

HALIFAX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
464 Plymouth Street  
Halifax, Ma 02338  
781-293-2581  
[www.halifax.mec.edu](http://www.halifax.mec.edu)

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK  
2011-2012**

**This agenda belongs to:**

Name:

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**Halifax Elementary School, Halifax MA 781-293-2581**

**Massachusetts Union #31 and Silver Lake Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, or handicap in their educational activities or employment practices.**

### **Philosophy**

Education is the key to a full and productive life. The purpose of Halifax Elementary School is to foster a climate that honors education, encourages high academic standards, and respects cultural diversity. The intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of the elementary-level child are understood and each student's learning style is supported and challenged.

The Halifax school community prepares students for a successful transition to the middle school level. In addition to a strong academic foundation, students take with them skills in critical and creative thinking, communication, and decision-making as well as a sense of personal responsibility, well being, and concern for others.

Halifax Elementary School promotes communication and cooperation among children, parents, staff and the community. We encourage family and community members to participate in strengthening the educational opportunities and resources for our children. Together, we hope to inspire our children to become life-long learners.

### **Goals**

- Promote communication among staff, parents, administration, and community members to strengthen the social, academic, and physical education of our children.
- Provide a clean, safe, caring learning environment.
- Continue the emphasis on reducing class size as recommended by the Halifax School Committee and the Halifax School Council.
  - Demonstrate pride in our school by displaying and presenting a variety of student work, including visual, musical, and theater arts throughout the school community.
  - Maintain and continue to update curriculum in accordance with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks by involving teachers as well as parents and community members in the ongoing process of curriculum development.
  - Recognize the need for providing appropriate resources including staff, materials, technology, and professional development to accommodate changes in student needs.
  - Accommodate a diverse range of learning styles by implementing instructional and assessment methods reflective of current research in teaching and learning.
  - Support the use of technology by staff, students and administrators.
  - Continue to promote respect and understanding for the similarities and differences among people.

## General Information and School Policies

### Absence and Tardiness

Parents are requested to call the school when your child is absent; otherwise, we will contact you. It is expected that your child will bring in a written excuse for this absence signed by a parent or guardian on the day he/she returns to school.

Absence and tardiness are disruptive to the learning process. Repeated occurrences for reasons other than illness or emergency shall be treated as a disciplinary problem and will be treated as such. Absence including non-school vacations and tardiness shall not constitute an excuse for missed lessons, assignments or tests.

An absence of more than 5 days and/or absence resulting from a contagious disease requires a doctor's certificate to return to school.

Full-day attendance at school is essential to the learning process. When a student is unable to attend school, a parent should call between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. with the following information: student's name, teacher, and reason for the absence. A student who does not attend school shall not participate in any school-related activities that day and/or evening. Every student returning to school after any absence should present a note from the parent indicating the reason for the absence. After an illness of five consecutive days, a doctor's certificate is needed.

When a student reaches:

- A. Seven absences:
  - a. A phone call will be made to discuss with the parent/guardian concerns regarding the student's attendance
  - ii. The parent/guardian *may* be asked to attend a meeting at school (with the student present) at this time.

*The goals of the meeting will be:*

    - To connect with and offer support for the parents
    - To educate the parents of the impact that school absences and tardies have upon student learning.
    - To help students problem-solve and increase their responsibility for his/her attendance.
  - iii. A letter will be mailed home to the family which documents the school's concern regarding the student's attendance.
- B. Twelve absences:
  - a. A phone call *will* be made to request that a parent/guardian attend a school meeting, which will include the student, to discuss the correlation between academic achievement/success and student attendance.
  - ii. A second letter will be mailed home to the family that documents the continued concerns expressed by the administration regarding the student's attendance.
- C. Eighteen absences:

- a. A phone call will be made to request that a parent/guardian come to school for a meeting (which will include the student) to discuss the significant concerns regarding the student's attendance.
- ii. A third letter will be mailed to the student's parent(s)/guardian reiterating and documenting the significant concerns voiced by the administration regarding the student's attendance.

If a student's absences or continued tardies occur on a regular basis and impede their academic progress, the school, as a mandated reporter, may consider filing a CHINS, Child In Need of Services. Should the decision be made to file a CHINS, parent education about this process will take place.

This procedure outlined above will be implemented and varied according to the professional judgment of the Principal and the law regulating school attendance. Some excess absenteeism occurs because families take vacations during school time. This is strongly discouraged by school authorities. Teachers are not expected to provide assignments prior to a vacation taken during school time. After students return they are responsible for missed assignments, making them up as soon as possible.

### **Animals**

Animals may not be brought to school without **teacher and the office permission first**, and then only for an educational reason. Animals must be transported to school by means other than the school bus.

A secure container or cage must be provided for the animal.

### **Arrival at School**

Children should arrive at school at approximately 8:15 a.m. with the arrival of the first bus. No child should arrive prior to **8:00 a.m.** Those children arriving prior to 8:15 should report to the All-Purpose Room to await the bell signaling they may go to class. Children should report promptly and directly to assigned classrooms.

### **Bicycles**

A written note from home is required for students to ride bicycles to and from school. Bicycles should be ridden directly to the bicycle rack when arriving at school and left there until the close of school in the afternoon. At the close of school, bicycles are to be ridden directly home from the school grounds after the departure of the buses. **In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, children 16 and under must wear a helmet.**

### **Cell Phones**

The use of cell phones is not allowed in school during the instructional day. We discourage students from bringing them to school. Any cell phones that are in school must be turned off during the school day and left in backpacks. Office telephones are always available as needed.

### **Change of Address**

If a family moves within Halifax, the school must be informed of the change of address and/or telephone number so the school emergency cards can be updated and bus company notified.

### **Communications**

The Halifax Elementary School website is the best source of school information.

General notices are usually sent home on Wednesday.

A variety of written notices go home with your child. Sometimes a classroom teacher sends news of a special event that is planned.



Emergency cards are sent home annually. It is extremely important that you return this card and update it with any changes that have occurred since the previous one, as well as changes that occur throughout the school year.

Please call your child's teacher when deemed necessary. You may not be able to reach a teacher directly during the school day, but they will return your call at their earliest convenience.

Other organizations, such as P.T.O, ([www.halifaxpto.org](http://www.halifaxpto.org)) distribute news via students.

"Halifacts", our school newsletter, will go out several times during the year highlighting school news and information.

### **Daily School Hours**

Classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at 2:40 p.m. (except on early release days when classes begin at 8:30 a.m. but end at **12:45** p.m.

### **Detention or After-School Sessions**

A teacher may arrange for students to remain after school for detention or extra help. Students may also ask their teachers to help them after school.

Detention is assigned for violation of school/classroom regulations. Detention is assigned by any teacher or administrator who is experiencing difficulty with a student.

For either detention or extra help, parents will be contacted and must arrange for after-school transportation.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

No child is to leave the school grounds without a note from his/her parents. If there is any change in the normal dismissal of a student, it must be verified by a note to that effect. For the least disruption to the school day, we request the dismissals do not occur before 2:30. Children being picked up at school at the end of the day will be signed out and picked up at the gym lobby. If we do not have a note, a student will be put on his/her regular bus. Persons picking up students must sign them out.

### **Dress Code**

Children are expected to wear appropriate school attire. Halters, tank tops, or other types of incomplete shirts or blouses are not to be worn. Hats/bandanas will not be worn during school hours. Hair coloring is also discouraged. Shorts and skirts should be of an appropriate length.

No articles of clothing promoting or depicting any alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or other harmful substance or containing objectionable wording or pictures will be allowed. Students will call home to have a suitable replacement brought in.

Sneakers or athletic shoes are required for physical education. Cleat-type shoes are not permitted.

