



Bernardston Elementary

2017-2018 Family Handbook

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.



BERNARDSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

37 SCHOOL ROAD
BERNARDSTON, MA 01337
PHONE: 413.648.9356
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Bob Clancy
Principal
clancyb@pvrsdk12.org



Dear Bernardston Elementary School Families,

Welcome! I, along with all the BES staff, look forward to a great school year.

The Family Handbook will help get you acquainted with the philosophy, goals, and procedures of the BES community. We encourage you to familiarize yourself, and your child, with these guidelines and important information. Please take careful note of the information concerning the lunch payment and attendance policies, as they have recently changed. If at any time you have a question or concern about a policy or practice at BES please contact the school directly.

As has been the practice for many years, Bernardston Elementary is committed to building within each student a strong educational foundation and successfully preparing them to meet challenges of the future. Our goal is to help each student grow in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits. Teachers encourage initiative, individual and group responsibility, critical thinking and creativity. We expect that all students will develop a strong sense of community. They will feel membership in the community of their classrooms, their school, and their town.

It is our intention to work closely with all children and parents/guardians in order to ensure that all students achieve their personal best. We have high expectations for all students and hope that each child will leave this school with an excitement for learning and a motivation to excel. Please do not hesitate to contact me concerning how you might become more involved in your child's experience at Bernardston Elementary School.

Sincerely,

Bob Clancy, Principal

Bernardston Elementary School Family Handbook

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Rev. August 21, 2017

BES FACULTY AND STAFF: 2017-2018

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Tony Streeter - streetert@pvrsk12.orgEvening Custodian
Susan Townsley - townsleys@pvrsk12.orgCafeteria Assistant Manager
Cathleen Tuttle - tuttlec@pvrsk12.orgCafeteria Helper

2017-18 PVRSD School Committee

B= Bernardston L=Leyden N=Northfield W=Warwick
See monthly online calendars for scheduled meetings & locations.

Jim Bell (B) – bellj@pvrsk12.org
Debra Gilbert (B) – gilbertd@pvrsk12.org
Robin L’Etoile (N) – letoiler@pvrsk12.org
Sharon Fontaine (L) – fontaines@pvrsk12.org
Peggy Kaepfel (L) – kaepfel@pvrsk12.org
Jeanne Milton (B) – miltonj@pvrsk12.org
Martha Morse (W) – morsem@pvrsk12.org
Sue O’Reilly-McRae (W) – oreillymcras@pvrsk12.org
John Rodgers (L) – rodgersj@pvrsk12.org
Pat Shearer (N) – shearerp@pvrsk12.org
Bill Wahlstrom (N) – wahlstromb@pvrsk12.org
David Young (W) – youngd@pvrsk12.org

Bernardston Elementary School

Statement of Philosophy

Bernardston Elementary School is a place where students and teachers interact for the purpose of learning. The comprehensive educational program contributes to each student's intellectual, physical, emotional, creative and social growth.

Education results from a cooperative effort between students, staff, family, school committee and community; all will be responsive to the needs of our youth and accept responsibility for their learning. All will help the school address the constant changes in society.

Bernardston Elementary School will reflect an environment in which students and staff demonstrate mutual respect, cooperate with each other, appreciate each other's strengths and accept each other's differences.

The educational program will recognize each student's particular abilities and needs. Through heterogeneous grouping high expectations are communicated to all students as they are offered an equal opportunity to succeed.

An educated student practices learning as a continuous process of growth that includes cultural and environmental appreciation, creative and practical experiences and the learning of subject matter. Therefore, the school will strive to provide a broad variety of situations and subjects enabling students to develop concepts, skills and attitudes with which they can understand, make connections and apply knowledge.

In order for learning to thrive, it is essential to create a positive climate for learning – one in which students are responsible for taking an active role in their own education and the professional staff is engaged in a continuous process of development.

While school is not the only influence in the student's life, the educational foundation built during these years is an essential component in creating capable, self-confident adults ready to participate in a democratic society.

Mission Statement

“At BES we work with effort toward our greatest potential. We promote respect and truth. Our curriculum is filled with academic vigor and a variety of learning experiences. We value community, diversity, and are welcoming to all.”

Mission Statement Adopted April 2012

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, housing status, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

Chris Maguire
97F Sumner Turner Road
Northfield, MA 01360
(413) 498-2911

SCHOOL HOURS

Students should not arrive earlier than 8:40am. Supervision is not available before this time. Students and family members arriving before the start of school will be asked to gather in the tiled foyer. Students who are consistently arriving prior to 8:40am will be sent to the Before School Program and families will be charged for that service.

Preschool through Grade 6

8:55am to 3:15pm

1/2 Day Pre-school ~ Fridays

8:55am to 12:00pm

Early Release Fridays (K-6)

8:55am to 1:45pm

Early Release 1/2 Days (PreK-6)

8:55am to 12:15pm

Breakfast

Beginning at 8:30am

Recess Schedule

11:10am to 11:40am Grades K, 1, 2

11:40am to 12:10pm Grades 3 & 4

12:10pm to 12:40pm Grades 5 & 6

See preschool schedule for specific times

Lunch Schedule

11:40am to 12:10pm Grades K, 1, 2

12:10pm to 12:40pm Grades 3 & 4

12:40pm to 1:10pm Grades 5 & 6

See preschool schedule for specific times

Lunch is not served on ½ days unless otherwise noted.

Lunch and recess is still scheduled on school wide Friday 1:45pm early releases

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAM

The **PVRSD Out of School Time Program** provides children (K through 6 grade) with a safe and enriching environment before and after the school day. The program offers a variety of activities including group games, arts and crafts, reading, music, homework time, snack, and free time in an encouraging, safe, and friendly environment.

The Before School Program: 7:30 AM until the start of the school day.

The After School Program: School dismissal until 5:30 PM.

A Sliding fee scale is available. **For more information please contact:** Deb Wood, OST Coordinator: woodd@pvrsdk12.org or 413-648-545.

CONCERNS

When a concern arises: Please seek understanding and resolution of a question, concern or grievance according to the following process:

If the matter pertains to the classroom:

1. Talk first with the teacher for clarification of the issue.
2. Meet with the teacher to discuss possible resolutions.

If the matter is not a classroom concern, or if no satisfactory resolution to a classroom concern is found, please take your concern forward through these channels in the following order:

1. School Principal.
2. Superintendent of Schools.
3. Full School Committee.

Following the process in this order will help to expedite a satisfactory response with individual(s) closest to the situation and most likely able to expedite an appropriate resolution to your concern or grievance.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PVRSD Elementary Attendance Policy (Adopted 2010)

We cannot stress too greatly the importance of your child being in school everyday, on time, if he/she is to achieve the greatest success in his/her work. Regular attendance is expected of all students. It is impossible to completely make up everything that is missed. A typical school day is filled with learning that is not limited to books, i.e. group projects, discussions, and activities. Paper work can be made up, but the valuable learning opportunities cannot. However, when children are sick, they should stay home from school. If your child will be absent or tardy, please call the school before 9:30 A.M.

