

# Cutler School

Family/Student Handbook  
2020-2021

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*The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability in accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971.*

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# Parent Letter

September 2020

Dear Cutler School Families,

Welcome to Cutler Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year. We look forward to working with you in this unusual year. You will find the beginning section of this handbook has been updated with pertinent information for only the 2020-2021 school year.

This handbook has been prepared by members of the elementary teaching staff and the building principal. In it you will find school policies and procedures. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a resource of information that will strengthen your connection to Cutler School. Please review the handbook and keep it handy for future reference.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the contents of our handbook. Once again, we look forward to working with you to provide a challenging and meaningful educational experience for your children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Clifford  
Cutler School Principal

## HWRSD Core Beliefs

Core beliefs: are the values that professionals in an organization draw from. Unlike the vision, which may change every few years, core beliefs are the philosophies that guide our day-to-day work.

### HWRSD Statement of Core Beliefs

1. We believe in high standards for all students.
2. We believe successful members of our global economy and engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are effective communicators, collaborative, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers.
3. We believe engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century demonstrate respect for themselves, other people and their cultures, and our environment.
4. We believe in our shared responsibility to develop the whole child, including academic abilities and physical and emotional well being.
5. We believe students can demonstrate success in a variety of ways.
6. We believe all students learn resilience and confidence through learning in an environment that provides a balance of support and challenge.
7. We believe learning is a life-long pursuit that neither begins nor ends with one's formal education.
8. We believe education is the key to continuing the democratic ideals of our Nation.

### Mission, Vision and Core Beliefs

Mission: is a statement of purpose and defines the fundamental charge of the system. It is more general in nature and may, in fact, apply to other similar institutions. For example, all public schools have the same fundamental responsibilities. Therefore, they may share similar missions.

### HWRSD Mission Statement

The Mission of the HWRSD is to educate our children to become young adults who are of good character and demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills needed to be successful members of our global economy and engaged citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Vision statement: describes the desired state of the system in the next five years. It is more specific in nature. It is an expression of possibility, yet based enough in reality to be achievable. Its purpose is to inspire those involved and interested individuals to help it become a reality. It provides the basis from which the school system determines the priorities and establishes targets for performance in the next five years; that is, yearly district and School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals result directly from the vision.

## Vision Statement for the HWRSD

Through development of an integrated, data-responsive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development, the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District will be a world-class learning organization that graduates students who are well prepared to meet the post-secondary challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy and are engaged members of our global society.

## Motto of the HWRSD :

Knowledge \* Respect \* Responsibility \* Excellence

## Additional COVID-related Information

### Mask Requirements

- All students and staff are required to wear cloth face masks at all times inside the building with the exception of eating and mask breaks, per the Hamilton-Wenham School Committee policy.
- Documentation will be required for medical exemptions.
- Masks should be worn in the hallways on arrival, departure, and traveling between rooms.
- Students will not be permitted to board the school bus unless they are wearing a mask. Students are expected to wear a mask at all times on the school bus.
- The mask should fit snugly over the nose and mouth and be secured under the chin. Bandanas, gaiter scarves, or masks with valves are NOT permitted since they do not prevent respiratory droplets from transmitting into the air.

- It is the responsibility of the wearer to make sure the mask is labeled, kept clean and washed daily.
- Best practice when storing a mask: fold the mask so the sides facing the nose and mouth are touching. Masks can be stored in a brown paper bag when not in use and clearly labeled on the front of the bag with the owner's name.
- Mask breaks will be scheduled outdoors as long as six feet of social distance is maintained.
- During recess students need to wear masks when six feet of distance cannot be maintained if not running around. If students are running around, students must wear masks when 10 feet of distance cannot be maintained. This is in line with state guidelines for physical education activities.
- If a student refuses to wear a mask inside the building, his/her family will be contacted to make a plan for safe wearing.

## Student Arrival

- All students will need to be checked for possible viral symptoms by families before the start of the school each day. This check needs to be completed by 8 a.m. every day your child is in school. Information about symptom checks can be found on the [district website](#).
- Arrival will be staggered around the school to ensure we can safely have all students enter while maintaining six feet of social distance.
- Students need to wear a mask before entering the bus. Students who are dropped off need to put their mask on before exiting the car.
- Buses and parent drop-off will begin at 8:30 a.m. We have built additional time into our schedule to allow students to enter the building safely. Parents should plan on students arriving between 8:30 and 8:40 a.m.
- Parent drop off will take place in 3-4 car clusters to ensure students can maintain six feet of social distance. A staff member will approach and point to each car signaling that you may let your child out. Do not allow your child to exit the car before the staff member's direction. Your child will follow protocols specific to each building. Staff will be monitoring students in the hallways to ensure all safety protocols are being followed.
- Students arriving on buses will exit one at a time in the order in which they arrive. Students will enter the building through their classroom's assigned entrance. Students need to stay in line and maintain six feet of distance. Students will go directly to their classroom.

## Dismissal

- Specific dismissal routines will be developed at each school to meet their logistical needs while maintaining social distancing.

## Attendance

- Our regular district attendance protocols will be followed for absences during the hybrid in-person days.
- Remote teachers will take attendance during morning meeting and track student participation in group meetings and through schoolwork participation.
- Hybrid remote students who are assigned to small group instruction should be present during these groups as attendance will be kept.

