

# John F. Ryan Elementary School



## Student Handbook 2025-2026

### John F. Ryan Elementary School

135 Pleasant Street

Tewksbury, MA 01876

Phone (978) 640-7880 Main Office

Fax (978) 640-7888

Website [www.tewksbury.k12.ma.us](http://www.tewksbury.k12.ma.us)

Principal:	Josh Murphy	<a href="mailto:jpmurphy@tewksbury.k12.ma.us">jpmurphy@tewksbury.k12.ma.us</a>
Assistant Principal:	William Hart	<a href="mailto:whart@tewksbury.k12.ma.us">whart@tewksbury.k12.ma.us</a>

*Please use this email to notify us of your student's absence and include your student's name:  
**[ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us) or call (978) 640-7880***

## Civil Rights Notification

No person shall be excluded or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

Any questions should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, 139 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury MA, 01876, 978-640-7800

### [Curriculum Resource Bias Reporting Form](#)

Student Records - Directory Information (Release of information)

[603 CMR 23.00: Student Records - Education Laws and Regulations](#))

## NOTICE REGARDING STUDENT RECORDS

Student records in Massachusetts are governed by federal laws and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations (603 CMR 23.00 et seq.). A complete copy of these regulations is available online through the Department's website and can also be requested from any District school.

Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to:

- Access the student's records in accordance with 603 CMR 23.01, 23.02, and 23.07(2).
- Request changes, including adding relevant information or removing certain information, under 603 CMR 23.08.

### **Access by School Personnel**

Authorized school personnel, such as administrators, teachers, counselors, and clerical staff, may access student records as part of their official duties without prior consent. This is permitted under 603 CMR 23.02 and 23.07(3).

### **Third-Party Access**

In most cases, the District cannot release student records to third parties without the consent of a parent/guardian or eligible student. However, exceptions include:

- Court orders or lawful subpoenas
- Requests by federal, state, or local education officials for specific purposes
- Health or safety emergencies
- Missing student investigations by law enforcement
- Transfer of records to a student's new school (with notice)
- Requests by school health personnel or state/local health departments performing official duties

### **Directory Information**

Under 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a), the District may release “directory information” without consent unless a parent/guardian or eligible student opts out. Directory information includes:

- Student name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Date and place of birth
- Major fields of study
- Dates of attendance
- Weight and height (for athletic team members)
- Participation in school activities and sports
- Class designation
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Post-high school plans

To opt out of directory information sharing, parents/guardians or eligible students **must submit the [opt-out form](#)** annually by September 30th or 2 weeks after registration if school is in session.. If no opt-out request is received, the District will assume there is no objection to releasing this information.

### **Important Notes:**

- Without an opt-out request, the District is legally required to provide student names and mailing addresses to approved third-party mailhouses if requested by a Massachusetts public charter school.
- Similarly, the District must share directory information with U.S. military recruiters upon valid request, in compliance with applicable laws.

Families are encouraged to review the full regulations (603 CMR 23.00 et seq.) for a complete understanding of their rights and responsibilities regarding student records.

## **STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT PAGE**

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian:

Please carefully read and discuss the contents of this student handbook.

**A [Student Handbook](#) contract will be provided to students during the first week of school. Please sign and return to your student's homeroom teacher by Thursday, September 4, 2025.**

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please Note:

**There are times when pictures are taken of our students in learning and/or PAC activities at schools for the school websites, social media, student yearbooks, etc.**

**\*No personal information pertaining to students will be shared on our website or with businesses or third parties. Please contact your child's principal in writing if you do not want your child included in school-based pictures.**

*This handbook is periodically reviewed by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Faculty, and the Ryan School Council to ensure that policies and procedures relate to the normal governance of John F. Ryan School.*

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# John F. Ryan Elementary School

## *Student Handbook*

### 2025-2026

## **RYAN SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the John F. Ryan School is to utilize the resources provided by the district to maximize the educational benefits for all students. Our purpose is to promote an active learning atmosphere that encourages student participation, school/parent/community partnerships, and team building. This collaboration inspires students to become successful lifelong learners who possess higher order thinking skills.

## **RYAN SCHOOL MOTTO**

*Work hard. Be kind. Anything is “paws”-ible. Woof!*

## **Handbook Description**

This student handbook contains information, rules, and regulations pertaining to the life of a student at the John F. Ryan Elementary School. Students and their parents/guardians are responsible for reading and understanding the rules and policies of this school.