Please make every attempt to have your child at school on time. This means your child should be in their classroom before the school day start time ~ not just entering the building. Our day is scheduled and when a child is late, something is missed. Each absence or tardy is recorded. Parents and students are reminded that the number of school absences is reported on the Report Card at the end of each marking period. In addition to this, every effort will be made to notify parents by letter when absences begin to be excessive. Parents are strongly urged to assist the school by supporting its attendance policy.

ABSENCE PROCEDURE

On the day a student is absent, parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to call the school before 9:30 a.m. On the day the student returns to school, a written excuse note from the parent stating the date and reason for absence is required and must be turned in to the office upon arrival.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

From time to time, absence from school is unavoidable and legitimate. The following are the only acceptable excuses for absences:

1. Personal illness and/or hospitalization (after 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note and/or school nurse examination may be required);
2. Serious illnesses or death in the family;
3. A religious obligation;
4. Medical appointments that cannot be made at a time other than during school hours;
5. Severe storm or impassable roads;
6. Approved school activities;
7. Court appearance;

Any other reason for absence is unexcused.

PLANNED ABSENCES

By June the School Committee establishes the specific dates for school to be in session for the following academic year in order to allow parents and students adequate time to schedule trips and family vacations to coincide with periods in which school is not in session. By doing so, the Committee recognizes the importance of students' consistent and prompt attendance to school.

PVRSD ABSENCE NOTIFICATION POLICY

RE: EXTENDED FAMILY VACATIONS

Approved by PVRSD School Committee 6/18/2015:

Students who miss school due to family vacations, which occur on school days, are responsible for making up all missed work. Teachers **may** be able to provide the work ahead of time, but this is not always possible. Please plan accordingly. Note these are unexcused absences.

Under unique or unusual circumstances, a parent may request for his/her student(s) to leave school prior to the completion of the marking period or for a period of time during the marking period for reasons not covered under acceptable reasons for school absence. Parents/students must make such requests **to the Principal, with reasons stated, at least two weeks prior to the departure date.** The Principal will respond to all such requests. If a parent/student fails to notify and receive approval by the school, the absence will be treated as truancy.

If the request is approved:

1. Parent should meet with their student(s) teachers to discuss how they will complete the work covered during their absence.
2. Homework will be given in advance if possible.

RESPONSE TO EXCESSIVE ABSENCES OR TARDINESS

Following 5 incidences of absence or tardiness – letter home from principal reminding parents/guardians of the attendance policy and their responsibility in supporting it.

Following 10 incidences of absence or tardiness – certified letter home from principal requesting meeting to develop plan to improve attendance.

Following 15 incidences of absence or tardiness – certified letter home from principal requesting meeting to revisit plan to improve attendance; possible referral to Department of Children and Families

DISMISSAL

Written permission from the parent/guardian is required for a child to change regular dismissal procedures - regardless of their grade level.

A NOTE IS REQUIRED IN THE FOLLOWING INSTANCES:

1. If a child must leave school at any time other than the regular dismissal time.
2. If a child who regularly rides the school bus is to be picked up by anyone, including a parent.
3. If a child who regularly rides the school bus plans to walk or ride a bicycle home or to another destination.
4. If a child rides a bus to any destination other than his/her regularly scheduled bus stop. (Such a request may not always be possible, depending on the capacity of the bus. Please watch for information in Thursday News)

If the school does not receive a written notification for transportation changes, your child will be placed on her/his regular bus.

If you are picking up your child before 3:00pm, please report to the office and sign him/her out. The school secretary will call your child to the office.

If you are here at the end of the school day to pick up your child, please wait for him/her in the parking lot loop for students in grades 1-6 until students are dismissed. Preschool, kindergarten students, and their siblings are picked up in the playground loop. For the safety of the students, we ask that adults picking up students sign them out on the sign out sheets provided by staff at the gym doors.

At 3:15pm, students walking and riding bikes are dismissed out the main entrance. Students being picked up are dismissed to either the playground loop for prek-k students, or by the mailbox for students in grades 1-6. Students riding buses will be dismissed out the main entrance as the buses arrive.

NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

If there is a "no school" or delayed opening announcement for Bernardston Elementary School (Pioneer Valley Regional School District), due to inclement weather or other conditions, it will be made over the following stations:

Radio stations: WHAI, WYRY, WHYN, WRSI, WTSA, WKVT, WHMP.

Television stations: Channels 3, 22, 40 and 6 out of Albany.

The announcement will be made utilizing the media at approximately 6:00 a.m. If a delay announcement is made, please continue to monitor the news for a potential school closing. In the event of a one hour delayed opening on a Friday, the morning session of preschool will be conducted. In the event of a two hour delayed opening on a Friday, the morning session of preschool will not be conducted on that day.

In addition a phone call from the district's "Blackboard Connect" system will be placed in order to notify families of a delay, cancellation, or closing. In order to maintain clear communication for emergencies, **please notify the school of updated phone numbers.**

Emergency dismissal seldom occurs. However, if such a situation should occur due to bad weather or a building emergency, please plan with your child the procedure to be followed upon their arrival home. To assist in this process, an Emergency Procedure Sheet will be sent home each year to be filled out by parents, which will identify whether a child will go home as usual or to a different location.

BUS POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

In late August the policies, guidelines, rules, bus routes and school calendar are available at the school's main office when school begins. This also lists the bus company's pick up times, bus number and route taken. The bus company used is Kuzmeskus Bus Co. at 863-2595. Questions or concerns regarding bus matters should be addressed to the bus company.

Prior to Loading:

1. Be at the stopping place five minutes prior to the designated pickup time and ready to get into the bus with the least possible delay in order to keep the bus on schedule and to minimize traffic hazards.
2. Students loading the bus on a street where the bus passes in both directions are to wait until the bus passes on their side so they will not have to cross the road.
3. Students having to cross the road when loading and discharging are to cross in front of the bus, upon the driver's signal. All pupils are advised to use extreme caution by looking at traffic both ways before crossing.
4. Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
5. Remain at least five feet from the bus when it stops to pick up, and move forward only when the door opens.
6. After boarding the bus, take a seat as quickly as possible.

While on the Bus:

1. Do not bring animals, glass, reptiles, or prohibited or illegal items on the bus.
2. Obey the bus operator at all times while under his or her supervision.

3. Maintain an acceptable manner of conduct at all times. Yelling, smoking, vulgarity, boisterous behavior, spitting, or throwing objects out of windows or other insubordinate behavior will not be permitted.
4. Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
5. Do not extend any part of the body out of the bus windows at any time.
6. Keep aisles clear of lunch boxes, musical instruments, books, etc.
7. Assist the bus driver in keeping the bus clean by not eating or drinking while on the bus.
8. Do not deface or damage any part of the bus.
9. Remain absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
10. Do not play a radio or other audio devices on the bus.
11. Do not tamper or try to operate either the service door or the emergency door; this is the responsibility of the bus operator.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT ALL CHILDREN ARE SAFE WHILE ON THE SCHOOL BUS. RIDING THE BUS IS A PRIVILEGE AND ANY INFRACTION OF BUS RULES MAY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF THIS PRIVILEGE. COMPLETE BUS DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE IS AVAILABLE AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The following action will be taken whenever the school bus driver issues a student a bus discipline ticket. The student must have the ticket signed by the Principal, Assistant Principal, or Dean before he/she is allowed to ride the bus home; the ticket must then be signed by the parent/guardian and given to the bus driver the following morning.