No flip-flops or slipper-type shoes should be worn to school. "*Heelies*" should be removed from shoes – they are not allowed in the school building at any time.

In winter weather, we hold outside recess if possible. Be sure children are dressed appropriately for cold weather.

Electronic Devices: Children are not permitted to bring electronic devices to school or on the bus without explicit permission from the school principal. This includes Ipod, MP3 systems, video games, etc.

### **Homework**

Homework is an integral part of the learning process and should be regarded as an extension of the school day. Part of the homework process is the teaching of self-discipline, time management and responsibility. Development of good work habits in and out of school is an essential part of a child's educational growth.

The nature of homework assignments varies according to the grade level and the developmental needs of the students.

Suggested time for homework assignments (set out below) changes according to grade level. However, it is the school policy not to assign homework on Friday or on the day before a school holiday or school vacation.

Homework guidelines are as follows:

- a. It is not a daily practice to assign homework in Grades K and 1; however, an occasional activity may be assigned. Students should read and practice facts every night.
- b. Homework in Grades 2 and 3 is not to exceed 30 minutes per night.
- c. The maximum daily assignment in Grade 4 is not to exceed 45 minutes, and in Grade 5 and 6 is not to exceed 1 hour.

Homework is generally not assigned on a Friday or on the day before a holiday or a vacation.

### **How to Solve a Problem**

Many issues and problems arise in the normal operation of an elementary school. Many problems are simple and can be solved with little difficulty. Other problems are more complex and require investigation before consideration is given and action is taken. It is important that problems be solved at the lowest possible level within the school organization. For this reason the school suggests to all parents what the proper channeling of problems and complaints involving instruction, discipline, curriculum or transportation is as follows:

1. Teacher or Specialist (if involved)
2. Assistant Principal
3. Principal
4. Superintendent of Schools
5. School Committee

Problems will be referred back through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the next highest level in the organization.

### **Insurance**

At the beginning of each school year, parents have the opportunity to purchase school accident insurance.

If your insured child suffers an accidental injury covered by school insurance, claim forms are available in the school office.

### **Internet Policy**

Internet access is available at H.E.S. Students bring home acceptable policy use each September. An Internet User Agreement is required of each student.

### **Lost or Damaged School Property**

Parents are responsible for paying for any school property (including textbooks, etc.) lost or damaged by their children.

### **Moving**

When moving from Halifax, parents must notify the School Office of the impending move and complete a Record Release Form. This form requires a parent's signature in order that the school may forward a child's records to his/her new school. School records cannot be taken by parents to the new school. The child's new school district will request the records soon after the change is made.

### **Parents and Visitors**

Upon entering the building, all parents and visitors must report to the main office. They must sign in, wear a visitor's badge, and sign out when leaving the building.

### **P.T.O.**

There is an active P.T.O. group for the school, who are strong supporters of the school with their many activities and fundraisers. The executive board holds open meetings each month. All members and prospective members are most welcome to attend. [www.halifaxpto.org](http://www.halifaxpto.org)

### **Picture Publishing**

A Picture and Video Permission Slip is included in the handbook. This form requests parental permission to take student pictures and videos during various school/class activities.

### **School Calendar**

At the beginning of the year, parents are provided with a school calendar showing vacation times and early release days. This calendar contains dates for 180 days of school.

### **School Cancellation**

In case of a "no-school" session, announcements will be made over the radio on stations WHDH, WPLM, WATD, WEEI, WBZ, and WBET between 6:15 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Parents and students are asked not to call the Fire, Police or School Departments about school cancellations. Halifax will be listed under "Silver Lake Regional School District" and the Halifax website.

### **School Lunches**

Lunch is prepared and served each day at a cost of \$2.50 for students on a daily cash basis. Milk can be purchased at a cost of \$.75 for students bringing their lunch from home. Children may also purchase desserts near the end of the lunch period for \$.25-\$.50.

Children who forget their lunch or lunch money will be provided with a lunch. **Payment for this is expected the following day.** Repeated daily lunch charges are not acceptable.

Lunches are provided free or at a reduced rate for children of qualifying families. Applications are provided to all children early in the school year. If income conditions change, a family may apply or reapply at any time.

### **School Pictures**

At the start of the school year a photographer takes student pictures and parents have an opportunity to buy

pictures in a variety of formats.

### **Scooters, Skateboards, Roller blades**

Scooters, skateboards, and roller blades are prohibited on school grounds at all times.

### **Snacks**

Teachers may schedule an appropriate snack time daily. Healthy snacks are encouraged. No gum is allowed.

### **Telephone Use**

Children are not permitted to use the school phone for personal reasons. The office phone may be used in emergencies at the discretion of the Principal.

### **Toys**

Appropriate playground equipment is provided by the school; therefore, no toys, electronics, or sports equipment should come from home.

### **Use of Email**

Email is a convenient tool offering quick communication for staff, students, administrators and parents. Email is considered written documentation and when written to a student may become part of the student record. It is extremely important to use email appropriately and in adherence with district policy. If at any time you have a particular concern about the use of email or response to email you received, ask your building principal.

### **Vacations**

Some excess absenteeism occurs because families take vacations during school time. This is strongly discouraged by school authorities. Teachers are not expected to provide assignments prior to vacation taken during school time. After students return they are responsible to make up missed assignments.

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

### **Philosophy**

Discipline is that process by which the student learns self-control, the proper balance between self and group interests. This process involves the setting of realistic goals and proper limits, firm, fair and consistent enforcement of limits and punishment when circumstances warrant such action. It should be pointed out that discipline is a process and that its goal is self-discipline for every student.

Students are primarily responsible for their own behavior. It is the initial and continuing responsibility of parents to teach their children proper behavior.

It is the school's goal to educate children. The purpose of discipline within the school is to ensure an atmosphere most conducive to teaching and learning. Students, parents and the school must work as partners in order that the school may successfully achieve its purpose.

### **Guiding Principles**

All adults and students are to be treated courteously and fairly. Courtesy is contagious. Respect is essential.

Reasonable rules are necessary and will be enforced fairly and consistently.

Students are responsible for their actions and will accept the consequence of their actions.

Students, parents and school personnel have a vital interest and responsibility for the promotion of quality school experiences for students.

Students, parents and school personnel must communicate effectively if the goals stated above and the rules stated below are to be practiced, not just preached.

### **Discipline Procedures**

Students shall be well-behaved, courteous and properly groomed at all times. When a discipline problem occurs, a teacher or other supervising adult may take such action as he/she deems appropriate. Such action may include keeping a child after school and/or referring a child to the Principal's office for additional discipline. It is the responsibility of the disciplining adult to ensure that the child is adequately supervised. When a child misses classroom time for reasons of discipline, the child will be required to make up all classroom work on his/her own time.

Teachers and other school authorities will contact parents when a discipline problem so warrants. Whenever a child is referred to the Principal's office and in other appropriate cases, the Principal will use discretion concerning notification of parents.

### **Suspension**

Suspensions are a very serious form of discipline. Suspensions will be issued for one or more days as appropriate and at the discretion of the administration. Students under suspension are responsible for making up all school work and tests missed during their suspension. For out-of-school suspensions, students may not be allowed to return to school until a conference is held between parent (s) and the administration.

Reasons for suspension include, but are not limited to: Assault on school personnel, flagrant disrespect to a teacher, staff member or administrator; stealing; vandalism; smoking; use or possession of alcohol or drugs; fighting; profanity directed at a teacher, staff member or administrator; continual disregard for school rules, or any other offense deemed serious by the administration.

Any student who has been suspended from school will not be allowed to attend or participate in any school-related activity or program during the duration of the suspension.

