writing is required to release the records to anyone else, including a new school in which the child will attend.

### **Busses**

Students have the privilege of riding on busses provided by the school district to and from school. Students are only allowed to ride the bus that they are assigned. If he or she needs to ride another bus, parents/guardians must notify the principal in writing and it must be approved prior to riding the bus. Proper behavior is mandatory while waiting for and while on the bus. Students shall always remain seated and should exit the bus in an orderly manner once they arrive at their destination. Students are urged to carry their backpacks onto and off of the bus instead of wearing it. Any

accessories that are attached to the outside of the backpack should be removed in order to prevent snagging on the bus handrail.

Bus drivers are responsible for the safe operation of their vehicles and full cooperation from all passengers is expected. Bus drivers will notify the principal or his designee of students who are in violation of the bus expectations. Disciplinary action may include the suspension of bus-riding privileges. Bus travel to athletic events requires the same cooperation. Parents are reminded to observe all laws and safety precautions while driving near the school or on school buses, particularly at the beginning and end of the day.

Any questions about bus routes, or scheduled stops should contact the bus contractor, Michelle Altmannsberger, 860-388-6782. [maltmannsberger@mjbusiness.com](mailto:maltmannsberger@mjbusiness.com) with M & J Transportation.

### Traffic Pattern - Drop Off and Pick Up



Students must be responsible in exercising safety as pedestrians. All persons arriving at and departing from school must follow all posted traffic directions for traffic and safety precautions.

Parents/Guardians are reminded to observe all parking rules on school property, to obey all flashing signals of school busses, and to respect the proper use of handicapped parking spaces. Signs clearly mark established travel patterns for entering and exiting the school property.

Students should be dropped off or picked up in the circle in front of the school (see diagram). Students should not be dropped off or picked up in the staff parking lot adjacent to McVeagh Road or the bus lane.

When picking up or dropping off, parents/guardians should pull up to the red line (see diagram) to allow for more efficient drop off and pick up times.

### Hallway and Athletic Lockers and Locks

It is important for students to understand that school lockers and locks are the property of Westbrook Board of Education. They are loaned to students for their use. Whenever possible, student privacy is respected regarding locker use. However, school personnel have the right and obligation to inspect lockers to insure the enforcement of school rules and proper locker use. School administrators reserve the right to inspect lockers when there is reasonable suspicion that a school rule or policy is being violated. At the end of the school year or athletic season, students are expected to clean out their lockers, leaving them in a condition for future use by other students.

- Hallway lockers are assigned by homeroom/grade level areas.
- Each student is assigned one specific locker and lock for the school year.
- Personal locks are NOT to be used on school lockers. They will be removed.
- Nothing should be attached to the outside of your locker.
- Replacement of school issued locks must be purchased from the main office for five dollars.

### Search and Seizure

All lockers, desks and other storage areas provided for student use in school remain the property of Westbrook Public Schools. And are provided for the use of students subject to inspection, may be accessed for maintenance, and searched if there is reasonable cause. Students must use school issued locks. Unapproved locks will be removed. The Principal or designee will search a locker and its contents when there is reasonable cause to suspect discovery of prohibited items and when the probable presence of such prohibited items presents a serious threat to the maintenance of safety and health in the school or on an authorized school field trip. Anything found in course of a search conducted in this way, which is evidence of a violation of school rules, may be seized and admitted in any suspension or expulsion proceeding.

## **Lost and Found**

A box of lost items is maintained adjacent to the stage in the cafeteria. Custodians will bring any items left behind during the school day to the lost and found box. If a student lose a textbook, calculator or equipment belonging to the school, he or she should report it to the subject area teacher, Students will be responsible for replacing these items. At the end of each quarter, clothing that is not claimed will be donated. You should check the lost and found regularly.

## **Internet Use**

Students will have access to the Internet and other electronic resources at various sites in the middle school, including the library media center and the computer lab. Such resources are to be used for legitimate educational purposes, under the supervision of school personnel. Students will receive a copy of the Board of Education Acceptable Use policy (6141.323(b)). This policy must be reviewed with a parent/guardian, and an Internet User Agreement form must be completed and signed by the student and a parent/guardian and returned to the library media specialist. Students may only access the Internet after a signed form is received.

## **Cell Phone/Telephone Use/Electronic Devices**

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to school, but they should be turned off and locked in the locker during regular school hours, unless used for specific educational purposes and approved by a staff member.

Students will not be interrupted during school hours for calls from home. Parents are encouraged to review after-school plans with their child before school. Office staff will get a message to the student in a true emergency.

An office phone is available for student use for emergency reasons. Students will be permitted to use the phone to notify parents of any changes in the athletic or extra-curricular activities schedules. In order to foster a sense of responsibility, the office phone is not to be used for calls for forgotten homework, instruments, gym clothes, etc. The office phone is not to be used for planning social activities outside of school.

## **Lunchroom Expectations**

Students may purchase hot or cold lunches (which include milk) from a varied menu. A monthly menu is posted on the school website. [http://www.westbrookctschoools.org/groups/5756/food\\_services/test\\_page](http://www.westbrookctschoools.org/groups/5756/food_services/test_page) Students may also buy healthy snacks, as well as 100% fruit juice, milk, and bottled water. Breakfast is also available.

Our Point of Service (POS) program, Powerlunch, allows each student to have money deposited into their account to prepay for breakfast, lunch and a-la-carte items (when available). Students are expected to pay in advance or at the time of meal purchases by having funds available in their account or having cash at the time of sale. Parents may send cash or a check prior to breakfast or lunch purchases being made. We encourage parents to send in a check so there is a record of each deposit made to the child's account. Checks should be made payable to Westbrook Lunch Program, noting the student's name. Those funds will be deposited into each student's Powerlunch account. Every meal or item purchased will be "debited" or deducted from the balance at each sale. This process will ensure a more efficient and confidential process moving the lines more quickly and allowing students additional time to enjoy lunch.

Any child who forgets or loses money will be able to charge one meal, although this should be a limited occurrence. A note or email will be sent to notify the parent or guardian of the charge. If the charge is not repaid and the child needs another meal, a meal will be provided.

Students are to adhere to these standards and guidelines in the cafeteria:

- Enter the cafeteria quietly, at the designated time.
- Proceed patiently and properly through the serving line.
- Remain at one table throughout the lunch period.
- Respect all peers and cafeteria personnel.
- No solicitation of food or money.
- Discard trash and recycle appropriate items.
- Remain in the cafeteria unless a written pass is obtained from a supervising teacher.

- Consume all food and drink in the cafeteria.

The school district participates annually in the National School Lunch Program. Applications for this free and reduced price meal program are distributed at the beginning of each school year. Information about income and number of household members is required on the application, which must be signed by a parent and returned to the Food Services Director.

