

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

The primary function of a school program is the instruction of students. All staff activities and efforts shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, and ever-improving instructional program.

There are primarily three functions involved in carrying out the instructional program:

- Operating Function
- Coordinating and Developing Function
- Evaluating and Assessment Function

The operating function involves classroom instruction and building program management. The coordinating and developing function includes monitoring activities (curriculum development), in-service education, and special services. The evaluation and assessment function involves data collection and synthesis and establishing future direction.

LEGAL REFS.: 603 CMR 26:00

SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval by May 1st of each year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education:

1. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
2. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in 603 CMR 27.02. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 15:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and School Day, effective 9/1/75
Board of Education, Student Learning Time Regulations
603 CMR 27.00, Adopted 12/20/94

SCHOOL DAY

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 71:59
Board of Education Regulations for School Year and Day, effective 9/1/75

CURRICULUM ADOPTION

The School Committee will rely on its professional staff to design and implement instructional programs and courses of study that will forward the educational goals of the school system.

The Superintendent will have authority to approve new programs and courses of study after they have been thoroughly studied and found to support educational goals. The Committee itself will consider, and officially adopt, new programs and courses when they constitute an extensive alteration in instructional content or approach.

The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum. It will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1; 69:1E

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The School Committee will attempt to provide every student with an opportunity for wholesome and enriched educational experiences. It is the Committee's belief that the following basic aims and objectives of the physical education program will contribute to this goal:

1. To aid the development of the entire student so that a well trained mind may function properly in a healthy body.
2. To encourage student participation in vigorous physical activity while in school, and to teach the skills of those activities so that they will have a carry-over value for later activities in every day life.
3. To increase appreciation of physical fitness and its importance in regard to good health.
4. To impress upon students the importance of integrating one's mind, body and attitude in preparing to face the obligations of a complex society.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:3
Board of Education Regulations Pertaining to Physical Education,
adopted 4/25/78, effective 9/1/78
603 CMR 26:05

HEALTH EDUCATION

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs. The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program as an integral part of each student's general education.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the District School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students in our schools will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If planned curricula change during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexual issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
2. Inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in the dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each Principal by September 1 of each year.

REF.: Department of Education

**HEALTH EDUCATION
(Exemption Procedure)**

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will be graded.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of the alternate activity within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:1

TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND TOBACCO

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally based drug and alcohol education and prevention programs in grades K-12.

The drug and alcohol education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug and alcohol use. It shall include special instruction as to the effects upon the human system; the emotional, psychological and social dangers of such use with emphasis on nonuse and the illegal aspects of such use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques for resisting peer pressure to use illicit drugs or alcohol.

The objectives of this program are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of each individual to the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

These objectives are:

To create an awareness of the total drug problem--prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation, and law enforcement on the local, state, national and international levels.

To relate the use of drugs and alcohol to physical, mental, social and emotional practices.

To develop the student's ability to make intelligent choices based on facts and to develop the courage to stand by one's own convictions.

To understand the personal, social and economic problems causing the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

To develop an interest in preventing illegal use of drugs in the community.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goal of the school system's special education program is to provide each child with a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to allow each child to grow and achieve at his/her own level.

The requirements of Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws and state regulations 603 CMR 28:00 inclusive will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs, and in assessing their educational progress. The requirements set forth in 603 CMR 28.00 are in addition to, or in some instances clarify or further elaborate, the special education rights and responsibilities set forth in state statute (M.G.L. c. 71B), federal statute (20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq. as amended), and federal regulations (34 CFR §300 et seq. as amended). In keeping with state requirements, children identified as eligible for special education between the ages of three through 21 who have not attained a high school diploma or its equivalent will be eligible for services.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the general education setting if they are provided with the specially designed instruction, accommodations, and support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school system's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children may require special programs, special classes, or special schools. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that schools work closely with parents in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure appropriately qualified personnel to work with the children with special needs.

As the procedures for implementing special education programming are extensive, a separate district special education policy and procedure manual delineates current procedures.

LEGAL REFS: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (PL 108-446)
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.
603 CMR 28:00 inclusive

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In keeping with the intention of the state of Massachusetts to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

File: IHBAA

OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Parents' request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Special Education Director or designee shall contact the parent(s) for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents' request.
3. When a parent requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.

9. The observer will be asked to submit his/her report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.
12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s) prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting. .