As an upper elementary school of grades 5 and 6, we recognize the unique needs of students in these grades and strive to build strong academic teams, a wide range of extracurricular activities, and a place where cooperation and acceptance are the norm. The expectations contained within this handbook are designed to support our students as they grow and learn academically, socially and emotionally.

We are excited for our students and families to enjoy all that our school has to offer.

Welcome to the Ryan School!

**GENERAL NOTIFICATION: FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY OF THE HANDBOOK REGULATIONS AS WELL AS WITH OTHER ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR NOT LISTED HEREIN MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES.**

**Tewksbury Schools Calendar:**

[2025-2026 School Calendar](#)

**Who to contact with questions:**

[Chain of Communication](#)



## STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our students are active learners in meeting our school's goals. The following outlines the expectations our students should have of their school and its staff. It also lists the responsibilities that our students should have toward their school, its staff, and their community as included in School Committee Regulation JJ5131.

### **Rights**

The best possible educational opportunities

A staff which is sensitive and responsive to their individual needs

Fair and just treatment from other students and staff

A safe, clean, non-threatening environment

The right to hear only appropriate language

### **Responsibilities**

Sustained effort to complete assigned lessons, including assignments missed because of absence, and asking for help from teacher when something is not understood

Regular and punctual attendance, and remaining on school grounds during the entire school day

Respect for themselves, the rights of others, the staff and school property

Behavior which will be a credit to themselves, their family, their school, and community, i.e. conformation to school rules at all times, during all school related activities

Honesty, courtesy, appropriate language and appropriate dress

## PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Parents/guardians are extremely important in the educational process, especially at the Ryan School. Working with your student and the school will help to ensure the best possible educational experience for him/her. Being supportive, providing a quiet place to study, checking the work of the student, and communicating with teachers are ways in which a parent can aid in his/her child's success. Sharing information enables us to better meet the needs of the student.

During the school year there are several scheduled occasions for parent/guardian and teacher interaction (see school calendar). The first is an open house, 6:00-8:00 PM, which provides parents/guardians the experience of following their sons' and daughters' schedules while each teacher explains the course outcomes and requirements along with specific classroom expectations. The remaining meetings are designated for parent/guardian and teacher conferences to allow the parent/guardian the opportunity to confer with faculty members and administrators concerning all aspects of the school's programs and the student's progress. Conference evenings are typically scheduled from 6:00-8:00 PM. Parents will be able to make individual appointments.

Parents may request a conference at any time by contacting the main office at (978) 640-7880.

Parents are encouraged to join such groups as the Parent Advisory Council and the School Council to help with support and direction. We welcome your involvement.

## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### PROGRESS REPORTS

- All students have access to their grades, assignments, and attendance records through the online **Aspen Student Data Portal**.
- Parents/guardians will be notified at midterm to access the Aspen Portal for their student's midterm grades. A separate notification will be sent to parents/guardians of students who are averaging a seventy or below in a course.

### REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued to the student at the end of each marking term. End-of-the-year report cards will be mailed home.

### GRADE CONVERSION TABLE

A+ = 97 to 100	B- = 80 to 82	D = 63 to 66
A = 93 to 96	C+ = 77 to 79	D- = 60 to 62
A- = 90 to 92	C = 73 to 76	F = 59 and below
B+ = 87 to 89	C- = 70 to 72	
B = 83 to 86	D+ = 67 to 69	

Students receive grades in Effort and Behavior on a scale of 1 to 4. A grade of 4 is the highest and 1 is the lowest.

## **EXTRA HELP**

Students should seek extra help from a teacher if they are experiencing difficulty in the subject area or if they have been absent. Students should speak with the teacher and schedule an extra help session for before or after school according to the teacher's scheduled extra help time. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. Late buses may be available, and if so, a late bus schedule will be published on our website.

A teacher may request a student to stay before or after school if it is apparent that the student is having difficulty with his/her work. This is not to be thought of as a punishment, but as a desire by the teacher to help the student make necessary progress.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

**File: [IKB - GENERAL HOMEWORK POLICY](#)**

Teachers may assign homework in all grades and in all areas of the Curriculum in the Tewksbury Public Schools. The objectives of homework are:

- To help students develop independent and collaborative work-study habits.
- To reinforce learning that has taken place in school or introduce new learning that will occur.
- To increase potential for home/school communication.
- To increase opportunities for enrichment activities.
- To provide differentiated learning opportunities.
- To correlate school learning with outside interests of the students' choice.