## Lunch and snack

- Detailed information on our Food Service program for the 2020-2021 can be found on our [district website](#).
- Lunches this year will be provided free of charge for **all** students through December 31, 2020 or until funding runs out as announced by the USDA. Read more [here](#).
- Students in allergy-free classrooms will not be permitted to have peanut or tree nut products.
- Students can remove their masks during snack and lunch, but they must stay at their desk facing forward to maintain six feet of social distance. If a student needs something they will raise their hand and their classroom teacher/lunch monitor will assist.
- Students may order either a hot lunch or bagel meal through their classroom teacher, or bring lunch from home. Ordered lunches labeled with students' names will be delivered to the classroom each day.
- Students will have recess outside whenever possible. Grade levels may have playground areas assigned, depending on school set-up.
- During recess students must wear masks when six feet of distance cannot be maintained if not running around. If students are running around, students must wear masks when 10 feet of distance cannot be maintained. This is in line with state guidelines for PE activities.
- When masks are not in use at recess, they should be stored on the student's body.
- Students are expected to wash or sanitize their hands before exiting the classroom and upon entering the classroom from recess.
- Students will use their assigned entrance to access the playground and return to their classrooms.

## Outdoor learning

- We hope to utilize our school grounds for as much outdoor learning time as possible this year.
- Students and staff may remove their masks outside as long as six feet of social distancing can be maintained.

## Hallway expectations

- Students must maintain six feet of distance at all times.
- Students must remain in their classrooms except for bathroom visits or emergencies.
- Any student traveling to a separate location for specialized services/instruction will be escorted by an adult.

## Use of bathrooms/drinking fountains

- Students must maintain social distancing on their way to, from, and inside the bathrooms.
- All paper towel dispensers are touch-free.
- The “bubbler” component of the water fountains will not be used. Each building will have a water bottle filling station that will be accessed with teacher supervision.

## Safety Protocols

Detailed health and safety information can be found on the [district website](#). School Nurses will share information regarding the Student Health Portal Symptom Checker, which will need to be completed before school on the days a child attends.

## Cleaning

- Cleaning will take place at the end of each school day.
- High-contact areas -- handrails, doorknobs, bathrooms, etc. -- will be cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the day.
- Students and staff should do their best to keep classrooms neat and organized as this helps with sanitization and cleaning. All vents should be free of clutter to allow for proper airflow.
- Windows should be left open whenever possible to allow for airflow.

## Social distancing

- Students and staff will be expected to remain at least six feet apart whenever feasible. We recognize there may be times when this is difficult.

## Masks

- See “Mask Requirements”

## Hand-washing

- All classrooms are equipped with sinks, soap dispensers, and hand sanitizer.
- Students will be required to wash their hands before entering and exiting the classroom.
- Students will be required to wash their hands before and after recess.
- Handwashing or sanitizing will be required throughout the day, such as before and after snack and lunchtimes, before and after recess, and before departing from school.

## Visitors

- Visitors will not be allowed to enter the school buildings during the school day.
- If students need to be dismissed early from school, please call the office to inform the secretary of your arrival. Your child will be brought to the front door for dismissal.
- Please reinforce the importance of personal responsibility with all students both at home and at school to ensure they come to school each day prepared with their materials. This helps to alleviate parents/guardians needing to drop off materials at the school.
- At this time we will not allow any outside users from utilizing space within the school in order to minimize exposure.

## Zoom

- The district will be using the Zoom platform for synchronous online learning. In order to ensure this a positive experience for everyone, please remember that users may not record, copy, share, or post any meeting or lesson. Meetings and lessons are only intended for you and your classmates. Given the nature of this technology, you cannot assume privacy or confidentiality. Please be aware that we may use Zoom breakout rooms where students will work in small groups independently, temporarily unsupervised, with a small group of students in their class.

## Academic

### What should parents do when they have a concern regarding a child?

If it is an academic or social concern, parents should initiate school contact with the classroom teacher. This can be accomplished by a note, phone call, or email communication. Teachers will respond as soon as they are able. However, if you attempt to contact the teacher during the school day, the response may be delayed until students have gone home for the day.

The classroom teacher should be able to address your concern or seek assistance from other staff resources such as the Instructional Support Team, adjustment counselor, or building principal. If you

continue to have a student concern after discussing it with the classroom teacher, contact the building principal for support.

The Instructional Support Team (IST) is made up of classroom teachers and specialists. The team reviews the student concerns and develops short-term interventions for improvement. Progress from the intervention is monitored and the team reconvenes to analyze the available performance data. Additional decisions regarding intervention will be determined as a result of this process.

## Respectful Community

### Expectations of Conduct

Our school is an extension of the Hamilton-Wenham community. Students as well as adults are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times.

One of the primary goals of the Cutler School Community is to create a positive interdependence of students through sensitivity, respect, open communication and consistent standards of behavior. It is our expectation that students will be able to conduct themselves in a safe, orderly, considerate manner throughout our school community. Please read and talk about our school code of conduct published inside the front cover of this guide.

In the beginning of every school year each classroom, on the first day of the year, your child's teacher spends a considerable amount of time discussing and drawing up classroom rules and reviewing school-wide expectations of conduct. These rules and expectations are posted in each classroom. The faculty works with students to help them develop problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills. We continually reinforce the strategy of seeking adult assistance when students cannot reconcile differences.

Serious incidents of misbehavior shall be termed "Unacceptable". These include: stealing, obscene language or gestures, dangerous fighting, vandalism, destruction of property, and physical or verbal assault on another child or adult. These incidents will be brought to the immediate attention of the principal. The student will be brought or sent to the office.