1st Ticket: Warning

2nd Ticket: Three-day suspension for bus riding privileges.

3rd Ticket: Five-day suspension of bus riding privileges and a parental conference.

4th Ticket: Indefinite suspension.

If deemed necessary by the administration and the bus company, riding privilege may be suspended without using the above system.

Questions or concerns regarding bus matters should be addressed to Kuzmeskus Bus Co. at 863-2595.

CURRICULUM

The instructional program in the elementary school is designed to help encourage the pursuit of life long learning and to help the individual develop to the limits of his/her capacity the ability to enjoy a socially responsible life. This is primarily accomplished through the pursuit of excellence in the areas of reading, handwriting, spelling, oral and written language, mathematics, social studies, science, art, music, health, physical education, and computer education.

The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks provide a foundation for ongoing curriculum development. Teachers and administration work collaboratively to develop curriculum, which aligns with the state frameworks. Teachers implement this basic curriculum in a creative and thought-provoking manner based upon sound educational theory and each teacher's special talents and strengths.

HOME AND SCHOOL COLLABORATION

It is our belief that student achievement will improve as a result of collaboration between the school and its families. Parent and teacher communication is encouraged. The following are some suggestions that may help to increase the academic success of your children:

- Sign and return all papers that require a signature.
- Encourage positive attitudes toward school.
- Be certain that your child is absent only when necessary.
- See that your child arrives to school on time.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Encourage your children to prioritize their activities, putting schoolwork first.
- Read to your child and encourage your child to read each day.
- **Praise children often and have high expectations for their success**

STUDENT RECORDS

Under Chapters 71, 71B, and section 13 of Chapter 76 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, student's temporary records (not including transcripts of grades) shall be destroyed five years after transfer, withdrawal, or graduation from school. Any student and /or parents have the right to receive, upon request, such information in whole or in part before its destruction.

Non-Custodial Parents

Massachusetts law has been revised to standardize the process by which elementary and secondary schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents") The law, M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 34H, is intended to encourage parents to be involved in and informed about the education of their children, while protecting the rights and safety of all parties.

The school is required to give full rights to either parent, unless the school has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, state statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody that specifically revokes these rights. Section 34H (b) requires the non-custodial parent to submit a written request to the principal annually. A copy of the required affidavit specifying the mandated documentation is available.

Upon receipt of the completed affidavit the school must immediately notify the custodial parent of the receipt of the request and that the school will provide the student record information to the requesting parent pursuant to Section 34H after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides to the principal of the school with documentation of any court order which prohibits the non-custodial parent from having contact with the child, or prohibits the distribution of the student record information, or is a temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody from abuse by the requesting parent, unless the protective order specifically allows access to the student record information.

For a more complete explanation of your rights under the law you may wish to consult with your attorney or the court.

CALENDARS

A current Pioneer Valley Regional School District Calendar has been provided for your family's reference. This calendar lists all early release, in-service days, holidays, and vacations.

In addition, Bernardston Elementary School events will be communicated to you through classroom and school newsletters. Special dates may also be listed on the school's website.

The district calendar, as well as the BES newsletter the *Thursday News*, our monthly lunch menu, and more can also be found on our school website: <https://sites.google.com/a/pvrsk12.org/bes/>

NEWSLETTERS

We will continue to use a "Thursday Folder" system in which all notices will be sent home with students each Thursday. It is especially important that families check students' backpacks each Thursday, as the folder will contain the weekly lunch order forms, a weekly school update, as well as other notices and classroom communication. In general, we will send home one notice per family. This notice will come home with the youngest student in the family.

It is our hope that all school, district, and community notices will be sent home in the Thursday folders. Therefore, we ask for cooperation from outside groups in providing their notices to the school no later than Wednesday.

Although the majority of school communication will be sent home on Thursdays, it is important to have your child check his/her backpack each night for homework assignments, as well as occasional notices that cannot be sent on Thursday.

Occasionally school announcements and reminders may also be sent using the district's automated phone system, "Blackboard Connect" however, it is our hope to limit the interruptions to the busy lives of our families. Please refer to the Thursday News for regular communication.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Bernardston Elementary has a response plan in place in the event of an emergency. We will continue to periodically have drills so that everyone understands the procedures. In case of an accident or emergency at the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station, a specific plan and procedure are in place. Plans are on file in the school office should you wish to read the specific plan for Bernardston Elementary School.

FIRE, EVACUATION and SHELTER IN PLACE PRACTICE

Fire, Evacuation, Shelter-In-Place practice will be held throughout the school year. When directed students will shelter in place or exit the building in an orderly fashion. It is very important that each student remain calm and attentive. Each classroom has a prescribed plan to shelter in place or exit. If directed, once all the students have cleared the building and have reported to their designated outside meeting areas, they should wait for further instructions from their classroom teacher.

CAFETERIA INFORMATION

Students may bring their own lunches and purchase milk or buy a school lunch. Snack milk is also available. Prices for lunch and milk are subject to change as voted by the School Committee.

| | 2017-2018 Lunch Prices | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Breakfast | Lunch | * Milk |
| Adult | \$2.00 | \$4.10 | \$.60 |
| Child | \$1.85 | \$2.86 | \$.60 |
| Child reduced | \$0.30 | \$0.40 | \$.60 |

Student lunch accounts may be paid online at: www.payforit.net.

Nutritional, well-balanced lunches are provided. Free and reduced lunches are provided for children whose parents meet the appropriate criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Applications for free or reduced lunches are distributed to all students in September and may be obtained at any time throughout the year from the school office. *** Please note, snack milk or milk with home lunch is charged at full rate for all students regardless of free or reduced lunch status.**

A lunch calendar will be sent home prior to the first of each month. Weekly lunch order forms will be sent home at the beginning of each

month in Thursday folders. Order forms and payment should be returned to school on Monday so that the cafeteria manager can plan breakfast and lunches for the week.

Classes are accompanied to the cafeteria by assigned staff. The cafeteria staff fills each student's tray with the main course. Each child is encouraged to take a little of everything being served. Children are asked not to bring candy, gum and soda for lunch.

Students are reminded to use appropriate table manners. Conversation should be the same as one might use in a restaurant. Once seated, students must stay in that spot until their lunch is finished. Sharing food in the cafeteria is discouraged. Seating in the cafeteria is at the discretion of the Lunchroom Supervisors.

The Lunchroom Supervisor dismisses each table individually, however, students should never feel rushed and may remain eating for the entire lunch period if they choose to do so. Students are responsible for maintaining their individual table place. When they have finished eating they will deposit the recyclables and trash in the designated containers.

After students are dismissed from their tables they must wait in line until the Lunchroom Supervisor excuses them. They walk to their classrooms in an orderly fashion. It is expected that rules of good health, good manners, and common sense be used during this lunch period.

Family members are welcome to have lunch with their children at any time during the year but it is important that you call the office to reserve lunch.

NO LUNCHES SERVED ON 1/2 DAY EARLY RELEASE DAYS: Please plan ahead for these days.

