

Student/Parent Handbook
Melrose Elementary Schools
360 Lynn Fells Parkway
Melrose MA 02176
(781) 662-2000
School Year: **2008-2009**

Melrose Public School Administration

Mr. Joseph F. Casey	Superintendent
Mr. Greg Zammuto	Business Manager
Mrs. Patricia White-Lambright	Pupil Personnel Services Administrator
Ms. Patricia Muxie	Director of Curriculum

Melrose High School Administration

Mr. Joseph Dillon	High School Principal
Ms. Marianne Farrell	Assistant Principal
Mr. Robert Savarino	Assistant Principal

Melrose Middle School Administration

Mr. Thomas Brow	Middle School Principal
Mr. Martin Stanton	Assistant Principal

Melrose Elementary School Administration

Ms. Jennifer Corduck	Title I Early Childhood Center Coordinator
Dr. Dennet Sidell	Hoover School Principal
Mr. Jeff Strasnick	Horace Mann School Principal
Mr. Brent Conway	Lincoln School Principal
Ms. Kerry Clery	Roosevelt School Principal
Ms. Bryna Lakin-Davis	Winthrop School Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians/Students,

Welcome to the Melrose Public Elementary Schools! Our schools represent a place where talents are developed and recognized. We strive to help each child achieve his/her highest potential. In order to make this happen, we firmly believe that the process of education is both life-long and team-oriented. A high level of involvement and good communication between administrators, teachers, parents, and students is essential in reaching our goals. This handbook serves as a guide, which will hopefully be the cornerstone of communication as we work together throughout the school year. It contains most of the information you will need on a day-to-day basis. You will find information relating to the school calendar, school policies and regulations, expectations for conduct, emergency procedures, and opportunities for volunteers. Please keep it in a place that is handy for future reference. We hope you will find it helpful. Make sure you and your child/ren sign the acknowledgment page at the end of the booklet and return it by the due date.

Sincerely,
Pat Muxie and the Elementary
Administrative Team

NOTE: For your convenience, all changes to the 2007-2008 handbook have been typed in bold-faced print in this year's handbook.

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MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS
MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our Mission: Every child in the Melrose Public Schools is given the opportunity to reach his/her maximum potential and achieve educational excellence through the dedicated efforts of inspired and caring educators and the support of family and community.

Our Vision: All students will become life-long learners and successful participants in a global community.



STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

An important piece of legislation affecting the public schools was passed in August 1971. This law, Chapter 76 section 5 of the general Laws of 1971, is intended to prohibit discrimination in the public schools and guarantees each student the right to equal educational opportunity, as amended in December, 1993.

“No child may be excluded from any school nor prohibited or discouraged from participating in any course, activity, or resource available in such schools on account of race, gender, handicap, color, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.”

Our district also complies with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106. This requires recipients of federal funds to designate a Title IX coordinator, adopt and disseminate a nondiscrimination policy, and put grievance procedures in place to address complaints of discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities. Our Title IX Coordinator is Patricia White-Lambright, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. You may reach her by calling 781-979-2150.

HOLIDAY AND/OR CULTURAL EVENTS CELEBRATIONS POLICY

The Melrose Public Schools recognizes that, “Holidays are a time to promote greater understanding and tolerance among students of different traditions while respecting and adhering to the First Amendment’s prohibition against school-sponsored endorsement or promotion of religious beliefs of any kind.”

Diverse holiday and/or cultural event celebrations or assemblies should:

- Advance a child’s knowledge of society’s rich cultural and religious heritage
- Focus on several different religions or holidays
- Express the diverseness of beliefs and customs
- Never promote one religion over another.

Religious music:

- Must not dominate or be the focus of a holiday concert
- Should not be limited to a particular holiday or religious denomination.

Classroom decorations:

- Should only reflect those symbols that have come to have a secular meaning (e.g., snowflakes, candles, dreidels, Christmas trees). Crosses and nativity scenes must not be displayed.

At no time should one holiday or religion be discussed exclusively. Throughout the course of the year, there should be a balanced discussion of different religions, cultures and holidays as they occur. Children should not be expected to be the authorities on their particular religion or holiday celebration.

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 SCHOOL CALENDAR – 2008-2009

Early Release Dates: Oct. 29, Nov. 13, Dec. 11, Feb. 4, Mar. 24, Apr. 30, June 3

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	<u>SEPTEMBER</u>							<u>FEBRUARY</u>					
	H	T	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	X	X	X	X	X	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30											
	<u>OCTOBER</u>							<u>MARCH</u>					
			1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
12	H	14	15	16	17	18	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
26	27	28	29	30	31		29	30	31				
	<u>NOVEMBER</u>							<u>APRIL</u>					
						1				1	2	3	4
2	3	T	5	6	7	8	5	6	7	8	9	X	11
9	10	H	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	19	X	X	X	X	X	25
23	24	25	26	X	X	29	26	27	28	29	30		
30													
	<u>DECEMBER</u>							<u>MAY</u>					
	1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
21	22	23	X	H	X	27	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
28	X	X	X				24	H	26	27	28	29	30
							31						
	<u>JANUARY</u>							<u>JUNE</u>					
				H	X	3		1	2	3	4	5	6
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18	H	T	21	22	23	24	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	28	29	30				

	<u>June 19th=181 days</u>						<u>June 26th=186 days</u>						
Sept. 2	Teachers on Duty						Dec.24-Jan.2	Winter Vacation					
Sept. 3	1st Day for Gr.1-5						Jan. 19	M.L. King Day					
Sept. 5	1 st Day for K (Half-Day)						Jan. 20	Teacher PD/No School					
Oct. 13	Columbus Day						Feb. 16-20	February Vacation					
Nov. 4	Election Day/Teacher PD-						No School						
Nov. 11	Veterans Day						April 10	Friday before Easter					
Nov. 26	Noon Dismissal						April 20-24	April Vacation					
Nov. 27, 28	Thanksgiving Break						May 25	Memorial Day					

Note: T= Teachers Only

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

At registration time, parents will be required to fill out or provide the following:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Acceptable verification of school district address.

Prior to entry into school, parents will also be required to submit immunization information and previous school experience reports if applicable.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Hours

Full-Day Kindergarten: 8:15 a.m. – 2:20 p.m.

Half-Day K Morning Session: 8:30-11:00

Half-Day K Afternoon Session: 11:55-2:30

Grades 1-5 8:15 a.m. - 2:20 p.m.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Early release days will be held with dismissal at 12:30. *The lunch program is in effect on these days.*

RECESS

Due to time and learning constraints, recess will be held to a 15-minute period in the morning. Students also go out after lunch. Lunch and recess combined is 30 minutes. In the event that morning recess is not taken, 15 minutes may be added to the lunch period.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Students are admitted to the building at 8:10 a.m. Prior to 8:05 a.m., teachers are engaged in planning and there is no playground supervision. Parents are asked to see that children are not at school before 8:05 a.m. Classes begin at 8:15 a.m. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. are tardy and should report to the office.

The school day ends at 2:20 p.m. and children go to their designated crosswalk or bus at that time.

Students who remain after hours for after-school activities are to take their coats and other belongings with them to their designated meeting site. They are not permitted to return to their classrooms for forgotten items without permission from the office. Parents are urged to pick up students promptly at the end of the day.

AFTER SCHOOL POLICY

There will be times when having a student remain after school will benefit both the child and/or the school community. Some of the reasons a student may be kept after school include the following:

- to complete work
- to receive additional individual help in a particular academic area
- to establish immediate disciplinary consequences for unacceptable behavior.

Teachers will make arrangements ahead of time with parents to enable the child to complete work or receive academic help after school.

In the case of disciplinary action, parents will be notified by the teacher that the child will be remaining after school from 2:20-2:50 on that day. Transportation or pick-up arrangements are the responsibility of the parent. Parental cooperation and support in this matter will ensure a quality learning environment for all students.

ATTENDANCE

Pupils are expected to attend school every day school is in session, unless prevented by personal illness or family emergency. Massachusetts General Law states that a Superintendent or his/her designee may excuse cases of necessary absence for causes other than physical incapacity. A NOTE TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHER AFTER ANY ABSENCE IS MANDATORY! THIS IS IN ADDITION TO A PHONE CALL TO THE SCHOOL'S SAVE-A-CHILD LINE BEFORE 8 A.M. ON THE DAY OF THE ABSENCE. A reason for the absence should be stated in the note. Children who are absent during the day due to illness should not attend school functions at night. Absences in excess of fifteen days per school year *may* lead to retention at any grade level.

Parents should be aware of the fact that if PLANNED absences do NOT coincide with school vacation periods, students will not be allowed to make up classwork or homework for credit. This may have a negative effect on grades. Planned absences and time out of school should coincide with school vacation periods. This gives children the clear message that school is important and a priority.

TARDINESS

School starts promptly at 8:15. Students arriving after that time are considered tardy. A NOTE IS REQUIRED WHENEVER YOUR CHILD IS LATE UNLESS THE TARDINESS IS DUE TO DELAYED DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION. Notes should be turned in to the classroom teacher, not the school secretary. Notes should include the student's name, reason for the tardiness, parent's signature, and a phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached.

Parents will be contacted via telephone by the principal after the student reaches his/her fourth tardy in one trimester. Habitual tardiness may result in: loss of recess to make up missed work, after-school detention, or suspension.

SAVE - A - CHILD SERVICE

We have a call-in service if your child is to be absent or tardy. The telephone numbers for our child safety program are:

Lincoln	781-979-2252	Roosevelt	781-979-2272
Hoover	781-979-2182	Winthrop	781-979-2282
Horace Mann	781-979-2192		

Please put these numbers with your emergency telephone numbers. You may call the number any evening or until 8:00 a.m. each morning and your message will be recorded. Give your child's name, the date, his/her teacher's name, and the reason for the absence/tardiness.

DISMISSAL

Parents are to send a note to the classroom teacher if a child is to be dismissed during the day. Please give the requested dismissal time. Parents must report to the office to pick up the child at the designated time. Sign-out is required!

No student will be dismissed from school in the custody of a person other than the parent or guardian of the child. Exceptions will be made only when the parent informs the school in writing that a person other than the parent will call for the child. Proper identification may be requested.

TRANSFERS TO ANOTHER COMMUNITY

Students transferring to another community will need to have their records forwarded to their new school. Under 603 CMR 23.07 (4) (g), consent is no longer required to forward a transferring student's records to the new school. Parents should call the school as soon as possible to notify the office of the transfer. You should then come in to pick up a copy of your child's health records. Please give the office 24 hours notice and have the address of the new school available for the school secretary. A Transfer Slip will then be issued to you so that your child can enter his/her new school. Records will then be mailed. All families leaving the school system will be asked to fill out and return an exit interview form.

IN-DISTRICT STUDENT TRANSFER POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the parameters set by the Melrose School Committee for parents who want their children to attend a school other than their neighborhood school. Requests will be reviewed based on class size and honored only if space is available as defined by class size policies. Kindergarten is a one-year placement. New school assignments begin with students entering first grade. Once a student completes his/her first grade assignment, that student is guaranteed the right to complete the grade level configuration at that school.

Student Transfers During the School Year:

Requests must be submitted in writing to the building principal of the school to which admission is sought, and must include the reasons for the request. Requests submitted by the close of the school week will be processed by the close of the following school week. Requests will be honored if space is available. Requests for transfers will be closed for the current school year on April 1st.

Student Reassignment for the Start of a New School Year:

Requests for a student to attend a school other than the one to which s/he is presently assigned or would be enrolled normally must be submitted both to the building principal of the school to which admission is sought as well as the building principal of the sending school, before July 1st. A decision on all school reassignment requests for the new school year will be made beginning August 1st.

Only one transfer per year is allowed unless:

- the child returns to his/her original school within one month of the new assignment
- there are extenuating circumstances necessitating exemptions.

The Superintendent and the receiving school principal must approve any exemptions for students requesting more than one transfer per year.

Parents choosing to have their children attend a school other than their neighborhood school are responsible for transporting their children to and from their assigned school.

If there are more requests for admission by transfer or reassignment to a particular school at a particular grade level than there are available seats, then available seats will be given to applicants based on the following prioritized criteria:

1. Sibling preference (brothers and/or sisters)

All students whose parents make timely application and already have other children attending that school are given priority of assignment to that school.

2. Order of receipt of application.

(continued)

A parent who is dissatisfied with the school assignment or transfer, may send a letter to:

**Mr. Joseph F. Casey
Superintendent
Melrose Public Schools
360 Lynn Fells Parkway
Melrose, MA 02176**

The Superintendent will follow procedure in reviewing the letter and will send a reply within ten school days. A copy of the letter will be sent to the principals of the sending and/or receiving schools.

NON - SCHEDULED VACATION PERIODS POLICY

When a student is not in class, it is a lost learning opportunity. Vacations during school time are discouraged. At times, however, there are some extraordinary circumstances that are unavoidable. In such cases, parents are to submit a note to the principal before the absence, indicating the circumstances.

Teachers do not provide unscheduled vacation homework or classwork. Students are encouraged to keep a daily log or journal of their activities to share when they return to the classroom.

MELROSE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ELEMENTARY CODE OF CONDUCT

STUDENT GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS
MELROSE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

This code of conduct has been carefully prepared to enable you to know and understand the disciplinary philosophy, policies, and practices of the Melrose Public Elementary Schools. Since we feel that parental support is essential to the welfare of our students and to the achievement of our goal of self-discipline, we hope the policies outlined are reinforced by, and consistent with, your personal philosophies. To indicate that you are aware of and support the contents of this code, please read it carefully and discuss it with your children.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The cornerstone of our code of conduct is our Declaration of Human Rights. It is a simple statement of belief that drives our words and actions. It promotes a healthy, safe, and high-quality learning environment. Our Declaration states:

“We believe in a community of ALL people. We are all human beings. We all have hopes, dreams and talents. This sameness is stronger than our differences in color, culture, religion or beliefs. It binds us together. To hurt someone because he/she is different is wrong. We promise to show respect for each person in our words and actions. We promise to help make Melrose one community, open to all.”

To show our commitment to the principle that all people should be treated with respect, each Melrose elementary school has its own Human Rights Coordinator. The name of the coordinator will be given to parents at the start of each school year. The responsibilities of the coordinator will be to act as a resource person for the dissemination of human rights information, to encourage the celebration of diversity by holding annual school-wide events, and to promote equal opportunity and harmony for all by identifying potential human rights problems and developing a plan to resolve them. They will also assist in creating a human rights display in each school. Coordinators meet quarterly and participate in training offered by the City of Melrose in mediating bias incidents.

GOOD MANNERS

Good manners need to be practiced and exhibited in order for the school community to embody the principles extolled in the Mission Statement of the Melrose Public Schools.

Good Manners are expressed verbally and symbolically:

Verbal examples include saying, “Thank you,” “Please,” “Excuse me,” “I’m sorry,” “Pardon me,” and “You’re welcome.” Verbal manners also include calling adults by their proper title – Ms., Miss, Mrs., and Mr., as well as using, “yes” and “no.”

Symbolic manners are expressed in many different ways: holding doors for others, picking something up when dropped by others, stopping to allow another person to pass in front or ahead of you, not walking between two people who are talking, waiting to be called on or acknowledged rather than interrupting, assisting and asking if someone is all right when injured, covering mouth when sneezing, sharing your possessions, and exhibiting proper eating manners.

Good Manners toward all community members:

Proper manners ensure that you: will treat others as you would want to be treated, are respectful of people and property, have the opportunity for equal participation, and display tolerance for the diversity of others.

PARENT ROLE

Parents should respect their children and expect respect from their children. A mutual respect between parents and the school is expected.

Parents should encourage their children to be respectful, polite, courteous, obedient and cooperative.

DRESS CODE

We believe that students should be encouraged to dress appropriately for school. This will help remind them that school is a place of importance. A neat, clean appearance helps to instill a serious attitude toward education. Dress and grooming shall not be such as to disrupt the learning process or interfere with the rights and safety of others.

(continued)

All students should keep the following dress code guidelines in mind:

- Torn, ragged or dirty pants and/or shirts are inappropriate
- Bare midriffs are inappropriate
- Shirts, buttons, etc. which are obscene and/or suggestive, pornographic, racist or sexist are inappropriate and, causing disruption, will be banned
- Hats, coats, or outer clothing will not be worn indoors
- Heelies (shoes with wheels built into the heels) may not be worn in school.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

School Grounds

Rules that apply to the general school setting ensure a safe, respectful relationship among members of our school community.

Unacceptable behaviors include: fighting, swearing, verbal abuse, theft, cheating, sexual behavior; wrestling; spitting; and swinging of backpacks. Children should have respect for property and people.

Dogs, with the exception of seeing-eye dogs, are not allowed on school premises.

Before School Line-up Time

Rules that apply to the morning line-up time ensure a safe, injury-free setting as well as an orderly procedure for entering the building. Students should line up upon request or hearing the bell ring at school. Inappropriate school ground behaviors as listed above will not be tolerated.

Playground

Rules that apply to the playground are to ensure a safe, respectful environment in which to play.

Play safely.

Rough play; use of hard balls, bouncing balls against the building; or going behind the building is not safe play. Softballs/bats will be used under the supervision of teachers only. Leave sand, snowballs, rocks, or sticks on the ground. Do not leave the schoolyard. Deliberate interruption or disruption of games is prohibited.

Play fairly. Be a good friend.

Play Equipment

Rules that apply to the play equipment are to ensure the safety of children playing on and in the area and ensure the respectful use of property.

Go down the slide feet first. Jumping off platforms, pushing, vandalism, mistreatment of equipment, or writing on equipment will not be tolerated.

Games, roller blades, and skateboards, are prohibited from school property and are to be left at home.

Electronic Devices

Students are not permitted to bring in laser pointers, radios, tape/CD players, iPods, Mp3 players, Walkman stereos, headphones, GameBoys, or personal beepers. In many cases, these promote unsafe conditions and hinder the learning process. **Cell phones may not be on or used during the school day. Students are also prohibited from using a cell phone or other such device to record conversations, or send/ receive text messages, pictures, or other such communication. Principals may confiscate the cell phones of students who violate these regulations. In this event, the cell phone may be picked up at a later date as determined by the principal or the parent may take possession of the device upon request in person.**

Vandalism

Vandalism includes intentional, willful, and malicious destruction of public or private property in which the student paints, marks, etches, scratches, places stickers on, or otherwise defaces property. Acts of vandalism will result in: community service appropriate to the offense, suspension, and/or expulsion.

Travel to and from School

Respect the property of others. Cross at crosswalks. Don't walk between cars. School behavior applies here as well. Roller blades may not be used for travel to and from school. Travel directly to and from school. Walk with others if possible.

Drop Off/Pick Up

Instead of children being dropped off in a way that may congest traffic, parents should drop off children a block away and let them walk to the crossing guard to allow traffic to flow.

Children and siblings should be encouraged to stand out of the way of others when waiting for someone to exit the school or when exiting the school themselves. Children should take care not to walk on the grass. Children are not allowed back in the school building without permission once they have been dismissed. Parents are urged to pick up children promptly.

Library

Each Melrose elementary school has its own library/media center.

Books should be returned in good condition and returned to their shelves or the librarian's cart when due. **Our parents and schools work hard to enhance our library collections and materials. For the purpose of keeping our collections available and complete, overdue library media center materials must be returned or paid for prior to the check-out of new materials. In June, notices will be sent home to the family of any student having outstanding library materials. Principals will be given a list of students who still need to return or pay for lost materials. Payment for lost books prior to the end of the school year will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Students who do not return or pay for materials will not be able to check out materials in the fall until materials are returned/paid for, or the matter is resolved in conference with the principal.**

Cafeteria

Rules that apply to the cafeteria ensure a safe, orderly, healthy and respectful eating environment for all. Proper table manners should be exhibited at all times. Children are responsible for cleaning up their own area.

Children are expected to:

- Treat the lunch supervisors with respect
- Raise hand and be acknowledged before speaking out
- Talk in a quiet tone of voice and stop talking when the lunch supervisor speaks to the class
- Dispose of trash when given permission to do so.

Only in emergency situations will children be given permission to leave the lunchroom. They are expected to walk quietly through the halls to and from lunch. Other classes are working. Children may not stay in at lunch recess without a note from parents with the reason indicated.

Halls

Rules that apply to the halls ensure the safe and orderly passage of all who enter the school and ensure respectful observance of quiet for those in classrooms and other work settings in the school. Children should stay to the right, hold doors, not push or shove, not cut in line, not scuff feet, and not talk or run when passing in the halls. Children should keep orderly lines.

Bathrooms

Rules that apply to the bathroom ensure the safe, orderly use of property. Children should display quiet/calm behavior and clean up after themselves. The following activities are PROHIBITED in the bathroom: playing and loitering; throwing towels or toilet paper; climbing over or under stalls, deliberate flooding of bathrooms, vandalism and writing on walls or stalls, destruction of property.

Office

As the office area is a place of business, students who enter the area should be quiet and respectful of office business.

Party Invitations

To ensure sensitivity and avoid any hurt feelings, invitations to parties should be mailed to children's home addresses. Invitations will not be distributed in school OR ON SCHOOL PREMISES BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL.

Language and Gestures

Disruptive language and/or gestures, which violate community standards of acceptability, are not allowed in school or at school-related events. Examples of offensive language/gestures shall include, but are not limited to: language/gestures that are obscene, profane, racist, or sexist.

Bullying

Bullying and harassment of students can create an atmosphere of fear and anxiety for all members of the school community. Bullying can affect the ability of a student to attend school; to learn and progress effectively in school; and to participate in activities inside and outside of school, including traveling to and from school, walking in the corridors, eating in the school cafeteria, playing in the school yard and participating in special or extracurricular activities. Bullying behaviors that are not addressed can lead to serious adverse consequences for students, including academic, attendance or psychological problems. The failure to address bullying behaviors also gives other students the message that it is permissible to engage in negative behaviors.

Prohibition Against Bullying and Harassment: Bullying of students occurring in the schools is prohibited by law and will not be tolerated by the Melrose Public Schools. For purposes of this policy, "school" includes schools buildings, school grounds, school-sponsored activities, including social events, field trips, sports events, and similar school-sponsored events and functions, and travel to and from school and/or school-sponsored events.

Definition of bullying: Typically, bullying is a continuing pattern of intimidation or abuse by one or more persons against another person or persons, through verbal, physical, mental or written interactions in an attempt to gain dominance over another. It can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, the following types of behavior:

Physical aggression against students, including assaults on student property
Intimidation or extortion, in any form, including cyber-bullying
Oral or written threats
Threatening looks or gestures
Teasing, name-calling or putdowns
Cruel rumors
False accusations and
Social isolation, such as shunning.

Intervention and Response to Alleged Bullying: The Melrose Public Schools takes allegations of bullying seriously and will respond promptly to complaints and allegations of bullying. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, school officials will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and to impose corrective action, as necessary.

A school employee who observes, suspects or becomes aware of an act of bullying is expected to notify the principal immediately. Depending upon the severity of the incident, school officials may implement a student safety plan; separate and supervise the students involved; provide staff support for students; and/or develop a supervision plan with parents. In addition, school officials may require the offender(s) to work with school personnel on better behavior; recommend that the offender(s) obtain counseling or other therapeutic services; impose disciplinary action, up to and including detention, suspension, involuntary transfer to another district school, expulsion; and/or report incidents to law enforcement officials. Bystanders are encouraged to speak to an adult in the school to further reduce the effect of bullying. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures relative to the implementation of this policy. Our hard stand on bullying is in keeping with our Human Rights Declaration.

Presented and accepted with changes by MSC 3/15/05
Presented and accepted by MSC 4/12/05

Personal and School Property

Children are expected to respect public and private property. Theft or damage to school or an individual's property may result in required restitution. At the discretion of the building principal, consequences may include the responses described at the end of this section.

Personal Injury

Because students have the right to a safe environment, it is expected that:

A student shall not intentionally do bodily injury to any person or threaten any person with or without any object that can reasonably be considered a weapon:

- a. On the school grounds, during and immediately before or immediately after school hours
- b. On the school grounds at any other time when the school is being used by a school group
- c. Off the school grounds at any school activity, function or event
- d. On the way to and from school.

Substance Abuse

While the use of harmful substances is not an issue that usually needs to be addressed in our elementary schools, we include the following statement to be applied if ever necessary:

Our schools have been designated drug and tobacco free zones according to the law. Any infraction can carry the maximum legal consequence at the discretion of the principal. Students will not possess, use, transmit or be under the influence of any drug (with the exception of those medications administered under doctor's orders by the school nurse), alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. All employees, visitors, and students are not permitted to smoke, use, or possess tobacco products on school property, in the school building, on school buses, or at school sponsored events. Per an amended revised ordinance, Chapter 11, any student who violates this expectation in regard to tobacco will be subject to the following:

1st and subsequent violations- A \$50 non-criminal fine ticket is initiated by the principal or administrative assistant and issued to the student. A cover letter is sent to the parent/guardian outlining the violation and future plan of action. This fine will be paid to the city clerk within 21 days. Failure to comply will result in a summons issued by the Malden District Court. A recommendation will also be made that the student should attend a tobacco cessation program.

Infringements of Civil Rights

No student shall, by behaviors and/or remarks, interfere with the civil rights of others. This includes sexual harassment, reference to race, religion, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, or ethnic background.

Weapons

Possession or use of dangerous weapons, firearms, knives, razor blades, clubs,
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explosives, mace, or possession of a dangerous object of no reasonable use to the student at school such as a mock gun, brass knuckles, or a sharpened stick on a person/persons at school or school-sponsored events is prohibited.

Truancy and Leaving School Grounds

Students are expected to obey the state laws referring to attendance. A student who leaves the school grounds during the school day without permission will be considered truant.

Repeated Disobedience

Children are expected to respect and obey the school rules and the people who work in the school. Repeated disregard for this expectation may result in the application of the consequences described below.

DISCIPLINARY CODE OF ACTION
CONSEQUENCES WHEN RULES ARE NOT OBEYED

- Level 1 Supervisor explains that the behavior is not acceptable and in violation of school policy. He/she may escort the child to the office to meet with principal. If deemed necessary, a message of concern will be sent home and social privileges may be withheld.

- Level 2 Supervisor explains that the behavior is unacceptable and in violation of school policy. He/she escorts the child to the office to meet with the principal. At this time, communication with parents to arrange a conference to discuss the situation will take place. The parents of the child need to be aware that consideration was extended to the child with little effect and that the next offense will result in suspension.

- Level 3 Suspension (one day or greater depending on the severity of the behavior) based upon the regulations established by the School Committee.

- Level 4 Expulsion based upon the regulations established by the School Committee.

THE PRINCIPAL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BYPASS ANY OF THE LEVELS DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVED.

GROUNDS FOR SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION, LONG-TERM SUSPENSION, DISCIPLINARY TRANSFER OR EXPULSION

The suspension of a student from school is a severe disciplinary measure. It is reserved for instances of repeated offenses and/or blatant disregard for school rules in the form of behavior that has the potential to cause serious injury to members of the school community or major disruption of the educational process at the school. Therefore, when reasonable efforts to provide positive remedies are ineffective, suspension remains the right of the school and will be instituted in accordance with appropriate due process (ref. G.L. c.71, ss.37H and 37H ½).

Examples of offenses that may warrant suspension are listed below. They refer to behaviors that have the potential to cause serious injury to members of the school community or major disruption of the educational process at the school. The examples are presented as a guideline. Students who violate these rules on busses, in schools, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored events will be considered for suspension by the school administration. Disciplinary action by the principal may also be taken for behavior outside of school if he/she determines that a student's presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Offenses that may trigger review for possible suspension/expulsion from the school or school district include:

- Damage to school/private property; theft of school/private property or attempt thereof
- Use of profanity, abusive language, obscene gestures, or other speech which creates any disruption or disorder within the school
- Leaving or attempting to leave school grounds without permission
- Setting off smoke detectors or fire alarms without just cause
- Use of tobacco in any form
- Use, possession, or being under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind. (Any prescription drug should be turned over to the school administrator or school nurse in accordance with school and public health policy.)
- Possession or transmission of any firearm, knife, explosive, or other similar dangerous object appropriate to these categories
- Assault of a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide, volunteer, visitor, or other school staff on school premises or at school sponsored/related events, including athletic games.

DUE PROCESS

Where a student's violation of the Code of Conduct may result in suspension or expulsion from school, the following procedures will be followed to ensure that due process is met:

- A. Procedural requirements prior to implementation of short-term suspensions (ten days or less)
 1. Notice of charges against the student, orally or in writing
 2. Explanation of evidence
 3. An opportunity for the student to present his/her side of the story to an impartial decision-maker (e.g., school administrator)

- B. Expulsion (or suspension of more than 10 days)
 1. Notice of impending action will be issued in a form reasonably calculated, under the circumstances, to apprise the interested parties (e.g., student, parent/guardian).
 2. The student will have an opportunity to be heard prior to the judgment.
 3. A written statement of reasons shall be issued by the school administration.
 4. The student shall have access to the evidence relied upon by the school, unless releasing such evidence poses a potential threat to a witness who fears retaliation.
 5. The student shall have a right to be represented by counsel, at his/her own expense, in connection with a long-term suspension or expulsion.
 6. The student shall have a right to an adversary hearing before he/she is asked to leave the school (except where the student presents an immediate threat to the school officials, students, him/herself) with:
 - The right to present witnesses
 - The right to cross-examine
 - Written findings of fact
 - Disciplinary action appropriate to the student violation
 - Neutral decision-maker and
 - A reasonably prompt written decision.
 7. The student will have an opportunity to appeal the decision to the Superintendent of Schools provided a written request for appeal is filed within ten days of the decision for suspension or expulsion. (Such an appeal will not delay long-term suspension or expulsion.)

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All students with disabilities are expected to meet the requirements of behavior as set forth in this handbook, unless the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for a student specifically indicates that the student is not expected to comply with such rules, or is expected to comply with modified rules, as described below. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for special education students before they may be excluded from their programs for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, as described below. Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, must also be afforded these increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than 10 school days in a given year or a change in placement. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities.

- 1) The IEP for every student eligible for special education or related services must indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
- 2) The principal or designee will notify Pupil Personnel Services if a student with a disability commits an offense that warrants suspension or removal from the program described in the student's IEP according to the discipline code, and a record shall be kept of such notice.
- 3) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to 10 consecutive school days in a school year, or for shorter periods that constitute a pattern of removal and accumulate to more than ten (10) school days, in the same manner as a student in the general education program. Exclusions for longer periods of time are considered to constitute a change in the student's placement.
- 4) Whenever the principal contemplates changing a special education student's placement through the disciplinary process, the student's parents must be sent a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards, notifying them of the procedural protections available to special education students.
- 5) In general, before a student with a disability may be excluded from his/her program for more than 10 school days in a given school year, the student's Team must meet to conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) for the purpose of developing and implementing interventions to assist the student in avoiding the problematic behavior in the future. If an FBA already has
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been conducted and a behavioral intervention plan (BIP) exists, the Team should review and modify the BIP, as necessary, to address the student's behavior.

- 6) In addition, before a student with a disability may be excluded for more than 10 school days in a given school year, relevant members of the student's Team, as determined by the district and the student's parent(s), must meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (i.e., whether the student's behavior (1) was caused by [had a direct and substantial relationship to] his/her disability; or (2) was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP) (manifestation determination). If the Team determines that the behavior was NOT related to the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students, but must continue to provide services to the student as specified in the student's IEP. If a parent disagrees with the Team's manifestation determination, the parent has the right to request an expedited hearing with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.
- 7) If the Team determines that the behavior WAS related to the student's disability, the student may not be excluded from his/her current educational program (except in cases of weapons or drugs) until the Team develops, and the parents consent, to a new IEP.
- 8) If a student with a disability, while on school grounds or at a school-related function, possesses a weapon, knowingly possesses or uses, sells or solicits the sale of an illegal drug or a controlled substance, or inflicts serious bodily injury on another person, the district may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days. A hearing officer or judge may also order the placement of a student in an IAES for up to 45 school days if the district can present substantial evidence that the student presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in the current setting.
- 9) Under certain circumstances, students who have not been determined to be eligible for special education services nonetheless may be entitled to the protections described above, if the district had prior knowledge that the student had a disability and was eligible for special education services, before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

STUDENT RECORD REGULATIONS

The State Board of Education Regulations apply to all information kept by a School Committee on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into sections: the transcript and the temporary record. Please note: The general provisions of parent/student rights (603 CMR 23.00) are now available in brochure form and can be obtained from the building principal or at the office of Pupil Personnel Services. Listed below are six items that come under the broader category of Student Record Regulations.

Transcript

The transcript includes only the maximum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes the name, address, course, titles, grades, credits and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

Temporary Record

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as: standardized test results, class rank, school sponsored extracurricular activities, and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons as well as other similar information. The student may take the temporary record at the end of the senior year or it is destroyed within five years after the student leaves the system.

Inspection of Records

A parent or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request unless the parent or student consents to a delay. Parents and students have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials. Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

Confidentiality of Records

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to the information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

Amendment of Records

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. (continued)

The parent and student have the right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

Destruction of Records

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and student must be notified and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction.

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

As a result of the Public Records Law, professional information relating to public employees and members of licensed professions, including public school teachers and administrators, is a public record under the state public records law G.L. c.4, s.7. Under this law, any person, whether or not s/he has a child in school, is entitled to ask for and receive the following professional information in regard to staff members: name, certification/licensure status, and degrees earned, including field of study and the institution that awarded the degree/s. Parents must put their request in writing to the building principal. Principals will respond in writing within 10 business days. The public records law specifically exempts from disclosure employees' personnel and medical files and any other individual data the disclosure of which may constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

HEALTH RECORDS

Records of a school-based health clinic are subject to medical, not student, record regulations. Health records are confidential and must be issued separately from school nurse to school nurse when a student transfers. Special protection exists for certain health information (AIDS, HIV, etc.). A health care provider cannot disclose any information with respect to the same without specific, informed, written consent. Physician's records are confidential and may not be released to any third party without written consent.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES TO SCHOOL

If you find it necessary to telephone your child at school, the message will be relayed to him/her. It is most helpful if a message is telephoned in before 2:00 p.m. If possible, all instructions should be given to your child before he/she leaves home in the morning.

A message may be taken at any time for a teacher. Unless there is an emergency, teachers will not be interrupted from classroom instruction during the school day. Students do not have access to the telephone except in the event of an emergency.

DELIVERIES

Should it be necessary to bring articles of clothing, lunches, instruments, or other items to school during the day, they should be left in the school office and NOT brought to the classrooms. This policy is in the students' best interest as it promotes uninterrupted instructional time.

VISITORS

Whenever you visit the school, please make your presence known to the Main Office. Sign the Visitor/Volunteer Log and pin a Visitor/Volunteer button onto your clothing. All individuals not wearing a Visitor/Volunteer button will be asked to return to the Main Office, sign in and obtain a button. This policy ensures the safety of the students and minimizes interruptions in the classroom.

When you leave the school after a visit, please sign out and return the button.

VOLUNTEERS

Anyone volunteering in the Melrose Public Schools must register with the schools' centralized volunteer program, The Bridge: A School/Community Partnership. Registration forms can be obtained from the school secretary or by calling The Coordinator of Volunteers, Emily Rubenstein, at 781-979-2299.

In accordance with Mass General Law Chapter 71, section 38R, any current or prospective volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children must agree to a criminal record (CORI) check. Information obtained will be confidential and will effect decisions about the placement of volunteers.

Confidentiality when working in a school setting is extremely important. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement. To ensure the privacy and safety of students and staff, information about both groups must be not be discussed with any one except the appropriate school personnel. **Volunteers who are unable to maintain a professional stance regarding confidentiality can and will be asked to discontinue their volunteer work for the rest of the year.** Volunteers who have access to the school's computers, networks, and Internet services are to use them for school-related purposes and performance of job duties.

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Personal use of school computers is only permitted when approved by school personnel and must comply with general expectations for professional behavior and communication. The school retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks, and Internet services owned or leased by the Melrose Public Schools. Volunteers have no expectation of privacy in their use of school computers, including e-mail messages and stored files. The school committee's Acceptable Use Policy regarding school computers is available upon request.

All volunteers should make their presence in the building known to the Main Office. Volunteers must wear an individualized volunteer badge when in the building. Any volunteer who does not have a badge should contact The Coordinator of Volunteers.

Volunteers must keep track of the time they spend volunteering. In some schools this is done with volunteer sign in/sign out sheets. Sheets are kept on a clipboard in or near the Main Office. In some schools there is a volunteer time sheet book. In these books there is a page for every volunteer that should be completed each time a volunteer works at the school.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION AND DELAYED OPENING PROCEDURES

No School or Delayed Opening announcements are given on the following stations: WBZ, WRKO, WCVB and WBUR. (This includes Channels 4, 5, and 7). Delayed Opening means a starting time of 9:15 a.m. for elementary schools. Secretaries have been requested to report 60 minutes later than their usual start time in order to arrange for substitutes and answer parent questions.

EMERGENCY CARE

The school nurse is able to administer first aid as it relates to the immediate and temporary care given in case of accident or sudden illness. There are times when a child becomes ill at school and parents are not able to provide transportation. If a responsible person is at home, the nurse, the principal, or secretary, may, at their discretion and with parent's permission, arrange for dismissal and/or transportation home.

Please contact the school immediately if there is a change in the care provider or if you will be away on vacation. It is imperative that you make arrangements for whoever will assume care should an emergency arise. A sick/injured child cannot be kept at school. Careful planning in advance can prevent a very difficult situation.

Children should not come to school if they appear to be ill. It is advisable to keep the child home if he/she has a sore throat, severe cold, rash, or fever. In keeping with health regulations, a student with a fever of 100 or more must be kept home. The close proximity of seating in classrooms accelerates the spread of communicable diseases.

EMERGENCY CARD INFORMATION

At the beginning of each school year, parents are asked to provide emergency information for each of their children. This card is vitally important for the well being of the child. In the event of illness or injury, the parent will be notified and asked to provide transportation home. Two emergency numbers are requested in case of the parent's absence from home.

Please keep this information updated in the school office. Be certain to return the emergency card you receive. We must have a card on file for each child you have at school.

Confidential health information cards are also required for the School Nurse. This card gives the nurse valuable information such as previous illnesses your child might have had, disease conditions, emergency contacts, health insurance provider names, primary care physician name, and appropriate dental information. One card is required for each child.

MEDICATIONS

- Parents are urged to give medication (s) at home before or after school. It is our policy to have all prescribed medications administered by the School Nurse. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office.
- All prescribed medication must be brought to the School Nurse by the parent or other designated adult. The medication must be in a pharmacy-labeled container with the child's name, the name of the medication, and the dosage. The parent must sign a consent form for administration in school. For short-term medication administration, such as antibiotics, parents must follow the same procedure, except that only the parent consent is required.
- All non-prescription medicine must be sent to school in the original container from the pharmacy with the child's name labeled on it. The parent must sign a consent form for use in school.
- All inhalers for asthma must be kept in an unlocked cabinet in the Nurse's office. In addition to the required consent forms for the parent and physician, an Asthma Action Card must be filled out. All health offices also contain a nebulizer. If your child is in need of this service, please speak to the School Nurse.
- School personnel must be notified in writing if a child is using certain drugs with the permission of the parent. Please include a statement of the drug's possible side effects.
- All reasonable accommodations are met in regard to sending medications on field trips. If accommodations cannot be made, the parent/guardian will be asked to give the medication or to make other arrangements.
- Medications are generally not given on early dismissal days.
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- Beginning with the 2001-02 school year, Tylenol will be available to all students in grades Pre-K –12. Parental consent is required. A line item for permission is found on the Confidential Health Information card. Tylenol will not be given without this consent. If the child has a fever, the parent will be notified that dismissal from school is necessary.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Beginning with the 2001-02 school year, all children entering kindergarten must have a five- year physical and record of immunization on file with the School Nurse by August 15th of the year entering kindergarten. Forms may be sent to the Board of Health, 562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176 by that date or to the School Nurse at each school by the end of June. Kindergarten requirements are: 3 doses Hepatitis B, 5 doses DtaP/DTP/DT/Td, 4 doses Polio, 2 MMR, 1 dose Varicella OR physician documented history of disease. These requirements are subject to change according to Mass. Gen. Laws and DPH requirements. These requirements also apply to children in Grade 1. Children in Grades 2-5 are required to have all of the above except the dose of Varicella.

All children in Grade 3 are required to have a physical exam according to Mass. General Law, sec. 57, ch. 71, which states that, “the School Committee or Board of Health shall cause every child in the public schools to be separately and carefully examined by a physician duly registered in Massachusetts within six months before entrance to school or during the first year after entrance, and at intervals of either three or four years thereafter. A child transferred from another school system shall be examined as an entering child unless school records are transferred with the child showing that he has had an adequate health appraisal in the school year of transfer.” Melrose requires a physical exam for all Kindergarten, 3rd, 7th, and 10th grade students by December 30th of that school year. It is recommended that students see their primary care physician for the physical examination during the summer before entering the required grade level. School physicians are available on a very limited basis. Any student who does not have a primary care physician or health insurance, should contact the School Nurse immediately for assistance. The Children’s Medical Security Plan provides health insurance for all students up to age 19 in the Commonwealth. School Nurses send out notices of the requirement to all students in Grades 2, 6, and 9 in the Spring of that year. Notices are sent again in the Fall and then in early December. If the School Nurse has not received the information by December 30th, the child’s name will be forwarded to the Principal of the school for immediate exclusion.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

If a child contracts a communicable disease, that child will be excluded from school. If the illness is found at school, the parents must remove the student from school. Any child with a temperature of 100 or higher will be excluded from school. A child must remain fever free for 24 hours without medication in order to return to school. Any child diagnosed with strep throat must be on medication and fever free for 24 hours before he/she is considered non-contagious. The child is allowed to return to school after 24 hours and the temperature is normal.

Any child with chicken pox must remain out of school for seven days from the first eruption of the rash or until all lesions are crusted/ scabbed over. The diagnosis must be reported to the Board of Health and/or the School Nurse.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Melrose provides a school lunch program using a Foodservice Point of Sale System. This is a debit system where money must be prepaid (or deposited into individual student accounts). Each student is issued an ID card, which is necessary to purchase meals, milk, or ala-carte items. Money is collected weekly in the classroom and sent to the Foodservice Department for posting to the student's account. Cash and checks are the acceptable methods of payment. Checks should be made payable to *Melrose Public Schools*.

Students who have a positive account balance can purchase any item(s). Students with a negative account balance will be allowed to purchase a meal for two (2) days. After two (2) days, if money is not deposited into the account, the student will be allowed to receive a lunch of a cheese, peanut butter, **or other** sandwich, which will be charged to their account. In an effort to prevent negative account balances, the Foodservice Department will periodically send notices home to parents indicating low account balances.

Information regarding the cost of lunch, milk, or ala-carte items, and applications for free or reduced cost lunches, are available from the building principal. Weekly lunch menus are posted in advance in the local paper. Monthly menus are sent home with all students.

LIBRARY AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Textbooks and essential instructional materials are loaned to students. Students are held responsible for the loss of textbooks or damages to any material beyond normal wear. Please have students cover textbooks, which go home on a regular basis. Parents/guardians will be responsible for the cost of replacing lost or damaged schoolbooks, materials, and library books. Notification of fees due will be sent home in June. **Students who do not return or pay for library materials will not be able to check out materials in the fall until materials are returned/paid for, or the matter is resolved in conference with the principal.**

GUIDELINES AND CONTRACT FOR INTERNET USE

The Internet is a vast global network linking computers at universities, high schools, science labs and other sites. Through the Internet, one can communicate with people all over the world through a number of discussion forums and electronic mail. In addition, many informational files and documents that are of educational value are available. Because of its size, the Internet's potential is boundless. However, with such great potential for education also comes potential for abuse. The purpose of these guidelines is to make certain that all who use the Internet use it as a valuable resource and in an appropriate manner.

The most important prerequisite for someone to receive an Internet account is that he/she takes full responsibility for his/her own actions. The Melrose Public School system, along with other organizations sponsoring this link-up will not be liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the Internet through this hook-up. All users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their actions.

In addition, Melrose takes no responsibility for any information or materials that are transferred through the Internet.

Should a user happen to find inappropriate material while using the Internet, he/she shall refrain from downloading it, and shall not share or identify the location of this material. Be aware that the transfer of certain materials is illegal and punishable by fine or jail sentence. Failure to abide by the following regulations shall result in suspension of Internet privileges, pending administrative review.

The Melrose Public Schools makes no guarantee regarding the reliability of the data connection. It reserves the right to examine all data stored in the machines.

No user shall use the link to perform any act that may be considered illegal or unethical. This includes the illegal distribution of software, otherwise known as pirating.

For questions relating to technology hardware, please call 781-979-2225.

Elementary students will accept and agree to the following rules:

1. Realize that the primary purpose of the Melrose Public Schools Internet connection is educational.
2. Realize that the use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Since this is the case, inappropriate behavior may lead to penalties including revoking that privilege, disciplinary action, and/or legal action. (continued)

3. Agree not to participate in the transfer of inappropriate or illegal, treasonous or subversive materials through the Melrose Public School Internet connection. (Realize that the transfer of such material may result in legal action.)
4. Agree not to allow other individuals to use our account for Internet activities nor will they give anyone our passwords.
5. Release the Melrose Public School System from any liability or damages that may result from the use of the Internet connection. Accept full responsibility and liability for the results of actions with regard to the use of the Internet.
6. Understand that parent/guardians are responsible for all financial and legal liabilities resulting from their son's/daughter's misuse of the Melrose Public School's Internet connection.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners. Homework assignments are aligned with state curriculum frameworks and district benchmarks and are used to reinforce or enhance school experiences. Homework needs to be completed and returned on time. The classroom teacher will communicate consequences for non-compliance. Please be advised that both short and long-term assignments are considered homework and will be corrected and returned to the student.

The designated average length and frequency of assignments by grade level is listed below.

Average Length and Frequency of Homework Assignments

Grade	Length	Frequency
K	10 minutes	Four times per week
1	10-15 minutes	Four times per week
2	20 minutes	Four times per week
3	30 minutes	Four times per week
4	45 minutes	Four times per week
5	60 minutes	Four times per week

Note: In addition to the above, staff recommends the following reading assignments:

Kindergarten and Grade 1

Fifteen minutes of daily reading with an adult or sibling

Grade 2

Fifteen minutes of daily independent reading

Grades 3-5

Minimum of 75 minutes per week of independent reading. (continued)

Listed below are the responsibilities of students, teachers, and parents with regard to homework.

Students will:

- record the directions for homework
- ask questions to clarify the assignment, including seeking after-school help if necessary
- follow a schedule and keep materials in order
- hand in neat, accurate and meaningful products
- plan time for completion of long-term assignments
- determine and complete homework assigned during absence.

Teachers will:

- communicate homework expectations and criteria for credit at the beginning of the school year
- assign homework that is aligned with the state frameworks and district benchmarks
- provide appropriate and timely response to all homework assignments
- provide a balance between short and long-term assignments
- monitor long-term assignments
- give clear, concise directions, allow time for students' questions, consider availability of materials and resources
- ensure that students who are absent know how to make up homework
- monitor the effectiveness of homework as reflected in student performance.

Parents will:

- provide a suitable place for study
- help students develop routine home study habits
- ensure that work is made up after an absence
- assist and correct, but not do, the actual work and notify the teacher if the student experienced extreme difficulty
- be aware of long-term assignments and assist the student in learning to budget time accordingly
- contact the teacher if they observe an absence of homework or have a question regarding the nature or extent of the homework.

TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

Evaluation of students through standardized achievement tests or required state assessments is conducted periodically. Parents will be notified as to dates, results, and educational implications. The purpose of testing is to inform classroom instruction in the light of our philosophy and curriculum outcomes. Teachers will refrain from testing on religious holidays. All students are required to take the MCAS tests at grade levels designated by the state.

PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Performance reports for grades 1-5 are sent out three times a year. Their purpose is to provide information on a student's progress in all curriculum areas as well as in the areas of social development and work/study habits. Students in Grades 1-5 are assessed on their ability to meet standards, which reflect state proficiency levels. Kindergarten reports are issued two times per year; once in January and once in June. Students who are on Individual Education Plans are issued progress reports on a schedule that typically coincides with the issuance of performance reports.

The most effective way to communicate about student progress, however, is through a conference with the teacher. We urge you to maintain close contact with the school regarding your child's growth and development. Feel free to contact the office at any time to set up an appointment with your child's teacher/s for this purpose.

ELEMENTARY PROMOTION/RETENTION POLICY

Nothing in the following procedures for promotion or grade placement should be construed to restrict the appropriate placement of children for educational, emotional, or social adjustment when, in the judgment of the principal, after consultation with the teacher, a higher or lower grade placement would be to an individual child's advantage. Report cards should reflect accurately the achievement levels in the subject areas, and any special grade placements or transfers of children will be so noted on report cards and permanent record cards and signed by the principal.

Decisions on promotion shall be made by the teacher for students in grades 1-5. If there is a possibility of retention, parents will be notified by the first Friday in March. If a student is retained, notification will be made to parents by the 1st Monday in June.

When making decisions regarding promotion and retention, all phases of a child's development will be considered. Major criteria taken into consideration are:

- 1) Academic achievement* (Below grade-level performance in two major subjects can result in retention.)
- 2) Chronological age (continued on next page)

- 3) Cognitive maturity
- 4) Social maturity
- 5) Emotional maturity
- 6) Physical development.

Progress of students with Individual Education Plans will be measured in accordance with the student's Educational Plan as it pertains to the above criteria and the specific goals and objectives of the plan, which are determined by the core evaluation team.

Kindergarten

A student should move to grade one if he/she, in the judgment of the teacher, has demonstrated readiness and academic achievement in accordance with the prescribed kindergarten curriculum and the above criteria. Parents have the final determination on the placement of their child at the kindergarten level only. The recommendation of the teacher will be filed in the child's record.

Grades 1-5

Promotion in grades 1-5 indicates, as determined by the teacher, that a student has acquired sufficient knowledge and skills at his/her grade level. Promotion requires grade-level understanding of the major academic subjects, which include math, reading, language arts, social science, and science as described in the curriculum for that particular grade. A student who is performing below grade level in any two major subjects may be retained.

Classroom Placements

Classroom placement is determined by the team of grade level teachers and other staff members such as: the principal, reading specialist, and special education personnel. There are many factors that go into student placement. We need to strive for a reasonable balance of boys and girls, a balance of student abilities, a mixture of students who stand a good chance of succeeding in terms of interpersonal dynamics, and class sizes that are balanced at each grade level. In addition, consideration is given to the placement of special needs students, the learning styles of children, and the teaching strategies used by staff. This process begins immediately following April vacation.

Students entering Kindergarten must be 5 years old by September 1st.
Students entering Grade 1 must be 6 years old by September 1st.

FIELD/STUDY TRIPS

Field/study trips are a voluntary extension of classroom activities and serve to enrich the curriculum. All students who do NOT choose to participate in a field/study trip must still attend school. The Code of Conduct that is applicable within the school, also applies to field/study trips. Students participating in field/study trips must submit a signed, "Parent Consent and Release from Liability Agreement Form" for each trip. The student/teacher ratio normally does not exceed 10-1. All chaperones must be willing to participate in CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) checks.

Chaperones are vital to the success of study trips. We appreciate it when parents take time from their busy day to assist us with these activities. Listed below are some guidelines for chaperones. Classroom teachers may have other requests in addition to the following.

- Review the list of students you have been assigned.
- Stay with students you have been assigned for the entire duration of the trip.
- Sit with students on the bus (not with other parents). Chaperones should spread out.
- Avoid confrontations with students. Ask a teacher for assistance if someone is not listening to you.
- Inform the teacher of anything that happened which should not have happened. The teacher will determine what action, if any, should be taken.
- Report any serious problems to the teacher and administrator. Follow it up with a written report.
- Injured students should be taken to the teacher or person in charge of first aid.
- Chaperones are not allowed to bring guests on the bus.
- TAKE A HEAD COUNT BEFORE THE BUS DEPARTS!
- Upon returning home, help students make sure the bus is clean and free of trash. Collect all articles of clothing left behind and give them to the teacher in charge.

LOST AND FOUND

Any found items should be brought to the office. If the owner cannot be identified, items such as clothing will be put in the school's lost and found area. It is a good idea to clearly mark items with the child's name and room number in a visibly restricted area on the item.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Students should bring with them to school only those items necessary to assist them in the classroom. Stuffed pets, toys, and other personal items should not be brought to school unless permission is received to do so from the student's teacher.

FIRE DRILL AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Fire drills are held to ensure the safety of all, should there be an emergency. In case of fire, the signal to evacuate the building will be a continuous sounding of the emergency alarm. A fire drill plan is posted in each classroom or special area. All buildings also follow certain procedures in the event of a bomb threat or natural disaster. All staff has received and is familiar with these procedures.

CRISIS TEAM PLAN OF ACTION

A Crisis Team Plan of Action is kept at each Melrose school. Its purpose is to assist the school when it is dealing with issues of death and dying. Its guidelines help members of the school community respond to the needs of the students and faculty at times of grief and loss in order to help them remain psychologically healthy and to prevent the development of later psychological problems. The plan establishes a caring committee or crisis team at each school typically consisting of some of the following: the building principal, assistant principal, classroom teachers, guidance staff, nurses, parents, and students. Credit for the original design goes to the Good Grief Program at Judge Baker's Children's Center in Boston. The process of, "good grief," promotes good mental health and involves the four psychological tasks of: understanding, grieving, commemorating, and going on. The protocol associated with the plan is designed to aid in the accomplishment of these tasks. A copy of the Crisis Team Plan of Action is available at the front office of each school.

SCHOOL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The school district offers a voluntary insurance plan that provides benefits for school accidents at a minimal cost. Information is distributed at the beginning of the school year. That is the only time the insurance policy may be purchased.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM

Instrumental lessons are provided to students in Grades 3-5 through a partnership between our Music Department and the Coffey Music Company. Currently, all lessons are scheduled during the school day. Lessons are provided for a reasonable cost, which includes an instrument rental fee and the cost of your child's music book. Students will receive information about instrumental lesson offerings at the beginning of each year.

PTO

The objective of the PTO is to provide a forum for parents and teachers to cooperate in the education and enrichment of the current and future students of the school. The PTO helps coordinate many activities during the school year. Fund-raisers and dues financially support the PTO. The PTO provides support to each classroom in many different ways.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 provides for a comprehensive strengthening of local school system leadership for school improvement. The school-based planning responsibilities of school councils form the foundation for a more focused, responsive and accountable system of serving our students. The councils are an advisory vehicle for involving more parents and teachers in school decision-making and for strengthening the bonds between schools and the communities they serve.

What is a school council?

A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members and, at the secondary level, students, which each school is required to establish.

What are the main areas of responsibility for school council?

The law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils. School councils are to assist principals in:

1. Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
3. Reviewing the annual school building budget
4. Formulating a school improvement plan.

Two members from each elementary school council make up the city-wide council. This council works co-operatively on district-wide issues. If you are interested in being on your school council, or the city-wide council, please notify your building principal in writing.

PROCEDURE FOR DISCUSSING SCHOOL-RELATED CONCERNS

We believe in a strong partnership between home and school. If you have concerns however, please begin with your child's classroom teacher. The next level of approach would be to make an appointment with your building principal. If you feel the problem is still not resolved, a letter to the superintendent is your last step.

STUDENT TEACHERS

Our teachers occasionally work with student teachers. Parents will be notified when this college partnership occurs.

PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTICE REGARDING SEXUAL EDUCATION OR HUMAN SEXUALITY ISSUES

Melrose Public Schools affords parents/guardians the flexibility to exempt their son/daughter from any portion of any course that teaches or involves human sexuality education or human sexuality issues. In order to exempt your youngster from any portion of any class that pertains to these issues, the parent/guardian must provide written notification to the school principal. Please note, no student so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. Every reasonable effort will be made to help support the educational needs of the student. To the extent practicable, curriculum materials will be available for review.

PUPIL PERSONNEL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Department of Pupil Personnel Services offers a broad range of diagnostic services and programs for students in the Melrose Public Schools whose learning challenges cannot be addressed through the general education program alone.

In each school building, we have instructional support teams, composed of general education staff members and specialists from both general and special education who collaborate to resolve learning issues relative to individual students. Very often resolution is developed at the building level. In some cases, however, it is deemed appropriate by the school staff and/or the child's parents to refer the child for further evaluation by the Department of Pupil Personnel Services. We also accept direct parent referrals although we strongly encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school staff in submitting a referral.

The evaluations performed as a result of the referral, address the areas of need defined by those who know the child best; the school staff and the parents. Evaluations may include educational testing, psychological testing, speech and language testing or other testing based on areas of need.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, parents and school staff will meet together to discuss the testing results and determine whether or not special learning needs exist. If it is determined that they do exist, a discussion will take place around what program modifications or adaptations need to be developed, and what consultative and/or direct services need to be implemented in order to address the child's needs and help that child maximize his/her potential to learn.

(continued)

We offer a range of options from consultation to staff, to services provided in general classrooms and small group pull-out. In a very small number of cases, small group education classroom settings for those students who cannot benefit from being educated in large classroom settings for typically developing children, are provided. If you think your child may have a disability that is interfering with his/her progress at school, talk to your child's teacher and principal. They will assist you in facilitating a resolution to your concerns, either at the building level or by referring your child to the Instructional Support Team.

The Special Education Program at our schools has been designed so as to comply with Massachusetts Law Chapter 766 and Public Law 94-142. A full range of programs are available to provide assistance to children who may be experiencing difficulties in school. An Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.), signed by the parent/guardian, is required for service delivery. Services are offered through an inclusion model and individual and/or small group of lessons. Specialists are actively involved in diagnosing and prescribing individual student needs, sharing instructional materials/techniques with classroom teachers, and providing consultation to teachers and parents. Support services provided by trained specialists may include academic support, speech/language therapy, counseling services, and occupational or physical therapy.

INFORMATION REGARDING SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

Section 504 is an act, which prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

1. Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working)
2. Has a record of such an impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Melrose Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a handicap will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices in the Melrose Public Schools.

The Melrose Public Schools has specific responsibilities under this Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and afford access to appropriate educational services, if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the Melrose Public Schools, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. (continued)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) also specifies rights related to educational records. This Act gives the parent or guardian the right to:

1. Inspect and review his/her child's educational records
2. Make copies of those records
3. Receive a list of all individuals having access to those records
4. Ask for an explanation of any item in the records
5. Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the child's right
6. Ask for a hearing on the issue if the Melrose Public Schools refuses to make the amendment.

The 504 Coordinator is now the building principal. Please contact him/her if there are any questions.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TEAMS

The Instructional Support Team (IST), which is a function of regular education, enables staff members to meet as a team to address the individual special needs of children. At the classroom level, the purpose of the IST process is to identify aspects of the student-teacher partnership where accommodation in the classroom can help the student experience improved success. Its primary outcome is to provide direction and guidance so that teachers can differentiate instruction. A secondary outcome is to help the student develop strategies that enable him/her to make effective progress. If, after a variety of instructional interventions and strategies have been implemented in the general education setting for an appropriate amount of time, the student is still not making effective progress, the IST will refer the child for an evaluation to determine special education eligibility.

TITLE IX

The governing regulations of Title IX, effective July, 1975, covers all aspects of sex discrimination in schools with regard to admissions, treatment of students, and employment. Specifically, Title IX states:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under an educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

The Title IX Coordinator is Patricia White-Lambright, the Administrator of Pupil Personnel Services. Please contact her at Pupil Personnel Services, 781-979-2150.

Chapter 766

Chapter 766 section 5 is referred to as, “An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in the Public Schools.” The law reads as follows:

“No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.”

This law makes it clear that all aspects of public school education must be fully open and available to members of both sexes and all minority groups. The regulations for Chapter 766 address five areas of school policy: school admissions, admissions to courses of study, guidance, extra curricular activities, and athletics.

The Chapter 766 Coordinator for the Melrose Public Schools is the Administrator of Pupil Personnel Services. Please call Pupil Personnel Services at 979-2150.

Grievance Procedure for Matters Relating to Discrimination

It is the policy of the Melrose Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, handicap, color, or national origin in its educational programs or activities. Any student who feels that he/she has been discriminated against should utilize the following procedure to register a grievance.

- Submit any allegations of discrimination in writing to the building principal.
- **The principal will investigate the allegations, conduct an interview with the complainant, and provide the complainant the opportunity to present evidence or witnesses.**
- The principal will provide a written summary of their findings of the investigation to the complainant within ten school days of the receipt of the written complaint. As appropriate, the principal will institute remedies to address the complaint.
- **If the matter is not resolved, the complainant may appeal to the Title IX Coordinator, Pat Ruggiero, the Title II Coordinator, John Buxton, or the Civil Rights Coordinator, Patricia White-Lambright.** The coordinator will meet with the complainant and respond in writing within ten school days of the receipt of the written complaint.
- If, at the end of ten school days following the written response from the coordinator, the matter remains unresolved, the complainant has the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools, Joseph F. Casey. All allegations of discrimination are to be communicated to the Superintendent in writing.
- The Superintendent will investigate the complaint and respond in writing to the complainant no longer than ten school days after having received the complaint.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the complainant may appeal in writing to the School Committee within ten school days of receipt of the Superintendent’s response. The School Committee will respond to the complainant in writing within five school days.

METCO

METCO Incorporated is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1966. Currently the program places 3,300 minority students from Boston communities into surrounding school districts. METCO Incorporated is funded through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the Racial Imbalance Act and is the nation's oldest voluntary school desegregation programs. Our Coordinator's name is Doreen Ward. She can be reached at 781-979-2298.

The Mission:

The METCO mission is to provide students with educational opportunities designed to enrich their academic, personal and interpersonal experiences. It is our belief that the METCO experience should provide a strong academic foundation, as well as an opportunity for cultural, educational, ethnic, and racial diversity.

The Purpose:

- a. To provide the opportunity for an integrated public school education for children of color from racially unbalanced schools in Boston by placing them in suburban schools
- b. To provide a new learning experience for suburban children
- c. To provide closer understanding and cooperation between urban and suburban parents and other citizens in the Metropolitan Boston area.

PUBLIC RELATIONS PHOTOGRAPHS

Occasionally a representative of the local or other press is interested in photographing or videotaping children performing activities at school (e.g., school plays, curriculum related projects). Further, with expanding electronic communication, schools are taking advantage of opportunities, such as creating homepages, to inform and gain support from the community. Addresses of students are never disclosed.

If you prefer NOT to have your child included in any photograph opportunities, you must send a note stating your request directly to your building principal.

STUDENT AND PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is the responsibility of parents and students to read and/or discuss this booklet in its entirety. After reviewing the booklet carefully, please sign the form below and **return it by September 26th. In order to allow principals to easily track the return of slips, if you have more than one child, please return one slip to the homeroom teacher for EACH of your children.** Thank-You!

(Parent's / Guardian's Signature)

Date

I have read and/or discussed the Melrose Elementary handbook with my parents/guardians.

(Student's Signature)

Teacher and Grade