Because of the ages of younger elementary school students, a formal suspension may be deferred. A student who has often disregarded school rules may be dismissed for the day in the custody of his parent. This type of dismissal is not a suspension. It is used to impress upon the student and parent that the student cannot disregard the rules without consequences. Dismissal for the day follows other disciplinary action.

In cases involving dangerous weapons, a "weapons report" must be filed with the local Chief of Police and DCF. In addition, arrangements will be made for a Psychological Assessment, Counseling Services and a follow-up Psych Assessment.

### **Disciplining Students With Special Needs**

All students are expected to meet the requirements of behavior as set forth in this handbook. The Department of Education Policy on Disciplining Students with disabilities requires that the team evaluation determine which student's handicapping condition requires modifications of the rules and regulations as outlined in the student handbook. The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities who have an I.E.P. or 504 plan or are in the process of determining their request for an IEP or 504 plan.

1. The I.E.P. or 504 plan for every student with disabilities will indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's handicapping condition requires a modification.

2. Suspension is defined as a day in which a student with disabilities is denied the opportunity to participate in special needs services as a result of not complying with the rules and regulations outlined in the student handbook.
3. When it is known that the suspension(s) of a student with disabilities will accumulate to ten days in a school year, a review of the I.E.P. or 504 plan will be held to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. The team will make a finding as to the relationship between the student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition and either: a) design a modified program for the student; or b) write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any modification of the I.E.P. or 504 plan relative to discipline code expectations.

### **School Rules**

School rules governing behavior in schools, at recess and on the buses have been produced by the school administration with the advice and assistance of teachers. These rules are set out below and are discussed with all students at the beginning of the school year with their classroom teacher. Parents should be familiar with these rules and reinforce them often.

#### ***Bathrooms***

- Bathrooms should be used for the purposes for which they were designed.
- Writing on fixtures, partitions or walls is not allowed.
- Practice good health habits by washing hands before lunch and after using toilets.
- Children must not stand on any toilet seats, climb on toilet partitions, or harm any of the fixtures.
- Soap dispensers are to be used properly. Wet paper is to be put in the wastebaskets and nowhere else.

#### ***Entering School and Conduct in the Corridors***

- Children shall enter by the front main doors to the school. Pupils who are driven to school by parents shall be dropped off to the left of the bus area.
- Children shall walk on the right side of all corridors and ramps in a single file. Fire drills will necessitate the only deviation.
- Children shall move quietly so as not to disturb others.
- Running is never permitted inside the building.

#### ***Indoor Recess***

- Teachers will prepare the class for indoor recess by providing a variety of games and activities to keep children occupied constructively.
- Children shall remain in their room; they should not be in hallways, or making social visits to other classrooms or the bathroom.
- There should be no activities which present a threat to safety or property, such as playing ball, tag or play-fighting.
- Children should speak with an appropriate tone of voice during indoor recess.

#### ***Leaving School***

Pupils will exit upon hearing the dismissal bell over the loudspeaker system. The walkers and bicycle riders will be dismissed in this manner after the busses leave the school grounds

Students shall leave the building quietly and orderly.

#### ***Lunch in Cafeteria***

- Children shall be courteous to all lunchroom personnel at all times.

- While waiting in lunch lines, students shall remain quiet and orderly.
- Students are to stay in the cafeteria during lunch periods unless they have specific permission to do otherwise.
- Students are expected to sit with their own class.
- Students are to speak in a quiet voice when in the cafeteria.
- Students are encouraged not to waste food.
- Students are discouraged from exchanging food.
- Students shall not throw or play with food.
- Students must raise their hands for permission to leave their seats.
- Litter and waste are to be placed in the proper barrels.
- Tables and floors are to be left clean for others.
- No food is to leave the cafeteria without permission.
- Students are to wait quietly in the cafeteria until they are dismissed.

### ***Recess***

The following are **not** permitted during the recess period. Children are cautioned to abide by these rules. They have been instituted for their safety.

- Wrestling
- Piggy-back riding
- Standing on swings or on slides. Never two on a swing. Do not jump off swings or playground equipment.
- Hardballs such as baseballs
- Hard bats.
- Playing in non-designated areas on the playground.
- Returning to the building without permission before recess is over.
- Interfering with the play of other children.
- Throwing rocks or snowballs.
- Improper use of playground equipment. It is the responsibility of the child taking out the equipment to return the equipment.
- Football or other contact sports.

### ***Other***

- No fighting or pushing is permitted on the school premises.
- No spitting is permitted anywhere on the school premises.
- No swearing or other unacceptable language is permitted anywhere on the school premises.
- No smoking, alcohol or drugs is permitted anywhere on the school premises.
- No gum chewing is permitted anywhere on the school premises.

Violations of recess rules will result in the student missing recess for a period of time, detention, or other consequences as determined by administration.

## **STUDENT SERVICES**

### **Lunch**

Lunch is prepared and served daily at a minimal cost. Free or reduced lunches are provided to qualifying families. Applications for Free or Reduced Price Meals are distributed to all students at the start of the year. Parents may request an application at any time when they feel that their circumstances change qualifying the children to take part in the program.

### **Bus Services**

All Halifax students are bused to school. Buses pick up children and return them to points in the vicinity of their homes. Buses do not provide door-to-door service to all children.

Buses attempt to pick up Kindergarten students at their homes. Kindergarten students will never be dropped off at an apparently empty home. They will be returned to the school at the end of the bus run.

Students will be assigned **one bus** and routed to and from their home address for the entire school year. In other words, **the bus your child rides in the morning will be the same bus your child rides at the close of school**. With prior notice, the only pick up or drop off changes that will be approved must fall on that student's original bus route; therefore, we will not accept notes requesting children to take different routes home - other transportation arrangements will need to be made by you.

In an effort to accommodate any permanent babysitting or daycare arrangements, you may request your child be transported to and from the bus stop closest to your babysitter or daycare house instead of from your own home.

Proper bus behavior is critical to the safety and well-being of all the children.

### ***Bus Safety Rules***

Students must:

- be at the bus stop on time
- maintain orderly behavior at all times on the bus and the bus stop
- when boarding or exiting the bus, exercise courtesy toward others
- respect and obey the bus driver – their job is to transport students safely
- remain in seat while bus is moving – do not get out of seat until the bus comes to a complete stop
- keep all objects/body parts inside the bus
- loud talking and yelling are not allowed
- do not damage any part of the bus or seats
- after leaving bus, step well away from the bus
- no animals/pets are allowed on bus
- know the correct procedure for emergency exit from the bus

If children misbehave, the drivers take action that may involve a seat change or a firm verbal warning. If behavior does not improve, the child is reported to the principal in writing. Bus conduct reports are filed in the office. Children may receive an in-school restriction, or an after-school detention, or loss of bus privilege for a period of time. If poor behavior continues, parents will be involved by telephone or personal conference.

### **Students shall not:**

- Change buses - we will only transport to and from the same address every day of the week. A parent must notify and request, in writing, approval from the principal if there is an emergency situation that requires a change in buses.
- Eat on the bus at any time.
- possess or use tobacco at any time
- Possess or use alcohol or any other drug at any time.
- Mark, destroy or mutilate school buses at any time. Parents are responsible for paying for any damaged property.
- The principal may use discretion in certain instances. Generally, the repeat offender will be dealt with more and more severely.
- School policy states that discipline procedures may include suspension and/or cancellation of bus privileges.



Under state law, the responsibility of seeing that a child is in school rests with the parent or guardian.  
**NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF SUSPENSION OF BUS PRIVILEGES IS CONSIDERED TRUANCY.**

### **Health Services**

The school nurse is at school each day. The nurse deals with student illnesses, injuries and dispenses daily medication. Please be sure the emergency cards we have on file for your children are updated when addresses, phone numbers, helpful neighbors or doctors change. If your child is hurt or becomes ill at school, we do need alternative people to get to in case you are unavailable.