Pioneer Valley Regional School District Food Service Guidelines

Pioneer Valley Regional School District offers parents the opportunity to select the best meal plan to meet their children's needs, the family budget and life style:

- Breakfast and/or lunch packed at home, brought to school and eaten in the cafeteria.
- Breakfast and/or lunch purchased at full price at your child's school.
- Breakfast and/or lunch at free or reduced lunch fees for families who qualify according to income guidelines. Families may apply at any time during the school year if there is a change in income status.

We are committed to working with parents to ensure that all school age children have adequate nourishment. Studies have conclusively associated proper nourishment with a child's ability to learn.

Our PVRSD School Lunch / Breakfast Program operates on a *non-profit* basis and is not supported by local tax dollars. Its operational budget comes from daily revenues and state and federal subsidies. It is the responsibility of parents who choose to purchase or receive subsidized meals from our program to stay current with their bills and to notify Food Service of any changes in their income status so that we may provide you with Free and Reduced meal applications on a timely basis. Pre-payments may be made by cash, check, or bank check. The following guidelines are currently in effect:

All meals must be paid for **in advance**. Money may be sent in on a monthly or weekly basis with your child. Deductions are made only when students purchase school meals or milks.

After five days of non-payment, parents will be notified that their child will be given a sandwich, fruit, and milk until the account resumes to a positive balance.

Families are welcome to complete a Free/Reduced Lunch Application at any time during the school year. Should the application for free or reduced status be approved, families are still responsible for the balance due, as the change of status is **not** retroactive for past due balances.

REPORT CARDS

Student evaluation reports are sent home three times per year in November, March, and June. Parents should look for these evaluations. Specific dates will be published in Thursday News.

Report cards and parent/teacher conferences are ways that teachers communicate with parents and guardians about students' academic and social growth. If after checking a student's report card parents have any questions they should contact the teacher for an appointment.

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES

All textbooks and curricular materials are supplied at the expense of the district. These books and materials are the property of the district and are loaned to the pupils. When pupils lose, destroy, or damage any schoolbooks, school equipment or school property, parents are responsible and shall be asked by the school personnel to make restitution.

The teacher will inform the parent of any supplies students may need to buy.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences are held in the Fall & Spring. At this time, your child's progress will be discussed. You are encouraged to make every effort to attend. Additionally, you may request a meeting with your child's teacher at any point throughout the year.

While report cards give valuable information in summary form, they can never take the place of personal contact. Only in a conference can the many aspects of the child's educational development and growth be fully explained and discussed between the people who know the child best - the parents and the teacher.

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to come to school to talk with teachers. However, in the interest of not interrupting the children's school day, we ask parent or guardians to call school to arrange a mutually convenient time to speak with teachers.

LIBRARY

Students at Bernardston Elementary may borrow books/materials from the school library during library period each week. The number of books allowed is at the discretion of the school library paraprofessional.

Students are responsible for returning any overdue books. If a book is not returned, he/she is responsible for the cost of the book in a timely manner. If a library book is damaged, the replacement charge applies.

PICTURES

School pictures, both individual and class, are taken each fall. Pictures will be taken in late September each school year with retakes taken within approximately 30-days. Information regarding the process and scheduled dates will be sent home in the Thursday News.

STUDENT/CLASSROOM DIRECTORY

Each fall the Bernardston Elementary PTO will create a grade level student directory. Families may voluntarily provide their address and phone number to be shared with other families in that grade level. This can help to facilitate social interaction outside of school and facilitate communication between families. Families always have the option to elect that their information not be included.

CELEBRATIONS

Each year every child's birthday is typically recognized in the classroom. Please contact your child's teacher if this practice is contrary to your personal beliefs.

Parents are asked to contact their child's teacher if they wish to make arrangements to recognize their child's birthday during the school day. Please familiarize yourself with the PVRSD Wellness Plan to help plan healthy snacks your child might share with his/her class.

Parents are also asked to refrain from having their child distribute party invitations in school. This is uncomfortable for excluded children. Families should make use of the student/classroom directories prepared by the BES PTO.

LOST AND FOUND

All unclaimed clothing items are kept in a specific area within the school. It is recommended that name labels be placed on sweaters, jackets, and other items for easier return. Parents are urged to visit the school to claim lost articles. Small items are kept in the office. The school accepts no responsibility for items lost. Several times throughout the year unclaimed clothing is donated.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We encourage families to carefully consider the ramifications of sending electronic devices to school with children. Electronic devices can often cause distraction and may be confiscated in those cases (to be returned to a parent). Students bringing cell phones to school must ensure that they are turned off during all school hours, which includes: snack, recess, lunch, during class, and restroom breaks. The school cannot accept responsibility for these devices and we would encourage families to keep these items at home. It is understood that BES and the PVRSD is not responsible or liable for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic devices. Students who fail to comply with this policy will have their personal electronic device confiscated by BES staff.

CLOTHING POLICY

Children are encouraged to choose clothing appropriate for the school environment and weather conditions. During the cooler months, the children should dress accordingly and wear a sweater, sweatshirt, or light jacket when out at recess.

Students are encouraged to leave a seasonal spare change of clothes at school.

Children in primary grades are required to wear snow pants and boots to recess if they are to play in the snow. This practice is also strongly encouraged at the fifth and sixth grade level. If there is snow on the playground, the children without snow pants and boots must remain on the blacktop area. **Heavy outerwear (coats, jackets, snow pants, boots, winter hats/hoods etc.) are not to be worn in school.**

Sneakers are required for weekly participation in physical education. Once sanding and salting of the roads, sidewalks, and parking lots begins, the children must wear a different pair of sneakers in the gymnasium. This may be an inexpensive pair of sneakers and may be kept at school for gym class. It is also necessary that students wear appropriate clothing for physical exercise on days when they have physical education class.

PARKING

Parking at Bernardston Elementary can be a challenge! To ensure the safety of the children, and to adhere to town guidelines, it is important that parents or visitors park in designated parking spaces. This process is equally as important during arrival and dismissal periods. Cars should never park in the designated bus lane in front of the school during morning unloading times or after they arrive at dismissal. Please exercise caution in the parking lot during arrival and dismissal time, as there are many cars and children walking. Please note that idling for more than 5-minutes is against Massachusetts General Law. Thank you for your cooperation in regard to this very important matter.

PETS/ANIMALS

There is nothing cuter than a fuzzy little animal. Most of us love them and have no problem being near them. That is not the case with all children or adults. Some children are highly allergic to many kinds of animals. Other children have had a frightening experience around animals that may have included being mauled or bitten. Due to these two reasons, we ask that you please do not bring animals with fur/hair into the school. If you make arrangements with a classroom teacher to show an animal, these animals should be viewed outside on the playground.

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Community groups or individuals may make arrangements to use the school facilities after school hours by submitting a facilities request form and submitting it to the office. The Principal and the Bernardston Board of Selectmen must approve arrangements. For further information and a facilities request form, please contact the school office.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are used to reinforce, to enrich, and to provide the student with the opportunity to prepare subject matter independently. Homework may be assigned in grades one through six as needed. In general, homework will not exceed the following allocations per night:

- Grade two - twenty minutes
- Grade three - thirty minutes
- Grade four - forty minutes
- Grade five - fifty minutes
- Grade six - sixty minutes

If a child is consistently exceeding these guidelines or having difficulty with the work, please contact your child's teacher. *Parents need to be aware of the difference between homework and unfinished daily work, which may also need to be completed at home.*

Generally homework is not given on Friday, however, there may be long term projects assigned which require students to set aside blocks of work time per night. These projects provide students with the opportunity to budget their time to complete assignments. Parents or guardians will be notified if a student continuously fails to complete homework assignments on time. If necessary, the teacher may request a meeting with the student/parents to create a plan to ensure the future completion of homework assignments.

