



WARWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
September 2011

STUDENT CODE OF ETHICS

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

A firm belief in the need for discipline in our schools and a desire to make enforcement of discipline more uniform across our school system are the motivational factors behind the creation of this code. This disciplinary code for Warwick's public schools is rooted in two philosophical beliefs. First, because no learning can take place in an atmosphere of chaos or fear, a safe and orderly environment must be guaranteed to all students. Second, discipline in our schools should reinforce the following values: responsibility, dependability, truthfulness, promptness, respect for authority and property, honesty, and willingness to accept the consequences for one's actions.

This code will benefit both the Warwick Public Schools and the young people it serves. With schools operating in an atmosphere of high disciplinary expectations, the energies of all parties will be properly focused upon academics and academic achievement.

Warwick Public Schools Do Not Discriminate On The Basis of Age, Sexual Orientation, Race, Religion, National Origin, Color, or Disability in Accordance With Applicable Laws and Regulations.

Any concerns about claims of discrimination on the basis of age, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, color, or disability in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, may be reported to our Title 9 officer at 734-3120 or to the Superintendent of schools at 734-3100.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is mandated by the Rhode Island General Law 16-19-1 and School Committee Policies JEA and JEDA for those students who have not reached their eighteenth birthday. After that date, students are in school on a voluntary basis and submit to the state mandate and School Committee policy as a condition of enrollment. Maintaining regular school attendance is necessary in order to achieve the goal of an educated citizenry.

Consistent with research and national standards, the Warwick Public Schools asserts that the minimum rate of attendance necessary to meet these goals is ninety-five percent. In order to be eligible to receive grades, Carnegie units, or be promoted, all students must be present in school a minimum of 165 days per school year. The only exception to the attendance policy shall be the enumerated extenuating circumstances that are verified by school personnel.

Extenuating Circumstances:

- Extended/chronic personal, physical, or emotional illness as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended hospital stay as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended contagious disease within a family as verified by a physician or dentist
- For any other extenuating circumstances, the student's parents or legal guardian must make a formal appeal to the principal or his/her designee.

For purposes of this policy, *extended* shall be defined as "more than ten consecutive school days."

For purposes of this policy, *excessive* shall be defined as "more than five school days within the same quarter."

For purposes of this policy, *chronic* shall be defined as "more than five school days within a quarter for more than one school quarter."

The only other exception to the attendance policy shall be other absences that are verified by the principal or his/her designee as stated below:

- Prior school system approved travel for education
- Death in the family (not to exceed one week)
- Catastrophe and/or disaster
- Religious observance.

A. Elementary

1. A parent or guardian must call the school to notify the appropriate person of a student's absence.
2. Parents are required to submit a written excuse for each period of absence or late arrival to school.
3. Students shall be allowed two (2) tardies per quarter.
4. Five (5) or more consecutive absences during any marking period will be brought to the attention of the school nurse for review.
5. Excessive absences and late arrivals which are not the result of a clearly defined medical reason will be brought to the attention of the school attendance administrator.
6. Each school shall implement attendance procedures that include both incentives and penalties. These procedures shall be uniform throughout the district. The incentives utilized in each school will be consistent with the maturity of the students in order to provide the desired outcomes sought by the school department. The penalties will include the removal of student social privileges, when appropriate.
7. Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged. When it is absolutely necessary to remove a student from school for this purpose, students will be responsible for all assigned work while they were absent. These will be counted as unexcused absences.
8. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of the school day whenever possible.
9. Chronic truancy or tardiness will be referred to the school attendance administrator which may result in a referral to the Rhode Island Truancy Court.