### **Logic Block**

Flex Block is an opportunity for our students to meet monthly with an adult in order to benefit from instruction and activities that support positive school climate. The lessons and activities through flex block cover a wide range of topics that include, but are not limited to, perseverance, empathy, celebrating differences, and self-control. Through their participation in cooperative activities and group discussions, with the guidance of their advisor, students become more supportive and understanding of each other. The ultimate goal of flex block is to help students gain life skills that will help them meet with success in school and in their adult lives.

### **Bicycles, Skateboards**

With parental permission, students may ride bicycles to and from school. Students are to follow all of the safe “rules of the road” by riding appropriately. Students must secure bicycles on the available rack in the front of the middle school and may leave the property only after each of the school buses has exited. Students may not ride bicycles to evening school events, such as PTSO Fun Nights, dances, athletics, or school concerts. Safety of all bike riders is paramount; this privilege will be revoked for reckless, irresponsible behavior.

Please be aware of Connecticut’s Bicycle Helmet Law. Pursuant to subsection (c), students in violation of this state law will be referred to the police.

(from) Connecticut’s Bicycle Helmet Law

Senate Bill No. 597

Public Act No. 97-46

An Act Requiring Children Fifteen Years of Age and Under to Wear Bicycle Helmets Subsection (b) of section 14-286d states:

(b) No child FIFTEEN years of age OR UNDER shall operate a bicycle on the traveled portion of any highway unless such child is wearing protective headgear which conforms to the minimum specifications established by the American National Standards Institute or the Snell Memorial Foundation Standard for Protective Headgear for Use in Bicycling.

(c) A law enforcement officer may issue a verbal warning to the parent or guardian of a child that such child has failed to comply with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section.

Skateboarding is not allowed on school property before, during, and after school hours, due primarily to liability concerns. Appropriate signage on school property serves as clear reminders.

### **Dances and Social Events**

School dances and other social events are scheduled periodically during the school year. These events are usually sponsored by the Student Council, and other school clubs and organizations. These events are for Westbrook Middle School students only. Admission costs, and other pertinent instructions for a particular dance or other social event will be announced prior to the event. Dances are usually held in the school cafetorium. Students must have a ride to and from the social event (no walkers, no bikers) and it is extremely important that students be picked up promptly at the conclusion of the event. Volunteer supervision by adults will end shortly after the conclusion of the scheduled event. Students must remain until the end of the event, and all school rules are in effect during such an activity. Necessary cancellations of events due to bad weather will be announced prior to the end of the school day, if possible. A student needs to attend school for a full day in order to attend school evening events. Doctor notes are required if a student is dismissed for a medical appointment on the day of an event.

### **Dress and Grooming - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5132**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5132%20Dress%20and%20Grooming.pdf>

The Westbrook Board of Education believes that appropriate school dress conveys respect for education and promotes a serious atmosphere conducive to the Board's mission of "high academic achievement" for all students. Therefore, the Board expects all members of the school community to dress modestly and respectfully when on school grounds, participating in school-sponsored activities, and when representing the school district.

The responsibility of student dress and general appearance rests with the individual student and his/her parent or guardian. However, the Board of Education requires students to attend school in appropriate dress that meets health and safety standards and does not interfere with the learning process or contradict the educational mission of the school.

The Board requires students to wear appropriate protective gear in certain classes when necessary.

The Board prohibits the wearing of attire bearing any expression or insignias which are obscene or libelous, or which advocate racial or religious prejudice, or which display alcohol, sexual or drug content or which are defamatory toward person(s), group(s), the school or other organizations or which are likely to initiate or inflame. The Board prohibits the wearing of various items, as they interfere with the safe and healthy environment of the school. Examples include: coats, bare feet, soiled clothing, clothing with excessive holes, bulky jewelry, jewelry with sharp edges, ornamental chains, and dog collars.

The Board prohibits the wearing of various items, as they interfere with the educational process. Examples include but shall not be limited to: hats, except those worn pursuant to established religious customs, headgear, headbands, short shorts, short skirts, see-through clothing, underwear tank tops, sunglasses, underwear worn as outerwear, sagging clothing which exposes underwear or impedes movement.

Any exception to the above must be with specific written prior approval of the school principal or Superintendent of Schools.

The Board directs consistent implementation of the above dress codes throughout all its District buildings that house children throughout their academic career.

The administration shall have the authority to require a student to change his/her attire should it be deemed inappropriate.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules

Policy adopted: March 10, 2009

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are designed for educational and cultural purposes. Field trips can enhance and enrich classroom instruction and learning. Students earn the privilege of participating in these activities by displaying proper behavior in school. Any student whose behavior has been unsatisfactory may be restricted from field trips by the principal. While on a field trip, all students are considered to be "in" school. All school rules and any rules specific to the trip or event are in effect. Students are reminded that school personnel may search personal belongings for contraband material in order to maintain a safe field trip experience. Standards for student behavior and dress will be enforced throughout the field trip. Unacceptable behavior will result in strict disciplinary consequences. Parents will be informed about scheduled field trips and must return a signed permission form prior to the trip. The school nurse will provide the staff with any necessary medical information and guidelines regarding the medical needs of the students.

### **Transfers and Withdrawals**

Students withdrawing from school must notify the main office or the school counselor one week prior to their last day. Parents or guardians must obtain and complete necessary forms, including a formal written statement of withdrawal and release of records. Teachers will sign a document indicating the present grades at the time of withdrawal and that all textbooks and assigned materials have been returned. Academic and health records cannot be forwarded to another school until all such items have been returned or payment has been submitted. The Connecticut State Department of Education expects that when students leave a school district, their records and State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) will be provided to the receiving district.

The records of children with disabilities will include a statement of current or previous disciplinary action that has been taken against the student. The statement may include a description of any behavior that required disciplinary action and any other information that is relevant to the safety of the student and other individuals involved with the student. Upon transfer from one school to another or from one district to another the transmission of any of the child's records must include both the student's current Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## **YOUR LIFE AT SCHOOL - ACADEMIC**

### **Homework - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 6154**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/6000/6154%20Homework.pdf>

The responsibility of the school district to educate the student is carried out by the teachers through effective classroom instruction and the careful delegation of independent study. It is important for the student to be taught the concepts related to the subject area and how to study in school before he/she is given work to do at home. There is, therefore, a steady increase in the amount of homework expected of students from the elementary grades through high school.

Worthwhile homework benefits students. Homework assignments should be a meaningful reinforcement of class objectives, clearly understood by students, and be well-planned and purposeful. Homework/assignments that are evaluated by a teacher should be shared with the students in a timely manner.

Basically, there are three types of homework:

1. Practice of Skills

Practice provides students with the opportunity to reinforce and master specific skills presented in class and to review content.

2. Preparation for Future Classes

Prepares students for the next class meeting, and may include reading, library research, or other information-gathering activities.

3. Extension of Classwork

Extension focuses on individual application, research, and study; takes students beyond work covered in class.