Regular attendance is important, but do not send your child to school if he/she is sick. A healthy environment is impossible when children are sent with fevers, severe colds, etc. If serious or communicable diseases occur, a call to the school nurse will be most appreciated. We can help with homework, home study teacher, and be on the lookout for other cases.

### ***Health Problems***

The school strongly encourages parents to make the school nurse aware of any health problems, chronic or temporary, that their child may have, such as physical handicaps and serious allergies. The school nurse is available to help children learn how to maintain good health habits.

### ***Immunization***

Immunization certificates are required by state law for all students. No child will be admitted to school without one.

### ***Screening Programs***

All students are screened yearly for possible vision and hearing impairment. Referrals are made to parents when the testing results indicate this need. The tests used are accurate in identifying children who may need further testing by a physician.

### ***Medication Procedures***

All medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, that a child must take at school, must be stored and administered under the nurse's supervision. The following conditions apply:

- a. All medication is to be delivered to school by an adult;
- b. Prescription drugs must be in the original bottle with the physician's name and prescribed dosage on the label;
- c. In all cases, a note from the parents giving permission to administer medicine is necessary.
- d. Daily prescription medication needs to be accompanied by a doctor's note and signed off by the parent when delivered to school.

If medicine arrives at school and does not meet these conditions, parents will be contacted by telephone and medicine will not be administered.

### **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

The Halifax Elementary School has established an Internet connection for use by students, teachers and administrators. The purpose of this Internet access is to promote and enhance our educational program in the following ways:

- Students and faculty can use the Internet for research.

- Individuals and classes can communicate locally and around the world using electronic mail.
- The school can establish a presence on the World Wide Web.
- Students will be prepared to more effectively use the Internet throughout their educational careers and in later life.
- The Internet is an important resource for education and communication. It enables the user to connect with computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. As a result of our Internet connection, students and faculty will have access to the following:
  - public domain software and shareware.
  - information and news from agencies such as NASA.
  - local and university libraries; the Library of Congress; state, local and national governmental agencies: ERIC; cultural resources and museums; databases and websites focused on specific topics; and local and national organizations.
  - discussion groups on countless subjects such as the environment, music, health, or politics.

For the above reasons, we believe that the Internet is a valuable tool that will enrich a student's instructional program. However, while it is our intention to use the Internet to further the educational goals of the school, students may find ways to access other materials as well. Since the variety of materials and points of access to the Internet are so numerous, families should be aware that some of the material may be inappropriate for use in the school, illegal, inaccurate, controversial or potentially offensive to some people. Because we believe the benefits and opportunities outweigh the concerns, we plan to monitor student use closely and utilize a filter program where appropriate and possible to screen potentially objectionable material. At the same time, we will be educating students about the responsible use of Internet resources.

#### *School Internet Use Rules*

Access to the Internet is a privilege and users are responsible for their behavior and communications on the World Wide Web just as they are in any school setting or situation. The network is provided for users to conduct research and communicate with others in a manner which is consistent with the educational goals of this school.

It is understood that teachers may provide an entire class or groups of students with live or simulated access to the Internet and will only be given to those who have signed the user agreement. As a result all students must have signed parental permission to work individually on the Internet. Those students will be guided toward appropriate use and supervised by faculty during school hours on school related assignments. Outside of school, families bear this same responsibility for guidance just as they would for television, movie, print media, etc.

Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored. However, the following are not permitted:

- Providing personal or family information without prior approval such as home addresses, telephone numbers, family names, pictures, etc.
- Sending or displaying offensive or threatening messages or pictures.
- Using obscene language.
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others.
- Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks.
- Violating copyright laws or plagiarism.
- Using another person's password.
- Trespassing in another's folders, work or files.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources.
- Employing the network for non-curriculum related private or commercial purposes.

- Utilization of the Internet for purposes without direct correlation to the educational purposes of the school.

**VIOLATIONS MAY RESULT IN A LOSS OF ACCESS AS WELL AS OTHER DISCIPLINARY OR LEGAL ACTION.**

*Signing of Agreement*

All students and faculty members who will use the Internet are expected to sign the Halifax Elementary School's Acceptable Use Agreement. Parents of students are also required to sign indicating their knowledge and support of this policy as well.

By signing both, faculty and parents accept all financial and legal responsibilities which may result from misuse of the Internet by the designated user. It is also understood that parents accept responsibility for providing guidance and conveying to their child acceptable standards for use of the Internet.

**Library Services**

The school has a well-equipped media center. Students visit the library on a regular basis, either individually or with their classes, to browse, withdraw materials and complete research.

**Placement**

Each spring a series of intensive meetings are held among the teachers and the principal on each grade level to place each student with the next year's teacher. Others involved in the process include subject area specialists and special needs personnel. The objective of the placement process is to match each child's learning style with an appropriate teacher and group of students. Great care is taken to ensure heterogeneous character of each classroom. Due to the complexity of the process, requests for specific teachers cannot be accepted.

**School Safety**

Halifax Elementary School is committed to creating a school environment which is safe and responsive to all children. Toward that end, our goal is to promote school safety and socially-appropriate behavior to ensure student learning.

We believe that school safety and order are directly related to children's social and emotional well-being and their academic learning. We recognize that a safe school environment is achieved through a multi-faceted approach which includes three elements: education, prevention and intervention.

Furthermore, we believe that through meaningful parental involvement and mutually-cooperative effort between the home, the community and the school, we can better achieve the goal of school safety. We recognize that school communities can do a great deal to foster safety. Our efforts, which are implemented through the Second Step Program, and a school wide Safety Plan, include the following:

- Promotion of good citizenship and character.
- Discussion of safety issues openly.
- Welcoming meaningful family involvement.
- Promoting academic success for all children.
- Development of links to the community.
- Emphasizing relationships between students and staff.

- Identification and referral of problems for solutions.
- Helping children to identify and express feelings safely.
- Treating students with respect.

### **Section 504**

MGL Chapter 76, Section 5 specifically states, “No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.”

Mrs. Joy Blackwood, Assistant Superintendent, is the Title IX, Chapter 622 and Section 504 Coordinator. She will coordinate the Silver Lake Regional School District’s efforts to carry out the responsibilities of the regulations. Any inquiries concerning the application of the regulations to the practices and policies of the Silver Lake Regional School District may be addressed to: Mrs. Joy Blackwood, Assistant Superintendent, Silver Lake Regional School District Administration Building, 250 Pembroke Street, Kingston MA 02364. Telephone 781-585-4313, or the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington DC 20221.

### **Specialist Services**

Students receive regular instruction in Art, Computer, Library, Music and Physical Education. Students in Grs. 4, 5 and 6 are offered the opportunity to study instrumental music. Chorus is also offered to students in Grs. 5 and 6.

### **Special Needs Services**

Special Needs students are serviced by a School Psychologist, Speech Therapist, Learning Disability Teachers, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and a Special Needs Teacher. A Child Study Team coordinated by the Principal meets on a regular basis to process and review referrals and develop appropriate educational plans for students with demonstrated special needs.

Children who have trouble walking, talking, seeing, hearing, learning or playing with others may have “special needs”. The school has developed a referral process under guidelines established by Massachusetts state law contained in Chapter 766. The referral process can be initiated by a parent, guardian, teacher, or other school official. This process, which includes parent input, is designed to plan for a child’s education based on what is known about a child’s ability to learn in school. Inquiries about possible referrals should be made to the school principal or to the classroom teacher.

### *Statement regarding Title IX and Chapter 622*

It is the policy of the Halifax Elementary School not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, color and national origin in its educational programs, activities or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments and Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971.