Consequence: These may include in-school suspension, detention, conference with the child, parent, principal and/or teacher. In some cases, the child may be suspended from school for the following day and/or a specific behavior management plan will be developed with the child, teacher, parent and principal to assist the child in gaining control of his/her behavior. These cases will include repeated offenses of the above incidents.

## Bullying

Massachusetts state law prohibits bullying in schools. School districts are required to develop an anti-bullying policy. Please refer to the HWRSD Bullying Prevention Policy included in the appendix of this document.

### Hamilton-Wenham Elementary Schools Bullying Definition and Rules

“Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself.” (Olweus definition of bullying)

#### Bullying involves:

1. Repetition over time
2. Intent to do harm
3. Imbalance of power

#### Anti-Bullying Rules:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

When bullying behavior is identified, progressive disciplinary steps will be taken to correct the problem. This will begin with a warning from the classroom teacher and progress to a First Bullying Offense, a Second Bullying Offense and a Third Bullying Offense. Anything above a warning will involve the school counselor and/or the principal. Parents will be notified any time bullying behavior has been identified.

- Being a bully is not permitted in school.
- Sometimes bullies say mean things like teasing too much or calling kids or their friends and family nasty names.
- Sometimes bullies do mean things like hitting kids, pushing them, making rude gestures or touch kids in a way that they don't want.
- If you think someone is being a bully to you or to one of your friends, tell them to stop and then walk away.
- If the bully won't stop, tell one of the adults in school.
- You can tell any adult in school you like.
- When the adult hears about your concern, the adult will try to solve the problem.
- If the adult cannot solve the problem right away the adult will talk with the Principal.
- Many concerns can be resolved by an adult or the Principal pretty easily.
- Sometimes, however, concerns are more serious. There may be some discipline for the bully and parents may be called.

- The bully is not allowed, however, to try to get back at you for telling your concerns to an adult; if that happens, tell an adult again right away.
- It is important to us that our elementary schools are safe and caring places for all our students and that both students and the adults behave in a courteous and respectful way with each other.

## Playground Rules

- Be kind and considerate of others when on the playground.
- Share space with others.
- Respect Recess Supervisors and follow their directions.
- No kicking, pushing or shoving.
- No fighting -- anywhere at school!!!
- Touch football only -- no tackles.
- No slide tackles in soccer.
- Return all playground equipment to the classroom's recess bag.
- Share equipment with as many students as possible.
- Only one person on the slide at a time; sliding down in seated position.
- Balls cannot be kicked or thrown against the building.
- Climbing structures used at recess only, not before school.
- Note: each school may have specific guidelines for unique spaces or pieces of equipment

## State Policy Concerning Discipline

1. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
2. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
3. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b); provided, however, that any principal who decides that said student should be suspended shall state in writing to the school committee his reasons for choosing the suspension instead of the expulsion as the most appropriate remedy. In this statement, the principal shall represent that,

in his opinion, the continued presence of this student in the school will not pose a threat to the safety, security, and welfare of the other students and staff in the school.

4. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
5. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section and applies for admission to another school for acceptance, the superintendent of the sending school shall notify the superintendent of the receiving school of the reasons for the student's expulsion.

In addition, any school department personnel must report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of social services, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act." Section 37, School Reform Bill.

## Special Education Discipline Policy

The IEP of every special needs student indicates why the student is or is not expected to meet the regular discipline code and if not, what modification of the code is required. If a modified discipline code is necessary, it is described in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). In the event that a special needs student is suspended for more than ten (10) days in a school year, the IEP is reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement in the program. Suspension is defined as any action which results in the removal of a student from the program prescribed in his/her IEP. The

term includes in-house suspension as well as any exclusion from transportation services, which prohibits the student's participation in his/her prescribed program.

The suspension policy is:

- If the TEAM determines that the student's misconduct is related to a disability, an inappropriate Special Education Placement, or an IEP not fully implemented; the student is not suspended and the Plan is modified with the help of parents or special education personnel and school officials. Following parental approval, the student is placed immediately in the new program.
- If the TEAM concludes that the student's misconduct is not a result of a disability or the result of an inappropriate special education placement and that the original IEP was fully implemented:
  - An amendment to the IEP is developed and implemented to assure the student's access to special education services during the suspension.
  - The original IEP is modified to meet long-term plans (including discipline code expectations) designed to assure the student's continued participation in an educational program.
- If suspension results in absence for more than ten (10) days in the school year, immediate written notification of the suspension and a request for approval of an alternative plan must be submitted to the Division of Special Education with a copy sent to the student's parents. Parents have the right to accept or reject this component of the IEP.

## General Building Information

### Absences, Tardiness And Dismissal - In-Person Days

The Cutler School maintains a Safe Arrival Program. We ask parents to call 978-468-5344, if you know your child is going to be absent or tardy. This phone number is connected to an answering machine with a message asking that you leave your child's name and teacher name. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will call you to check on the safety of your child. If there is no answer at the home phone, the child's emergency card will be used to contact a working parent. Please keep the office updated with cellular telephone numbers and the like.

A student arriving at school after the start of the day (8:40 a.m.) reports to the front door upon arrival. The secretary will make note of the arrival and give the child a "pass" to enter the classroom. The "pass" is a signal to the classroom teacher that the student has been signed in at the office. PreK & K students will be escorted to their classrooms. Students who do not arrive at school until after 11:15 a.m. will be considered absent for the day. Students who are absent for 5 consecutive days due to illness will require a doctor's note before returning to school.

