



MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL/PARENT-GUARDIAN HANDBOOK 2016-17

The different schools in Manchester each have their own personality and culture. However, all of our schools operate according to policies determined by our Board of Education, and we have highlighted some key policies (and common practices) in this student/parent-guardian handbook. To see the complete set of board policies, [please click here](#). Also, please note that every school has much more information on its webpage -- in some cases including a handbook supplement.

-- Superintendent Matt Geary

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential if students are to properly benefit from teaching and learning. Connecticut state law places the responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other persons having legal control of the student.

When your child is going to be absent, please call the office and leave a message on our answering machine. Calls can be made at any time, including before and after school hours.

Please give your child's full name, teacher and reason for absences. If your child is absent and no message is left on the answering machine, you will receive a phone call by office staff so that we may determine the reason for the absence. On the day your child returns to school, please send a note to his/her teacher explaining why s/he was absent. If we do not hear from you the absence will be considered unexcused.

- For an overview of our attendance policy, [please click here](#)
- For the complete BoE policy, [please click here](#).
- To see our standardized 'Chronic absenteeism letter' [please click here](#).

BEFORE AND AFTER-SCHOOL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

There is programming available before and after school at every elementary school through our partnership with the Manchester Early Learning Center. To learn more [please click here](#). Note also: Various after school activities are held throughout the year that are sponsored by our PTA or the staff. If a student is absent from school on the day of an activity, s/he may not attend the after school activity. The behavior policies that govern the school day also govern after school activities.

BEHAVIOR

Schools throughout the district share the following core practices:

- Teaching and upholding common expectations for student behavior across our school
- Using common language to communicate expectations
- Implementing a systematic approach to reinforce positive behaviors
- Ensuring equitable, logical consequences and opportunities to restorative and collaborative practices when negative behaviors occur.

In order to bring greater consistency to this area of our work, the district has created a document outlining expected behaviors aligned with a range of appropriate interventions.

- To see the expected behavior matrix (along with an explanatory letter from Superintendent Geary), [please click here](#).

BULLYING

The school board is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school

grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by Board of Education.

- To see the complete school board policy, [please click here.](#)
- To see a shorter 'Family Guide to Understanding Bullying", [please click here.](#)
- For a form to report an alleged case of bullying, [please click here](#)
- To reach the district's safe school climate coordinator, [please click here](#)

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Riding the bus is a privilege earned through appropriate behavior. Board policy states that transportation services may be suspended for conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a publicized policy of the Board of Education.

- The district's Director of Transportation is Joanne Hebert. She can be reached at b11jhebe@mpspride.org.
- To see the board's transportation policy, [please click here.](#)

CELEBRATIONS

Our district is committed to establishing a healthy learning environment that positively influences students' general well-being, eating behaviors, physical capacity and learning ability to succeed academically. Regarding celebrations:

- Students are allowed to bring party invitations to school as long as every child in their class is invited to the party.
- By board policy, classroom birthday celebrations will be food and snack free.
- To see the district's school wellness policy, [please click here.](#)

DISCIPLINE

The school board has detailed information regarding student discipline including consequences for various infractions.

- To see the school board's discipline policy, [please click here.](#)

DRESS CODE

Please support your child in choosing clothes that are appropriate for school. Clothing ought to be comfortable, and free of any language or pictures that may be offensive or distracting to the school community. Ultimately it is the right of the administration to determine whether or not an article of clothing is appropriate for school.

A note regarding footwear: We also strongly discourage students from wearing flip-flops to school. Also, in order for your child to participate in PE, s/he must wear sneakers. This is due to safety concerns.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

The Board of Education supports the use of mobile and personal electronic devices while at school, and school-sponsored activities, as learning tools intended to support instruction and as a means of communication under circumstances approved by the school administration. However, the use of mobile and personal electronic devices must not disrupt the classroom, harass, or harm others, or compromise law, order, and safety. Also, a student who possesses an electronic communication device is responsible for its care. The Board is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to electronic communication devices brought onto its property.

- To see the district's electronic device use policy, [please click here](#).
- To see the policy on acceptable use of technology, [please click here](#).
- To see the board's policy on Internet safety, [please click here](#).

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The Board of Education believes that a student's education is a responsibility shared by the school, parents or guardian, family members, other significant adults in the child's life, and the community. All must work together as knowledgeable partners to educate all students up to their capacity. Our schools are committed to this work as is our Family and Community Partnership office.

- To see the Family and Community Partnership website, [please click here](#).
- To see the board policy on parent/family involvement, [please click here](#).

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Every elementary school (as well as Manchester Preschool Center and Bennet Academy) has a full time Family Resource Center (FRC), each with its own coordinator. The role of the FRC is to support families in a variety of ways with the overriding objective of improving student achievement.

- To learn more about the FRCs (including contact information for the FRC at your school), [please click here](#).

FIELD TRIPS

The school board encourages and supports student field trips that provide unique educational learning experiences to students.. The board also is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, are able to participate in grade level guaranteed experiences.