Homework Tips:

- Provide a quiet place to do homework.
- Set aside a specific time to do homework.
- See that study area is well equipped with pens-pencils, paper, ruler, markers, glue, dictionary.
- Look over homework assignments to check for understanding.
- Encourage students to work independently, but be available to assist during homework time.

OPEN HOUSE

Open House at the Bernardston Elementary School is held in late September/early October. This is an opportunity for you to visit your child's classroom and become acquainted with your child's teacher and educational program. Individual conferences are not possible at this time but may be arranged. Information regarding Open House will be sent home prior to the event.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Pioneer Valley Regional School District has established certain protocols to insure the safety of the school community, the security of the computer network, and compliance with applicable law. This policy can be found at the school office or on the district website at www.pvrsdk12.org. A copy may be requested by calling the office.

TESTING

State standardized testing typically occurs each year for students in grades three through six at BES. The revised MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) test has been built upon the best aspects of the previous MCAS assessments and includes innovative items developed by PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers), along with new items specifically created to assess the Massachusetts learning standards. MCAS is an untimed computer-based test. It includes three parts of English/Language Arts for grades 3 - 5, two parts of ELA for grade 6, two parts of Math for grades 3 - 6 and two parts of Science & Technology/Engineering for grade 5. The testing window is open from the first week of April through the end of May. These tests will evaluate the student's ability to think critically and to problem solve. MCAS test questions are still available online. If you would like your own copy of prior questions, please visit the DESE website at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html> and <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>.

VISITORS

To ensure the safety of all our students at Bernardston Elementary School all visitors/ volunteers will use the main entrance, report directly to the office where they need to sign in and obtain a visitor pass.

Visits to our school and/or classrooms by parents are welcomed. They allow parents the opportunity of observing the teaching and learning process. All school visits must be scheduled in advance with the classroom teacher.

SECURITY OF THE BUILDING

All doors are locked at Bernardston Elementary School for the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors. When arriving at the front entrance at BES please ring the doorbell and know that someone from the staff will come to the door as soon as possible. We regret any inconvenience that you may experience but safety is first for all building occupants. Please then check in at the front office. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers within our school provide teachers and other staff members with volunteer assistance by members of the community who have expressed a desire to help provide quality educational services at Bernardston Elementary. Volunteers will assist teachers by fulfilling tasks that teachers or administrators have specifically requested. The purpose is to supplement and enrich the school program at the direction of the professional staff. We have a variety of needs in the following areas: school library, chaperoning, and in the classroom.

Parent volunteers are most welcome at Bernardston Elementary School. If you are interested in volunteering in our school, contact the classroom teacher or call the school office at 648-9356 if you have time to offer. The office will provide interested volunteers with a CORI/SORI form and information regarding fingerprinting which is now required in Massachusetts. We will also notify previous volunteers when their CORI expires. When arriving to volunteer, please sign in at the office. Thank you in advance for any assistance you may be willing to provide.

STUDENT SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

The district has been carefully following the creation of legislation adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The legislation stresses three components as essential to a school's efforts to prevent and address bullying:

- Age-appropriate instruction for students in each grade on bullying prevention incorporated in a school's curriculum. **PVRSD elementary schools implement the *Second Step* social curriculum in grades PK-6.** A social curriculum helps students learn how to feel good about themselves, interact with each other, and develop healthy relationships.
- A clear statement that bullying of any type is not permitted in our schools, the requirement that all adult and student witnesses report it immediately, and clear and easily understood procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying. **We have a bullying statement and established policies and procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of bullying when they occur that are in compliance with the new MA Anti-Bullying Law.**
- The development of a bullying prevention and intervention plan to be implemented, including strategies to protect those who report bullying and appropriate services for students who have been bullied or are bullies. **Many strategies and services are already in place and we have started the process of documenting our prevention and intervention plan. The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be required to provide guidance and resources.**

Throughout this year, the district will ensure that our policies, programs, and strategies meet its intent. We will look for ways to strengthen and improve our efforts to ensure the safety and well being of all our students. We welcome your ideas or questions.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:

- Respect is our guiding principle. It is expected that children and adults will treat each other with respect. We strive to use supportive language and a respectful tone while keeping the Golden Rule in mind. We model and expect kindness and good manners.
- Teachers, staff, and students at Bernardston Elementary School work together in a proactive way to promote appropriate behavior. We help each other understand and reflect on our behavior. Children are empowered to solve their own problems and, when appropriate, are involved in determining consequences for their behavior.
- Developing social skills is a priority in our school. Children need time and guidance in practicing cooperation, negotiation, problem solving, communication and empathy in various school settings.
- A major goal for establishing rules is that students develop mechanisms for self-control such as the ability to attend, the ability to use words rather than force, and the ability to make appropriate choices.
- Teachers and students at the beginning of each school year establish rules for each classroom. In establishing rules together, we build a foundation upon which our community develops. There are also school-wide rules generated by the children.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR:

When students do not follow school rules, consequences are respectful, related, logical, and reasonable. When necessary, parents or guardians will be informed. Parents and/or guardians will be contacted when instances that involve conflict between students occur.

- ❖ In instances of disruptive behavior, the student is:
 - Given a reminder or warning
 - Timed out in the classroom
 - Timed out in a neighboring classroom
 - Brought to the office to speak with the principal and parent or guardian may be called (child may be sent to the office with a note from the teacher.)
- ❖ In instances in which a student physically endangers another person, that student shall be brought to the principal immediately. In all such cases, the students' family will be notified of the incident. The student may serve an in-school suspension. Repeated or extreme aggressive

acts will be handled at the discretion of the principal (or head teacher) and may result in an out-of-school suspension.

- ❖ In instances in which property is damaged, stolen or destroyed, the principal and attending teacher shall determine the consequences.
- ❖ In repeated or extreme instances in which a student uses hurtful language (put-downs, bullying, swearing, name calling) toward other students, teachers, or staff, that student shall be brought to the principal immediately. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the incident. Incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the PVRSD bullying policy.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS UNDER SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504

The discipline of students with disabilities eligible for special education and students on Section 504 Accommodation Plans is governed by federal and state special education laws and the regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, its implementing regulations 34 C.F.R. et seq.; and Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 71 B and its implementing regulations 603 C.M.R. 28.00. Students with disabilities who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current educational placement for up to ten (10) school days per year, to the extent that such a removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without a prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability. The student's IEP or 504 team must meet within ten (10) days of the decision to suspend to review all relevant information in the student's file.

Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) days in any school year, this constitutes a 'change in placement.' This includes both in school and out of school suspensions. A change in placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law.