Guidelines for time required for homework at each level (elementary, middle, high school) will take into consideration the needs of the students. Teachers shall assign homework according to administrative regulations.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221 Boards of Education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

Policy adopted: May 12, 2009

### **Homework Requests**

Homework may be requested once a student has been absent for two or more days. Homework can be found on google classroom, the teachers' websites, contacting the main office or by contacting a classmate.

### **Honor Roll**

Students are recognized for their consistent academic achievement during each marking period with the publication of the Honor Roll. The following criteria will determine Honor Roll at Westbrook Middle School:

Honors

Grade average between 85%-94%

No grade lower than 80% with the exception of an Advanced Placement Class (Accelerated Math 7 and 8th Grade Algebra)

### High Honors

Grade average between 95%-100%

No grade lower than 80% with the exception of an Advanced Placement Class (Accelerated Math 7 and 8th Grade Algebra)

Students who are enrolled in Accelerated Math 7 or 8th Grade Algebra cannot have a grade lower than 75% in that course in order to attain Honor Roll status.

Fifth Grade Students will not participate in Honor Roll.

A student with an "incomplete" grade in any subject are not eligible for Honor Roll.

Certificates of achievement are awarded to students who qualify for the Honor Roll. The Honor Roll is also published in The Harbor News.

### **Student of the Month**

Students of the Month (SotM) demonstrate excellent behavior inside and outside of the classroom. SotM are well mannered, have a positive attitude toward others and learning, and are respectful to both peers and adults. SotM display excellent citizenship by aligning themselves with the WMS expectations, and show exemplary character through their compassion, honesty, trustworthiness, optimism, and loyalty, while creating a positive school environment.

### **Recognition and Awards**

Various academic awards are presented throughout the school year and particularly at the promotion ceremony for eighth graders in June. Among the awards presented to Grade 8 students are:

Middle Level Scholar-Leader Award - presented by the CT Association of Schools to one boy and one girl from each CAS member middle school to recognize academic achievement and leadership in school and community.

Sterling Giles Award and Louise Buzzell Award - presented by the Westbrook Education Association in memory of two former teachers to recognize academic success and personal character.

President's Award for Educational Excellence - presented by the Federal Department of Education to students who meet established academic criteria and national standardized achievement levels.

President's Award for Educational Improvement - presented to students who show outstanding growth, improvement, commitment, and intellectual development.

The Faculty Cup - presented to one student to recognize character and contributions to the school.

The Principal's Award – Recipients of the Principal's Award are students who consistently display positive leadership abilities during their middle school careers. They are empathetic, honest, innovative, confident, and collaborative. Each of these students is committed and passionate about making Westbrook Middle School a better place for all students..

CABE Award – presented to students by the Board of Education who show outstanding leadership skills. These skills include a willingness to take on challenges, the capability to make difficult decisions, concern for others, ability to work with others, willingness to commit to a project, diplomacy, ability to understand issues clearly, and the ability to honor a commitment.

CAPSS Superintendent Award – presented to the students by the Superintendent. The CAPSS Superintendent Student Award Recognition Program, formally approved by the CAPSS' Board of Directors, provides Superintendents with a means of aligning themselves with students in their local communities. The program is conducted by CAPSS and made available to local CAPSS' Superintendents who wish to participate. Each participating district bears the cost of the award certificate(s). Awards are based on community service and service to others; academic prowess; and leadership service to the school community.

## **Textbooks**

Students are responsible for the proper care of textbooks and materials issued to them. Each teacher will record the identifying number of each text before issuing to the student. Students must return all textbooks and education materials provided by the school in good condition. Students will be required to pay for a replacement of any damaged or lost textbook, equipment, or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or schedules until the textbooks or other education materials are returned.

## **Promotion**

A Promotion ceremony for Grade 8 students occurs in June. Students parents or guardians need to resolve any financial obligations they have incurred over the course of the year or return school items prior to promotion. If a student receives two or more failing grades for the year, the student will be allowed to participate in the ceremony but will need to attend summer school before entering high school.

## **Promotion/Retention - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5123**

<https://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5123%20Promotion%20Acceleration%20Retention.pdf>

Middle school philosophy and best practice recognizes unique developmental differences in young adolescents. To accommodate these developmental differences, the certified school personnel place students at the grade level appropriate to their academic, social, and emotional development.

Students must fulfill all of the requirements in each course and meet attendance requirements to qualify for promotion. School administration will consider the recommendations of the Planning and Placement Team and of the certified teachers in determining eligibility for promotion.

Retention in a particular grade is often not in the best interest of the young adolescent student. Thus, alternative educational interventions are used with a student whose academic performance is unsatisfactory. If these further alternative strategies are unsuccessful, retention will be recommended. Parents/guardians will be communicated with regularly regarding their child's progress.

## **Summer Directed Study Program**

Summer school may be required for students who are in danger of not being promoted to the next grade. Remedial instruction is offered for our middle school students during the months of July and August. This program is required for any student who has failed two or more courses during the school year. Daily attendance at each class session is required. No bus transportation will be provided to this summer program.

# **ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS**

## **Art Club**

Art Club is open to students in all grades for art creations, in all forms of artistic media.

## **Drama Club**

**Fall** – Informal drama workshop activities for students in all grades.

**Spring** – Auditions for a part in an evening production presented to school and community.

\*Due to the time commitment required to participate in Drama Club, students must be in good academic standing.

A failing grade in any two subjects will prohibit participation.

## **Family and Consumer Club**

The focus of this club is giving back to the community. Members will have the opportunity to learn and use child development principles, cooking experiences, and sewing skills for community-based projects. Students in all grades are welcome.

### **Intramural Sports**

Intramural activities will provide middle school students with proper instruction in various sports. Student participants will benefit from direct instruction, informal club games, and the chance to improve physical fitness.

### **Literary Magazine**

Students work with an advisor create a magazine published yearly which features various written and artistic contributions of the school community. Students in all grades may contribute to the magazine.

### **Mathcounts**

Mathcounts team members work after school once per week on problems which supplement the daily math curriculum. Students in all grades may participate. There is voluntary team participation in two competitions: a local one with Old Saybrook and East Lyme and a regional competition at the Coast Guard Academy in February. Team members who qualify may then compete in a state-wide competition, individually or as a team member.

### **Newspaper Club**

Students in the Newspaper Club work with advisors to write articles about events and activities that take place throughout the school year. Students in all grades are welcome to contribute.

### **Science Club**

Students participate in fun experiments, robotics, and Invention Convention.

### **Student Council**

This is the official student government organization. Four officers are elected from the seventh and eighth grades – President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The activity is open to all students in each of the four grades in the middle school who wish to present issues for the group's consideration at regularly scheduled meetings.

### **Technology Club / Robotics Club**

Students meet regularly for group projects in technology education.

### **Yearbook**

Middle School students compose a yearbook, which includes a tribute section to the graduating eighth graders as well as photos of activities, field trips, clubs, and fun had by all throughout the year. Students spend time organizing, formatting, and arranging pictures for the layout. Writing and editing are also required for specific sections. Students from all grade levels are welcome.