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

Approved by all four school committees: December 11, 2009

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

“School districts and parents have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue.”

“The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

**the safety of children in the program during the observation;
the integrity of the program during the observation;
and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.”**

File: IHBD

COMPENSATORY EDUCATION (Title 1)

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

File: IHBEA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English (PHLOTE), observations, intake assessments, and recommendations of parents, teachers and other persons. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to the Massachusetts Department of Education each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by the Massachusetts Department of Education to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. 3001 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)
 42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
 603 CMR 14.00

File: IHBF

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

In the event of surgery, accident or prolonged illness, home instruction will be available for students in major subjects. Inquiries should be addressed to the student's Principal or designee. A medical report by a physician is needed for this service.

HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a home schooling program is in compliance with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law.

Prior to removing the child from public school:

- The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.
- The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the district, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may include:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children.
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
4. Periodic mutually agreed upon testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the district may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent by paying all required fees.

Home School students will not be eligible for a Silver Lake Regional High School Diploma.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69: ID; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles – Mass. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass. 324 (1987)

SUMMER SCHOOLS

The school system will conduct summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be remedial work in reading and mathematics.

To attend remedial summer school, students must have the approval of their classroom and/or special subject teachers and have passed two of four quarters of the course.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted to high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:28

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school system. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of international, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, physical disabilities or sexual preference.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility for meeting the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:48; 71:49; 71:50

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.

Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.

Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents/guardians making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District is not required to convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated, and the period of three years does not apply.

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

TEXTBOOK SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Responsibility for the review and selection of textbooks to be purchased shall rest with the Principal of each school. The Principal is encouraged through the School Committee to establish a review committee to assist in the process to determine the textbooks that best meet the curriculum guidelines of the District. The review committee should include teachers who will use the texts and other staff members as found desirable. Students and parents will be encouraged to serve.

Principles that apply generally to the selection of instructional materials and library materials shall apply to textbooks. Additionally, basic textbooks and textbook support materials shall be chosen:

- To advance the educational objectives of the school system and particular objectives of the course program;
- To contribute toward continuity, integration, and articulation of the curriculum; and
- To establish a general framework for the particular course or program.

Because the instructional purposes of textbooks, as stated above, are of such importance, particular care shall be taken in their selection as to content.

Although many points must be examined, the School Committee directs the staff to be mindful of the following considerations:

- The needs of all learners must be provided for.
- Attention should be given to gender roles depicted in the materials.
- The textbook and textbook support materials should lead the student and teacher beyond the textbook into a wide variety of other materials and educational experiences.
- If the textbook deals with problems and issues of our times, it should present and encourage examination of varied points of view.
- Because textbooks are selected for multiple years' use, special attention also shall be given their physical characteristics, durability, format and price.

LEGAL REFS.: 71:48; 30B:7; 71:50
603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

The continuous review of integrated learning center (library) materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials shall be withdrawn shall rest with the professional staff.

Among the other reasons for withdrawing an item shall be the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered as superfluous materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Materials contain information which is no longer accurate or current.
- Materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. Some books which are deemed standards or classics shall be retained even though they rarely circulate.
- Materials have worn out, been damaged or physically deteriorated, and have lost utility, and/or appeal.
- Materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

SPECIAL INTEREST MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION

Organizations, institutions, and individuals at times develop materials that are offered to schools free or inexpensively. As a general rule, sponsored materials present a particular point of view, and extreme care must be exercised in evaluating and using them. The responsibility for using sponsored materials rests with the certified staff member who recommends its use. In any questionable instance, the Principal should be informed and shall decide whether its use in the best interests of the students.

Sponsored materials must meet the same basic selection criteria as any other learning material, as well as the following special criteria.

Any expression of a point of view should be clearly identified.

Any advertising that appears on or with any material should be in good taste and unobtrusive.

The source of all material should be clearly identifiable.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Access to Electronic Media

The Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate and responsible manner.

Safety Procedures and Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to electronic media. Guidelines shall address teacher supervision of student computer use, ethical use of electronic media (including, but not limited to, the Internet, e-mail, and other District technological resources), and issues of privacy versus administrative review of electronic files and communications. In addition, guidelines shall prohibit utilization of networks for prohibited or illegal activities, the intentional spreading of embedded messages, or the use of other programs with the potential of damaging or destroying programs or data.