For your child's safety, anytime a child's dismissal plans change from the regular routine, parents must send in a note to the classroom teacher informing them of the student's dismissal, whether it be a bus or walking plan change.

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law, students are expected to be in attendance every day that school is in session. The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District maintains procedures to systematically address the needs of students with ongoing attendance issues. Given the history of poor academic outcomes for students who miss school on a frequent basis, as well as the tendency of attendance problems to escalate, as a student grows older, there is a critical need for parents and school to work collaboratively and respond in a proactive manner.

Attendance letters will be sent to parents at regular intervals when a student is absent from school. The letter will request notification if the absences are due to a chronic medical condition. If the parent does not provide verification of a medical condition after receiving letters from the school and a student is absent for ten (10) days (consecutive or cumulative), the principal will contact parent(s) directly to discuss the reason for the absences and collaboratively develop a plan to support improved school attendance.

If a student's physician provides a written order verifying that the student has a medical condition precluding daily school attendance, an administrator will make the parent aware of rights and requirements with regard to home/hospital tutoring when absences exceed fourteen (14) days.

Please note that the practice of taking vacations when school is in session is strongly discouraged. Students who are absent miss vital classroom instruction and opportunities to practice developing skills. As a result, family vacations need to be scheduled during the December, February, and April school vacations only.

## Early Dismissal

Any student dismissed during school hours must be picked up by their parents or parent designee at the school's front door. Parents picking up students during school hours may park in the designated areas and call the office to let us know you have arrived. Please do not park in the fire lanes. Please send a note to your child's teacher indicating early dismissal. Students will be considered absent for the day if they are dismissed before 11:15 a.m.

## School Lunch Program

Information regarding the School Lunch Program can be found on our [website](#).

## Family Communication

Cutler School sends out regular communication via classroom Seesaw accounts and emails through Aspen. You will receive more information about Seesaw when school begins. Our website is also updated regularly. For information, visit [www.hwschools.net](http://www.hwschools.net) and look for the Cutler tab at the top.

## Lost And Found

A "Lost and Found" area is maintained in the cafeteria, where articles are kept for a reasonable period of time before being donated to charity. We suggest that you label all of your children's clothing and items being brought to school. Unclaimed items will be donated to shelters at each school vacation. Items left on the bus are kept on the bus and not brought into the school.

## Classroom And Library Books And Property

Books are loaned to students with the understanding that if they are lost or damaged it is their responsibility to replace or pay for them. Persons who mark or destroy school property must pay for the cost of any repairs.

## Photographs And Videos

Throughout the school year, classroom teachers and others take pictures and videos of the students participating in a wide variety of activities. These pictures will be displayed around the school, in the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, local cable channel, and perhaps other local publications. A general permission form will be distributed at the start of each school year. Please indicate your permission on the form and return it to school immediately.

## School Council

The School Council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers and a community member. The School Council adopts educational goals that are consistent with our District policies. It also identifies needs for our school and reviews the annual school budget. The council formulates a school improvement plan that is submitted to the school committee. All meetings are open to the public.

## The Friends Of Cutler

The Friends of Cutler (FOC) is our parent volunteer service organization. The purpose of the Friends is to supplement the educational process with additional resources such as sponsorship of volunteer programs, materials and direct financial support. Activities of the organization are intended to facilitate closer communication between home and school. The Friends, through hard work and

interest, provide our school with funds and added programs. Friends of Cutler has a strong volunteer program and always welcome new members!

## School Safety

### Crisis Plan

As adults in a school and community setting, we help young people cope with painful losses and events that are a part of life. We help students heal and guide them through difficult times. We also must be prepared to deal with emergency situations.

When a crisis occurs, it can have devastating consequences for individuals, families, neighborhoods, schools and the community at large. The best response to a crisis is to be prepared before the crisis strikes with a well thought out plan of action and in integrated response. As schools are often the “hub” of communities, the school’s response to a crisis may set the tone for the community’s response as a whole. If handled calmly, responsively, and thoroughly, the crisis may even serve as a unifying force. Each school in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District has a “Crisis Action Plan” in place in the case of an emergency or other crisis.

### Delayed Opening Procedures

Based on weather and road conditions in both communities of Hamilton and Wenham, the Superintendent of Schools will determine by 6:00am whether to declare a delayed opening for that school day. The Superintendent will use ConnectEd to make phone calls to staff and parents regarding a delayed opening of school. A delayed opening means that school will start 2 hours later than usual. Students should arrive at school no earlier than 10:30am, they will follow the schedule of the day and be dismissed at the regular time.

### Emergency Dismissal

If it is necessary to dismiss school earlier than scheduled due to unusual weather conditions or other unforeseen emergencies, students will be sent home. As a precaution, parents are encouraged to work out an emergency plan with their children. No child will be allowed to go home to an empty house. The principal will contact parents with a ConnectEd phone call and email.

ConnectEd is an effective procedure to inform parents of an emergency dismissal. Please do your part and follow through so that all children will be safe. If there is ever a change in a home, work or cell phone number, be sure to contact the school office so the appropriate changes can be made.

## No School Announcements

It is the policy of the Hamilton-Wenham schools to cancel classes only in case of extreme weather conditions or emergencies. Parents are urged to use their own judgment concerning their child's attendance at school on storm days.