These include, but are not limited to:

A. If the school did not conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such a student before the behavior that resulted in the discipline, the school shall convene an IEP meeting to develop an assessment plan to address the behavior, or if the child already has a behavior intervention plan, the IEP Team shall review the plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

B. A review by the IEP Team of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action, which is often referred to as the Manifestation Determination. School personnel

may order a change in educational placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) that provides the student with a free appropriate public education for the same amount of time that a child without a disability would be subject to discipline, but not for more than forty-five (45) calendar days if the student:

1. Carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function.
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs at school, a school function, or school sponsored event; or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, a school function, or a school sponsored event.

School Personnel may also seek an order from the department of Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), using the authority of the hearing officer, placing a student in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) calendar days, when it is determined that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others. Parents/guardians and/or students, where appropriate, may request a hearing at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals regarding a disciplinary action described above to challenge the Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) or the manifestation determination. For a copy of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education brochure on Special Education Parents’ Rights available in many languages visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/> or contact the administrator of Special Education at (413)498-2911.

RECESS

Recess is designed to give your children vigorous exercise, a time to be active and learn to play cooperatively. During regularly scheduled recess periods, there will be adults on the playground. Students are asked to stay within sight of the adults and if they need any special attention, they should see the adult on duty first. All children are required to participate and a doctor's note is necessary for staying inside on outside recess days. During the winter months please be sure that children dress appropriately for the weather conditions.

BICYCLES

Children, with parental permission, may ride bicycles to school. Helmets must be worn in compliance with Massachusetts State Law. We urge parents to review safe riding procedures and perform a regular safety inspection of bicycles. Students are reminded to walk their bikes on the school grounds during the school day. There is to be no riding during the school day including recesses. A permission slip will be sent home in the beginning of the year to indicate your permission for your child to ride his/her bike to and from school.

SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLERBLADES

Skateboards and rollerblades may not be used on school grounds. Students are reminded that skateboards and rollerblades must be carried once on school property.

FIELD TRIPS, SCHOOL EVENTS, DISTRICT EVENTS

Trips to sites throughout the area can be an important enrichment activity within the scope of the classroom curriculum. Trips connected to classroom curricula will be planned by school staff. Notices and permission slips will be sent home for each individual field trip.

In addition, the location of Bernardston Elementary allows for exciting enrichment activities right here in Bernardston! A walking field trip permission form will be sent home in September. This will allow classroom teachers to access the wonderful environment surrounding our school.

Children are expected to participate in all school-sponsored or district-sponsored events. These events may be graduation exercises, fine arts concerts, band/music performances, field trips, or other similar events. These activities are scheduled as part of our regular approved curriculum, and, as such, attendance by the children is expected. If you elect not to have your child participate in a scheduled field trip or district event, your family may need to make alternate arrangements for your child.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has enacted legislation, which calls for the establishment of a School Council for each elementary, secondary, and independent vocational school in the Commonwealth. Each council is to have the following categories of membership: school representatives (including principal), parents, and community representatives who are not teachers or parents of students at the school.

Councils are to assist principals in adopting educational goals for the school, identifying the educational needs of the students attending the school, and formulating a school improvement plan. Parent representatives on the council are elected our PTO, the Friends of BES. Meetings are held monthly and are open to all.

FRIENDS OF BERNARDSTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We strongly encourage all parents and guardians to become actively involved in this organization. The Friends of Bernardston Elementary School not only supports the activities at the school such as field trips, programs, etc; it also can provide you with useful information as well as a chance for parents to come together with ideas and concerns. It is the format for one to become actively involved in the whole school program. Please contact the school for more information.

STUDENT HEALTH

Please contact the school nurse at 648-9356 with any questions.

Staff - A registered nurse coordinates the health care needs of each student. This includes complying with school health policies mandated by the state of Massachusetts, screening and referring students, attending to sick and injured students, facilitating positive student responses to normal development. Utilizing a team approach, the school nurse promotes the health and safety of the students, and administers medication per doctor's orders and employs early intervention with potential health problems.

Emergency Information - At the beginning of the school year each child receives an Emergency Information form. These forms provide the information necessary to reach parents, guardians, or alternates promptly in case of illness or accidents. Because individual health conditions may vary among children within a family, parents who have more than one child in our school are asked to fill out a separate card for each child. In the event a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the name of a person to be notified in cases or emergency must be included on each card. Please be sure the persons you name are willing and able to serve in this capacity; whenever possible, please list local people. *Please update the office with changes to your information as they occur (cell phone, work phone, etc.)*

Physical Exams - Physical exams are required for entrance to pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and grades 4, 7, and 11. Annual physical exams are required for all students who play sports. Students are encouraged to go to their own physicians. Your own pediatrician has more knowledge of your child and conducts a more thorough examination. Maintaining a connection with your physician is an important opportunity for you and your child. If necessary, the fourth grade physical will be completed by the school physician if a request is made in writing. The physician must have a written report sent to the school to be kept in the student's health record. Students who transfer into the Pioneer Valley Regional School District must show evidence of a physical exam within the past six (6) months or make an appointment to satisfy this requirement. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires verification of completion of school immunization requirements for all children attending school.

Immunizations – In accordance with MGL Ch 75 Sec.15, no student will be admitted to school without documentation of complete immunization. The physician will administer private immunizations and boosters. Any family unable to arrange for the required immunizations will be assisted through referrals by the School Nurse to obtain them. Lead screening is required prior to entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. A current immunization schedule is available from the School Nurse. Exemptions for medical or religious reasons must be requested in writing.

Illness and Injuries at School - If a student is sick or has been injured seriously enough to require further evaluation, school staff will contact a parent or guardian. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to take the child home and/or arrange for any needed medical follow-up. The School Nurse will administer first aid only. In case of serious injury requiring emergency medical treatment and a parent or guardian cannot be reached, an ambulance will be called if necessary and a school staff member will accompany the student to the nearest hospital emergency room. For your child's sake, as well as for the sake of others, please keep your child home if he/she is not well. Your child must be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before he/she is permitted to return to school. If your child has a contagious illness such as strep throat, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), or impetigo, he/she must be evaluated by his/her physician and then may return to school 24 hours after beginning the prescribed treatment. Please contact the school nurse if your child has a contagious illness. Notices concerning contagious disease exposure in the school are sent home with the students. Please read these as they contain information about signs and symptoms, and school policy concerning re-entry into class.

Medication Policy - The following guidelines must be followed to ensure safe and appropriate administration of all needed medications during school hours. This includes non-prescription medications that are required on a regular basis. State mandated forms are to be completed before any medication is given in school. These forms may be obtained from the school nurse.

1. Written consent from the parent or guardian for the administration of medication during school hours. If a student has multiple medications, including prn, they must be listed individually on this form.
2. A signed and dated order by the doctor that includes the need for the medication, the name of the medication, and the dosage, route of administration, and time(s) to be administered.
3. A medication administration plan (a med plan) is completed and signed by both the parent and the school nurse for each medication taken at school.