### **Role of the School/Teacher**

If homework is assigned, the teacher will:

- Tailor homework assignments to cater to the diverse learning styles, interests, and needs of students. This may involve offering choice in assignments or adjusting the difficulty level to challenge students appropriately.
- Ensure that students understand each homework assignment.
- Review students' homework completion and provide relevant feedback in a timely manner.
- Ensure two-way communication between both students and parents/guardians when a student has difficulty completing or cannot complete homework assignments.
- Make every effort to honor students and families' time off from school and not assign homework on weekends, holidays, observed religious holidays, or school breaks/vacations on the school calendar.
- Allow a student, following an excused absence, a reasonable amount of time to submit the homework missed due to the absences.

### **Role of the Student**

The student will:

Ask the teacher to clarify any assignment that is unclear or ask for assistance when Needed.

Complete all their assignments within the time-frame given, to the best of their ability.

Let their parent/guardian(s) know what the homework is and ask them for their assistance whenever needed

Role of the Parent/guardian(s)

The parent/guardian(s) will:

Provide the student a consistent time and a suitable place for study.

Review homework with the student to monitor its completion and the student's understanding of the work completed.

Communicate with teacher(s) whenever the student appears to have difficulty with homework or when clarification is needed.

Time Guidelines

While assigning homework is not mandatory, the guidelines below serve as a recommended MAXIMUM amount. It is expected that interdisciplinary/grade-level teacher teams will collaborate to ensure guidelines are not exceeded.

Grade 5-8: not to exceed a total of 45 min/day (as determined by the core team)

## **HOMEWORK REQUESTS**

When a student is out of school for two or more consecutive days, parents/guardians can telephone (978) 640-7880 before 8:30am to request homework assignments. Homework will be available at the office one-half hour prior to the end of school. It is helpful for students to have a classmate obtain assignments for shorter absences. (Please note: many of your student's curriculum workbooks and textbooks are available online for home use.)

## **MAKEUP WORK**

When a student is absent, he/she is responsible for making-up the work missed. The student must meet with the teacher to schedule make-up work missed during the absence. Tests/quizzes will be scheduled at the convenience of the teacher. All makeup work should be completed within a period equal to the number of days absent, plus one.

If a student receives a school suspension, it is the student's responsibility to make up missed work or tests within a reasonable number of days (Reasonable number of days will be equal to the number of days of the suspension, plus one).

## **HONOR ROLL**

The John F. Ryan School is pleased to acknowledge two levels of achievement earned by students.

- The first area consists of students who have attained all A's and 4's and 3's in all subject areas. Those meeting this requirement have earned *High Academic Honors*.
- The second area of recognition consists of students who have attained all A's, B's, and 4's and 3's in all subject areas. Those meeting this requirement have earned *Academic Honors*.

# TPS 1:1 Device Program

## Personal Electronic Devices (Grades K-8)

To foster a focused learning environment, minimize distractions, and protect the privacy and safety of students and staff, the following guidelines regarding personal electronic devices is in effect during the school day (as defined by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education).

### Prohibition of Physical Access:

Students in grades K-8 are prohibited from having physical access to personal electronic devices during the school day. Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, smartphones, mobile phones, tablets, computers, smartwatches, and any other electronic device not owned or provided to the student by the school that is capable of communication through the internet or a wireless network. These devices must be powered off and stored out of sight (e.g., in backpacks, lockers, or a designated collection area if provided by the school) from the start of the school day until dismissal.

### Exceptions:

Physical access to a personal electronic device may be permitted only under the following circumstances:

1. **Authorization by a School Administrator:** When a school administrator provides explicit authorization for an individual student to access their personal electronic device to address a specific need. This authorization will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
2. **Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan:** When the use of a personal electronic device is specifically outlined in a student's IEP or a Section 504 education plan. The use must be in accordance with the provisions of that plan.
3. **Emergency Situations:** In the event of an emergency that necessitates communication via a personal electronic device, as determined by school staff.

### Important Considerations:

- **School-Provided Technology:** This policy does not apply to electronic devices owned and provided to students by the school for educational purposes.
- **Responsibility:** Students who bring personal electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of these devices.
- **Recording Prohibited:** The use of audio or visual recording features on personal electronic devices is strictly prohibited at all times on school grounds and during school-sponsored activities without the prior explicit approval of a school administrator or teacher. This aligns with Massachusetts law regarding the recording of conversations.
- **Consequences for Violation:** Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the school's code of conduct. This may include, but is not limited to, confiscation of the device, parent/guardian notification, and other appropriate consequences.