Cancellation of the school day will be announced as follows:

ConnectEd	The Superintendent will use ConnectEd to make phone calls to staff and parents regarding school cancellation.
Radio	Announcements of school cancellation will be broadcast on radio stations WESX (1230), and WBZ (1030) between 7:15am and 7:30am.
Cable	Hamilton-Wenham local Channel 10 is notified of any cancellations or delays.
TV	Boston Channel 4, Channel 5 and Channel 7

## Emergency Drills

In keeping with state regulations, fire drills are conducted regularly in each school under the supervision of the building principal. Procedures are posted in each classroom or teaching area. A program on fire safety is provided in the schools by the local fire departments.

To provide fire engine access to our school in case of an emergency, we are asking parents/visitors not to park in the bus lanes located in front of the building.

We also practice safety drills and evacuation procedures periodically with the children to safeguard them in the unlikely event of a crisis situation.

## Transportation

Student safety is the number one priority in the transportation of your child. Children must wear a mask at all times on the bus and only sit in their designated seat.

Behavior on the bus must be acceptable at all times. This is important to assure the safety of ALL bus passengers. Disruptive behavior can lead to the suspension of bus-riding privileges. We encourage you to help your child exhibit good bus-riding practices at all times, including a regard for all other riders.

## Bus Rules

- Each pupil shall be seated immediately upon entering the bus in the place assigned by the driver, if such assignments have been made. Only students living in the same household can sit in a seat together.
- Students must wear a mask prior to entering the bus and for the duration of the ride.
- Once seated, students should remain in their seats until the bus has reached its destination.
- Loud and/or profane language, or inappropriate conduct shall not be tolerated.
- No windows or doors will be opened or closed except by permission of the driver.
- No pupils shall enter or leave the bus until it has come to a full stop and the door has been opened by the driver.
- Students are to obey the directions of the bus driver and will identify themselves correctly when requested.
- There is to be no lighting of matches or smoking on the bus.
- Eating on the bus is not allowed.
- Students are not to throw objects on the bus or out of the windows.
- Students shall not put their hands or their heads out of the windows.
- Students are responsible to arrive at the bus stop on time.
- Littering the bus is unacceptable. Any damage to the bus caused by a student will result in reimbursement to the bus company.
- Students are not to stand in the stairwell of the bus.
- Any incident of disruptive behavior will be reported to the principal. Parents will be notified.
- A second instance may result in a suspension of bus privileges and requires that the parents and student meet with the principal.

## Bicycle Permission

Students in grades K-3 may ride their bikes to school with adult supervision. Children in grades four and five are allowed to ride their bicycles to school independently. All children under 12 years of age must wear a helmet according to Massachusetts State Law. Students should ride bikes with the flow of traffic. A bike rack is provided for student use. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen bicycles. Children should not ride bicycles in rainy, icy or snowy weather. Parents are responsible for the safe operating condition of their children's bicycles. Youngsters who ride to school should be reminded that riding bicycles on the playground is not allowed. Improper use of this privilege will result in its suspension.

Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District  
Recommendations for Bicycle Safety  
Approved 4/27/00

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, its administrators and staff wish to recommend that students, within the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District and their parents/guardians, consider the following suggestions for Bicycle Safety should the student and his/her parents/guardians opt to have the student ride a bicycle to and/or from school:

- **BIKE PLAN** – It is recommended that parents/guardians and students prepare a bike plan outlining the route that the child may take to and from school. It is recommended that the student and parent/guardian write out a bike plan that may minimally include the streets to be traveled to and from school. The bike plan, if the student and parent/guardian decide to follow this recommendation, could be kept by the parent/guardian and periodically reviewed for safety.
- **SAFETY TIPS** – Helpful general safety and bicycle safety tips and suggestions are circulated by the Hamilton and Wenham Police Departments and the School District. It is recommended that students and their parents/guardians consider reviewing these safety tips. These safety tips often address issues involving the proper use of a bicycle helmet, where one can safely (and legally) ride a bicycle, how to properly cross a street, and proper bicycle maintenance.

It must be remembered that riding a bicycle can be very dangerous, and that the best way to avoid any accidents is for the student to plan out a bicycle route to and from school with a responsible parent/guardian, adhere to all traffic laws, and to follow any general recommended safety tips for a safe and enjoyable ride.

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee, the administrators and the staff hope that the above suggestions and recommendations are helpful and remind each student and parent/guardian that bicycle safety is up to you.

## Health Services

The Hamilton-Wenham Public Schools share with the parents of our community a deep concern for the health and well-being of its children. How well our children will be able to meet their new opportunities and responsibilities which they face in the years ahead will depend on a large measure of their physical vitality as well as intellectual capabilities. Your child's health status is determined through the modalities of observation, screening tests, (vision, hearing and postural), measurements (height and weight) as well as medical, dental, and psychological evaluations.

All children in grades K-5 are screened for visual and auditory problems during each school year and any problems are reported to parents. In addition, parents may request that the school nurse do further screening during the school year if they feel that their children may have impairment in vision or hearing.

Physical examinations are required for all children prior to entering school and in grade 4.

The school nurse is your child's advocate. There are many opportunities for individual and informal health guidance offered in the course of a school day. Her role is to work in collaboration with you, the parents, and with others in the school system and in the community to foster good and wholesome health practices.