### **Athletics / Intramurals**

Athletics are an integral part of the school's educational program. The opportunity to try-out for interscholastic teams is available to students in Grades 6-8. Students must be registered by a parent or guardian in the PowerSchool parent portal before trying out for a sport. Sports offerings include field hockey and soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and softball and baseball in the spring. All athletes must have an updated physical on file with the school nurse prior to trying out for any team. This physical is good for thirteen months. Sports participation can supplement the formal physical education classes, enable students to advance their level of fitness, and learn self-discipline and cooperation. Students must be in good academic standing to participate in a sport. A failing grade in any two subjects will prohibit this participation.

Every Westbrook athlete is expected to represent herself/himself in a manner which reflects positively on the school and the town. Adherence to the rules of the school and good sportsmanship are more important than final scores. An athlete must be in school on time on the day of a game or practice to be able to participate that day. Exceptions to this rule will be determined by the principal. All members of a school team must go to and return from the games on the bus with the team and coach. If a parent wishes to depart a game site with his/her child they must complete a "Request for Approval for Alternative Transportation" form and submit it to the Athletic Director prior to the day of the event.

Coaches, teachers and activity advisors will make every reasonable effort to prevent conflicts in school events and practices. In those instances when an athlete elects to participate in one school sponsored event over another, there shall be no negative action taken by the advisor or coach of the other activity.

Athletes are responsible for the proper use, care, and return of all supplies, equipment, and uniforms. Cleats of any kind are not to be worn in the school or on the bus.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Counseling Department**

School personnel seek to help young students with the many transitions and challenges they may face during the middle school years. This help includes assisting students to function more successfully within the school environment. A school counselor, social worker, and a school psychologist are available for middle school students.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

Teachers, principals, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff are obligated by law, as mandated reporters (C.G.S. 17a-101), to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and school personnel receive regular training in these procedures. Reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. School authorities will work closely with appropriate social services agencies in all cases.

### **Health Services**

The health office is staffed by a registered nurse during regular school hours, as well as a part-time health aide. The health office is located across from the main office. Students who are feeling ill must report to the nurse with a pass from a teacher. Dismissals from school for illness will be authorized only by the nurse or the principal. Students are not to skip this important process when feeling ill. Parents will be notified by the nurse or other school personnel if the student is ill and is to be sent home. Any student with a temperature of 100 degrees or above, is vomiting, has diarrhea, or has suspected or confirmed conjunctivitis, must be sent home from school. Students should remain out of school for at least 24 hours after symptoms cease with any of the following: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, lice/nits.

### **Immunizations**

Parents and guardians must submit written proof of all immunizations to the school nurse before a student is permitted to attend school.

- Grade 5 Immunizations: 4 DTap/Td, 3 Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep B, 2 Varicella or verification of disease, 2 Hep A
- Grade 6 Immunizations 4 DTap/Td, 3 Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep B, 2 Varicella or verification of disease
- Grade 7 Immunizations 3 DTap/TD w/Tdap, # Polio, 2 MMR, 1 Meningococcal, 3 Hep B, 2 Varicella or verification of disease.

### **Physical Examinations**

- New students from out-of-state school districts must present proof of all immunizations and of a physical exam performed within the previous twelve months, performed by an MD or DO; this information must be provided on the State of Connecticut health (blue) form. New students from out-of-the-country must present proof of all immunizations and of a physical exam performed within the previous twelve months on the State of Connecticut health (blue) form.
- Grade 6 students must have the results of a comprehensive physical exam and a record of all immunizations on file with the school nurse
- Students participating in interscholastic athletics must have a yearly physical exam by a healthcare provider every thirteen months. This requirement must be satisfied before a student participates in try-outs or practices.

### **Administration of Medication - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5141.21**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5141%2021%20-%20Administration%20of%20Medication.pdf>

The State of Connecticut has definitive regulations regarding administration of medication in schools. Please refer to Regulation on Administration of Medicinal Preparations by School Personnel, available on file in the nurse's office, for the

details. If it is necessary for a student to take medication during school hours, the following steps will facilitate the procedure and meet state regulations:

- The prescribing physician/orthodontist, licensed to practice in the State of Connecticut, must submit a written procedure or prescription for each medication. Forms for these orders are available from the school nurse.
- The parent or guardian must also sign the above written authorization for medication and deliver the medication directly to the school nurse.
- The medicine container must be labeled from the pharmacy with the name of the patient, the name and strength of the medication, the name of the prescribing physician or orthodontist, the date of the original prescription, and the directions for administration.
- Students are not permitted to carry or take any unauthorized or unidentified medication. This includes over the counter items, i.e. aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or ibuprofen.
- At the end of the school year, parents must pick up students' medications from the Health Office within three days. In keeping with Connecticut State Law, all medication not picked up will be discarded.

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases**

Parents and guardians must directly notify the school nurse or the principal of any communicable/ infectious disease contracted by a student, such as chicken pox or hepatitis. Similarly, parents and guardians should inform the nurse about cases of strep, mononucleosis, scabies, conjunctivitis, or the presence of lice. In these cases, parents must still call the main office to notify personnel that their child will be absent from school.

### **Homebound Instruction**

Parents should contact the Director of Special Services (399-7925) if a child's injury or extended illness has disrupted regular school attendance and may require short-term or long-term instruction at home.

### **Limited Physical Education Program**

Any student with an injury causing him or her to miss physical education two or more consecutive times must have a note from the treating physician. A note from the physician is also required in order to resume normal activity.

### **Temporary Disability**

Any student coming to school on crutches, in a cast, or temporarily disabled must first report to the nurse. A physician's note must be provided stating any activity limitations.

### **Screening Requirements:**

- Grade 5: Scoliosis (females only), vision, and hearing screens performed by school nurse within the school year.
- Grade 6: Students must have a complete physical exam with their health care provider during the school year; this exam includes vision, hearing and scoliosis screenings; a record of this complete exam must then be submitted to the school nurse, on the appropriate blue form.
- Grade 7: Scoliosis screening (girls only) will be performed by the school nurse.
- Grade 8: Scoliosis screenings (boys only) will be performed by the school nurse

### **Food Allergies**

School personnel will work closely with parents, children, and physicians to ensure a safe environment for all students with allergies. Parents should regularly inform the school nurse of a child's allergies and provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medications as directed by a physician. Students with allergies should not trade food with others, should not eat anything with unknown ingredients, and should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

### **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Education - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 6164.12**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/6000/6164.12%20Acquired%20Immune%20Deficiency%20Syndrome.pdf>

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Education is the best way to prevent the spread of AIDS, and through learning the facts about AIDS, students are better able to make decisions which will keep them healthy and even save their lives. Various school district curricula, including health curricula, science curricula, and social studies curricula among others, shall include information on AIDS - both its cause and prevention. Students will be exempt from instruction on acquired immune deficiency syndrome upon written request of the parent or guardian in accordance with regulation.