B. Secondary

1. A parent or guardian must call the school to notify the appropriate person of a student's absence.
2. Any student deemed truant will be assigned to an alternative in-house school setting and/or other disciplinary action deemed appropriate after a parent conference is held.
3. Parents are required to submit a written excuse for each period of absence or late arrival to school.
4. Effective in the fourth quarter of the current school year (2009-2010), students will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences per quarter. Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, a student will be allowed two (2) unexcused absences per quarter.
5. After the first two (2) unexcused tardies per quarter, if a student is tardy to school (after the late A.M. bell), the student must report to the main office to sign in with his/her assistant principal. If the lateness is unexcused, as determined by the assistant principal, the student will be assigned detention for that night or the following night (in order to provide twenty-four hour notification).
6. If the student fails to attend the assigned detention, the student will be assigned a Friday "extended" detention (2:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.).
7. If the student fails to attend the Friday "extended" detention, the student will be suspended from school the following school day.
8. The suspended student must be reinstated to school the day following the suspension by a parent/guardian.
9. Repeated tardiness - Chronic offenders will be brought to the attention of the school attendance administrator.
10. Each school shall implement attendance procedures that include both incentives and penalties. These procedures shall be uniform throughout the district. The incentives utilized in each school will be consistent with the maturity of the students in order to provide the desired outcomes sought by the school department. The penalties will include the removal of student social privileges, when appropriate.
11. School sponsored activities will not be considered as absences.
12. Visits to colleges by seniors with the prior notification by the parents to the school administration will be an excusable absence.
13. Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged. When it is absolutely necessary to remove a student from school for this purpose, students will be responsible for all assigned work while they were absent. These will be counted as unexcused absences.
14. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of the school day whenever possible.
15. Students who are truant from class will not be allowed to make up missed work or tests.
16. Those students who have more than fifteen unexcused absences from the class they are failing will not be allowed to enroll in summer school.
17. Chronic truancy or tardiness will be referred to the school attendance administrator which may result in a referral to the Rhode Island Truancy Court.

Each school shall provide a program of interventions designed to assist students and/or families that are experiencing attendance problems. Interventions shall encourage the school and the family to work together, utilizing a problem solving approach, and shall incorporate actions consistent with the maturity of the student and the seriousness of the problem. Appeals of attendance related decisions should be directed to the school principal.

B. TRANSIT TO SCHOOL

1. Code of Behavior - School Buses*

Students shall conduct themselves in an orderly and respectful manner. The school bus is a classroom on wheels. Students should act on a school bus as they would in the classroom. The driver is in charge of the school bus in the same manner as a teacher is in charge of a schoolroom.

Examples of Unacceptable Behavior Which Will Result in the Suspension of Bus Privileges Are:

1. Fighting or assault on the bus.
2. Possessing or use of illicit drugs or alcohol.
3. Smoking or the lighting of flammable objects.
4. Insulting, insolent or otherwise unseemly behavior to the driver, the adult bus monitor, or student(s).
5. Causing a disturbance by teasing or threatening the driver or student(s)
6. Damaging school bus property and/or personal property. It will be the responsibility of the parent(s) of those students involved for proper reimbursement to the school district.

7. Tampering with or using the **Emergency Door** without permission of the driver.
8. Throwing an object or objects at the bus or from the bus.

Examples of Unacceptable Behavior That May Result in Disciplinary Action Possibly Leading to the Suspension of Bus Privileges Are:

9. Shouting or otherwise making continuing noise on the bus thus creating a distraction to the driver.
10. Moving about within the bus while the bus is in motion.
11. Standing or moving at the bus stop in such a manner as to create a danger to self or others.
12. Opening the windows of the bus without the driver's permission.
13. Blocking of aisles so as to endanger passengers.
14. Spitting on the bus.
15. Eating or drinking on the bus.

NOTE: REPETITION OF ANY VIOLATION OR ANY INFRACTION WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION OF BUS PRIVILEGES.

Violations of this Code or any other actions not specifically listed which interfere with or threaten the safe operation of the school bus and create a hazard to the safety of the students and/or the driver shall constitute grounds for the temporary suspension of bus privileges or temporary suspension from school.