You may call the health office at any time to check on the well being of your child or to voice concerns that may arise. If your child has a fever or symptoms which would interfere with normal classroom functioning, please make arrangements to keep him/her out until the child is able to perform in the classroom. We are here as a team to provide a safe, healthful, and wholesome environment in which your child can experience growth and vitality each and every day.

## Medication

In accordance with the Massachusetts State Law governing the administration of medications in schools, all medicines must be accompanied by a written doctor's order, including all over-the-counter drugs (e.g. cough syrup). All requests for the dispensing of medications must be directed to the school nurse. In situations where it is necessary for medication to be given on a regular basis at school, the medicine should be brought to school in a prescription bottle by a parent. The container should be labeled with the name of medication, the amount to be given, the time to be given, the expiration date, if any, and the physician's name. The parent will also be asked to sign a permission form authorizing the school nurse to administer the medication.

It would be helpful for us to know of any serious accidents or operations or of any medicine administered at home which might affect a student's performance at school. In addition, it is important that the school be informed about children with allergic reactions so that proper action can be taken if the need arises.

## Counseling Services

The School Counselor is a professional trained in social work or counseling and certified by the Massachusetts Department of Education as a School Social Worker/Adjustment Counselor. It is the role of the School Counselor to help students with their personal, social and academic concerns with a focus on school functioning. The School Counselor meets with students individually and in small groups. The School Counselor also works with teachers, administration and parents to help all students be successful in school. Debra Lanigan is the School Counselor at Cutler School. School personnel, i.e. teachers, principal and nurse all may refer a student to the School Counselor if they believe he or she may benefit from this service. A parent may refer a student to the School Counselor or may call the Counselor at 978-468-5330 or email her for information, advice, suggestions or with concerns.

Students can also request to meet with the School Counselor themselves for assistance with various issues including academic, social or personal matters.

## What kinds of services does the School Counselor offer?

### Student Services

- Individual and small group counseling
- Lunch/Snack Groups
- Instruction in various social curriculums and personal safety
- Conflict resolution
- Coordination of puberty unit
- Family Services
- Provide information and consultation to parents around social/emotional issues.
- Meetings with parents upon request
- Communication with parents (phone, e-mail)

### School/Community Services

- Provide consultation and support to classroom teachers around individual student needs and social/emotional issues.
- Develop various social curriculums to address the Massachusetts Health Frameworks.
- Make appropriate community based referrals and network/collaborate with community based clinicians and state agencies working with students and families.
- Act as the primary school liaison for students with collateral agency involvement.
- Participate in various Special Education Team meetings as indicated.
- Member of Student Assistance Team and Clinical Team.
- Member of school's Crisis Team.
- Provide crisis intervention as needed.

If you have any questions about these services, please feel free to ask. The school counselor is always happy to speak with families and looks forward to working with you.

## Non-smoking Policy

State law prohibits the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel.

## Special Education

Special Education Laws, Massachusetts Chapter 766 and Federal P.L. 99-142, provide for all children ages 3-21 the right to an appropriate education through their local public school system.

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District offers a variety of programs and services to students ages 3-21 who have disabilities. Our special education programs provide for the maximum possible development of students in the least restrictive environment. Special education services and support are provided in the regular classroom through the collaborative efforts of a special education teacher and the classroom teacher whenever possible. Most children with disabilities progress faster academically and are less socially isolated when they remain with their peers in the regular classroom setting. Special classes, separate schooling, or the removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature of severity of the disability is such that the educational needs of the child cannot be met in the regular classroom.

Emphasis is placed on early recognition and correction of student problems. The school system is required to screen all kindergarten entry level children to assess weaknesses in skill areas, and in addition, has the responsibility to notify the parents of three or four year olds that their children are eligible for the screening program.

Requests for an evaluation may be made by parents, teachers, or other staff at any time to determine the presence and nature of special needs.

Subsequent individual programs, if needed, are then planned in collaboration with specialists, parents, the pupil's teacher, and other persons whom the parents and/or specialists wish to involve.

C3005 KI

Observations of Students and Programs by Parents, Advocates, and other Designees

Introduction

The purpose of An Act to Provide Access to Information for Parents and Evaluators (House Bill No. 391) is to protect the rights of parents in participating fully and effectively with school personnel in the development of appropriate educational programs for their children. To that end, the Hamilton Wenham Regional School District has established guidelines regarding parents' observations of their child or child's program conducted by themselves, their educational advocate or an evaluator. The cooperation of school and parent is essential to ensure the safety of children and the integrity of the program while under observation.

II. Policy

Requesting an Observation . In order for the District to have verbal or written contact with an educational consultant or evaluator who wishes to observe the student in the classroom, a "Release of Information" form must be signed by the parent.

A request for an observation through letter or telephone at least one (1) week in advance of the proposed observation and should include the purpose and activities requested for observation.

The Principal shall immediately notify the teacher(s) involved and the Director of Student Services and begin the process to determine the appropriateness of the specific date requested.

The duration and extent of the observation will be determined on an individual basis.

1. Different observation requests may require more planning and observation time than others depending on the complexity of the student's needs being evaluated or observed.

e. The Principal shall schedule the agreed upon time for observation as soon as possible.

1. The time needed to determine the feasibility of a request to observe a specific classroom in a week, may be only an hour. In other instances, such as when a designee needs to observe both the current and proposed programs, including periods

of unstructured time to observe student's interactions and responses, the observation will likely take longer to schedule.

f. There will be periods of time when observations will not be scheduled, such as during MCAS or other district wide testing and during the first two weeks of school and the last two weeks of school.