Internet safety measures shall be implemented that effectively address the following:

- Controlling access by minors to inappropriate matter on the Internet and World Wide Web;
- Safety and security of minors when they are using electronic mail, chat rooms, and other forms of director electronic communications;
- Preventing unauthorized access, including “hacking” and other unlawful activities by minors online;
- Unauthorized disclosure, use and dissemination of personal information regarding minors; and
- Restricting minors’ access to materials harmful to them.

The District shall provide reasonable public notice of, and at least one (1) public hearing or meeting to address and communicate its Internet safety measures.

Permission/Agreement Form

A written parental request shall be required prior to the student being granted independent access to electronic media involving District technological resources. The required permission/agreement form, which shall specify acceptable uses, rules of on-line behavior, access privileges, and penalties for policy/procedural violations, must be signed by the parent or legal guardian of minor students (those under 18 years of age) and also by the student. This document shall be kept on file as a legal, binding document. In order to modify or rescind the agreement, the student's parent/guardian (or the student who is at least 18 years old) must provide the Superintendent with a written request.

Employee Use

Employees shall use electronic mail only for purposes directly related to work-related activities.

Employees shall not use a code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless they have been given authorization to do so. (Authorization is not required each time the electronic media is accessed in performance of one's duties.) Each employee is responsible for the security of his/her own password.

Community Use

On recommendation of the Superintendent or designee, the Committee shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access systems will be available to the community. Upon request to the Principal or designee, community members may have access to the Internet and other electronic information sources and programs available through the District's technology system, provided they attend any required training and abide by the rules of usage established by the Superintendent or designee.

Disregard of Rules

Individuals who refuse to sign required acceptable use documents or who violate District rules governing the use of District technology shall be subject to loss or restriction of the privilege of using equipment, software, information access systems, or other computing and telecommunications technologies.

Responsibility for Damages

Individuals shall reimburse the Committee for repair or replacement of District property lost, stolen, damaged, or vandalized while under their care.

Responding to Concerns

School officials shall apply the same criterion of educational suitability used to review other educational resources when questions arise concerning access to specific databases or other electronic media.

Audit of Use

Users with network access shall not utilize District resources to establish electronic mail accounts through third-party providers or any other nonstandard electronic mail system.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process to determine whether the District's education technology is being used for purposes prohibited by law or for accessing sexually explicit materials. The process shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Utilizing technology that blocks or filters Internet access for both minors and adults to certain visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, or, with respect to computers with Internet access by minors, harmful to minors;
2. Maintaining and securing a usage log; and
3. Monitoring online activities of minors.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

CROSS REFS: IJNDB, Acceptable Use Policy – Technology

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The purpose of the Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, Plympton School Department) network is to advance and promote education in the District. It is intended to assist in the collaboration and exchange of information among all who are concerned with education. The Internet is a computer network (actually a network of networks) that links the schools with other schools, universities, private corporations and people worldwide. The primary purpose of using the Internet is to help students gain access to vast amounts of current research being conducted locally, nationally, and worldwide and to communicate with other students with similar interests who are on the network.

Access to the World Wide Web/Internet must be in support of education and research. The use of the Internet Access Network is a privilege, not a right. Everyone is responsible for what he/she says and does on the network. Because communication with thousands of others is so quick and easy, it is important to think before communicating and to show respect for other people and their ideas.

Network administrators will make reasonable efforts to maintain reliable service and user privacy, but they cannot absolutely guarantee that the system will always be available or that files will always be saved, nor can privacy be completely guaranteed.

NETWORK RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Transmission of any material in violation of any US or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening, harassing, obscene or pornographic material, or material protected by trade secret.
2. Any traffic from this network that traverses another network is also subject to that network's acceptable use policy.
3. Users must respect others' privacy and intellectual property.
4. All communication and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property. Any sources used in research must be cited and credit given to the author.
5. The legal rights of software producers and network providers, and copyright and license agreements must be honored.
6. The Internet will be accessed from within the (town of Halifax, Kingston, Plympton and the other towns within the) Silver Lake Regional School District. When using the Network, students must obey any faculty, staff members or supervising personnel.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE

Certain behaviors have gained acceptance on the network, some because they save misunderstanding and maintain privacy, and others because they help other users avoid a waste of time or help conserve system resources. As one joins the on-line community, practice these appreciated behaviors.