Legal Reference:

## **Concussion Protocol**

Middle School Students will not receive IMPACT Testing

When a student is diagnosed with a concussion, the following protocol will be followed:

1. After one or more days out of school the student is to report to the nurse upon arrival.
2. The nurse/school counselor will email all teachers of concussed student to alert them of the student's condition.
3. The student may not attend the following classes: Band, Chorus, Tech, PE, Computer, any other class using computers and recess. It is also possible that the student will be unable to attend lunch in the cafeteria, due to the volume of noise.
4. The student is to listen in class and participate as much as possible, but sometimes just listening is the best. They are not to take any quizzes, tests, etc.
5. If the student complains of any symptom, they will be sent immediately to the nurse.
6. When the student athlete is symptom free for at least 24 hours they will then return to a normal, full day of school. He/she will need a note from their physician, stating they are no longer concussed. Teachers will be notified via an email that the student is cleared to resume all normal activity.
7. If there will be a prolonged return to normalcy, an immediate meeting between guidance and teachers involved will take place to make an educational plan that will allow the student to fulfill the requirements for each subject without becoming overwhelmed.
8. While under concussion protocols (not yet cleared by a physician's note), a student cannot attend practices/games or any after school activity; cannot attend field trips or concerts, or participate in other activities, including recess.

## **Insurance**

School insurance is available to families. Brochures about this coverage are distributed to all families at the beginning of each academic year. This is an optional program for parents to provide additional insurance protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangements are contractual between the parent and the insurance carrier. Students are not protected by accident insurance through the Board of Education. It is highly recommended that parents consider this available insurance protection.

## **Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5131.6**

[http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5131.6%20Alcohol%20Use.%20Drugs.%20&%20Tobacco%20\(including%20Performance%20Enhancing%20Substances\).pdf](http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5131.6%20Alcohol%20Use.%20Drugs.%20&%20Tobacco%20(including%20Performance%20Enhancing%20Substances).pdf)

The Board is required by Connecticut law to prescribe rules for the management and discipline of its schools. In keeping with this mandate, the unlawful use, sale, distribution or possession of controlled drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, as defined in C.G.S. Section 21a240, or alcohol on or off school property or during any school sponsored activity is prohibited. It shall be the policy of the Board to take positive action through education, counseling, discipline, parental involvement, medical referral, and law enforcement referral, as appropriate, in the handling of incidents in the schools involving the unlawful possession, distribution, sale or use of substances that affect behavior.

## **Crisis Management Plans**

In the ongoing effort to provide the best possible school environment, school personnel continue to collaborate with local and state agencies, including the state police. A regular review and revision of school security measures occurs. Every effort will be made to establish and maintain a secure school setting, based on mutual respect and responsibility. There is a crisis management team at Westbrook Middle School who meet to ensure the safety of students and staff.

# **CLIMATE**

## **School Climate - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5131.914**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5131.914%20School%20Climate.pdf>

### **Policy Statement**

All schools must support and promote teaching and learning environments where each and every student achieves

academically and socially, has a strong and meaningful voice and is prepared for democratic life and successful transition into the 21st century workplace. A positive school climate is an essential element of achieving these goals. Rigorous implementation of the following set of guiding principles and systemic strategies will promote these desired outcomes.

The Westbrook Board of Education (the “Board”) adopts this Policy that is guided by the fundamental belief that each and every school community member should be treated with dignity, should have the opportunity to learn, work, interact and socialize in physically, emotionally and intellectually safe, respectful and positive school environments, as well as the opportunity to experience high quality relationships. Schools, therefore, have the responsibility to promote conditions designed to create, maintain and nurture positive school climate. This Policy sets forth the framework for an effective and democratically informed school climate improvement process, which includes a continuous cycle of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, and (iv) implementation, and serves to actualize the expectations of the five National School Climate Standards, as detailed herein.

The Board recognizes that there is not one best way to improve school climate. Each school needs to consider its history, strengths, needs, and goals. This Policy will support and promote the development of research-supported action plans that will create and/or sustain physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe learning environments that foster social, emotional, ethical and academic education.

#### Definitions

An “Effective School Climate Improvement Process” is one that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:

(1) Promoting decision-making that is collaborative, democratic, and actively involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied and meaningful roles and perspectives where all voices are heard;

(2) Utilizing psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g. survey) and qualitative (e.g. interviews, focus groups) data to drive action planning, preventive/intervention practices and implementation strategies that continuously improve

all dimensions of school climate, including regularly collecting data to evaluate progress and inform the improvement process;

(3) Tailoring improvement goals to the unique needs of the students and broader school community. These goals shall be integrated into overall school improvement efforts thereby leveraging school strengths to address evidence-based areas of need, while sustaining the improvement process over time;

(4) Fostering adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to build capacity building among school personnel and develop common staff skills to educate the whole child;

(5) Basing curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions on scientific research and grounding in cognitive, social-emotional, and psychological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength-based programs and practices that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning; and

(6) Strengthening policies and procedures related to:

- a. climate informed teaching and learning environments;
- b. infrastructure to facilitate data collection, analysis, and effective planning;
- c. implementation of school climate improvement plans;
- d. evaluation of the school climate improvement process; and
- e. sustainability of school climate improvement efforts.

“Positive Sustained School Climate” is the foundation for learning and positive youth development and includes:

1. Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, intellectually and

physically safe;

2. People who treat one another with dignity, and are engaged and respected;
3. A school community that works collaboratively together to develop, live and contribute to a shared school vision;
4. Adults who model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning; and
5. A school community that contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

“Safe School Committee” (the “Committee”) means the committee appointed at a specific school building by the Specialist to perform the duties described herein.

“Safe School Climate Coordinator” (the “Coordinator”) means the Superintendent or the certified administrator appointed by the Superintendent to oversee the implementation of the district's Safe School Climate Plan and perform the duties described herein.

“Safe School Climate Plan” means the district plan developed and implemented pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-222(d), containing provisions pertaining to bullying, filing complaints and conducting investigations, and posted on the district website.

“Safe School Climate Specialist” (the “Specialist”) means the certified administrator appointed by the Coordinator at a specific school building to oversee the implementation of the district's Safe School Climate Plan within the building, oversee the implementation of the School Climate Improvement Plan within the building, and perform the duties described herein.

“School Climate” means the quality and character of the school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults. School climate is also based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning, leadership practices and organizational structures.

“School Climate Improvement Plan” (the “Improvement Plan”) means the building-specific plan developed by the Committee using the Survey data and developed in accordance with the process described herein. An Improvement Plan must include the requirements of the Safe School Climate Plan, but has the larger purpose of improving school climate on a more global level and actualizing “The 13 Dimensions of Climate” (Appendix C) and “The National School Climate Standards” (Appendix A).