Procedures to be followed in a disciplinary action resulting in a temporary loss of bus transportation or suspension are outlined in Student Suspension Regulation. Students shall be entitled to due process as outlined in Student Suspension Policy.

***See also School Committee Policy-EEACC (also JFCC).**

2. Code of Behavior - Walkers

- a. Students must proceed directly to and from school in an orderly fashion using designated routes
- b. Elementary students must cross streets only at crosswalks where designated adult crossing guards are posted.
- c. Students who damage public or private property will be reported to the Warwick Police Department.

C. STUDENT BEHAVIOR ON SCHOOL GROUNDS PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF SCHOOL.

1. Elementary

- a. Students will arrive at school no earlier than ten (10) minutes before the opening of school.
- b. Upon arrival, students will report directly to a designated area and must conduct themselves in an orderly manner.
 - Clear Weather - Children will report to the school yard.
 - Inclement Weather-Children will report to an area designated by the Principal.

2. Secondary

Students arriving at school earlier than fifteen (15) minutes before the beginning of the homeroom period will be restricted to certain areas of the building designated by the Principal. Within the fifteen (15) minute period prior to homeroom, students will be in the corridors solely for the purpose of getting materials from their lockers. They are then to report directly to homeroom. Students are to remain in homeroom during the homeroom period unless given written permission to leave by a teacher or administrator.

D. DRESS CODE K - 12

In order to enhance the educational environment and promote proper personal growth habits, a dress code has been established for the Warwick Public Schools. The purpose of this code is to remove distractive, disruptive, and dangerous apparel from the educational environment. The code has been written not to infringe upon the individuality of the students but rather to create a feeling and awareness of community pride within the student body.

In adopting this code, the Warwick School Department hopes to create a clean, healthy, and safe environment which shall be conducive to good education and beneficial to all students. It is the School Committee's intent that students wear appropriate, clean non-disruptive clothing, and in keeping with that intent, students are required to comply with the following:

1. Articles of clothing must cover the torso, to be appropriate to the school environment and/or non-disruptive in the classroom.
2. Sunglasses may not be worn in classrooms unless medical reasons exists.
3. No hats may be worn within the building.
4. No clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, violence, profanity, or is obscene as that word is construed by the United States Supreme Court decisions shall be worn in a school building.
5. Coats worn as outerwear may not be worn within the building during school hours.

The School Committee recognizes that a student may be exempted from the provisions of the dress code due to health or handicapping conditions. Exceptions to the dress code will be granted by the building Principal upon presentation of substantive evidence from the child's physician. Such evidence shall include the specific condition and how the child's health will be affected by the dress code, information regarding any previous instances of problems, and the length of time the exception is to be in place. All exceptions will be reviewed monthly by the school building Principal.

E. ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Students are prohibited from carrying, possessing or using a paging device of any kind or a laser pointer of any kind within the building during school hours. Students are prohibited from using a cellular phone on school property during school hours. Students are also prohibited from wearing or using "walkman" type electronic gear within the building during school hours. Violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of the device.

F. BEHAVIOR

Actions or conduct which would constitute a crime will be reported to the Warwick Police. Actions which interfere with or threaten the orderly conduct of school functions, or violate the written policy of the Warwick Public Schools are grounds for suspension. This applies to **ALL** school associated activities, including classroom, extra curricular, and athletic.

In accordance with **Section 16-2-16 of the General Laws of Rhode Island**, the public schools of the City of Warwick in the process of accommodating the government and discipline of the schools has established the following instances in which student suspension or expulsion from school may result.

1. Grounds for Suspension

Actions which if committed by an adult would be a crime, or actions or conduct which interfere with or threaten the orderly conduct of school functions including classroom, extra curricular, athletic and other school related functions or violate written policy of the Warwick School Committee, school department rules and regulations or school rules* shall constitute grounds for suspension of a student from enrollment in the Warwick Public Schools.