- Never give out personal information such as your Social Security number, telephone number, mailing address.
- What you say on the computer reflects upon you. Never use offensive or inappropriate language (e.g. derogatory or explicit language, swearing).
- Don't publicly criticize ("flame") others.
- Do not contribute to junk mail. Do not use all capital letters.
- Conferencing and bulletin boards are "showcases." Proofread and edit before posting.

ACCESS

To get Internet access, you must do the following:

- Read this entire document and ensure that you understand these terms and agree to abide by them.
- Complete and sign the application form.
- Show the enclosed letter and this document to your parent or guardian and have them sign the application form. (See page 2)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Any violation of the network responsibilities will result in a cancellation of network privileges. The system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the system administrators may close the Network at any time as required. The administration, faculty, and staff may request the system administrator to deny, revoke or suspend specific users. Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton School Department) will not be responsible for any damages anyone suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, nondeliveries, misdeliveries, or service interruptions caused by the school's own negligence, or anyone's errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Network is at your own risk. Silver Lake Regional School District (The Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton School Department) specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

NETWORK ETIQUETTE APPLICATION FORM

Silver Lake Regional School District and Halifax, Kingston, Plympton School Departments Internet Access Network

The Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton School Department) is pleased to provide this opportunity to explore the world through the Internet. However, because the Internet is an open system, some of the material that is available on the Internet may not be suitable for students. Parents and students have the responsibility for discussing the appropriate usage of the Internet Access Network.

Student Name: _____ School _____

Current Grade: _____ Homeroom _____

Street Address: _____ Telephone Number _____

I understand and will abide by the terms and conditions outlined in this document regarding the use of the Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton School Department) Internet Access Network. I further understand that any violation of the regulations stated is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked; school disciplinary action may be taken and/or appropriate legal action.

User Signature _____ Date _____

For the parent or guardian: As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read this document regarding the use of the Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton School Department) Internet Access Network. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes and the Silver Lake Regional Public Schools (Halifax, Kingston, Plympton School Department) has taken available precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I recognize that it is impossible to restrict access to all controversial materials.

I hereby **give permission** for my child to access the Internet via the Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston and Plympton School Department) Internet Access Network, will not hold Silver Lake Regional School District (Halifax, Kingston, Plympton School Committee) responsible for materials acquired on the network and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

Parent/Guardian's Name (Please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

I **do not** give permission for my child to have access to the Internet.

Parent/Guardian's Name (Please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date _____

RETURN THIS ENTIRE FORM TO YOUR HOMEROOM TEACHER

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT WEB PAGES

The Halifax, Kingston and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District realize the limitless potential for information and communication provided by the World Wide Web. The availability of this communication vehicle provides an opportunity for students and staff to access and contribute to the world of information related to curriculum, instruction, school, District, and school community related activities. Therefore, the Halifax, Kingston and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District will use the Internet as an effective, efficient and timely source of information, method of communication and vehicle for resource collection. In order to take advantage of the opportunities the Internet provides, the Committee authorizes the creation of school and/or District Web pages on the Internet.

Only those web pages maintained in accordance with Committee policy and established procedures shall be recognized as official representations of the District or individual schools. All information on a school or District Web page must accurately reflect the mission, goals, policies, program, and activities of the school and District. The Web pages must have a purpose that falls within at least one of three categories:

1. Support of curriculum and instruction – intended to provide links to Internet resources for students, parents and staff in the District.
2. Public information – intended to communicate information about the schools and District to students, staff, parents, community, and the world at large.
3. District technology support – intended to provide and respond to instructional and administrative technology needs of students and staff.

The Superintendent shall designate an individual(s) to be responsible to maintaining the official District web page and monitoring all District Web page activity. A building Principal shall make such designation for an individual school. Schools or departments that wish to publish a Web page must identify an appropriately qualified publisher and/or author.

As with any instructional materials or publication used by or representing the school or District, the building Principal or Superintendent, respectively, are ultimately responsible for accuracy and appropriateness of the information made available at the Web site. Concern about the content of any page(s) created by students or staff should be directed to the building Principal or to the Superintendent's office when related to the District Web site.

Web sites developed under contract for the Halifax, Kingston and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District or within the scope of employment by Halifax, Kingston and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District employees are the property of the Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District.

Due to the dynamic nature of the World Wide Web, this policy is to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or more frequently if required.