“School Climate Survey” (the “Survey”) shall mean a well-established reliable and valid survey, approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education, with additional external confirmation of its strength through third party evaluators and research studies, that is vigorously field tested, measures the core district populations (including students, parents/guardians, all school personnel - administrators, educators, certified and noncertified staff) and, when available, the wider community, and is easy and quick to administer. It shall also be administered in the predominant languages used by the population being surveyed.

“School employee” means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school Superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the Board.

“Social Justice” means a community that enables its members to be fulfilled as fully engaged contributors to their community. It provides the foundation for a healthy and thriving school community that takes care of all of its members, especially those with the least advantage. A socially just community insures that there is complete and genuine fairness and equality. To that end, each and every school community member (students, faculty/staff, parents/guardians, family members, community members, etc.) no matter his or her age, role, power base, privilege, advantage, etc.:

1. Has value, worth and is treated with dignity;

2. Is assured protection of his/her liberties, rights and opportunities;
3. Is honored and celebrated for his/her unique background, culture, language, gifts and/or challenges;
4. Has fair and equal access to all curricular, extra-curricular educational and social programs;
5. Is provided the opportunity to have a meaningful voice in decision making and policy creation; and
6. Feels physically, emotionally and intellectually safe to exercise his/her voice, participate freely and contribute to the wellbeing and benefit of the entire school community.

#### I. Applicable Standards:

##### A. For School Employees:

1. All certified educators in the State of Connecticut are accountable for compliance with the regulations enacted by the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Bureau of Education Standards and Certification, including, but not limited to the Connecticut Code of Professional Responsibility For Teachers, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, (Section 10-145d0400a) and the Connecticut

##### Code

of Professional Responsibility For Administrators, Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (Section 10-145d0400b) (collectively "Codes"), as they may be amended from time to time.

2. All school employees are accountable for compliance with the policies and procedures of the Board applicable to personnel, including, but not limited to nondiscrimination, conduct and professional rights and responsibilities.

##### B. For Students:

1. All students are accountable for compliance with applicable codes of student conduct, policies and procedures for student participation and behavior.

##### C. For Board Members:

1. Board Members are accountable for compliance with the Board's Code of Ethics and applicable Board By-laws governing Board member conduct.

##### D. For Persons Contracted to Provide Services to the Board:

1. Persons contracted to provide services to the Board (such as bus drivers, consultants, evaluators or the like) are accountable for compliance with such codes of ethics as may apply professionally, the terms of any such contract, as well as the policies and procedures of the Board generally applicable to persons on school property.

##### E. For Other Participants in the School Community:

1. Parents/guardians, family members, visitors and other persons on school property or otherwise participating in programs or services of the Westbrook Public Schools are accountable for conducting themselves in accordance with applicable policies and procedures pertaining to such participation.

#### II. Alignment with Conn. Gen. Statutes Section 10-222(d):

- A. This Policy is aligned with C.G.S. 10-222(d), "An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying Laws."

B. In order to be in compliance with applicable law, all individual schools in the District of Westbrook must adhere to the following requirements:

1. In order to develop and maintain an "Effective School Climate Improvement Process", schools must develop and implement "Improvement Plans," administer and utilize the findings of "School Climate Surveys," and engage in a continuing systemic process of learning and evaluating identified goals and objectives. The vision of the Westbrook Board of Education is to support a vibrant and thriving school community by removing any barriers to teaching and learning, and re-engaging those who may have become disengaged.

2. In order to implement an Effective School Climate Improvement Process, qualified and effective leadership is required. Such leadership shall be developed through

- (a) the implementation and satisfaction of appropriate professional development,
- (b) the Superintendent or the appointment of a Coordinator by the Superintendent,
- (c) the appointment of Specialists at each school building by the Coordinator, and

(d) the establishment of a Committee at each school building.

### III. Safe School Climate Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. The Superintendent shall assume the role of, or appoint from among existing school district administrators, a district Coordinator.
- B. The duties of the Coordinator shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) and the Westbrook Board of Education's Regulation Section 5131.911. at a minimum, and shall also include the following:
- i. Overseeing the implementation of the district's Safe School Climate Plan;
  - ii. Preventing, identifying and responding to any kind of mean-spirited behavior including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the schools of the district, in collaboration with the Specialists, as well as the Board and the Superintendent as appropriate;
  - iii. Providing data and information regarding school climate improvement to the Connecticut State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Superintendent as may be required by law;
  - iv. Meeting with the Specialists at least twice during the school year to:
    - (i) identify strategies to improve school climate that promotes high quality relationships among all school community members, and, as a result, is designed to eliminate intentional and unintentional mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to bullying and harassment,
    - (ii) make recommendations concerning amendments to the district's Safe School Climate Plan, as well as to make recommendations concerning amendments to each individual school's "School Climate Improvement Plan," and
    - (iii) oversee completion of each individual school's "School Climate Survey;" and
  - v. Providing leadership for the following activities:
    1. Advancement of evidence-based policy and best practices to improve school climate, foster high quality relationships, and promote physical, emotional, and intellectual school safety; and
    2. Development and dissemination of resources and training materials for Specialists, Committees, school staff and community members about issues of school climate and school climate improvement efforts and activities.

### IV. Safe School Climate Specialist Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. At the beginning of each school year, the Principal of each school, or the Principal's designee as approved by the Coordinator, shall serve as the Specialist for the individual school to which he or she is assigned.
- B. The Specialist's duties shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) and the Westbrook Board of Education's Regulation Section 5131.911. In addition to these duties, the Specialist shall:
- a. Investigate, or supervise the investigation of, reported acts of mean-spirited behaviors including, but not limited to reports of alleged bullying and harassment in the school in accordance with this Policy;
  - b. Collect and maintain records of such reports in the school;
  - c. Act as the primary school official responsible for preventing, identifying and responding to such reports in the school and leading efforts to improve school climate;
  - d. Chair or co-chair the Committee and establish the meeting calendar for the Committee meetings; and
  - e. Serve as the primary supervisor of the school's School Climate Improvement Plan for the implementation and the monitoring of the School Climate Improvement Plan.

### V. Safe School Climate Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

- A. In collaboration with the Coordinator, the Specialist at each school building shall form a representative Committee consisting of a demographically representative group of students enrolled in the school (if developmentally appropriate); parents of students enrolled in the school; school personnel, including, but not limited to teachers, administrators, student support personnel; other medical and mental health experts where available; and community members.
- B. Such Committee shall be formed no later than 30 days from the effective date of this Policy.