The Silver Lake Regional School District Assistant Superintendent, Joy Blackwood has been appointed to serve as the school system’s coordinator of Title IX and Chapter 622. Inquiries regarding compliance with either act may be directed to her at 250 Pembroke Street, Kingston. The telephone number is 781-585-4313. A parent may also inquire at the Regional Center for the Department of Education or to the Director of the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health and Human Services, Boston, Massachusetts.

### *Inspection of Student Records*

A parent has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record

must be made available to the parent no later than two days after the request, unless the parent consents to a delay.

The parent has the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

Finally, the parent may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

### **Title I**

Title I is a federally-funded program that provides corrective instruction and tutorial help to qualified students. Students are eligible on the basis of standardized test scores and teacher referral.

### **Visitors**

To further ensure school safety for students and school employees, we require that all parents, volunteers and non-school personnel sign in at the Main Office immediately upon arrival at the school. An identification badge will be issued where appropriate to individuals who need to visit classrooms or other areas of the school. Teachers and students are asked to report any visitor to the school who is without proper identification to any of the contact people listed above.

## **REPORTS OF STUDENT PROGRESS**

### **Parent Communications**

#### ***Parent-Teacher Conferences***

Conferences are scheduled in December and March. Additional conferences are scheduled at the request of either a parent or a teacher.

A parent-teacher conference is a meeting between you and your child's teacher or teachers. It is an opportunity to discuss your child's progress in school. It's also a time for you to ask questions, give teachers information that will help them better understand and work with your child, and to reaffirm your commitment to work together with them.

A successful conference is an important way for parents and teachers to communicate. If you feel you need more time, schedule another appointment. Parents and educators working together is in the best interest of children.

#### ***Mid-Term Reports***

All students receive Mid-Term Reports during the months of October, January and April. The Mid-Term Report indicates that a child's performance in subject areas, work habits and conduct has been either "Satisfactory" or "Needs Improvement" during the period covered by the report.

#### ***Report Cards***

Report cards are issued in December, March, and June.

#### ***Testing***

- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Testing (MCAS) is administered in the spring to all

- students in Grades 3-6 in accordance with Massachusetts State law.
- DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is administered in Grades K-3 to assess reading skills.

### **School Committee Policy on Student Discipline**

#### ***Statement of Policy***

1. Corporal punishment and/or verbal abuse in any form is prohibited. Physical restraint may only be used as a last resort, and then only to prevent a student from injuring him/herself or another individual. When such restraint is used, the incident shall be reported to the principal immediately, followed by a written statement within 24 hours detailing the incident.
2. Discipline shall foster self-control and self-esteem. In order to be effective, discipline must:
  - a). clearly establish a link between the infraction and the consequence;
  - b). avoid threats, insults and humiliation.
3. Group punishment as a result of the misbehavior of one individual or a few individuals is prohibited.
4. In order to establish and retain authority, the teacher must make every effort to control discipline within his/her classroom. When the teacher determines that outside intervention or assistance is required, the teacher will request the assistance of the principal. The principal will then determine the most appropriate course of action consistent with a uniform, progressive plan for students with severe or repeat discipline problems.
5. It is the parents' responsibility to discuss proper behavior with their children. Students must come to school with a clear understanding of the school rules and appropriate conduct.
6. The principal shall have the authority to suspend students who repeatedly fail to follow school rules or whose behavior is particularly abusive or threatening to either the staff or other students.
7. The principal shall have the authority to expel any student who, on school property, or at a school-sponsored event:
  - a. has in his/her possession a dangerous weapon.
  - b. has in his/her possession illegal drugs or alcohol;
  - c. assaults a member of the school staff.

#### ***Grounds for Serious Discipline***

You are subject to serious discipline, including suspension from Halifax Elementary School for, but not limited to, the following reasons:

1. Attendance issues: truancy, unauthorized departure, tardiness, cutting classes, loitering.
2. Possession and use of tobacco products
3. Fights
4. Stealing, cheating, plagiarism, forgery
5. Cafeteria disturbances (e.g., throwing food)
6. Violation of alcohol or controlled substance policies
7. Smoking
8. Vandalism (student will pay for damages) and misuse of equipment
9. Class disruptions: failure to report to office when requested
10. Failure to follow Rules of Conduct
11. Disrespectful or abusive behavior towards H.E.S. staff or off campus
12. Habitual neglect of responsibilities; repeated violations of school rules

13. Abusive or vulgar language or actions
14. Insubordination (i.e., refusal to obey a reasonable request of a staff member)
15. Any form of gambling
16. False fire alarm
17. Possession and/or use of a weapon
18. Physical or verbal harassment including hazing and sexual harassment and discrimination
19. Inappropriate use of the computer network within or outside of H.E.S., including but not limited to e-mail and the internet.
20. Other disruptive or inappropriate acts judged serious by the administration

***Notice of Non-Discrimination***

The Silver Lake Regional School District reaffirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or exercise of civil rights in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs or activities. The Silver Lake Regional School District also affirms its commitment to maintain a school and work environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or exercise of civil rights. Any harassment on the basis of sex, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, or exercise of civil rights will not be tolerated.

If you should have a complaint or concern that there has been discrimination, you may also utilize the following procedure:

1. Report the violation to the building principal. The building principal will meet with you and the other persons who might have information about the issue promptly and will attempt to resolve the issue. Any additional investigation will be commenced within a reasonable period of time. The building principal will issue his/her decision in writing to you within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the investigation.
2. If the complaint is not resolved, it can then be appealed to the district's Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator. This appeal must be in writing, describe the circumstances, and the relief you seek. This appeal should be taken within one week after receipt of the principal's decision.
3. The Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator will meet with you within a reasonable length of time. Following a review of the materials presented to the principal and any additional investigation which will be conducted promptly, the Coordinator will make a final determination on whether there has been a violation of the district's policy within ten (10) days after the conclusion of any additional investigation. If there has been a violation, the Coordinator will indicated the steps to be taken to correct it.

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Education, J. W. McCormack POCH, Room 222, Boston MA 02109-4557.

The District's Equal Opportunity, Title IX, Section 504, Civil Rights, and Americans with Disabilities ("ADA") coordinator is Joy Blackwood, Assistant Superintendent. She has been designed to respond to any questions about the district's policy and are part of the review process for complaints or concerns about discrimination. Mrs. Blackwood can be reached at 250 Pembroke Street, Kingston MA 02364 and at 781-585-4313.

**Superintendency Union 31 & Silver Lake Regional School District  
BULLYING PROTOCOL**

**I. GOALS**

The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District Public School District Schools are committed to providing our students equal educational opportunities, and a safe learning environment free from bullying. This will be possible when all members of the school communities treat each other with respect, appreciating the individual differences in our schools. This protocol is an integral part of Superintendency Union 31's and Silver Lake Regional School District's comprehensive efforts to promote learning and eliminate all forms of violent, harmful and disruptive behavior. All students require this support to reach their personal and academic potential.

The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying, in our schools during school-related activities. Such reports of bullying will be promptly investigated.

As stated in the Massachusetts Anti-bullying Law, **Bullying is 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 educational process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying "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.**

The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District responses to bullying actions will include, when appropriate, referral to a law enforcement agency. The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District will support this protocol in all aspects of their activities, including their curricula, instructional programs, staff development, extracurricular activities and parental involvement.

## II. RATIONALE

The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District prohibit all forms of harassment, discrimination and hate crimes based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. The civil rights of all school community



members are guaranteed by law. The protection of those rights is of utmost importance and priority to our school district. The Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District also prohibit bullying of school community members for reasons unrelated to their race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability. Further, Superintendency Union 31 and Silver Lake Regional School District will also not tolerate retaliation against persons who take action consistent with this protocol.

