

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

- Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.
- Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.
- Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.
- Community service efforts which enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
 - 1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 - 2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
 - 3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
 - 4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- (b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).
- (e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

SCHOOL PARENTS 'ASSOCIATION

1. The School Committee recognizes the school-parent associations as private, nonprofit adjuncts of the School Department under its auspices.
2. The School Committee looks upon school-parent associations as integral parts of the school community.
3. Among the many services which such associations can offer, the School Committee welcomes any assistance which they can give in developing and maintaining strong and effective communication between home and school.
4. Such association shall operate under an agreed upon-set of bylaws which shall be filed in the Superintendent's and building Principal's office.
5. School-parent associations are obliged to follow all School Committee policies with particular emphasis placed on the following:

Fund raising must be conducted in accordance with School Committee Policy. Funds must be accounted for in accordance with School Committee Policy and applicable laws.

Enrichment opportunities and related activities must be approved by the Building Principal in accordance with School Committee Policy.

GIFTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will recommend to the School Committee the acceptance of gifts and offers of equipment for the schools when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business or specific interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the public schools.

Gifts which would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to School Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the School District. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account by the town treasurer or Silver Lake Regional School District Business manager and expended at the discretion of the Committee as provided by law. The Superintendent or designee may accept gifts of supplies or equipment with notification to the committee.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37A

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

No resident of the district will be denied the right to bring complaints to the School Committee. Complaints will be referred back through the proper administrative channels for solutions before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will only be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations.

The School Committees believe that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement of the School Committee. The proper channeling of complaints regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School Building Administrators
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is resolved before it comes back to the Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of action desired.

The School Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a prompt reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23B
603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10 (MASC's legal reference)
Contract Refs.: Teachers' Agreement

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES – GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The school facilities of the Halifax, Kingston, Plympton and the Silver Lake Regional School District are available to reputable and responsible organizations, subject to the control of the appropriate School Committee and to such conditions and regulations as each may establish.

No such use of school facilities, however, shall at any time be allowed to interfere with or limit the regular work or extra-curricular activities of the school program, or of classes or activities of the school program, or of classes or activities conducted in each school district.

School equipment will not be available to outside organizations except under very special circumstances and with permission of the building Principal.

Any equipment brought into the schools by outside or related organizations should not be considered school property, and as such, the school assumes no responsibility to the individual or group furnishing the equipment.

LEGAL REFS.:M.G.L. 71:71; 71:71B; 71:71E; 272:40A

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The school system will provide students, parents, and employees some measure of protection from solicitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The school system should not give the public the impression of endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without School Committee permission.
2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing school system employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the Committee's policy on staff solicitations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 44:53A

CROSS REFS.: GBEC, Staff Gifts and Solicitations
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities
JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
KHB, Advertising in the Schools

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

Pupils, staff members, or the facilities of the school may not be used in any manner for advertising or promoting the interests of any community or non-school agency or organization without the approval of the School Committee. Exceptions to the rule are:

1. Appropriate advertising may be sold for school publications, with the approval of the building Principal.
2. The Superintendent may cooperate in the activities of the community providing such cooperation does not infringe on the school programs or diminish the amount of time devoted to school programs.

No person, unless employed by the School Committee, shall give any notice by reading or otherwise to the pupils of any school within the District except with the approval of the Principal, or shall under any circumstances post upon bulletin boards, or elsewhere on school property, any advertisement or announcement of any kind.

CROSS REF.: JP, Student Gifts and Solicitations
 KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

DISTRIBUTION OF NOTICES

Distribution of notices by non-school organizations or on non-school matters shall be permitted only under the following conditions:

In Kingston, such notices may be distributed only with the School Committee's authorization.

In Silver Lake, Halifax, and Plympton, such notices may be distributed with school administration approval.

Such notices shall relate to activities for school children.

Such notices shall be those of non-profit community organizations.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee encourages parents and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school system's mission and goals.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is required that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school must ask permission of the Principal or designee 24 hours in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the District schools, and for safeguarding all school property.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

RELATIONS WITH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Any inspection of the buildings by the local fire departments should be done with the knowledge of the principals. A written report of any such inspection should be forwarded to the Principal and Superintendent for transmittal to the School Committee.