C. Committee composition/membership shall be reviewed annually by the Coordinator and the Specialist.

D. The duties of the Committee shall include those enumerated under C.G.S. Section 10-222(d) and the Westbrook Board of Education's Regulation Section 5131.911. In addition to these duties, the Committee shall, at a minimum, perform the following duties:

- i. Supervising the scheduling and administration of "School Climate Surveys" to students, staff, parents, and community members;
- ii. Setting goals and tracking survey completion;
- iii. Reaching out to staff and parents before administering the Survey;
- iv. Providing Survey data to the Coordinator;
- v. Reviewing and analyzing the school-based school climate assessment data;
- vi. Using the data and other appropriate data and information to identify strengths and challenges with respect to improving school climate;
- vii. Using the data to create and/or update the school-based School Climate Improvement Plan;
- viii. Overseeing the implementation of the school-based School Climate Improvement Plan;
- ix. Implementing the School Climate Improvement Plan and monitoring the progress of school climate improvement, in collaboration with the Coordinator;
- x. Overseeing the implementation of annual school climate assessment at the school;
- xi. Reviewing and making recommendations to the Coordinator regarding the safe school climate plan based on issues and experiences specific to the school;
- xii. Overseeing the education of students, school employees and parents/guardians of students on issues relating to improving school climate;
- xiii. Holding meetings at least four times each year, at which minutes shall be kept and made available to the public; and
- xiv. Performing any other duties as determined by the Specialist and/or the Coordinator that are related to improving school climate in the school, or required by law.

#### VI. School Climate Surveys:

A. Each school, supported with oversight by the Coordinator and under the guidance of the Committee, shall administer, on an annual basis, at the same time of year each year, the School Climate Survey in order to assess a school's strengths and challenges.

B. Preparation for Survey Administration: All survey participants should be made aware of the purpose and value of the survey as determined by the Committee prior to administration, so that the school will receive authentic data to help drive decisions that will benefit the entire school community.

#### VII. School Climate Improvement Plans:

A. In collaboration with the Coordinator, each Specialist shall develop and/or update an Improvement Plan based on the findings of the School Climate Survey.

1. The Specialist and the Committee shall develop and/or update the Improvement Plan, using the School Climate Improvement Plan template (Appendix D), taking into consideration the needs of all key Stakeholders, with sensitivity to equity and diversity.
2. The Improvement Plan shall support the actualization of the following five Standards.

Standard 1: Develop a shared vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.

Standard 2: Develop policies that promote social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual learning as well as systems that address barriers to learning.

Standard 3: Implement practices that promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students and student engagement as well as addressing barriers to learning.

Standard 4: Create an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Standard 5: Develop meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

3. Each Improvement Plan shall be submitted to the Coordinator for approval and implementation no later than mid-September of each school year. The Coordinator may provide feedback to the Committee with respect to amendments to the Improvement Plan.

VIII. Codes of conduct for both students and adults shall be amended to reinforce positive school climates by detailing, and consistently recognizing and supporting positive behavior, applying appropriate graduated and restorative responses for inappropriate conduct, in order to address the root causes of the individual's specific conduct, while promoting physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe and supportive teaching and learning environments for all students and adults in the school community. Restorative practice builds community, celebrates accomplishments, transforms conflict, rebuilds and strengthens relationships. Such responses shall be educative and restorative and be chosen in response to the context of each situation to support relationship-building and improvement, and with particular attention to issues of equity. These responses may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:

- a. Reflective activities;
- b. School counseling support;
- c. Anger management;
- d. Health counseling or intervention;
- e. Mental health counseling;
- f. Skill building such as social and emotional, cognitive, and intellectual skills;
- g. Resolution circles and restorative conferencing;
- h. Community service;
- i. Conflict resolution or mediation; and
- j. Other actions detailed in accordance with Board policies and procedures such as those regarding:
  - i. Participation in extracurricular activities;
  - ii. Student discipline (including detention, in or out of school suspension, and expulsion); and
  - iii. Adult/employee professional responsibility, conduct, separation/disciplinary actions.

#### IX. Professional Development

- a. Mandated school climate trainings shall be provided by individuals and/or organizations deemed qualified service providers by the Superintendent and/or the Coordinator.
- b. All school employees, as defined in this policy, shall participate in any mandated school climate trainings and update sessions.
- c. The District shall provide necessary on-site coaching and/or technical assistance in the implementation phase of school climate improvement.

#### X. Funding

The District shall budget sufficient funding to satisfy the requirements of this Policy. Such funding shall be distributed accordingly, with Superintendent approval, for assessments and professional development, as well as for community outreach, training, coaching, and technical assistance.

#### XI. Accountability

- a. The Board shall establish, foster, support and maintain a "no fault" framework and promote a culture of trust. Such a framework and culture is evident by a shared intent to:
  - A. Take collective responsibility for what has been accomplished and/or not accomplished;
  - B. Learn from what has been done well and not so well;
  - C. Work together to improve the quality and character of school life;
  - D. Create a highly effective professional learning community (PLC) whose responsibility it is to:
    1. Establish norms, values and goals that encourage and support collaborative and courageous leadership;
    2. Model and provide high quality academic, social, emotional and ethical learning; and
    3. Engage in ongoing reflection and evaluation.
- b. The Board shall hold itself, its individual members, and the Superintendent to the

standards of this Policy and promote its intent and goals.

c. The Superintendent shall hold himself/herself, the staff, the students and other members of the school community to the standards of this Policy.

XII. Compliance with Other Applicable Laws: This Policy does not modify or eliminate a school's obligation to comply with state and federal constitutional protections and civil rights laws applicable to schools.

XIII. Liberal Interpretation: The design of this Policy being to facilitate the operation of the school district in a positive manner and to advance justice, the Policy provisions will be interpreted liberally in any case where it shall be manifested that a strict adherence to them will work surprise or a manifest injustice.

Policy adopted: March 19, 2014 ,**Rev. Nov. 11, 2015**

### **Board of Education Policy Violations**

If a student has violated a board of education policy it may result in an out of school suspension. In addition, when a student violates the law, that student will be referred to legal authorities.

### **Bullying and Harassment - Board of Education Policy 5131.911**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5131.914%20School%20Climate.pdf#page=38>

The Board is committed to creating and maintaining a physically, emotionally, and intellectually safe educational environment free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In order to foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, the Board has developed the following Safe School Climate Plan, consistent with state law and Board Policy. This Plan represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and teen dating violence, sets forth the Board's expectations for creating a positive school climate and thus preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying and teen dating violence.

Bullying behavior and teen dating violence are strictly prohibited, and students who are found to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district's commitment to addressing bullying behavior and teen dating violence, however, involves a multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a positive school climate in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff.

#### **I. Prohibition Against Bullying and Retaliation**

- A. The Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds and teen dating violence at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.
- B. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school;
- C. The Board further prohibits any form of teen dating violence outside of the school setting if such violence substantially disrupts the educational process;
- D. In addition to prohibiting student acts that constitute bullying, the Board also prohibits discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying.
- E. Students who engage in bullying behavior in violation of Board Policy and the Safe School Climate Plan shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law.