*School rules outlining punishable offenses and penalties are posted in all schools in accordance with Section 16-2-16 of the Rhode Island General Laws.

2 Criminal Actions which Result in Suspension and Other Disciplinary Measures

- a Arson
- b Assault and/or battery
- c Burglary, theft or robbery
- d Extortion
- e False alarms
- f Forgery
- g Sale, distribution, use or possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal or non-prescribed drugs in a school building or at school events.*
- h Possession of fireworks
- i Possession of weapons including without limitation firearms, knives, bombs, rockets and grenades. The Warwick School Department follows all applicable state and federal laws including the Gun Free School Act, which includes a definition of weapons and penalties for weapon possession.
- j Tampering with a school computer or computer program.
- k Bomb Threats – Verbal or written.

*** Refer to Substance Abuse Policy (JFCH/JFCI) for further direction.**

3. Actions which Result in Suspension and/or Other Disciplinary Measures

- a Cutting Class
- b Failure to report to detention
- c Fighting
- d Harassment - verbal, physical or sexual.
- e Leaving school grounds without permission.
- f(i). Use of tobacco - School Committee Policy (JFCG)
.....Smoking and the use of all tobacco products is forbidden on school property. The penalty for infraction of this policy shall be suspension. Appropriate notices regarding this matter shall be sent home to the parents at the beginning of the school year.
- (ii). Possession of tobacco or tobacco products on school grounds will result in the confiscation of such items.
- g. Truancy
- h. Profanity

- i. Disrespect, disobedience – failure to comply with directions of teachers, administrators and other appropriate staff members on school grounds or at school related activities.
- j. Lack of needed materials
- k. Cheating
- l. Overt displays of affection
- m. Property damage, including vandalism.
- n. Simple Assault
- o. Computer misuse

Also included is any other infraction not specifically listed in A or B which is, of its very nature, disruptive of the educational process and would create a hazard to the safety of students or school staff.

4. Hazing Policy

The term “Hazing” as defined by law means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Anyone who knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such action shall report such action to appropriate school personnel as soon as is reasonable and practicable. Anyone who fails to report such action shall be subject to suspension not only from school, but also from the team for the remainder of the season

5. Due Process

a. Suspension - Five Days or Less

When a school administrator imposes a suspension of a student for a period of up to and including five (5) days, the following procedure shall apply:

1. Whenever an incident occurs that may lead to the suspension of a student, the principal or assistant principal shall investigate the nature of the alleged incident.
2. Normally, before a student is removed from the school, an informal hearing will be afforded him/her before the Principal or Assistant Principal. At the hearing, the administrator conducting it will inform the student of the charges against him/her and will represent a fair summary of the evidence upon which the charge is based.
3. The student shall be given an opportunity to be heard with respect to the alleged incident. However, no school employee shall harass, coerce, intimidate or in any way compel students to incriminate themselves or interrogate them against their will.
4. In cases in which, in the opinion of the Principal or Assistant Principal, the nature of the act or occurrence is such that persons or property are endangered or disruption of school operation is occurring or threatened, the student will be removed from school immediately and the informal hearing will take place as soon thereafter as practicable.
5. If the principal or assistant principal determines that grounds for suspension exist, he/she shall:
 - a). Immediately suspend from school and remove from the premises a student whose conduct disrupts the educational conduct of the school, endangers fellow students or damages property. Except in cases of disruption, where circumstances make it vital that one or several students be removed from the school property immediately, no student shall be released from school during the day without notifying the parent or guardian in person or by telephone. In instances of suspension where the student shall remain in school until regular closing time, the parent or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 will be notified of the suspension on the same date.
 - b). Within one school day following the suspension, written notice containing reason(s) therefore and length of suspension shall be given the student and the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18. Such notice shall be in spoken language of the parent(s) or guardian.
 - c). Within three school days following the suspension, the student, and the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 shall be given the opportunity to confer in person with the school administrator who imposed the suspension. The purpose of this conference shall be to discuss the student's school problem, to provide opportunity for the student and the parent(s) or guardian to be heard in opposition to the suspension and to provide conditions or means for the student's return to school. The administrator is not required to permit the presence of counsel or follow any prescribed judicial rules in conducting this conference.
 - d). The maximum suspension, which may be imposed by a school administrator is five (5) school days.