### III. **APPLICATION**

This protocol applies to all sites and activities under the supervision and control of Superintendency Union 31 & Silver Lake Regional School District, or where they have jurisdiction under the law. The protocol applies to all students and staff on school premises or in school-related activities, including school-related transportation. Nothing in this protocol is designed or intended to limit the District's authority to discipline or take remedial action under General Laws Chapter 71, §37H, or in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether this protocol covers the conduct.

### IV. **DISCIPLINARY AND CORRECTIVE ACTION**

Violation of this protocol is a serious offense. Violators may be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective action to stop the conduct and prevent its reoccurrence. The District is committed to protecting the complainant, and all students, from bullying. Procedural manuals containing responsibilities of staff and students, reporting procedures, complaint process, resolution, and protection against retaliation shall be in place at each level. All disciplinary incidents will be reported using the school disciplinary action process.

#### **Restraint Policy**

##### ***Policy on Physical Restraint***

Halifax Public Schools comply with the Department of Education (DOE) restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. ("Regulations"), to the extent required by law. According to terms, the Regulations apply not only to school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. A brief overview of the Regulations is provided below.

School staff may use physical restraint only:

1. When non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.
2. Pursuant to a student's IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.

Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm. Chemical and mechanical restraints may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion is prohibited.

The regulations do not prevent a teacher, employee, or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm, or from restraining

students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

In the Halifax Elementary School, we use non-violent restraint such as re-direction, escorts to quiet areas, talking to students and other such methods. Physical restraint is only used as a last resort when a child presents as harming him/herself or others.

A copy of the regulations can be obtained at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html>.

### ***School Behavior***

If students present problems, teachers usually take steps within the classroom. Some situations may be referred to the principal or assistant principal.

Students who are issued detentions are given 24 hours notice. A written form is sent home to notify parents, and it must be returned on the following day with a parental signature. Students stay after school until 3:30 p.m. in a supervised area. Parents are responsible for providing transportation home for their child.

In the case of extremely poor or dangerous behavior, school authorities may suspend the student from school immediately with parents being notified. Students will receive zeros for class work during a suspension. Cases of very poor behavior may cause a child to be denied privileges of some future special event on which student supervision can be more difficult.

Field trips require school behaviors to be followed as if students were within the school.

### ***Harassment Policy***

If you feel that you are the victim of any type of harassment, including, but not limited to, cyber-bullying, you should follow the policy listed below:

1. Report the matter to a school administrator, counselor, teacher, and/or other staff member.
2. The principal will then arrange for a prompt investigation. The principal will meet with all of those involved who will have an opportunity to explain their side of the story.
3. If the accusation of harassment has been substantiated by the principal, appropriate discipline will be administered depending on the nature of the offense.
  - a. Verbal first offenses will be handled by a warning to be followed by a much stricter discipline if the offending behavior continues. Parents will be notified.
  - b. Physical offenses will be taken very seriously. Appropriate discipline will be administered. Parents will be notified.

The Committee recognizes that children learn best and teachers teach best when schools are safe. In safe schools, students and teachers feel physically secure, respected and supported. The Committee promotes Civil Rights and Protecting Students from Harassment, Bullying, and Hate Crimes.

The Complaint Procedure which may need to be followed in appropriate circumstances is found below.

### ***Complaint Procedure—Informal Process for Students***

In determining whether an alleged incident constitutes sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below, unless the Title IX Coordinator is the subject of the complaint.

1. Any student of the District who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is to report the incident(s) to any administrator, Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent. The administrator and/or Superintendent are to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator. A written

record of the complaint will be made by the party receiving the complaint. A separate file system will be maintained, apart from the student's personal record, regarding these complaints and as to all matters relating to the complaints.

2. If the alleged harassment involves the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent of Schools will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
3. If the alleged harassment involves the Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary of the School Committee will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
4. The Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator will look at the totality of the circumstances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. They will attempt to resolve the problem by conferring with both parties in order to obtain a clear understanding of the facts. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible.
5. Students may be accompanied, at any phase of this process or subsequent hearing before the Committee, by a parent, guardian or representative of their choosing. Parents will be immediately notified by the Title IX Coordinator of the existence of a student's report of sexual harassment.
6. The Title IX Coordinator will explain each phase of the Informal and Formal Complaint Process to a student who wishes to file a complaint and will assist the student in the processing of the complaint. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the student of additional forums for resolution of the complaint such as the Office of Civil Rights (O.C.R.) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (M.C.A.D.)
7. Under normal circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator's investigation will be completed within five working days of the initial complaint. Upon completion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator shall issue his/her findings in writing to the student and the alleged harasser.

***Complaint Procedure-Formal Process for Students***

1. A complainant may file a formal complaint immediately or may do so after the Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator's efforts to reach a settlement under the informal process have proven unsuccessful.
2. The complaint will state clearly and concisely the complainant's description of the incident and it will also indicate any remedy sought. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. The Superintendent's office will send the respondent a copy of the complaint within five working days after it is received. A separate file system shall be maintained as to all matters relating to the complaint. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent possible.
3. The respondent will have ten working days to respond in writing. This statement will contain full and specific references to each claim in the complaint, admitting, denying or explaining the complainant's allegations. The respondent must sign his or her statement which will then be appended to the original complaint. Within three working days, the Superintendent's office will forward both statements to the complainant and the respondent.
4. There will be two modes of resolution for formal complaints. A complaint may be settled through mediation or through a hearing. If the complainant and respondent agree to pursue mediation, a date mutually acceptable to both parties will be set within ten working days. If the mediation results in a mutually acceptable agreement, copies of the agreement will be forwarded to both parties. If the mediation does not result in an agreement, the case will be forwarded to the Superintendent for a hearing unless the Superintendent is the alleged harasser in which case the hearing will be before the Kingston School Committee.
5. When a hearing is requested, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the Superintendent or the School Committee, as the case may be, and the case will be heard at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the School Committee pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law and/or before the Superintendent pursuant to M.G.L., c. 71, 42.

***Formal Hearing***

1. The purpose of the Superintendent or School Committee Hearing is to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated, and, if so, to determine the appropriate consequences for violation.

2. Both parties will be given a full and fair hearing. The proceeding, although formal, is not a court proceeding and the Superintendent or School Committee is not bound by the procedures and rules of evidence of a court of law. In most instances, complainants and respondents will be expected to speak for themselves, although, if desired, each party may be accompanied by counsel or an advocate.
3. The presiding officer of the hearing may have counsel present for purposes of assisting in the orderly conduct of the hearing and the questioning of witnesses. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to clarify the issues and to define the areas of disagreement. To encourage a fair and focused hearing, at the start of the proceedings the points of agreement and disagreement will be reviewed. The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will hear testimony and consider whether the School Committee Policy on Sexual Harassment has been violated, and, if so, will recommend appropriate consequences.
4. The presiding officer will:
  - a. ensure an orderly presentation of all evidence;
  - b. ensure that the proceedings are accurately recorded by means of a tape or stenographic recording; and
  - c. see that a decision is issued no later than ten working days after the conclusion of the hearing or, when written arguments are submitted, ten working days after their submission.
5. The Superintendent of the Committee, as the case may be, will:
  - a. conduct a fair and impartial hearing which ensures the rights of all parties involved;
  - b. define issues of contention;
  - c. receive and consider all relevant evidence which reasonable people customarily rely upon in the conduct of serious business;
  - d. ask relevant questions of the complainant, respondent, and any witness if needed to elicit information which may be of assistance in making a decision; and
  - e. ensure that the complainant and respondent have full opportunity to present their claims orally or in writing, and to present witnesses and evidence which may establish their claims.

***Decision of the Superintendent or the Committee***

1. After all the evidence, testimony, and written arguments have been presented, the committee will convene for deliberations to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the policy has not been violated, that fact will be registered in the records of the hearing, and the written decision will be forwarded to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after completion of the hearing.
2. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the hearing Committee will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Committee will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the Superintendent will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Superintendent will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

The findings of fact as well as the penalty and relief will be based solely on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing.

3. The penalty should reflect the severity of the harassment. The penalties may include, but will be

limited to, any one or combination of the following: verbal admonition, written warning placed in the respondent's personnel file or student record, probation, suspension without pay, dismissal, demotion, or removal from administrative duties within a department; students may be subject to suspension or expulsion proceedings following a finding that the policy has been violated. The Committee or Superintendent may also make appropriate recommendations, such as professional counseling, and may recommend relief for the complainant which reinstates and restores, as much as possible, the aggrieved party.

### ***Guns, Weapons, etc.***

No gun, type of weapon or parts of any type of weapon of any kind is allowed at school or on a school bus. Teachers or bus drivers shall take any found in a child's possession. Such items will never be returned to the child. Suspension or expulsion from school may result from violation of this rule. Police may also be notified.

A dangerous weapon includes but is not limited to a gun or a knife. The term "dangerous weapon" depends on the circumstances: if used in an assault on another person, a baseball bat, a pair of scissors, a pencil, or a shod foot, could be considered a dangerous weapon. The principal will review the circumstances of each case and make the determination. In cases involving dangerous weapons, a weapons report must be filed with the local Chief of Police and D.C.F.

In addition, arrangements will be made for a psychological assessment, counseling services and a follow-up psychological assessment.

### ***Expulsions***

Section 37H of Ch. 71 of the Gen. Laws give principals authority to expel any student who is found on school premises or school-sponsored events in possession of a dangerous weapon or a controlled substance or any student who assaults school personnel on school premises or school-sponsored events. Expulsion is discretionary within the province of the principal. The principal may use suspension rather than expulsion.

### ***Massachusetts General Law, c 71, 5. 37H***

By State Law the following procedure is followed in certain cases of serious student misconduct as specified below:

- 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 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/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).
- a. Any student who has been expelled from the 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/her 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.
- b. 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.

**Felony Complaint or Conviction of Student; Suspension; Expulsion, Right to Appeal (Massachusetts General Laws, C.71 an d37H 1/2)**

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 headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster 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 students shall also receive written notification of his/her 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/her request for an appeal no alter 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/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, 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 regional school district with regard to the suspension.

2. Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication of admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster 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 place. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to an appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion of the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his/her 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 calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the year. Such decision shall be the final decision of the regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no student or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

**Contact & Resource People**

Principal  
Assistant Principal  
School Psychologist  
School Adjustment Counselor  
Classroom Teachers  
Parent

Finally, we wish to emphasize that the well-being of our students and staff is the most important priority in our school. For this reason, we will treat all violations of our safety procedures most seriously. Together with the mutual cooperation of our staff, our students, and our community members, we are confident that our school will remain a healthy and safe learning environment for everyone. Your assistance in this important matter is appreciated.

## **Programs**

### **Title One**

Title One is a federally-funded program which is designed to provide assistance to identified students. Students are selected for Title One service based on standardized test scores and teacher recommendation. Special assistance in reading and writing is provided daily to students in their regular classroom setting by Title One tutors who work directly with each youngster individually or in small groups.

In addition, Title One offers a summer program which is designed to help youngsters sustain their reading, writing and math skills over the vacation period so that they can return to school with confidence as readers and writers. Title One students are invited to participate in the spring, and the program operates for the month of July on a half-day schedule.

If you believe your child needs additional assistance in reading or writing, you should contact the principal or your child's teacher to request an evaluation for possible placement in the Title One program. In addition, if you have questions about the Title One program or concerns regarding your child's services through Title One, you should contact the building administration or the Title One parent representative who serves on the School Improvement Council to represent Title One parents and students.

### **Volunteers**

Parents and others who wish to volunteer are welcome. Teachers who request volunteer assistance are put in touch with prospective volunteers to work out times and activities. All volunteers must fill out a CORI/SORI form.

### **Special Area Subjects**

All students in Grades 1-6 participate in Computer, Art, Physical Education and Music, as well as opportunities to use the Library/Media Center.

### **Supplementary Music**

***Instrumental Music*** – Instrumental Music lessons are available to students in Grades 4, 5 and 6. Information is sent home at the beginning of each year.

***Chorus*** – Chorus is available to any interested students in grades 5 and 6.

### **Library-Media Center**

All classes in Grades 1-6 are scheduled for a visit to the Library/Media Center weekly. Children may borrow books which may be taken home. Books are renewable at the next visit. Children are responsible for returning all borrowed books within a reasonable length of time. Any books lost, damaged or not returned to the Halifax Elementary School Library/Media Center will be paid for by the student signing out the book.



## **Glossary of Terms**

**“Ala Carte”** – A longstanding HES tradition for snacks and desserts which may be purchased separately at the end of lunch.

**Inclusion** – Educating special needs children with their same age peers within the regular education programs and classrooms in their neighborhood schools.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** – An educational plan for special needs students developed at a meeting which is attended by the child’s team. Team members may include one or both parents and a representative of the school system or the child’s teacher who is qualified to provide or supervise the Individualized Educational Plan.

**Learning Specialist** – A teacher who provides services to children who have been diagnosed as having specific learning disabilities.

**Reading Specialist** – A teacher who is certified in reading. This individual expedites the best use of all reading materials and serves as a resource person for teachers in improving reading instruction in the regular classroom.

**School Adjustment Counselor**- A trained professional who provides direct services to students, either individually, in small groups, or in classrooms, to address their social and emotional adjustment needs.

**School Council** – The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 called for an establishment of school councils. The school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers and community members. The council functions in an advisory capacity to the school principal. The council has a role in shaping the policies and programs of the school. The primary responsibility of the council is to assist the principal in the development of the “School Improvement Plan”.

**School Improvement Plan** - A yearly plan developed by the school principal in consultation with the School Council, to advance goals, address said needs, and improve student performance consistent with the goals and standards set by the Mass. Board of Education and any policies set by the School Committee of Halifax Elementary School.

**School Psychologist** – A trained psychologist who carries out team evaluation processes, counsels children and serves as a resource for teachers with children experiencing problems.

**Speech Therapist** – A trained professional who provides services to children needing corrective instruction in speech and language development skills. An educational plan through a partial core evaluation is required.

**Team Evaluation** - An evaluation process to determine if special needs services are to be provided at school for a student. Participants may include: classroom teacher, moderate special needs teacher, reading specialist, school psychologist, school nurse, adjustment counselor and an administrator.

**Title I** – Federally-funded program designed to identify and remediate students in need of short-term intervention.

# **Halifax Elementary School**

464 Plymouth Street – Halifax MA 02338  
Main Number (781) 293-2581 FAX (781) 293-6589

## **School-Parent-Student Learning Compact**

The Halifax Elementary School, and the parents/guardian, and students participating in the activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), agree that this compact outlines how the school administration and entire staff, the parents/caregivers, and the students themselves will share responsibility for improved student performance. This compact outlines the means by which the school and the parents will build a partnership that will help children to achieve the State's identified competencies.

### **Parent/Guardian Commitment:**

I want my child to be successful and to reach his/her full academic potential. Therefore, I commit to do all of the following:

- Ensure that my child attends school each day.
- Send my child to school on time and ready to learn.
- Review homework and offer assistance when needed.
- Limit my child's viewing of television and recreational Internet usage during the week.
- Encourage my child to read for pleasure.
- Show an interest in my child's school life by attending school functions such as the annual Open House and Parent Conferences.
- Respond to guidance and/or teacher requests to participate in meetings about my child.
- Encourage my child to explore his/her interests and talents through participating in after school activities.