Expectations During Observation:

a. The number of observers is limited to two (2) per observation and no children may accompany a parent, consultant or evaluator for the duration of the observation.

b. The observer is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If the observer is disruptive or inappropriate the observer will be asked to leave immediately and the observation will be discontinued.

1. Parent should be informed that his/her presence might influence the performance of their child, as well as the performance of other children.

c. The observer will be accompanied by a member of the school staff for the duration of the observation

d. The accompanying staff member will seat the observer (in consultation with the teacher) in an unobtrusive location within the classroom.

e. Those observing shall respect student confidentiality and shall not share any impressions of other students with anyone. Observers will be asked to sign a statement that in the event that they obtain personally identifiable or confidential information during the course of an evaluation/observation, they will not disclose it.

f. Staff members involved in a classroom observation will welcome observers to the class but will not discuss the student with observers before, during, or immediately after the observation period.

Discussion of the observation may take place at a subsequent conference. Discussions should last no more than 20- minutes unless a TEAM meeting is being scheduled.

g. The accompanying staff member should take observation notes during the observation period, and note anything atypical that occurs during the observation. If the observation notes made by a staff member are reduced to a written report, said report shall become part of the temporary student record.

h. School safety procedures shall be adhered to at all times. Principals retain the authority to exercise their discretion at any time to reschedule or terminate an observation in the event of a building emergency or a disruption that impacts the physical or emotional well-being of the children in the school or the program being observed or when necessary to protect:

The safety of the children in the program during the observation; The integrity of the program during the observation; and

Children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program.

#### Follow-Up

- a. Depending on the purpose of the observation, the Principal or other designated staff will schedule a meeting or make telephone contact to follow up on the observation.
- b. If the parent requests a TEAM meeting and an evaluation was conducted as part of the observation, the evaluator shall provide a written evaluation report to the school district at least 10 days prior to a scheduled team meeting.

#### II. Policy Review and Revision

Review and revision of this policy and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two (2) years.

#### III. Legal References M.G.L. c. 71B, s. 3 and 603 C.M.R. 28.07 (Parental Involvement)

Originally Adopted: November 2, 2006 Policy Review: April 27, 2012 Approved: May 21, 2012 Vote: 8-0-1 Chairman, HWRSD School Committee: s/s Alexa McCloughan (Original signature on file in Supt.'s Office)

#### Title VI/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act\*

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District recognizes its responsibilities under the federal statutes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to prohibit discrimination against handicapped individuals on the basis of their handicap.

The definition of a handicapped person is the following: any individual who has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment. A major life activity for students is participation in activities and learning opportunities at school.

The policies of the Regional District are non-discriminatory in their employment practices for staff and reasonable accommodations are made to provide access to school meetings and functions for handicapped parents. No discrimination against any person with a handicap is knowingly permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system.

\*As cited in the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District Civil Rights Booklet (revised 4/3/01).

A complete Section 504 policy statement is available upon request from each principal (Cutler School Principal/ Jennifer Clifford).

#### Section 504 Coordinators

Stacy Bucyk, Director of Student Services

978-468-5303

Jennifer Clifford , Cutler School Principal

978-468-5330

### Non-Custodial Parents

According to state regulations pertaining to student records, a “parent” is defined as a student’s father, mother, or a person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of a student in place of or in conjunction with the student’s father, mother, or guardian. The regulations further indicate that a “non-custodial parent” is any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student.

As a general rule, and excluding certain explicit regulatory exceptions, no third party shall have access to information in or from the student’s record without the specific, informed written consent of the student or parent.

However, a “non-custodial parent” may have access to a student’s record, provided that the non-custodial parent submits a written request to the school principal, including accompanying documentation for such access on an annual basis, and that such access is not legally prohibited.

In relevant part, the regulations indicate that a non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless any one of the following events have occurred:

The parent has been denied legal custody based on a threat to the safety of the student or to the custodial parent, or

The parent has been denied visitation or has been ordered to supervised visitation, or

The parent’s access to the student or to the custodial parent has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or subsequent modification) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record.

In the event that the non-custodial parent is not prohibited from accessing a student’s record due to any of the circumstances enumerated above, the regulations further require the non-custodial parent to submit a written request for such access to the school principal on an annual basis. Said request must indicate that the non-custodial parent continues to be entitled to unsupervised visitation with the student, and is eligible to obtain access to the student’s record.

A non-custodial parent’s initial request must include the following documentation:

1. A certified copy of the court order or judgment relative to the custody of the student that either indicates that the requesting parent is eligible to receive access as set forth ordering that the student records be made available to the non-custodial parent, and

2. An affidavit from the non-custodial parent that said court order or judgment remains in effect and that there is no temporary or permanent order restricting access to the custodial parent or any child in the custodial parent's custody.

Upon receipt of the non-custodial parent's request for access (Both initially and annually) the school district must notify the custodial parent "immediately" by certified, first class mail in the primary language of the custodial parent. The notice must state that the non-custodial parent will be granted access to the student's records within twenty-one (21) days, unless the custodial parent provides the district with documentation barring such access for any reason as set forth by state law.