b. Suspension - Six to Ten Days

When grounds for suspension are considered by the principal to be more serious, he/she may recommend a suspension of six to ten (6 - 10) days to the superintendent or his/her designee. In such instances, the procedures specified for a suspension of five days or less and the following procedure will be followed:

1. The principal or assistant principal shall notify the student or the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 and the superintendent in writing within one school day following the suspension on the same date and the recommendation to the superintendent for an extension of the suspension for more five days. Such notice shall describe the reason (s) for suspension and communication to the student, parent(s) or guardian will be written in their spoken language.
2. A suspension of six to ten (6 - 10) days must be approved by the superintendent or his/her designee. Within three school days following the extension of the suspension, the student and the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 shall be given the opportunity to confer in person with the superintendent or his/her designee who imposed the suspension. The purpose of this conference shall be to discuss the student's school problem, to provide opportunity for the student and the parent(s) or guardian to be heard in opposition to the suspension and to provide conditions or means for the student's return to school. The superintendent is not required to permit the presence of counsel or follow any prescribed judicial rules in conducting this conference.
3. The maximum suspension, which may be imposed by the superintendent is ten (10) days.

c. Suspension – More Than Ten Days

When the superintendent recommends the suspension of a student in excess of ten (10) days, the following procedure shall apply:

1. Whenever an incident occurs that may lead to the suspension of a student, the principal or assistant principal shall investigate the nature of the alleged incident.
2. Normally, before a student is removed from the school, an informal hearing will be afforded him/her before the Principal or Assistant Principal. At the hearing, the administrator conducting it will inform the student of the charges against him/her and will represent a fair summary of the evidence upon which the charge is based.
3. The student shall be given an opportunity to be heard with respect to the alleged incident. However, no school employee shall harass, coerce, intimidate or in any way compel students to incriminate themselves or interrogate them against their will.
4. In cases in which, in the opinion of the Principal or Assistant Principal, the nature of the act or occurrence is such that persons or property are endangered or disruption of school operation is occurring or threatened, the student will be removed from school immediately and the informal hearing will take place as soon thereafter as practicable.
5. The principal or assistant principal shall immediately suspend from school and remove from the premises a student whose conduct disrupts the educational conduct of the school, endangers fellow students or damages property. Except in cases of disruption where circumstance make it vital that one or several students be removed from the school property immediately, no student shall be released from school during the day without notifying the parent (s) or guardian in person or by telephone. In instances of suspension where the student shall remain in school until regular closing time, the parent or guardian will be notified of the suspension on the same date.
6. The principal or assistant principal may suspend the student for five days and make a recommendation to the superintendent that the suspension be extended for more than five days. He/she shall notify the student or the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 and the superintendent in writing within one school day following the suspension and/or recommendation on the same date. Such notice shall describe the reason(s) for suspension and communication to the student or parent(s) or guardian will be written in their spoken language.
7. A suspension for more than five (5) days must be approved in the first instance by the superintendent.
8. The superintendent may extend the suspension for an additional five (5) days for a maximum total of ten (10) days.