### **Student Commitment:**

I want to be successful and reach my full potential as a student. Therefore, I commit to do all of the following:

Every day, come to school on time, prepared to work, and with my homework and projects completed.

Pay attention in class and participate in class discussions.

Stay current with all my homework and seek help when I need it.

Take pride in my work and always do the very best that I can.

Show respect to everyone who is a part of my school environment.

Explore my skills, talents, and interests by participating in after school activities.

Take pride in being a part of the Halifax Elementary School community by participating in team and school functions.

### **Teacher Commitment:**

I support the Vision Statement of Halifax Elementary School which is *to ensure the success of each, individual child*. Therefore, I commit to do all of the following:

Develop relationships with all students.

Set and deliver high instructional standards that support the district benchmarks and are consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Within each program, teach effective study skills and strategies to ensure the retention of learning.

Establish flexible approaches in pedagogy to take into consideration the various abilities and learning styles of our students.

Connect with students who may be having difficulties and being available to those and all students for after school help.

Initiate contact with parents/guardians whose children may be having performance and learning difficulties.

### **School Administration Commitment:**

The administration works *to ensure the success of each individual child*. Therefore we commit to do all of the following:

Use data to support the allocation of resources to help students improve their individual achievement and performance.

Notify parents/guardians when data shows a student attendance problem.

Support programs and funding to improve the level of pedagogical skill in the school.

Publicize meetings of the School Council so that any parent/guardian can provide input to the school's decision making process.

As time allows, participate in meetings related to individual student progress.

Current curriculum aligns with the learning standards from the *Massachusetts Curriculum*

***Frameworks.***

**Halifax Elementary School**

464 Plymouth Street

Halifax MA 02338

Telephone: (781) 293-2581 Fax: (781) 293-6589

*Claudia Motta, Principal*

*Jeffrey Cateon, Assistant Principal*

To the Parents of Students in Grades 3-6,

The following policy of parental notification relative to sex education is in accordance with the General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A for the State of Massachusetts. This policy stipulates that parents will be notified in writing at the start of each school year about any curriculum which primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

While human sexuality is not a central focus of the elementary school health or DARE curriculum, there are times when topics related to this subject are part of the instructional program. These areas are listed below for your information:

Grade 3 Topics: **Health Habits and Disease Awareness**  
Description: Students learn about communicable diseases including colds, flu, chicken pox and HIV/AIDS. They discuss Universal Precautions and the importance of using gloves or a barrier when touching some else's blood.

Grade 4 Topics: **Health Habits/Disease Prevention**

Description: Students learn about communicable and noncommunicable diseases. They study the immune system and its role in preventing diseases. Universal precautions are also reviewed as a part of a unit on health habits.

Grade 5 Topics: **Growth and Puberty; Communicable/Noncommunicable Diseases**

Description: Students learn about the physical, social and emotional changes which occur during puberty. They view a film dealing with puberty\*. As part of the disease unit, they review causes of disease, discuss the body's defenses and how the immune system keeps us healthy.

\*Note: This unit has been taught for many years and parents are invited to preview the film prior to its showing.

Grade 6 Topics: **Drug Facts and Decision Making; Communicable Diseases; and Growth and Puberty.**

Description: There is continuing discussion regarding physical, social and emotional changes in puberty. The role of hormones and the structure and function of male and female reproductive systems are also discussed. Students learn to distinguish between HIV and AIDS and common methods of transmission. They also study how HIV compromises the immune system and ways to prevent contraction of HIV.

Under the law, as a parent or guardian you have the right to inspect and review program materials and to exempt your child from any portion of the curriculum which primarily involves human sexuality issues. If you would like to review our program materials, you may do so by calling the school and scheduling an appointment. In the event you wish to exempt your child from this instruction, you must send a letter to me requesting that exemption. Please note that such an exemption will apply only to the current school year and your child's current grade level placement.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss them. Thank you.

## WELLNESS POLICY

<b>STUDENT AND INSTRUCTION</b>	<b>5000</b>
<b><u>HEALTH AND SAFETY</u></b>	<b>5700</b>
<b><u>WELLNESS</u></b>	<b>5709</b>

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### Overview Statement

Demonstrating commitment to the full development of our students, the Silver Lake Regional School District and Union #31 endorse the following Wellness Policy. This policy shall define the goals and the means to further our students' understanding of the important role that good nutritional choices and physical activity will have on their lives. Central to this policy statement is the belief that success will be achieved from the combined efforts and encouragement of teachers, administrators, staff and parents. We recognize wellness is a critical component that enhances a

student's academic performance.

### **Nutritional Goals**

**The primary goal of nutrition education is to facilitate the voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.**

- Nutrition education will be integrated across core content and specialized areas as appropriate.
- Professional development activities for nutrition education will be available to designated staff.
- The school cafeteria will serve as a learning opportunity to allow students to apply critical-thinking skills taught in the classroom.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to impact students and the health of the community positively.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

### **Nutrition Guidelines for ALL Food on Campus**

#### **School Meals Program**

The School Food and Nutrition Service Department is required to provide approved school lunches each day that school is in session. School meals shall meet nutrition standards established by the USDA. Students must be given adequate time to eat.

#### **Food Items**

Main course food items offered in elementary, middle and high schools as an alternative to or in addition to the reimbursable meal will be offered in reasonable portion sizes that are consistent with guidance provided by USDA for Child Nutrition Programs. Packaged à la carte food will meet the minimum State standards.

#### **Beverages**

The sale of beverages in school cafeterias during the school day is limited to the following:

- Water
- Flavored water
- Flavored and unflavored milk
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- Fruit/vegetable juice beverages with at least 10% fruit/vegetable juice and 100% Vitamin C
- Iced tea
- Isotonic beverages (sport drinks)

## **School Activities involving Food and Beverages**

### **Food and Beverages:**

All foods made available to students by the school district during the school day will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and federal, state, and local laws, including safety and sanitation standards set by the Health Department Hazard Analysis and Critical Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines. These guidelines will be enforced during the school day. The guidelines include but are not limited to the following:

- a. School Meals Programs
- b. à la carte
- c. Beverages
- d. Student stores
- e. Special school-wide events

Nutrition information for products offered in à la carte and school stores is readily available near the point of purchase.

Schools are encouraged to consider wellness issues and student allergies when planning incentive or promotional activities and to promote healthy food and beverage choices at all events where foods and beverages are available to students.

The use of foods and beverages as a reward or withheld as punishment is discouraged.

Students must have access to water throughout the school day. The use of individual student water bottles is encouraged.

### **Safety and Security**

To help ensure the health and safety of the students in our schools, the following procedures will be implemented:

- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service facilities is limited to Food and Nutrition Service Staff.
- Schools will provide students the opportunity to wash their hands before and after eating meals and snacks.

### **Physical Activity Goals**

**The primary goal of physical activity is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short and long-term benefits of a physically-active and healthy lifestyle.**

- A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be included in a school's education program from grades pre-K – through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education and recess. Substituting any one of these components for the other is not appropriate.
- The school will provide curriculum and instruction that is aligned with the MA Frameworks Comprehensive Health, Standard 2: Physical Activity.
- A daily recess period will be provided for grades K-6.
- The school will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, not limited by athletic ability.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their children's lives.
- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to and encourage students and community members to use the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **Monitoring**

The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with the Silver Lake Regional Schools and Union #31 Wellness Policy. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food services areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent, designee, or school principal.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on District-wide compliance with the Wellness Policy based on input from the schools within the Region and the Union. That report will be provided to the school committees, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the Region and the Union.

#### **Policy Review and Evaluation**

Every three years each school in the Region and the Union will conduct an assessment of the implementation of the standards of the wellness policy. The district will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

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Updated: December 4, 2006 – Halifax School Committee