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| <p>4. Each prescription medication should be brought to the Health Office by a responsible adult and in the original container. No more than a 30-day supply of medication can be accepted at one time. <u>Please do not send medication to school with students.</u> Unmonitored medication endangers the health and safety of every child in the school. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the health office. All meds are to be picked up at the end of the school year. Meds are not stored during the summer. Any meds left will be discarded.</p> |
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5. Students must come to the Health Room for each medication dose. It is each student's responsibility to appear promptly at the prescribed time(s).
6. If a child has a short term (those requiring administration for ten days or less), the pharmacy labeled container may be used in lieu of a physician's order. A letter from the parent requesting that the medication be administered and the time of the administration must accompany the medication.
7. An Interval Health History is sent home at the beginning of the year. It must be filled out and signed by the parent/guardian each year. This form asks for information about your child's health, gives permission for the school nurse to treat, as well as offering an optional consent for Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and Benadryl to be given at school should the need arise. These medications can be given no more than 3 times per month without a written order from a physician. Completion of this form assists the nurse in her assessment of your child's health/illness status.
8. If your child has a life-threatening allergic reaction to bee stings or other substances (or if he/she has a sibling who reacts), please contact the School Nurse. It is crucial for the school to have a written protocol for dealing with this type of reaction on an individual basis should the need arise. Also, if an EpiPen has been prescribed for your child, please provide one to be kept in the Health Room. (If your child will participate in the after-school program, a second EpiPen will be needed, as staff from this program does not have access to the Health Room after school hours.)

Screenings - Students are screened annually for height, weight, vision and hearing as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. These screenings are not diagnostic. Any child who falls outside the expected parameters for their age or size group, their parent/guardian will be notified. A recommendation for follow up with the appropriate referral will be included with this notification.

Postural Screening is done annually for students in grades 5-9. Changes in the spine often develop slowly and without pain during these growth-spurt years. The school nurse and the physical education teacher will do the initial examination. Recommendations for further evaluation by a physician are directly forwarded to the parent/guardian. Exemption from this screening is allowed if a student's parent or guardian provides a written request. In this case, the student must be screened by his/her own physician and written verification from the physician given to the school nurse.

Fluoride Program - Students may participate in a weekly fluoride rinse program. Participation is optional, and written permission by each student's parent or guardian is required. The fluoride rinse program is offered free of charge to all students in grades 1 through 6.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Massachusetts Special Education Act of 1972, commonly referred to as "Chapter 766", ensures that all children with special needs between the ages of three and twenty-two will receive a free appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. These disabilities include pupils with temporary or permanent intellectual or emotional problems; sensory or physical impairments including vision or hearing problems, speech or communication disorders, cerebral or perceptual dysfunctions or other specific learning difficulties or combinations of them, which interfere with the student's ability to progress effectively in regular education programs. The Pioneer Valley School District makes every effort to educate all the students in our schools if possible. We believe that the environment of the community school is the most normalizing and enriching. To this end attempts are made to do the following:

- ◆ To find and evaluate at the earliest possible time all children with learning problems
- ◆ To develop an Individual Education Plan (I. E. P.) for each child who has a disability that significantly impacts his/her educational progress
- ◆ To provide these services within the local schools whenever possible

To accomplish the above responsibilities, Bernardston Elementary School has initiated several procedures to identify and remediate children's learning problems:

- ◆ All parents of three and four year old children are notified of yearly screenings to determine learning issues. Communication with local agencies is ongoing to help identify any children not yet enrolled who may have potential special needs. All parents of pre-school-aged children may at any time call to arrange such a screening.
- ◆ A Child Study Team meets throughout the year where teachers or parents may meet with the Principal and other teachers to discuss children who are not being successful in the classroom. Adaptations and modifications are discussed and implemented. Occasionally Special Education referrals may be made from this group.
- ◆ Evaluations are carried out by the school evaluation team.

The members may include parents, the principal, the school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, classroom teachers, the Early Childhood Coordinator, and the school nurse.

Overseeing the process is the Director of Special Education. A team chairperson is designated to organize the meeting, and to act as a parent liaison. Parent involvement is both mandatory and encouraged.

This program benefits many students allowing them to be as successful as possible. At Bernardston Elementary School the Special Education Department consists of a special education teacher, school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, an Early Childhood Coordinator, occupational and physical therapists and several special education aides, and assistants.

If you have specific concerns about your child's academic development, please do not hesitate to contact the teacher or principal.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½, the school shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written and oral notice of the proposed suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall

have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A parent/guardian present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of his/her determination in the form of an update to the student and parent/guardian, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the parent/guardian of the type and duration of the suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or parent's/guardian's expense;

- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by parent/guardian request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send his/her determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the parent/guardian for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort

shall be made to include the parent/guardian at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or parent/guardian requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and parent/guardian shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue his/her written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

DUE PROCESS FOR SUSPENSIONS: EMERGENCY REMOVAL

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension.

SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H½

1. The due process procedures above do not apply to a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) an assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c.71, §§37H or 37H½.
2. The principal will inform the student of the specific charges in writing, informing the student of the right to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense) and

- the right to provide evidence and question witnesses, on the proposed hearing date.
3. The student may appeal the principal's expulsion determination to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) days of notification of the expulsion.
 4. The superintendent may uphold, reduce, or reverse the disciplinary action after the appeal hearing. Note that a failure to make an appeal to the superintendent within the ten (10)-day period will exhaust any further right of appeal.
 5. All students who have been suspended or expelled who remain residents of the District shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during their period of suspension, expulsion, or removal from regular classroom activities.
 6. If the superintendent upholds the expulsion decision, if the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan.

PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT **ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

This grievance procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination in employment practices and policies of the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Pioneer Valley Regional School District.

The complaint should be in writing or on audiotape and contain information about the alleged discrimination including name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interview, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The grievant and/or his/her designee should submit the complaint as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

CHRIS MAGUIRE, ADMINISTRATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
97F SUMNER TURNER ROAD
NORTHFIELD, MA 01360

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing and, where appropriate, in a format accessible (e.g. large print, Braille, audiotape) to the

complainant. The response will explain the position of the Pioneer Valley Regional School District and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within 15 days after receipt of the response to the Superintendent of Schools.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Superintendent will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting the Superintendent will respond in writing in a format accessible to the complainant with a final resolution of the complaint.

Individuals always have the legal right to file a complaint independent of the grievance procedure with an appropriate agency if they so choose.

PIONEER VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT **SEXUAL HARASSMENT, BULLYING & HAZING POLICY**

I. Policy

- A. It is the policy of the Pioneer Valley Regional School District to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees and visitors free from sexual harassment, bullying, hazing, and intimidation. These terms are referenced herein as “harassment”. Such action may occur on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, or for any other reason.
- B. It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone harassment in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment.
- C. This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school’s authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to an employee’s or student’s work or participation in school related activities. Reports of cyber bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will result in discipline.
- D. It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

- E. Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.
- F. The Building Principal/Designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment.