- To see the board policy on field trips, [please click here](#).

FOOD (AND NUTRITION)

The district is committed to establishing a healthy learning environment that includes food and nutrition. Please note the following:

- All elementary schools offer healthy lunch options including fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Birthday celebrations are food and snack free.
- Elementary classrooms are nut-free. All snacks eaten in classroom must be nut-free.
- A nut-free cafeteria table is available for lunch.
- Healthy snacks and non-sugary drinks are encouraged.
- Food may be used to commemorate a cultural event or activity, or support a curriculum related project with the approval of the principal and in accordance with Health Department protocols
- Teachers will provide information to parents regarding allergy issues in the classroom so that snacks or activities involving food can be safe for students with allergies.
- Healthy party menus will be used.
- Food is not used as a reward.
- Students may not trade food with others.
- Eating on buses is prohibited.
- To see the district's school wellness policy, [please click here](#).

GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS

To reduce exposure of school building occupants to potentially hazardous chemical contaminants, the district has a 'green cleaning' policy.

- To read the policy pertaining to hazardous materials in school, [please click here](#).

HEALTH/MEDICATIONS

If a prescription or over the counter medication is required to be given during the school day, a medication authorization form must be signed by the child's physician and parent/guardian. These forms are available in all Manchester physicians' offices, walk-in clinics and school health offices. Medications must be delivered to the school nurse by an adult and be in a pharmacy prepared container. Medication orders must be renewed annually. There is an exception to this policy which allows school nurses to dispense Tylenol (or its generic form) and Ibuprofen with the written permission of the parent or guardian. Permission forms are available from the school nurse.

- To see the board policy on health assessments and immunization, [please click here](#).
- For a list of school nurses and overview of their policies, [please click here](#).

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of every student's education. Parents should ask their children about assignments daily. Your encouragement and enthusiasm are powerful motivators.

- To see the board policy on homework, including grade-level expectations, [please click here](#).

MEALS

We are committed to ensuring that every child has access to healthy and nutritious meals, regardless of the socio-economic status of a family.

Elementary school prices are:

- Breakfast: \$1.00
- Lunch: \$2:15
- Milk: .40

There is more information available about food, nutrition and wellness:

- To read our school wellness policy, [please click here](#).
- To see our school lunch account policy, [please click here](#).
- For more information about school breakfast, [please click here](#).
- For the EZMeal App website, [please click here](#).

- For our EZSchoolPay website, [please click here](#).

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Our district is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and we do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, access to boy scouts or other designated youth groups, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws.

For the district policy and complete text of the non-discrimination statement, [please click here](#).

PERSONAL ITEMS

Items that cause a distraction to the learning environment should be left at home. If an item is determined to be a distraction, school personnel will take it and send it to the office to be picked up by the parent or guardian. We are not responsible for personal items brought to school.

STUDENT PRIVACY

In accordance with federal law, the Board of Education has a variety of provisions regarding student privacy, with information on searches, surveys and more.

- To read the board policy on student privacy, [please click here](#).

Note: Parents/guardians are also asked each year whether they give permission for their student's name, image, voice, age, grade, school, school activity, achievements and school work to be published or displayed on school or district websites; class pictures; student yearbooks; newsletters; public media; graduation, theater, athletic, and music programs; etc. For more information please check with the main office at your child's school.

STUDENT SAFETY

The safety and security of our students is everyone's priority. At the same time, we encourage parents and family members to be involved and active in all aspects of our schools. To accommodate both of these important aspects of our school, our expectation for parents and other visitors as that they enter the building only by ringing the doorbell at the main entrance and then proceeding to the office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. (We have more

information below in the Visitors section.) After signing in, please be sure to wear the visitor's badge while in the building to identify yourself. Upon leaving, please sign out also. All doors of the school remain locked at all times.

THERAPY DOGS

The school district supports the use of therapy dogs for the benefit of its students. Therapy dogs can help students with reduced stress, improved physical and emotional well being, decreased anxiety, and increasing the likelihood of successful academic achievement by the student.

- To see the board policy on therapy dogs, [please click here](#).

TITLE IX

Title IX is a federal law that states: "No person in the United States shall on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance." Report any violation of this policy to the district's Title IX coordinator: Terri Smith, 45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042 (Phone: 860-647-3595 Fax: 860-647-3327).

TRANSPORTATION

Please see 'bus transportation' above.

VISITORS

The Board of Education encourages visits by citizens, taxpayers, and parents/guardians to all school buildings. However, to ensure a safe and productive educational environment, all visitors must receive prior approval from the school principal. Also, the board reserves the right to limit visits in accordance with administrative regulations.

- To see the policy on visitors, [please click here](#).
- To read about the protocol for when visitors arrive at school, [please click here](#).

NOTE:

Some schools also have much more information on their school website in so cases including a school-specific 'handbook supplement' that addresses subjects such as parking, student drop off/pickup, etc.