## II. Definition of Bullying

- A. "Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same district that:
1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
  2. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
  3. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
  4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
  5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- B. Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

## III. Other Definitions

- A. "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.
- B. "Electronic communication" means any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectric or photo-optical system;
- C. "Hostile environment" means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate;
- D. "Mobile electronic device" means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;
- E. "Outside of the school setting" means at a location, activity or program that is not school related, or through the use of an electronic device or a mobile electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education;
- F. "Prevention and intervention strategy" may include, but is not limited to:
- (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model or approach to safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education,
  - (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts,
  - (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, the lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur,
  - (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high

school,

(5) individual interventions with the bully, parents and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents and school employees,

(6) school-wide training related to safe school climate,

(7) student peer training, education and support, and

(8) promotion of parent involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

G. "School climate" means the quality and character of school life with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community between and among students and adults.

H. "School employee" means (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle or high school; or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in a public elementary, middle or high school, pursuant to a contract with the local or regional board of education.

I. "School-Sponsored Activity" shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored, recognized or authorized by the Board of Education.

J. "Teen dating violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship.

## VI. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Complaints of Bullying

A. Students and parents/guardians of students may file written reports of bullying. Written reports of bullying shall be reasonably specific as to the basis for the report, including the time and place of the alleged conduct, the number of incidents, the target of the suspected bullying, and the names of potential witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any building administrator and/or the Safe School Climate Specialist (i.e. building principal), and all reports shall be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with this plan.

B. Students may make anonymous reports of bullying to any school employee. Students may also request anonymity when making a report, even if the student's identity is known to the school employee. In cases where a student requests anonymity, the Safe School Climate Specialist or his/her designee shall meet with the student (if the student's identity is known) to review the request for anonymity and discuss the impact that maintaining the anonymity of the complainant may have on the investigation and on any possible remedial action. All anonymous reports shall be reviewed and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation. To the extent such action may be taken that does not disclose the source of the report, and is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

C. School employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying shall orally notify the Safe School Climate Specialist or another school administrator if the Safe School Climate Specialist is unavailable, no later than one (1) school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying. The school employee shall then file a written report not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.

D. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall be responsible for reviewing any anonymous reports of bullying and shall investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports. The Safe School Climate Specialist shall also be responsible for promptly notifying both the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have

committed an act of bullying, as well as the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed, that an investigation has commenced. In order to allow the district to adequately investigate complaints filed by a student or parent/guardian, the parent of the student suspected of being bullied should be asked to provide consent to permit the release of that student's name in connection with the investigation process, unless the student and/or parent has requested anonymity.

E. In investigating reports of bullying, the Safe School Climate Specialist or designee will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegations and the ages of the students involved. The Safe School Climate Specialist will interview witnesses, as necessary, reminding the alleged perpetrator and other parties that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

#### **Student Discipline - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5114**

<https://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5114%20Student%20Discipline.pdf>

#### **Non-Discrimination Policy - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5141.5**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5141%205%20-%20Sex%20Discrimination%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment.pdf>

It is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. Students, Board employees and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Legal References:**

United States Constitution, Amendment XIV

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et seq.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 C.F.R § 106.1, et seq.

Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District, 524 U.S. 274 (1998)

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)

Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties, 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (Jan. 19, 2001).

Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence (April 4, 2011).

Constitution of the State of Connecticut, Article I, Section 20.

#### **Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Harassment - Westbrook Board of Education Policy 5145.5**

<http://web.westbrookctschools.org/Policy/Policies/5000/5141%205%20-%20Sex%20Discrimination%20and%20Sexual%20Harassment.pdf>

It is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. Students, Board employees and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Any student or employee who engages in conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **Definitions**

Sex discrimination occurs when a person, because of his or her sex, is denied participation in or the benefits of any education program receiving federal financial assistance.

Sexual harassment: In a school setting, sexual harassment is conduct that 1) is sexual in nature; 2) is unwelcome; and 3) denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's educational program. Sexual harassment can be verbal, nonverbal or physical. Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment creates a hostile environment if the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive such that it interferes with or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the school's program. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are examples of sexual conduct prohibited by this policy:

1. Statements or other conduct indicating that a student's submission to, or rejection of, sexual overtures or

- advances will affect the student's grades and/or other academic progress.
2. Unwelcome attention and/or advances of a sexual nature, including verbal comments, sexual invitations, leering and physical touching.
  3. Display of sexually suggestive objects, or use of sexually suggestive or obscene remarks, invitations, letters, emails, text messages, notes, slurs, jokes, pictures, cartoons, epithets or gestures.
  4. Touching of a sexual nature or telling sexual or dirty jokes.
  5. Transmitting or displaying emails or websites of a sexual nature.
  6. Using computer systems, including email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogging or the use of social networking websites, or other forms of electronic communications, to engage in any conduct prohibited by this policy.

**Sexual Violence:** Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment. For the purposes of this policy, sexual violence refers to physical acts that are sexual in nature, perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's use of drugs or alcohol, the victim's age, the difference in age between the victim and the perpetrator, an intellectual or other disability, or any other factor that would prevent the victim from giving consent.

#### **Procedure**

It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to report such claims. Students are encouraged to promptly report complaints of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to the appropriate personnel, as set forth in the Administrative Regulations implementing this Policy. The district will investigate such complaints promptly, take interim measures, and take corrective action where appropriate. The district will maintain confidentiality to the extent appropriate. The district will not tolerate any reprisals or retaliation that occur as a result of the good faith reporting of charges of sexual harassment or sex discrimination. Any such reprisals or retaliation will result in disciplinary action against the retaliator.

The school district will periodically provide staff development for district administrators, and regularly distribute this Policy and the implementing Administrative Regulations to staff and students in an effort to maintain an environment free of sexual discrimination and sex harassment.

Sex discrimination and/or sexual harassment may also constitute bullying behavior under the Board's Bullying Behavior in the Schools Policy.

#### **Legal References:**

United States Constitution, Amendment XIV, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. § 1681, et seq., Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 34 C.F.R § 106.1, et seq., *Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District*, 524 U.S. 274 (1998), *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, 526 U.S. 629 (1999)  
Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Revised Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties, 66 Fed. Reg. 5512 (Jan. 19, 2001)., Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter: Sexual Violence (April 4, 2011). Constitution of the State of Connecticut, Article I, Section 20.

Policy revised: June 13, 2017

#### **Complaint Procedure**

A student or parent who has a complaint should first bring the matter to the most appropriate teacher, coach, or advisor. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the principal should be requested. If this outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the Superintendent should be requested.

#### **Title IX Coordinator**

The Title XI Coordinator for Westbrook Board of Education is the Superintendent of Schools, Patricia Ciccone, located at the Central Office, 158 McVeagh Road, Westbrook, CT 06498 and whose telephone number is (860) 399-6432.

#### **Equal Opportunity**

The Westbrook Board of Education and Public School District is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Westbrook Board of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry,

marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Connecticut State Department of Education does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction.