

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

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Message from the Principal:

Dear Families:

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Alfred J. Gomes School community back to another school year! As each new school year always brings both excitement and anticipation, we hope you will find the transition to be as smooth as possible. The purpose of the Student Handbook is to provide families with important information regarding the school policies and procedures in order to ensure a successful school year for all.

Although each year brings both changes in staffing and programming, the staff at the Alfred J. Gomes School will continue to ensure students are provided with a quality education and meaningful learning opportunities. As families are the first educators of our children, we encourage you to continue to be a part of your child's education through the various family involvement activities planned throughout the year. We look forward to fostering partnerships between students, staff, families, and community as we work together to education our children.

On behalf of the staff at the Alfred J. Gomes School, I thank you for your anticipated cooperation this year in helping our school achieve our goals. The staff is clearly dedicated to providing your children with a challenging curriculum that educates the whole child.

Sincerely,

Jamie L. Camacho, Principal

ALFRED J. GOMES SCHOOL

286 South Second St.
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 997-4511 Ext. 2432

SCHOOL'S HISTORY

The Alfred J. Gomes School opened in September of 1977 as a replacement for four turn of the century schools. At this time, the school was constructed to promote an educational philosophy that focused on an individual program of instruction for students that was flexible and encouraged grouping of students according to their needs.

The Gomes School was named after Alfred J. Gomes, a prominent Cape Verdean lawyer who was born on June 14, 1897 in the Cape Verde Islands. He came to New Bedford at the age of seven and was educated in the New Bedford Public School system. He worked to finance his own college education and graduated in 1923 from Boston University School of Law. After having attained this level of education, he became the first Cape Verdean born American to receive a doctor of jurisprudence degree.

After graduation, Alfred J. Gomes returned to New Bedford and became one of the city's most prominent civic and community leaders. He was especially concerned with promoting the aspirations and betterment of the Cape Verdean people in both America and his homeland, but demonstrated specific concern for the youth of the city of New Bedford.

In 1987, the Alfred J. Gomes School opened its doors at a Magnet School, which meant the school was a school of choice that focused on the theme of *Computer Technology/Preparation for Life*. In 2009, the Alfred J. Gomes School was once again designated as a Magnet School. At this time, the theme was changed to, *Communication Through the Arts*.

Alfred J. Gomes School

Guiding Principles

Mission:

We are committed to developing a community of learners who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self-confidence.

Vision:

The vision of the Alfred J. Gomes Magnet School of “Communication Through the Arts” community of staff, parents, business partners, and civic partners will work together to guide our students’ education.

Goals:

1. Our school will make Adequate Yearly Progress as demonstrated by student performance on the MCAS tests and attendance requirements.
2. Students at the Gomes School will meet District expectations for promotion to the next grade level as well as become productive citizens within the Gomes School Community and provide service to the community in which they live.

SCHOOL HOURS

School starts at 8:15 A.M.. The first dismissal is 2:30 P.M.. Dismissal on Friday's at 1:00 P.M.. **No afternoon Kindergarten classes on Friday's** for schools with morning and afternoon classes. Children who have completed their daily assignments, have followed school rules, and are not in need of any extra help will be dismissed at this time.

Parents should be aware that any pupil may be required to remain up to an *additional one-half (1/2) hour after the first dismissal*. Pupils may be kept for disciplinary reasons or for any extra help needed in their academic subjects. In effect, the elementary school day ends at 3:00 P.M. in order that our children can receive the full benefit of all the services provided.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

When "EARLY DISMISSAL" is announced the following schedule will be followed:

Students – 11:30 AM; Teachers – 12:00 PM; Paraprofessionals – 12:00 PM.

"DELAYED START TIMES", when the weather conditions warrant it; and the schedule will be as follows:

Students – 9:15 AM - 2:30 PM; Faculty – 9:10 AM - 2:30 PM.

"CANCELLATIONS", "EARLY DISMISSALS", and/or "DELAYED START TIMES" will be posted/broadcasted at the following:

New Bedford Public Schools' web site: www.newbedfordschools.org

Local Cable Channel 17

Standard-Times' web site: www.s-t.com

Channel 4 WBZ-TV/1030 AM

Channel 5 WCVB-TV

Channel 7 WHDH-TV

Channel 12 WPRI-TV

Radio Station WRKO-AM

Radio Station WBSM

Channel 6 WLNE

Channel 10 WJAR

FOX 25 WFXT

Radio Station WSAR

Radio Station FUN 107

We will try to make these decisions as early as possible to accommodate our working families.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL ROUTINES:

ENTRANCE

Please enter the building through the Main Entrance facing South Second Street. The door is kept locked at all times. Please ring the doorbell and give your name when asked via the intercom.

BEFORE SCHOOL

Students should arrive on the playground after 8:00 am. Grades K, 1 and 2 will use the north playground.

Grades 3, 4 and 5 will use the south playground. Once students are on the playground areas, they are not to leave school grounds. Students will not be allowed to enter the building or classrooms, prior to the 8:15 bells, unless so instructed by a teacher or the administrative staff. Students are not to bring toys or balls to school with them. Students are to play games that will not result in torn clothing or bodily injury. Students are not to place their hands on others. Students should line up promptly and quietly in their designated areas when signaled to do so.

Parents who are dropping their children off by motor vehicle must use the designated drop off zone. Please do not drop your children off on the street as the congestion could lead to a hazardous situation.

DISMISSAL

Students requesting early dismissal must present a signed note to the office from home stating the reason for such a dismissal. Parent/Guardian must come into the office to sign child out. **Any requests for early dismissals must be made before 2:00 pm that day.** Parents are asked to make an effort to schedule appointments after 2:30 pm. Students must use the cross walks at all times. Students must remain in line at dismissal to the North and South crosswalks staffed by crossing guards. When children are dismissed at 2:30 P.M. and no one is present to pick them up, they will be instructed to return to the building. ANY change in the daily dismissal will require written permission from the parent/guardian. If the nurse dismisses a student, he/she will receive a dismissal slip. The slip must be signed and returned to the nurse when the child returns.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE SAFETY

For children's **safety**, please observe the following:

1. There is no parking or drop-off on the school side (east side) of South Second Street at any time during the school day.
2. **Only buses** are permitted to use Alfred J. Gomes Way (the bus lane between the school and Route 18).
3. Please use the cross walks at all times. Children must remain in line at dismissal to the North and South crosswalks staffed by crossing guards.
4. If your child crosses South Second Street, please wait on the west side of South Second Street. There is too much congestion with both parents and students trying to cross the street.
5. **NOTES ARE REQUIRED IF THERE IS A CHANGE OF DISMISSAL LINE OR BUS TRANSPORTATION.** (See dismissal)
6. Please do not call the school with messages for your child (except in the case of an emergency) after 2:00 P.M. This is an extremely busy time of the day. Please send a note with your child.
7. ****Emergency information forms must be updated regularly*** for your child's safety. No child will be dismissed to an adult not listed on the form.

ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **PARTICIPATION:** Students have the responsibility of participating fully in the serious business of learning. Students must report to school and to all scheduled classes until excused, pay attention to instruction, complete assignments to the best of their ability and request help when it is needed.
2. **RESPECT FOR OTHER STUDENTS:** Students have the responsibility of recognizing the rights and human dignity of fellow students. For example, students must refrain from name-calling, fighting, harassment, belittling, engaging in deliberate attempts to embarrass or harm another student and being untruthful or dishonest. Students must refrain from gossiping, threatening, or fighting with other students.
3. **RESPECT FOR TEACHERS:** Students have the responsibility of showing respect for the knowledge and authority of their teachers. Any teacher has the authority to correct any student on the spot. Students should not defy authority. Students must use only acceptable and courteous language.
4. **BEHAVIOR:** Students have the responsibility of avoiding any behavior that affects their learning in a poor way. Students must cooperate in maintaining responsible care of books and other instructional materials.

DISCIPLINE

One of the most important lessons education should teach is discipline. While it does not appear as a subject, it underlies the whole educational structure.

It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people.

Please keep in mind that at times during the school day your child will be under the supervision of an adult other than his/her teacher. Your child is expected to follow the request of the adult in charge at the time, whoever that may be.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

School property is your property. School materials and property must be treated with the same consideration as your own property. Take pride in keeping the corridors and school grounds clean. Throw waste materials into the containers provided for this purpose. Gum chewing is prohibited in school, school grounds, buses and on field trips.

Do not mark desks, or other furniture. Such equipment is expensive and subject to hard wear through normal daily use. Since the school operates on a limited budget, let's keep costs down for you, your parents, and taxpayers.

CARE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

The school does not assume responsibility for personal property brought onto the school campus. Large sums of money, electronic devices (cell phones, Ipod, gameboys, etc.), and other non-essential items must be left at home.

CAFETERIA PROCEDURE AND REGULATIONS

Students must maintain a calm atmosphere during lunch and observe the following rules:

1. Students will walk to and from the cafeteria in quiet lines and wait to be served in an orderly manner; no "cutting" in line.
2. Proper manners are a must. NO throwing of food.
3. Students must raise their hand and ask for permission if they have a need to leave a seat.
4. Each student is responsible for cleaning his/her own place at the table and returning all utensils, trays, dishes and paper trash to the designated areas. No food or drinks will be taken from the lunchroom.
5. Each student must remain in the cafeteria until dismissed by the teachers in the cafeteria.

FREE/REDUCED LUNCHESES

An application for free and reduced lunches is given to each student at the start of the school year. It is to be completed and signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the teacher. The applications will then be processed. Parents will be notified of eligibility. All members of a household should be listed on the form including the child the application is being processed for. **Monthly income** (not weekly) should be specified where applicable. All applications must be updated when a families' income changes.

BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Breakfast is available to all students. Breakfast is part of the school day. It begins when students come into the building. The procedures outlined in the “cafeteria procedures” section will be adhered to during breakfast routines.

BOYS’/GIRLS’ ROOMS

Each class has a scheduled time. Children will be allowed to go at unscheduled times as necessary using a sign out procedure and pass. Students should always wash their hands after using the bathrooms. All paper products should be properly disposed of. Students should notify their teacher immediately if a sink or toilet is clogged. Pencils, pens or other writing instruments should not be taken into the bathroom.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drill procedures are different for each classroom. Students will find directions for each room posted. Teachers will explain the fire drill procedures on the first day of school and review them frequently after that.

For safety, the following procedures must be followed:

- Students are to leave in a quiet and orderly manner ready to hear any directions.
- Students will keep their eyes on the teacher, ready to respond to directions
- Students will walk quickly and in single file to the designated exit/area and wait quietly with that teacher
- Students who are with a teacher other than their own, will exit and wait with that teacher
- Students who happen to be in the bathroom, or passing in the hall, will exit with the nearest class and be reunited with their regular class.

ASSEMBLIES

During assembly programs, students are reminded that proper respect is to be given to all speakers. “Whistling and “Cat Calls” are signs of poor manners and will not be tolerated.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students will participate in gym. Only a medical excuse, provided by a doctor, will be accepted for long term non-participation. Required gym attire: Sneakers and appropriate gym clothes.

LOST AND FOUND

Anything found in or around the school should be turned into the office where the owner may claim his/her property by identifying it. Many items are lost because a student fails to ask for them. Students are responsible for books, and other school items issued to them.

TEXTBOOKS

Books are loaned to students for use during the school year. If a book is misused, a fine will be imposed. If a book is lost or stolen it must be paid for. Books must be covered at all times and kept free of paper, pencils, etc.

NURSE

The nurse is available for heights and weights, scoliosis screenings, monitoring immunizations, administering doctor prescribed medications, minor injuries, and physicals. Due to allergic reactions, wounds will be cleaned with soap and water and peroxide only. Students will be sent home as deemed necessary. Parents will be notified. Dismissal slips should be signed and returned to school.

MEDICATION POLICY

We would like to inform you of the state regulations governing the administration of prescription medication in school. These policies have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of children needing medications during the school day.

These regulations require that the following forms must be on file in your child's health record before we begin to give any medication in school:

1. Signed consent by the parent or legal guardian to give medication
2. Signed medication order. The written medication order form should be taken to your child's licensed prescriber (your child's physician, nurse, practitioner, etc.) for completion and returned to the school nurse. This order must be renewed as needed and at the beginning of each academic year.
3. Medication should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufacturer labeled container by parent/guardian or responsible adult whom you designate. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than thirty (30) day supply of medication should be delivered to the school, along with a note stating the number of pills sent in to school.

When your child needs medication to be given during the school day, please act quickly to follow these policies so we may begin to give the medication as soon as possible. It is recommended that medication be administered at home. However, students who must receive medication during the school day are required to comply with the above regulations.

No over the counter medication, including aspirin, cough drops, lip balm, will be given in school without the required signed medication forms.

SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR

The School Adjustment Counselor is available to students and parents for school related issues. This service is available to all students.

BUS SERVICE

By vote of the School Committee, students living two (2) miles or more from the school are eligible for free bus transportation. Students living less than two (2) miles from the school are responsible for providing their own transportation. As a courtesy some bus transportation is available for pay passenger. This transportation is arranged through the office. Bus tickets may be purchased from the school secretary.

General rules for students riding school busses:

1. The driver is in full charge of the bus and students. All students must obey the driver promptly

2. No loud talking and laughing or unnecessary confusion should divert the driver's attention and could cause a serious accident.
3. No student shall at any time extend hands, head, or arms out of the windows whether the school bus is in motion or not.
4. Students referred to the principal for unbecoming conduct may forfeit the privilege of riding that school bus.
5. Be on time at the designated school bus stop. Keep the bus on schedule. If the bus is on time and a student is not at the designated bus stop, the driver will not wait.
6. Students are to remain seated while the bus is in motion. Students are not to get off the bus until the bus has come to a complete stop.

Procedure for Dealing With Bus Policy Violations

1. Verbal warning should be given to offenders by the bus driver, aide, or both.
2. All serious offenses should be reported to the Principal by the driver/aide no later than one day following the incident on the prescribed bus conduct form. The Principal shall send the appropriate part of the form to the parent, keeping the second part on file in the school office for the remainder of the school year.
3. After a major offense, the Principal may request the parent/guardian to visit the school. At this time, the Principal may direct the parent/guardian to provide their child's transportation to and from school for a specified period of time. Students suspended from riding the bus must still attend school.
4. Principal should send a copy of the parent notification to the Transportation Dept.
5. If at any time the bus driver feels that the situation on the bus is uncontrollable, (when the bus cannot be safely operated), he/she will call the police for assistance.

VISITORS

All doors are locked. Entrance is through the Main Entrance door on South Second Street (yellow doors). Please ring the doorbell and give your name. All visitors must report to the office for a VISITOR PASS. Students are not allowed to bring visitors to school. Parents/guardians are always welcome, but must first report to the office.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We encourage families to keep in contact with your child's teacher by attending open house, requesting parent conferences if you have any questions or concerns, keeping the school updated of any changes in important information, and by reading classroom newsletters. Family members wishing to volunteer for various activities such as reading aloud to students, small group tutoring, assisting teachers with copying and other material development should contact the office. Family members must complete a CORI and a DSS check in order to be considered for volunteering in the school. It is also required that family members attend a volunteer orientation prior to coming into the school for volunteer activities. Any family member wishing to participate in school activities including field trips must have completed a CORI and a DSS check. Paperwork for the CORI and DSS check are available in the office. Family Members may also choose to become involved in the Gomes School by joining the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The school will have a school council whose membership will consist of school administration, staff members, parents and community members. Parents will be elected by an established voting procedure. The school council will discuss and be apprised of school functions and procedures.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The PTO is an organization that provides support to the school through fundraising, supporting supplementary programming and field trips, and creating opportunities for school based social activities. Through regular meetings, the PTO creates opportunities to support the Alfred J. Gomes School community.

ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

It is the belief of the faculty and administration of the New Bedford Public Schools that regular and punctual attendance is essential for every student. Active participation in the learning process is an important component to successful achievement, and regular attendance at school will help our students to become productive and responsible citizens. In light of this, the NBPS has instituted a 95% quota on attendance. All students are expected to meet this quota.

ABSENCES: Written documentation is required from a parent or guardian for any and all absences. The note must list the date(s) of absence(s); the student's full name; and it must clearly state the reason for the absence. The reason must be one of those listed below or the absence will be counted as inexcusable. The student will show each classroom teacher the documentation indicating his/her absence. The note will then be given to the homeroom teacher who will keep it on file for further reference. Homeroom teachers should follow disciplinary procedures to insure that notes are returned in a timely fashion.

Teachers and administrators realize that there are reasons for a student's absence from school. Only the following instances, all of which require official written verification or documentation, would constitute an excusable absence/tardy:

- Medical appointments/illness verified in writing by a professional health-care provider or the school nurse
- Death of a family member
- Observance of a major religious holiday
- School-related absence (i.e.: dismissals for field trips, suspensions, ASA, sports events, etc.)
- Legal obligation
- Verified post-high school visitation
- Absence approved by the school principal

If a student is absent for one of the above reasons, he/she will provide each classroom teacher with the appropriate notification.

Please note: Family vacations do not constitute an excused absence.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT: When a student exceeds the following:

- 9 inexcusable absences in a class that meets daily
or
- 5 inexcusable absences in a class that meets on alternating days

the student will not receive the Unit or portion thereof normally granted upon successful completion of that class. This, in turn, may place the student in jeopardy of attaining the required Units necessary for promotion.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION: Parents or guardians will be notified that a student is in danger of not receiving credit through a documented Notice of Absenteeism. (A teacher may choose to follow up with a telephone call.) Communication will occur on the following days:

- Class that meets daily – on/after the 7th day of absence
- Class that meets on alternating days – on/after the 3rd absence

TEACHER OPTION FOR CREDIT: Once a student has exceeded the minimum absentee days as stated above, the classroom teacher has the option of awarding credit only if the student has made up all the work missed to the teacher's satisfaction and in accordance with the standards set forth in the curriculum. It is strongly urged that the student make up the work as soon as possible. Should the student violate the attendance requirement, without making up work to the teacher's satisfaction, then – even if the student attained a passing grade for the class – the student's report card will indicate:

- No units earned toward promotion for that year
- The mandatory teacher comments: Exceeds minimum attendance/no credit

HEARING PROCESS: Students and parents will have the opportunity to request a hearing within five school days of issuance of the report card. The hearing will include a meeting with the parent or guardian, the student, classroom teacher(s), and the principal (where appropriate.) The parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the principal.

TARDINESS: If a student is not present in his/her classroom/homeroom at the bell, the student is marked tardy; a student attending less than half a day is marked absent. A written excuse (as described above) is required. The first three occurrences of tardiness will result in an after-school period. A detention period will be assigned for further tardiness. If a student is tardy more than 5 times, a conference will be held with the parent or guardian and the principal. Three instances of significant tardiness (approximately one third of the class missed in each case) will count as one absence.

DISMISSAL: A student wishing to be dismissed during a session must present a signed note from the parent or guardian to a principal. It must include the student's full name, reason, date and time for dismissal, and a telephone number where the principal can reach the parent or guardian for verification and approval.

TRUANCY: Truancy is defined as being absent from school without the permission of a parent or guardian. Any student who is found to be truant may be required to return to school accompanied by a parent or guardian.

RETENTION: A student will be retained in Grades 1-6 if he/she is not present for the full school day at least 171 days of the 180 days in a school year (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 2.) The principal will retain full authority to determine, for each student, the number of days that count toward the 171 day minimum requirement and his/her grade placement. A medical certificate is not reflected in the 9-day excused absence requirement.

Adopted:

New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, MA

New Bedford Public Schools Elementary Promotion Policy

The New Bedford Public Schools' *mission* states that *we are committed to developing a community of learners, who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self confidence.*

The *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* set forth the strict guidelines, curriculum objectives and standards for each grade level, therefore, the New Bedford Public Schools has set high expectations at each grade level for all students. Every teacher, administrator, parent and other adult involved in the lives of our students shares in the responsibility to ensure that all students meet these expectations.

This policy:

- further defines the expectations we hold for all students and the support strategies we need to employ to ensure their success.
- ensures promotions are earned and based on academic achievement.
- diminishes grade retentions to the greatest extent possible.
- ensures students will enter classrooms with the skill and knowledge necessary to do grade-level work.
- ensures students are prepared to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessments (MCAS).
- recognizes that promotion decisions for Special Education students shall be based on each student's progress toward attainment of measurable annual goals and objectives as specified in his/her Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
- recognizes that teachers will recommend each student for promotion based upon the criteria outlined in this policy and the teacher's professional assessment that the student's classroom performance indicates the ability to succeed at the next grade level. The intent is for all students to have the academic skills and habits to be successful.

Elementary School Promotion Requirements

Students must fulfill several requirements to be promoted to the next grade. Students must:

- in Kindergarten through Grade 5, consistently meet grade level standards to exhibit growth in the following content areas:
 - Reading
 - Language Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Science
 - Social Studies

- attain passing scores on the New Bedford Public School’s performance indicators, which are used to evaluate overall school performance. Assessments include, but are not limited to:
 - DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) in Grades K-5
 - ELA Benchmarks in Grade K-5
 - Mathematics Benchmarks in Grades K-5

- maintain a 95% attendance requirement (172 out of 181 school days) for the school year to meet the federal mandate put forth by No child Left Behind (NCLB) and the district’s attendance goal.
 - The principal will retain full authority to determine, for each student, the number of days that count toward the 172 minimum requirement;
 - Excused absences include student illness, medical appointment, death of an immediate family member, observance of a religious holiday and court appearance,

Grade Level Promotion Requirements

DRA Promotion Requirements Determining Proficiency

An **at-risk student** must be able to score within the following DRA (May/June) benchmark levels for promotion to the following grade:

Grade	Time of year	DRA Benchmark Level
Kindergarten	January	1
	May/June	3
Grade 1	September	3-6
	May/June	16-18
Grade 2	September	16-20
	May/June	28
Grade 3	September	28-34
	May/June	38
Grade 4		40
Grade 5		50

CHANGE IN GRADE PLACEMENT DURING A SCHOOL YEAR

Throughout the school year, a recommendation *may* be made by a building team to the principal to change the grade level placement of a student. In making such a recommendation, consideration will be given to the student’s age, maturity, attendance, effort, and the student’s academic potential. The principal will notify the superintendent or his/her designee of the team’s decision.

Adopted:
New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, MA

HOMEWORK POLICY

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

Purposeful homework benefits students. Homework should be an extension of the class lesson, be clearly understood by students, be well planned and meaningful. Homework can be evaluated in multiple ways through review, classroom or small group discussion, and/or direct assessment. Completion of homework will count towards students' cumulative grade for the content area.

The immediate purpose of a specific homework assignment may be to:

1. Strengthen basic skills
2. Extend classroom learning
3. Stimulate and further interests
4. Reinforce independent study skills
5. Develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction/reflection
6. Stimulate use of leisure time that increases understanding and love of learning
7. Acquaint parents with the content/concepts studied in school

Homework assignments shall be planned in accordance with the following principles:

1. If homework is to have value, its purpose and relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student.
2. Students should understand not only what to do, but also how to do it.
3. Homework should grow from classroom discussions, problems, projects, and concerns.
4. The student's age, need for play time, and out-of-school responsibilities must be considered when deciding upon length of any assignment. The student must bear responsibility for managing his/her time in a way that homework can be completed and submitted on time.
5. Assignments should make use of a variety of skills and prior knowledge.
6. Every homework assignment must be properly corrected and/or evaluated in keeping with the purpose of the assignment. To the extent possible, such corrections/evaluations shall be shared with the students involved in a timely fashion.

7. When a student’s grade or learning expectation are being adversely affected by poor homework performance or non-completion of assignments, the teacher shall communicate orally, or in writing, in a timely fashion with parents/guardians concerning the problem.
8. All homework assigned will be reflected in the child’s cumulative grade or learning expectation at the end of the term.

The School Committee encourages the administration to assist teachers in planning homework assignments in keeping with the above guidelines. Additionally:

1. the Committee expects that Principals (or directors/instructional supervisors where appropriate) will monitor the implementation of this homework policy through various approaches such as review of lesson plans, observation of classes, conferences with teachers, examination of student papers and/or other related activities.
2. The Committee expects that each content Director will clearly define the homework policy of his/her department. All such departmental policies must keep with this School Committee homework policy.
3. The Committee expects parents to provide a suitable place for students to do their homework and to monitor their children by questioning them upon the completion of their assignments.

Level	Average Time (minutes per week)
K	(45 minutes)
1-3	(150 minutes)
4-5	(175 minutes)
6-7-8	(300 minutes)
9-12	(600 minutes)

Adopted: 8/10/09
 New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, MA

PARENT CONFERENCES

Communication between the school and the family is essential to a child’s success in school. Teachers requesting conferences with parents will contact the parent in writing, by phone, or in person to set up an agreeable time for the meeting. By contract, teachers may require 24 hour notice of a parent-teacher conference. Parents requesting conferences with teachers must contact the teacher in writing or by phone through the school office to schedule an appointment. Please give the teacher the courtesy of contacting them about a concern before contacting the principal.

FIELD TRIPS

The School Committee recognizes the educational value of field trips, tours and excursions, when an adjunct to an approved program and designed to attain specific program objectives. The School Committee feels that field trips are a privilege and not an entitlement. To the extent that budgetary resources permit, the Committee encourages and sanctions student trips and other out-of-district school activities, including participation in community civic projects and international travel which are of value in helping achieve each participating student's educational objectives.

All field trips require both the Principal and the Superintendent's administrative approval. Requests for overnight trips must be approved by the Superintendent or designee, with attention paid to the specific instructional objectives and the overall educational value of the trip. All out of state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fund-raising activities for such trips shall be subject to approval by the Superintendent. All Committee policies and administrative regulations concerning students will be in effect for all approved field trips, excursions and travel experiences.