Additionally, in the event that records are provided to a non-custodial parent, the address and telephone number of the student and the custodial parent must be deleted from the copy provided to the non-custodial parent, but must not be removed from the original, as this would constitute an unauthorized amendment of the student's official record. Furthermore, the records provided to the non-custodial parent must indicate that said records shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

In the event that a principal, who has begun to provide information from a student's record to a non-custodial parent, is subsequently provided with documentation prohibiting a non-custodial parent's access to a student's record, the principal shall "immediately cease" providing the information, and shall notify the requesting parent accordingly.

#### Records Request

Only authorized personnel have access to information in a student's record. Written consent of the parent, or legal guardian, is required for school records to be released for any purpose. At any time, a parent, or legal guardian, may add relevant information to the student record or make a request to the principal to amend or delete information. If a parent or legal guardian wishes to review a student's records, contact the building principal. A "Request to Transfer Students Records" to another school must be done in writing. Please contact the principal if you have any questions.

## Student Use of Personal Device Technology

We acknowledge that an increasing number of our students have access to personally owned electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, iPads and eReaders. Students and parents are responsible for adhering to our guidelines regarding personal technology. If a student is not responsible in following these guidelines, the device will be held in the school office until a parent is able to pick it up.

- Cell phones are to be turned off and stored in the student's backpack.
- No photos or videos of other students are to be taken with personal devices on school grounds or on the bus.

- eReaders may be used with teacher permission.
- All other electronic devices of personal value should be left at home.
- The school assumes no liability for the loss, theft, or damage of any personally owned electronic device

## APPENDIX

### GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS

Teachers, staff, and other adults working in the school setting will be at times privileged to confidential information as they work and spend time with children and their families. A strict code and policy of confidentiality is maintained and upheld at all times during school and after school hours to ensure the privacy of the children and families who are involved in any aspect of the elementary school program.

The recommended “best practice” for those involved in elementary school programming is to treat all information regarding children with complete confidentiality. These guidelines protecting student and family rights with respect to confidentiality and ethics are listed below:

- Never share a child’s or family’s issues with another family.
- Avoid talking about a particular child in the presence of other students or people who are not authorized to access information.
- Refrain from discussing personal issues with parents and families.
- Obtain written permission from parents before sharing or receiving information with anyone outside the school setting.
- Allow only authorized personnel access to children’s records.
- Defer to a supervisor (such as an administrator) when people request sensitive information from a staff member.
- Avoid judging families or imposing personal values on a child if there is a difference in belief systems.
- Avoid gossip at all times and refer direct questions and/or concerns to someone authorized to provide accurate information.
- Require written permission to take a photograph and/or to make video or audio records used for research, advertising, and/or publishing in a newspaper, or for any other purpose.
- Do not keep such documentation within the context of classroom activities or give documentation to others without specific authorization.
- Request additional permission if photographs, video or audio records are to be used for research, advertising, and/or publishing in a newspaper, or for any other purpose.

Confidentiality can ONLY be broken when:

- A child is in danger, with regard to health, neglect, or abuse and it becomes necessary to report confidential information without permission.
- When a child imparts information that implies abuse or neglect, you are legally obligated to report this information to your immediate supervisor.

(\*Citation Source: Hamilton-Wenham Integrated Preschool Program Guidelines for Confidentiality and Ethics)

## GENDER IDENTITY

The term “gender identity”, distinct from the term “sexual orientation,” refers to a person’s innate, deeply felt psychological identification as male or female, which may or may not correspond to the person’s body or designated sex at birth (meaning that sex was originally listed on a person’s birth certificate.)

-Human Rights Campaign Website

## TITLE IX/CHAPTER 622 NOTIFICATION

Please be advised that the students and the faculty of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District are protected by the Federal Law Title IX and State Statute, Chapter 622. Under these statutes, it is illegal to discriminate against an individual based on his/her race, color, religion, national origin, gender or sexual orientation. Negative or demeaning comments or comments which draw attention to any of these factors are considered a form of harassment and are not allowed on the grounds of the Regional School District.

Chapter 622 is referred to as an act to prohibit discrimination in the public schools. The state law reads as follows: “No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion or national origin.”

## PLAYGROUND GUIDELINES CONCERNING PETS & OTHER ANIMALS

The control of animals on school grounds is required to insure the safety of all students at Cutler School. Please note the following town by-laws specifically related to dogs:

### Section 1.

1.01 The Animal Control Officer is authorized to require owners or keepers of dogs to prevent such dogs from becoming a public nuisance. The Animal Control Officer is further authorized to require owners or keepers of

dogs to restrain their dogs from running at large. Excessive or untimely barking, worrying or otherwise threatening or harming persons or domestic animals, chasing vehicles, trespassing upon school grounds, or trespassing upon private property or public property in such a manner as to foul or otherwise damage property shall be deemed a violation of this by-law.

1.02 No person owning, harboring, or otherwise having custody or control of a dog, shall permit such dog be at large in the town of Hamilton at any time, except that it be on the premises of another person with their consent. Any owner, harborer, or person having custody or control of a dog which is not on either premises of the owner or the premises of another person with their consent shall control and restrain such dog by a leash of appropriate length. Disposition of complaints or violations of this by-law will be in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 140, 173A.

## Definition of Nuisance

Animal behavior which constitutes nuisance includes, but not limited to, the following: molesting passerby or passing vehicles (including bicycle), attacking persons or domestic animals, trespassing on school grounds or other public property, damaging public or private property, barking, whining, or howling in an excessive continuous, or untimely fashion.

## FOR COMPLETE LISTING OF DISTRICT POLICIES

<http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1894>