9. Within three school days following the extension of the suspension, the student and the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 shall be given the opportunity to confer in person with the superintendent or his/her designee who imposed the suspension. The purpose of this conference shall be to discuss the student's school problem, to provide opportunity for the student and the parent(s) or guardian to be heard in opposition to the suspension and to provide conditions or means for the student's return to school. The superintendent is not required to permit the presence of counsel or follow any prescribed judicial rules in conducting this conference.
10. If the superintendent believes that a suspension should be for more than ten (10) days, he/she will refer the matter to the School Committee. The School Committee shall conduct a hearing, public or private at the selection of the student, on or before the tenth school day after the initial suspension.
11. The superintendent shall notify the student or the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 of the extension of the suspension. If the superintendent is recommending a suspension of more than ten (10) days, he/she shall include in the notice a clear, written statement of the reason for suspension, the date, time and place of the hearing before the School Committee and of their right to be represented by counsel. Such notice shall be given at least forty-eight (48) hours before such hearing.
12. At the hearing, the School Department may present evidence in support of the suspension and may present and cross-examine witnesses. The student, his/her attorney, parents or guardian may present evidence against the suspension or the length thereof and / or present and cross-examine witnesses. It shall not be necessary for the School Committee to follow the strict rules of evidence, but the hearing shall be fair and afford the student the right to due process of law. There shall be a complete and accurate (stenographic or electronic) record of the hearing, including all exhibits.
13. At the completion of the hearing, the School Committee may uphold the suspension as imposed, modify or amend it, or reduce it to a minimum of ten (10) days. The student shall be provided with a record of the hearing (without cost) and a written copy of the School Committee decision regarding the hearing. A copy of the decision and record will be promptly forwarded to the Commissioner of Education if there is an appeal to the Commissioner.

d. Suspension Appeal Process

1. The principal or assistant principal shall notify the student or the parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 in writing within twenty-four hours of the suspension. Such notice shall describe the reason(s) for suspension and communication to the parent(s) or guardian will be written in their spoken language.
2. Within three school days following the suspension, the student, parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 shall be given the opportunity to confer in person with the school administrator who imposed the suspension. The purpose of this conference shall be to discuss the student's school problem, to provide opportunity for the student and the parent(s) or guardian to be heard in opposition to the suspension and to provide conditions or means for the student's return to school. The administrator is not required to permit the presence of counsel or follow any prescribed judicial rules in conducting this conference.
3. The student, parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee by submitting a letter of appeal to the Superintendent.
4. The student or parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the School Committee, which shall conduct a hearing, public or private at the selection of the student.
5. The Superintendent shall notify the student or parent(s) or guardian if the student is under the age of 18 of the date, time and place of such hearing and of their right to be represented by counsel. Such notice shall be given at least forty-eight (48) hours before such hearing.
6. At the hearing, the School Department may present evidence in support of the suspension. The student may present evidence against suspension or the length thereof. It shall not be necessary for the School Committee to follow the strict rules of evidence, but the hearing shall be fair and afford the student the right to due process of law. There shall be a complete and accurate (stenographic or electronic) record of the hearing, including all exhibits.
7. At the completion of the hearing, the School Committee may uphold the suspension as imposed or amend it. The student shall be provided with a record of the hearing (without cost) and a written copy of the School Committee decision regarding the hearing.

8. A student may appeal the action of the School Committee, or a school principal as designee, to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education who, after notice to the parties interested of the time and place of the hearing, shall examine and decide the appeal without cost to the parties involved.
9. Any decision of the Commissioner in these matters shall be subject to appeal by the student to the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education.
10. Any decision of the Board of Regents may be appealed by the student to Superior Court.

Academic Requirements for Participation in COCURRICULAR and EXTRACURRICULAR Activities

A student is expected to meet high academic standards to be eligible to participate in a cocurricular or extracurricular program including, but not limited to, cheerleading, yearbook, newspaper, etc. and the interscholastic athletics program. Any student who has more than one (1) failing grade will not be eligible to participate in any of these activities. Additionally, students who participate in varsity or junior varsity athletics must also pass physical education to be eligible to participate. Eligibility is based on the cumulative grades earned for each of the four quarterly marking periods. A student who failed more than one (1) course at the end of the previous marking period will be academically ineligible for the current marking period. The marking period will be considered the cumulative report card marks.

PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION

Prohibition Against Bullying

Bullying is prohibited in the Warwick Public Schools. For the purposes of this policy “bullying” refers to harassment, intimidation or bullying. The prevention of bullying is part of the district’s strategic plan.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying means an intentional written, verbal or physical act or threat of a physical act that, under the totality of circumstances:

- ★ a reasonable person should know will have the effect of: physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person, or placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to his or her property; **or**
- ★ is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student.

Bullying also occurs when a student or a group of students organize a campaign of shunning against another student or when a student or group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student. In most circumstances bullying does not include a mutual fight between two students of roughly equal strength who are angry with each other. Such fights are subject to discipline as a violation of school rules prohibiting fighting.

Definition of “At School”

In the context of this policy, the phrase “at school” includes the following places and situations:

- ★ in a classroom,
- ★ elsewhere in the school,
- ★ on school property,
- ★ immediately adjacent to school property,
- ★ on a school bus or other school vehicle,
- ★ at school bus stops,
- ★ while students are walking to or from school,
- ★ at any school-sponsored activity or event, whether or not held on school premises.

Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary sanctions for bullying may include any of the disciplinary actions listed in the Student Code of Ethics and/or School Committee policies including the following:

- ★ loss of the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities,

- * loss of the opportunity to participate in school social activities,
- * loss of the opportunity to participate in graduation exercises,
- * loss of school bus transportation,
- * transfer to another school,
- * assignment of community service,
- * in-house suspension,
- * short-term school suspension (10 or fewer days of suspension) or long-term school suspension (suspension for more than 10 days),
- * admonitions, warnings and counseling.

Reporting Bullying

The district shall establish, and prominently publicize to students, staff, volunteers, and parents, how a report of bullying may be filed and how this report will be acted upon. The victim of bullying, anyone who witnessed the bullying, and anyone who has credible information that an act of bullying has taken place may file a report of bullying.

Responsibility of Staff

School staff shall take all reasonable measures to prevent bullying and shall report all acts of bullying that come to their attention. In this context, the staff includes volunteers working in the school.

Instruction in the Prevention of Bullying

Students and staff shall be given instruction in this district's policy and regulations against bullying. This instruction shall include methods of discouraging and preventing bullying, along with instruction in how to file a complaint against bullying, and the disciplinary action that may be taken against those who commit acts of bullying.

Responsibility of Students

Students who observe an act of bullying or who have reasonable grounds to believe that bullying is taking place are obligated to report the bullying to school authorities. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. The victim of bullying shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report the bullying.

Investigation of Bullying

The principal or his/her designee shall investigate all allegations of bullying. If the allegation is found to be credible, appropriate disciplinary sanctions, subject to any appropriate due process procedures, will be imposed. The investigation will include an assessment of what effect the bullying has had on the victim.

Help for the Victim of Bullying

If the victim's mental health has been placed at risk, appropriate referrals will be made. If the bullying included a violent criminal offense, the victim of the bullying will be informed of any school transfer rights he or she may have under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Prohibition Against Retaliation:

Retaliation or threats of retaliation in any form designed to intimidate the victim of bullying, those who are witnesses to bullying, or those investigating an incident of bullying shall not be tolerated. In most cases, retaliation or a threat of retaliation will result in the imposition of a short or long-term school suspension and, in appropriate cases, referral to the police.

Prohibition Against False Reports of Bullying

False reports concerning bullying will be subject to appropriate school discipline including short or long-term suspension from school.

Police Notification

When the bullying involves conduct that violates the criminal law, the police shall be notified.

School Atmosphere

School staff at all times will model correct and courteous behavior to each other, to students, and to visitors to the school. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor will not be accepted. An effort will be made to ensure that each student is well known by at least one certified teacher so that the student will have someone to turn to at school if a bullying situation develops. To the extent possible the influence of cliques and other exclusive student groupings will be diminished by the creation of a range of inclusive school activities in which student will be encouraged to participate.