Adopted: 8/10/09

New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, MA

DRESS CODE

Students are expected to be neat and clean and wear clothing that is not distracting to the student and staff population. Attire that exposes flesh inappropriately (cleavage, midriff, chest, thighs, etc.) such as muscle shirts, belly shirt, short-shorts and tube tops should not be worn to school. Pants should be belted and worn at the waist. Clothing that contains vulgar language or depictions cannot be worn.

Hats, sweat bands, coats, and jackets will not be worn in school except for extenuating circumstances when authorized. Hooded sweatshirts should be discouraged and at no time within the building or during school hours will a child be allowed to wear the hood up.

Special care should be given to the types of shoes worn. Clogs, sandals, flip-flops and platform footwear can be a safety issue. Sneakers must be worn on days that your child is to participate in physical education classes.

DISTRICT, STATE, AND FEDERAL GUIDELINES

DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS

1. **EMERGENCY SUSPENSION:** A student may be given an emergency suspension by the Principal if the Principal has reasonable cause to believe that:

a. The physical safety of the student or of others is substantially endangered and will continue to be endangered;

or

b. The student is causing and will continue to cause substantial interference with classroom instruction.

As soon as practicable following the imposition of an Emergency Suspension, the student shall be provided with an opportunity to respond to the charge on which the suspension is based.

2. **SHORT TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:** Except where an Emergency Suspension is warranted, a student will be given oral notice of the offense with which he/she is charged and an opportunity to respond prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in the student's suspension from school for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. In the event that the Principal determines that the student will be suspended from school, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and in writing.

3. **LONG TERM DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS:** Prior to the imposition of any disciplinary sanction that might result in a student's suspension for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or expulsion, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given written notice of a hearing at which they may be represented by an attorney at their expense and may examine and present witnesses and documentary evidence. Following this hearing, the decision maker (Principal/School Committee) will issue a written decision. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will have the right to appeal any decision imposing a long-term exclusion from school. Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent. For exclusions imposed by the School Committee in accordance with M.G.L. c.76 §17, the student shall have the right to file a written request for reconsideration by the Committee within ten (10) days of the effective date of the exclusion. Pending the outcome of any such appeal, the disciplinary sanction imposed shall remain in effect. M.G.L. c. 76 §17, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H, M.G.L. c. 71 §37H1/2.

4. **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students who have been identified as students with disabilities in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or who the school has reason to believe might be eligible for special education services are entitled to additional procedural protections when a disciplinary exclusion is considered. In many cases, a student with a disability will be entitled to services identified by the student's Team as necessary to provide the student with a free appropriate public education during periods of disciplinary exclusion exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year. For additional information regarding the rights of students with disabilities in the context of school discipline, please contact the Principal or the Director of Special Education.

DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. 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 students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services.

Students who have been found to have a disability that impacts upon a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year.

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 shall 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) Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to ten (10) school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). In most instances, during disciplinary exclusions exceeding ten (10) school days in a single school year, the student shall have the right to receive services identified as necessary by the Team to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion.
- (3) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
- (4) If building administrators, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to a new placement or until the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
- (5) If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

The New Bedford Public Schools provides equal education and employment opportunity without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or sexual orientation.

The New Bedford Public Schools complies with all applicable State and Federal Laws, including but not limited to, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151B, c.151C, c.76, §5, and c.71B.

The New Bedford Public Schools has duly appointed individuals responsible for the overall monitoring, auditing, and ensuring compliance with this policy. For compliance issues regarding educational activities, contact the District's Title IX and Section 504 Coordinators: Dr. Mary Louise Francis, 455 County Street - Room 141, New Bedford, Massachusetts, (508) 997-4511 x-3201. For compliance issues regarding employment activities, contact: Dr. Ronald F. Souza, 455 County Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts, (508) 997-4511. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District's educational or employment activities can file a written grievance with the appropriate officer.

HARASSMENT

The New Bedford Public Schools is committed to the principle of diversity in its community and seeks to create an environment in which all people can thrive. It is essential that all individuals recognize certain guidelines for appropriate behavior — that which allows each person the freedom to learn and work without fear of intimidation or humiliation. Behavior that disregards the rights of others is unacceptable and the person engaging in such behavior will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension or expulsion from school. In addition, anyone who retaliates against an individual who has brought a complaint of harassment to the attention of the school or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint of harassment will also be subject to disciplinary action.

An individual, who believes he/she has been harassed or who has witnessed or learned of the harassment of another person in the school environment, should inform the Principal. If the individual does not wish to speak to the Principal or if the Principal does not address the problem in an effective manner, the individual should contact the Director of Special Education or the Superintendent of the New Bedford Public Schools, 455 County Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts, (508) 997-4511.

The New Bedford Public Schools will promptly investigate complaints of harassment. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent consistent with the school district's obligations under law and under applicable collective bargaining agreements. The school district will comply with legal requirements governing the reporting of suspected cases of child abuse and will report suspected criminal activity to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

When an investigation has been completed, school personnel will inform the complainant of the results and will file a report with the district's appropriate compliance officer.

HARASSMENT / DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. As soon as possible following the occurrence of an act alleging a violation of Section 504, the ADA, c.151B, c.151C, Title IX, G.L. c.76 §5, the aggrieved party shall submit, in writing, to his/her Principal a statement describing the circumstances and specifying the nature of the alleged discrimination. The Principal will send a copy of the grievance to either the Student Affairs Officer or Personnel Officer. Within a reasonable time, not to exceed ten (10) days, the Principal shall investigate the circumstances and reply in writing to the aggrieved.
2. If the grievance has not been satisfactorily addressed at that level, the aggrieved party may submit the matter in writing to the Student Affairs Officer or Personnel Officer who will meet with the parties involved to review all facts in the case. Within ten (10) days following this meeting, the Student Affairs Officer or Personnel Officer shall submit a written answer to the aggrieved party.
3. If the matter is still not resolved, the aggrieved party shall submit in writing, the circumstances of the grievance to the appropriate Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent will conduct a hearing at a time convenient to all parties as soon as possible. The Assistant Superintendent will give a written response to the matter ten (10) days following this hearing.
4. If the case has still not been resolved satisfactorily, then the matter may be submitted in writing to the Superintendent who will give written notice of the action to the aggrieved within ten (10) days following a meeting at which the grievance is considered.
5. At any time during the process, a hearing may be requested at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) for a matter regarding a student, or a complaint filed with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) for matters regarding either students or employees.

JFCK-SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS

Sexual harassment is a form of behavior which adversely affects the learning experience. It is prohibited by State and Federal law. The New Bedford School Department also condemns and prohibits sexual harassment by any student or employee.

Sexual harassment does not refer to purely voluntary social activities. It refers to behavior which is not welcomed by the student, which is personally offensive to him or her, and/or which undermines morale and/or interferes with the ability of the student to learn effectively. It is, therefore, against the policies of the New Bedford School Department for any employee or student, male or female, to harass another student sexually, that is, by making unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other uninvited verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of obtaining an education;
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by a student is made the basis for educational decision affecting the student;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's educational performance;
4. Retaliation is threatened or undertaken against a student who complains that such conduct is interfering with his or her education; or
5. A hostile or intimidating learning environment is created for the student. Any student violating this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, including possible exclusion by the New Bedford School Department. Any student wishing to file charges should do so through the house office.

Complaint Procedure:

1. Any member of the school community who believes that he or she has been subject-ed to sexual harassment will report the incident(s) to the Principal.
2. The Principal will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:
 - a. Within two (2) school days, the Principal will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts.
 - b. The Principal will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain his or her response to the complaint.
 - c. The Principal will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to gather facts.
 - d. On the basis of the Principal's perception of the situation he or she may:
 - i. Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation; or
 - ii. Report the incident and transfer the record to the Assistant Superintendent or his/her designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.

The Principal may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the School Committee for termination or expulsion. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible.

STUDENT RECORDS

In accordance with Massachusetts regulations, an eligible student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall have access to the student record. In no event shall such access be delayed more than ten (10) days after the initial request, unless the requesting party consents to a delay. Upon such request for access, the entire student record regardless of the physical location of its parts shall be made available. Upon request, copies of any information contained in the student record shall be furnished to the eligible student or his/her parent. A reasonable fee not to exceed the cost of reproduction may be charged.

Destruction of Records: The school system will maintain a copy of a student's transcript for at least 60 years after the student leaves the school system. Temporary records will be destroyed within seven (7) years after a student leaves the system. Before any records are destroyed, the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given notice and an opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed.

Non-custodial Parents: Massachusetts regulations establish a mandatory process for responding to student record requests from non-custodial parents. When a parent who does not have physical custody of the child/student (non-custodial parent) requests access to the student's student record or other information regarding the student, the non-custodial parent is required to submit a written request to the building principal for the student record with a certified court order indicating that the non-custodial parent is eligible to access information regarding the student and an affidavit verifying that the order provided remains in effect and that the non-custodial parent is not subject to a temporary or permanent protective order.

Immediately upon receipt of this documentation the school shall notify the custodial parent that the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student record information after twenty-one (21) days unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation establishing that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to access information regarding the student. When student record information is provided to a non-custodial parent in accordance with the above procedures, the school will delete the address and telephone number

of the student and custodial parent from all records provided to the non-custodial parent. Any such records provided to the non-custodial parent shall be marked to indicate that they may not be used to enroll the student in another school.

Non-custodial parents are required by law to submit a written request for access to their child's student record information each year stating that the parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student and remains eligible to access information regarding the student.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS. C.71 §37H

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student, who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent.

The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the Superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the Superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion."

Massachusetts General Laws c.71 §37H1/2

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or Principal of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or Principal if said principal or Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in

effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or Principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

(2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or Principal of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or Principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

SERVICES AND ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parents or other people in a care-giving or professional position may refer a student to the Special Education Department for an evaluation of the student's eligibility for special education. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Upon receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a TEAM meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services. In some cases, the evaluation Team determines that a student with a disability may require only individual accommodations as opposed to specialized instruction and /or related services. Such students are then referred for an evaluation of their eligibility for an individual accommodation plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

For more information regarding the services available to students with disabilities please contact the school guidance counselor, Principal, or the New Bedford Public Schools' Director of Special Education.

NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, the New Bedford Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

BULLYING AND CYBER-BULLYING

“Bullying”, the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying”, bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

If a student notifies a teacher that they have been bullied, the teacher will immediately respond to the child's concern by contacting the child's parents within 24 hours to inform the parent of the action they will take to investigate and resolve the situation. The teacher will inform the assistant principal on their floor in writing of what was reported to them and the action they took to resolve the issue. If the bullying continues, the teacher may then refer the matter to the assistant principal for further investigation.

If the Assistant Principal receives a referral regarding the bullying incident, the Assistant Principal will work with the Guidance Counselor to conduct an investigation to determine the validity of the referral. The student (s) will be asked to sign a detailed statement, including the perceived bullying incident, the time/location and the alleged perpetrator. However, if a student decides to file an anonymous complaint, the school cannot take action against the alleged perpetrator(s) with the evidence alone.

If the written statement meets bullying designation under Massachusetts General Law, the assistant principal will immediately contact the parents of the student (s) being victimized and the perpetrator (s) to inform them of the situation and of the investigation process.

If the assistant principal or principal determines that a student has been participating in bullying in the school building, or on school property, including riding the bus to and from school, actions may be taken. The actions can include, but are not limited to, assigning the consequences listed below, arranging counseling sessions with the Guidance Counselor or Adjustment Counselor to focus on understanding bullying and developing appropriate social behaviors, and setting up a meeting with School Resource Officer to file charges.

Any student, who is deemed to be a co-conspirator either through hindering the process of reporting bullying incidents or intimidating a victim, may also be subject to the consequences as well.

Magnet School

It is a privilege for Magnet students to attend the Alfred J. Gomes School. Should a magnet student present behavior, attendance or other problems that detract from the education of all students, they may be required to return to their home school. Applications for magnet schools are available through the Superintendent's Office.

Gomes Elementary Magnet School for Communications through the Arts

Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines **communication** as a process by which meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols.

The Alfred J. Gomes School has a very diverse population where English speaking students sit side by side with students who have recently arrived from other countries and heritages. To capitalize on this rich and culturally diverse population "Communication through the Arts" was the natural choice for our new magnet theme.

The arts have long been known to genuinely unite people with ideas and emotions. Teaching through the arts helps students experience concepts rather than simply discussing or reading about them. These artistic endeavors include visual and performing, literary, music, and dance. This approach highlights the importance of reaching multiple learning styles. Researchers have also found that the arts have been remarkably effective in multicultural and multilingual settings removing many of the written and verbal language barriers.

To connect the Arts to our core curriculum requires students to engage in the act of creating art themselves. Through theme based interdisciplinary units of instruction, the A. J. Gomes teachers are assisting students in the development of projects. At present, the grade level team projects are linked to the science and social studies curriculum. The displays or demonstrations of the projects that are being developed will give students, at all grade levels, the opportunity to share information with others that is also equally memorable for them. Using this project-based technique has been linked to students' increased critical and creative thinking skills, self-esteem, willingness to take risks, and ability to work with others.

As the adage goes – "It takes a village to raise a child" - the Gomes School is fortunate to have several partners assisting us. Music in the Morning program has been running for several years at the A. J. Gomes school through the sponsorship of the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra. The ArtWorks! *Partners for the Arts and Community* provide quality Invest In Kids after-school programming and sponsorships for Gomes students. Since literacy is at the heart of communication, each week SMILES volunteers enter our site to partner with individual students to read and form caring relationships. Noted children's book author, Gretchen Pyne has paved the way additional resources and connections to arrive at our site. Through her associations, a one to one student partnership with the Tabor Academy has been created and which resulted in an extraordinary display of A. J. Gomes student talent at our art show and a student created logo representing our *Dream Believe and Do* motto. (See our Gomes school website).

Mrs. Pyne also set the wheels in motion for additional musical instruction by professional musician Mr. Rick Morin of the Rhythm Room. This year Mr. Morin is bringing rhythm to our second grade classes. Not only does this enhance our music program by introducing instruments a year earlier, but also integrates literacy, social and science skills during his weekly bucket drumming workshops (buckets donated by Lowe's).

The display of projects and productions to parents and community members showcases our student's learning through the arts.

A.J. Gomes Elementary School Parent / A. J. Gomes Compact

School Pledge

We understand that students, parents, teachers and administrators are all equal partners in education and that we must all share in the commitment and responsibility of improving teaching and learning. Therefore, we shall strive to do the following:

- √ We will provide an environment that allows for positive communication between teachers, parents and administrators.
- √ We will encourage teachers and parents to participate in learning activities, which will insure a safe and nurturing living environment for our children
- √ We will strive to be aware of the individual needs of your child.
- √ We will communicate regularly with you regarding your child's progress.

Parent Pledge

I understand that my child's years are very important, and that my participation in my child's education will help his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- √ I will see that my child is punctual and attends school regularly.
- √ I will stay aware of what my child is learning.
- √ I will be sure that my child gets an adequate night's sleep and nutritious meals
- √ I will read with my child and let my child see me read.
- √ I will attend Parent Conferences and Open House.

Please sign and return this page only.

I have received, read and understand this student/parent handbook, school rules and District policies for the Alfred J. Gomes School.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Student's Name _____

Grade _____ Room _____