WEB SITE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

Unlike the Internet itself, schools and the District can control the type of information placed on Web pages. Documents created for the Web and linked to District Web pages shall meet the criteria for use as public information or an instructional resource. The following considerations should be considered when determining the information to include on a school or District Web page: Copyright/trademark issues; applicability to the curriculum or communication goals of the school or District; privacy issues; and related School Committee policies. Links to other Web pages should be carefully selected based on the above issues.

Defined Purpose

A Web page must have a clearly defined purpose that is published on the Web page. Included in the purpose, the target audience must be specified and defined; however, all Web site users are reminded that their audience includes the worldwide community.

Content Standards

All subject matter on Web pages should relate to curriculum, instruction, school-authorized activities, general information supporting student safety, growth, and learning, or public information of interest to others. Therefore, neither staff nor students may publish on the District server personal pages or pages for individuals or organizations not directly affiliated with the District. Staff or student work may be published only as it relates to a class project, course, or other school-related activity. Parent groups, partnerships, and municipal or educational cooperatives are considered affiliates of the District. No confidential information is to be published on or linked to a Web page.

Quality Standards

All Web page work must be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Documents may not contain objectionable material or link directly to objectionable materials. Objectionable material is addressed in more detail in the School Committee policy for instructional material selection and reconsideration. Authors and publishers are reminded that a Web site is a virtual doorway to your school. A site and a school will be judged on its ease for the user, the design, and the content. It is strongly recommended that a school form a building committee of interested individuals including staff, administrators, parents, students, and community members for the development of the Web site. Thoughtful consideration should go into decisions regarding purpose, usefulness, and appearance of each item on the Web site. As much as possible, publishers are encouraged to include student pictures and work. As the District represents itself to the world through this medium, assurances should be provided that students are the focus of the Halifax, Kingston and Plympton Public Schools and the Silver Lake School District. Written student and parent consent must be secured for publication of student work.

Consistence Standards

Each existing school or department Web site shall have a link to the District Web site once the District Web site is online. For consistency, all school District Web sites must contain certain elements:

- At the bottom of each page there must be a link to the home page (to be defined by the school or District home page once online).
- At the bottom of the Web page, there must be an indication of the date of the last update to that page and the name or initials of the person(s) responsible for page update. It shall be that person's responsibility to keep the Web page current. Repeated failure to do so may result in revocation of approval. It is strongly recommended that a building set up a system of checks and balances for the Web site (for example: all incoming e-mail is blind copied to the Principal or department head).
- All Web sites must display the name and approved logo of the Halifax, Kingston or Plympton Public Schools or the Silver Lake School District.
- All Web pages must be given names that clearly identify them.
- Links to student e-mail accounts are not allowed.
- Student directory data is prohibited from publication, except for the first name and grade level of a student in relation to a photo or work.
- Web pages may not contain links to other Web pages not yet completed. If additional pages are anticipated, but not yet developed, the text that will provide such a link should be included. However, the actual link to said page(s) may not be made until the final page is actually in place.
- All Web sites must include: the author or publisher's name; the publisher or school's e-mail address; appropriate copyright citations.
- Authors must exhibit care when creating Web pages with extensive background, large graphics, applets, animation, and audio or video clips. Such files require extensive download time, are frustrating for modem users, and slow down file servers.

File: IJOA

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have parental permission for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

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. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

FIELD TRIPS

All School rules as contained in the student handbook will be strictly enforced while all field trips are in progress. All field trips sponsored by Union #31 Schools are limited to students currently enrolled in the Union #31 Schools (Kingston Elementary and Intermediate, Halifax Elementary, Dennett Elementary).

I. Educational Field Trips (Day)

Educational field trips by definition are those that would enhance the curriculum for the student. These trips should be designed to stimulate student interest, inquiry, and provide opportunities for sound growth and development.

- A. With approval of the Superintendent, teachers may organize field trips for instructional purposes only. Sponsor(s) of field trips must be a current employee of Union #31 schools (Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton).
- B. Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI check in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 S.38R.
- C. Participating students must submit a signed (by parent/guardian) permission form. Such form shall include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

II. Education Field Trips (Overnight)

All student trips sponsored by the Union #31 Schools that are planned between the hours of midnight and 6:00 A.M. and/or any overnight travel must have prior approval of the appropriate School Committee. Preliminary Approval by the School Committee is required before engaging students in fundraising activities. The School Committee will consider the educational value of the trip in relation to the cost prior to granting Preliminary Approval. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade/age level of the students.

Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip have been completed including, but not limited to, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts. The School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled trip dates.

A. Trip Approval Process

- 1. Advance approval by the school committee is required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel.
- 2. The approval process must be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
- 3. Overnight trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.

4. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process should apply only to school-sanctioned trips; school committees will not approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.
5. Policies and procedures for trip approval must take into account all logistical details involving transportation, accommodations, fundraising required of students, and the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs.

B. Transportation

1. The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel is not allowed. Such trips must use commercial motor coaches.
2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should involve pre-trip checks (in accordance with Federal Motor Coach Safety Association) of companies, drivers, and vehicles.
3. The contract with the carrier should prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the district to allow verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.

C. Trip Scheduling

1. Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Whenever possible, the trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
2. Trip scheduling should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, stragglers, and other unanticipated factors.
3. If most members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

D. Fundraising

1. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and with recognition of students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.
2. Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.
3. If students are charged individual fees for participation, the district should make every effort to provide scholarships where needed.

E. Student Supervision

1. Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI check in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 S.38R.
2. Participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such form shall include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

THIS SECTION PERTAINS TO SILVER LAKE ONLY

III. International Travel

- A. Although the School Committee recognizes the value of international travel, the School Committee assumes no responsibility for financial commitments, itinerary, arrangement chaperone assignments, personal injuries or personal inconveniences. International travel constitutes a contractual arrangement between parent/guardian student and responsible sponsors only.
- B. Sponsor(s) of international trips must be a current employee of Silver Lake Regional Schools. School facilities maybe scheduled at the discretion of the Principal for use after school hours by said individual or individuals to distribute relevant information about the program.
- C. All international trips must purchase trip cancellation insurance.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS

Community resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who respect diversity in thinking and varying views and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view. Prior administrative approval is required.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers will be subject to screening by administration as deemed appropriate, including but not limited to a C.O.R.I. check.

CROSS REF.: ADDA, C.O.R.I. Requirements

File: IK

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Children have diverse capabilities and individual patterns of growth and learning. Therefore, the Committee feels it is important that teachers have as much and as accurate knowledge of each student as possible in order to assess his/her needs and growth, and make instructional plans for him/her. A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential.

The Committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:

1. Parents/guardians be informed regularly of the progress their children are making in school.
2. Parents/guardians will be alerted and conferred with as soon as practical when a child's performance or attitude becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.
3. Insofar as possible, distinctions will be made between a student's attitude and his academic performance.
4. At comparable levels, the school system will strive for consistency in grading and reporting except as this is inappropriate for certain classes or certain students.
5. When no grades are given but the student is evaluated informally in terms of his/her own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's standing in relation to his/her peers.
6. When grades are given, the school staff will take particular care to explain the meaning of marks and symbols to parents.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences: A series of dates will be established to develop further communication between parents and school. Teachers are expected to be present and make every effort to see that this activity is a meaningful one for parents.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the student involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to the student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

The School Committee considers comprehensive and objective evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum to be of primary importance. The Superintendent will provide for the translation of the stated instructional goals into objectives and for appraisal of their implementation in order to:

1. Determine educational needs and provide information for planning.
2. Indicate instructional strengths and weaknesses.
3. Check on the suitability of programs in terms of community requirements.
4. Show the relationship between achievement and the system's stated goals.
5. Provide data for public information.

Elements of this evaluation process may include:

1. Testing programs such as nationally standardized general achievement tests, nationally standardized tests in specific subject areas, and tests administered by other agencies.
2. Study of school achievement records.
3. Study of students' high school and drop-out records.
4. Use of outside services, participation in regional research studies, contracted evaluation services; evaluation services at cost to the school system must be approved in advance by the School Committee.
5. Teacher and parent evaluation of student behavior.
6. State Department of Education specialists and services.
7. Evaluation by the regional accrediting association.
8. Evaluation by other agencies.

An evaluation of the curriculum and its effectiveness will be made periodically and reported to the Committee by the Superintendent.

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation.

Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.

2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal may appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents and two faculty members.
3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted to non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

A Principal may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A flag shall be displayed in each assembly hall or other room in each such schoolhouse where the opening exercises on each school day are held. Each teacher shall lead the pupils under his/her charge to salute the flag and recite in unison with him/her at said opening exercises each day the "Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag."

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:69