II. Procedures

A. Definitions – Sexual Harassment Prohibited

“Sexual Harassment” means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to unwelcome comments, touching, written notes, pictures/cartoons or other inappropriate conduct, such as leering, whistling, brushing up against the body, commenting on sexual activity or body parts or other activity referred to by the Model MCAD policy prohibiting such behavior. Harassment has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment that takes place under any of the following circumstances:

1. When submission to such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment, instruction, or participation in school activities or programs;
2. When submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used by the offender as the basis for making personal or academic decisions affecting the individual subjected to sexual advances
3. When such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work, attendance at school or participation in academic or curricular activities, or
4. When such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

B. Definitions – Bullying Prohibited

Bullying may take a variety of forms. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result no student or employee shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying in any public educational institute:

1. “Bullying and cyberbullying,” means severe or repeated unwelcome written, electronic, verbal or physical acts or gestures where a student or employee feels coerced, intimidated, harassed or threatened and under the circumstances (1) may cause a reasonable person to suffer physical or emotional harm, (2) may cause damage to another student’s or employee’s property, or (3) may cause a disruptive or hostile school environment. The behavior must interfere with an employee’s ability to perform his or her duties or with a student’s academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities, or privileges:
 - a. That are being offered through the school district; or
 - b. During any education program or activity; or
 - c. While in school, on school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school-sponsored activities, at school-sanctioned events; or
2. Through the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of any public education institute.
3. As used in this Section, “electronic communication” means any communication through an electronic device including a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

C. Definitions – Hazing Prohibited

The term “hazing” shall mean any conduct or method of initiation, even if consented to, 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.

1. Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.
2. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing and is at the scene of such activity, shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such activity to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such behavior shall be subject to discipline.

D. Guidelines for Investigating Harassment Claims

In school systems, harassment may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be an instance of staff member to staff member, staff member to student, student to staff member, or student to student. Guidelines for dealing with any report of harassment are as follows:

1. By law, harassment is defined by the victim's perception in combination with objective standards or expectations. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of both parties, it is important that the victim make it clear to the harasser that the behavior is objectionable.
2. In all reports of harassment, the victim or witness should describe in writing the specifics of the complaint to ensure that the subsequent investigation is focused on the relevant facts. Oral and anonymous complaints will be reviewed but are inherently difficult to investigate and may not be procedurally fair; as a result no disciplinary action shall be taken on anonymous complaints unless verified by clear and convincing evidence. All other complaints will be reviewed based on a preponderance of evidence standard.
3. Any school employee or community member that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of harassment, bullying, or intimidation shall immediately report it to the administration; each school shall document any prohibited incident that is reported and confirmed, and report all incidents of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying or cyberbullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the Superintendent's office as they occur.
4. A good faith report from a staff member renders the staff member immune from discipline for making a report and is considered to have been made in the course of the staff member's employment for purposes of M.G.L. c. 258. As a result, the school district shall indemnify staff members from any cause of action arising out of a good faith report of harassment or the district's subsequent actions or inaction in connection thereto.
5. If an instance of student to student harassment is reported to a staff member other than an administrator, the staff member must inform the Assistant Principal or the Building Principal.
6. If a situation involving a report of staff member to student harassment is brought to the attention of any staff member, the staff member must notify the Building Principal or Superintendent immediately.
7. In a situation involving a report of student to staff member sexual harassment the staff member must notify the Building Principal or Superintendent.

8. In a situation involving a report of staff member to staff member harassment the staff member must notify the Building Principal or the Superintendent.
9. Once a report of harassment has been made, including reports of mental, emotional or physical harassment as well as threats to a person's safety or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action should be taken.
 - a. The Building Principal/designee should investigate the report through discussions with the individuals involved. In situations involving allegations against a staff member, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion. In situations involving students the Principal/designee should engage the appropriate classroom or special subject area teacher. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in harassment may be invited to attend a meeting at which the complaint and potential resolution will be discussed. If excluded, a student disciplined for bullying will not be re-admitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such a meeting. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit.
 - b. If the harasser and the victim are willing to discuss the matter at a resolution meeting in the presence of the Principal/designee or Superintendent, a supportive faculty member and/or parent may be included in the discussion. During this discussion, the offending behavior should be described by the victim and administration, a request for a change in behavior should be made, and a promise should be made that the described behavior will stop. If circumstances do not permit a face-to-face meeting the administration will present the victim's position. Follow-up verification procedures will be explained. Failure to comply after a resolution meeting will result in appropriate discipline.
10. If after a resolution meeting with the involved parties, the Building Principal determines that further disciplinary action must be taken, the following could occur:
 - a. In instances involving student to student or student to staff member harassment, the student may be subject to discipline including but not limited to counseling, suspension, and in appropriate cases expulsion.
 - b. In instances involving staff member to student and staff member to staff member harassment, findings will be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for further action. Personnel action may also be initiated at this point, consistent with the applicable law and collective bargaining agreement.

- c. In all cases a referral to law enforcement will be considered by the Principal or Superintendent based on the circumstances. School officials will coordinate with the Police Department to identify a police liaison for harassment cases.

11. Retaliation:

Retaliation in any form against any person who has made or filed a complaint relating to harassment is forbidden. If it occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff personnel and/or removal from the educational setting for a student. A referral to law enforcement may be made.

12. Confidentiality:

Reports of harassment should be kept confidential, consistent with necessary investigation procedures, with the goal of protecting the victim and stopping the behavior.

For further information about these guidelines or help with sexual harassment problems or any other form of harassment, consult:

Chris Maguire
Harassment Coordinator, Pioneer Valley R.S.D.

If the alleged harasser is responsible for conducting an investigation, the Superintendent or Committee shall designate an alternative Harassment Coordinate, who is Chris Maguire.

DEFINITIONS

Several of the following definitions are copied directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, as noted below. Schools or districts may add specific language to these definitions to clarify them, but may not alter their meaning or scope. Plans may also include additional definitions that are aligned with local policies and procedures.

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

School Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Support Services: The strategy to help the target and aggressor will be based on the nature of the offense, the age of the victims & aggressors, and the decision based upon the results of the investigation. It may require the district to review its student curriculum to assure it is clear, and achieves the objectives of properly

educating and imparting the message to the students. This will require pre & posttests of understanding and comprehending lessons. This district incorporates 2nd Step in the elementary schools, and practices Positive Behavior Support.

The counseling services for the aggressor and victim may include the following:
Social emotional skills programs to prevent bullying by:

- Classroom Teachers
- Guidance Counselors
- School Adjustment Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Behavior Analyst Intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors:

- Guidance Counselors
- School Adjustment Counselor
- School Psychologists

To provide services for targets, aggressors and their families, the district uses culturally and linguistically appropriate resources outside the district. The district maintains a list of translation and/or interpreter services.

LEGAL REFERENCES

1. Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 703
2. Title IX of the 1972 U.S. Civil Rights Act.
3. Chapter 151C, Massachusetts General Laws
4. M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5
5. M.G.L. Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19
6. M.G.L. Chapter 71, §§82, 84
7. Pioneer Valley Regional School District Bullying Policies (All of these documents are available on the PVRSD website or in the school front office):

- A. Appendix A - Summary for Parents and Guardians, and Student Handbooks; Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- B. Appendix A – Summary for Staff Handbooks; Bullying Prevention and Intervention
- C. Appendix B – Pioneer Valley Regional School District Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Hazing Policy
- D. Appendix C – Pioneer Valley Regional School District Incident Reporting Form
- E. Appendix D – Anti-Bullying Legislation and Special Education
- F. PVRSD Policy Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan
- G. Education Laws and Regulations 603 CMR 49.00 Notification of Bullying or Retaliation Regulations