Social Skills Training

The school health program and school counseling services will include appropriate social skills training to help students avoid isolation and to help them interact in a healthy manner.

BULLYING, TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING, TEEN DATING VIOLENCE, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, teen dating violence and sexual violence are prohibited in the public schools of Warwick in Rhode Island. [R.I.G.L. 16-21-26, 16-21-30] The prevention of bullying, teen dating violence, and sexual violence is part of Warwick Public Schools, strategic plan [R.I.G.L.16-7-2(e)] and school safety plan [R.I.G.L.16-21-24]. Bullying, Dating Violence, and Sexual Violence will not be tolerated in Warwick Public Schools.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Raise school-wide awareness about bullying, teen dating violence and sexual violence;
- Provide direction in responding to incidents; and
- Prevent new incidents of bullying, dating violence, and sexual violence.

DEFINITIONS

At School means in a classroom, on or immediately adjacent to school premises, on a school bus or other school-related vehicle, at an official school bus stop, or at any school-sponsored activity or event whether or not it is on school grounds.

Bullying occurs when a student intentionally assaults, batters, threatens, harasses, stalks, menaces, intimidates, extorts, humiliates, or taunts another student. Bullying also occurs when a student or a group of students organize a campaign of shunning against another student or when a student or a group of students maliciously spread rumors about another student.

Dating Violence: A pattern of behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses physical sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control his or her dating partner.

Sexual Assault includes behaviors that are attempted or perpetrated against a victim's will or when a victim cannot consent because of age, disability, or the influence of alcohol or drugs. Sexual assault may involve actual or threatened physical force, use of weapons, coercion, intimidation, or pressure and may include:

- Intentional touching of someone in ways that are unwanted.
- Voyeurism,
- Exposure to exhibitionism,
- Undesired exposure to pornography, or
- Public display of images that were taken in a private context or when the victim was unaware.

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

The district, with input from school based staff, shall establish, distribute – and prominently publicize to school staff, students, volunteers, and parents – how to report bullying and how such reports will be acted on. The victim of bullying, dating violence, or sexual violence; witnesses/bystanders may report such actions. Any employee who has information that these actions have occurred must file a report. Procedures will be established to enable other interested individuals to file a report.

INVESTIGATION

The district, with input from school based staff, shall develop procedures and guidelines for the investigation of a bullying, dating violence, and sexual violence report for distribution to the schools. If the allegation is found to be credible, appropriate disciplinary sanctions, subject to due processes procedures, shall be imposed.

Whenever bullying, teen dating violence, or sexual violence involved conduct that violates criminal law, the police shall be notified.

DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Disciplinary sanctions for bullying, dating violence or sexual violence may include loss of privilege to participate in extra curricular activities including athletics and school social events; loss of school bus transportation; assignment of additional school work or community service; and, depending on the extent of involvement in the prohibited activity, suspension from school.

VICTIM RIGHTS AND PROTECTION

The district is committed to creating a campus environment in all of its schools that promotes timely and fair adjudication of bullying, teen dating violence, and sexual violence cases. The district shall establish guidelines to protect the rights and privacy of the victim as well as the due process rights of the alleged perpetrator.

PREVENTION

The district shall ensure that students and staff are instructed on how to identify, prevent and report bullying, teen dating violence, and sexual violence. The district shall also ensure that the school health program and counseling services include the appropriate social skills training to help students avoid isolation and help them interact in a healthy manner.

School staff shall model correct and courteous behavior to each other, to students, parents and to visitors. Abusive or humiliating language or demeanor shall not be accepted. The staff shall ensure that each student is known by a teacher that the student can turn to if abuse develops. To the extent possible, the influence of cliques and other exclusive student grouping shall be diminished by the creation of inclusive school activities in which all students are encouraged to participate.