[Annual Notification of FERPA Rights](#)

[Double Click to Link to the Table of Contents](#)

- All Students in grades 5-12 will be issued a Chromebook to be returned upon the graduation of John W. Wynn Middle School or Tewksbury Memorial High School, or departure from the district.
- This mobile device will be required in order to access digital curriculum resources. There is no opt-out option.
- TPS will filter content as required by Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requirements of 2001.
- Like textbooks, Chromebooks are the students main access to their curriculum resources.
- TPS can not support students' personal devices or guarantee all digital resources will be compatible with a non-TPS device.
- Non-TPS devices will not have access to the secure wireless network, and therefore, TPS can not guarantee a consistent connection.
- Families will be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.
- **Insurance is optional but highly recommended**
  - TPS will offer optional insurance (highly recommended) to families.
  - Only \$62 for 4 year coverage. Coverage includes accidental damage (cracked screen, liquid spills), liquid submersion, fire/flood damage, vandalism, natural disasters, and power surge due to lightning. There are no deductibles and no limit on the number of claims.
- **Uninsured Device Repair/Replacement Costs**
  - Chromebook: \$200
  - Charger: \$50
  - Tewksbury Public Schools will charge the parent/guardian for the cost of repairs of uninsured Chromebooks except for items covered by the manufacturer warranty or defects.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance

As AI tools become more accessible in education, students are expected to use them responsibly and in alignment with our district's values of academic integrity, digital citizenship, and personal accountability. This guidance provides expectations for how AI tools should and should not be used in academic settings. Please refer to the TPS AI Guidelines for a full account of the guidelines.

## CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

"Plagiarism is passing off a source of information, ideas or words as your own by omitting to acknowledge the source - an act of lying, cheating and stealing." (Harvey, Gordon. Writing with Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students, Hacket Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis, Cambridge, 1998). Cheating and plagiarism undermine the basic relationship of trust between a student and teacher. Cheating and plagiarism prevent the proper evaluation of a student's work and detract from the achievement of all students in the class. They are among the most serious offenses a student can commit. Any cheating infractions including plagiarism may be brought to the attention of Guidance and Administration.

Students who are found cheating on a test or assignment may receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment which cannot be made up. The teacher will inform the parent/guardian of the incident and detention may be assigned. If a student is caught copying another student's work with the second student's consent, the second student will receive the same consequence.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES INFORMATION

Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities offered at the Ryan School. All students participating in clubs/activities are encouraged to register at Community Pass. Late buses may be available, and if so, a late bus schedule will be published on our website.

In order to participate in Clubs/Activities, a student must pay a user fee of \$30 per club. At the Ryan School, there is a \$60 cap per student and a \$120 cap per family. Activities can be joined at no cost once the cap has been reached. User fees can be paid using Community Pass.  
(<https://register.communitypass.net/reg/index.cfm>)

Clubs and activities vary from year to year. The following is a list of clubs that have run in recent years:

Art Club

Choir

Kindness Club

Snowboard/Ski Club

Student Ambassadors

## STUDENT CONDUCT

### EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Students are expected to behave in ways that facilitate their and others' intellectual, emotional, social and physical well-being. This includes being in class on time, having all required materials, and completing all work on time and at the required standards. Any behavior that jeopardizes the safety or self-esteem of others or interferes with the teaching/learning process will not be tolerated. Any discipline actions taken by the administration and/or staff are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the student's parents/guardians and/or their designee.

You are responsible for the following:

- **Doing Quality Work:** do your best each day to complete assigned lessons, including homework and assignments missed because of absence;
- **Knowing School Rules:** learn our school's Code of Conduct and respect the adults who have a duty to enforce it;
- **Regular Attendance:** arrive on time; remain on school grounds the whole school day; don't leave without permission; bring a note from your parents (or guardian) explaining any absence to the satisfaction of your homeroom teacher;
- **Respect for Others:** treat them as you would like them to treat you, and show the same respect to their property;
- **High Personal Standards:** dress appropriately; meet standards of health and cleanliness; be honest, courteous and moral; only use acceptable language; refrain from actions that seem

insubordinate or unruly.

This Code of Conduct lets you and your parents/guardians know what to expect when disciplinary problems arise during the school day. As a student, you must do your part to make the most of the opportunities you are given here to receive an education. At a minimum, you need to come to school on time and on a regular basis. If a minor problem occurs, teachers may simply talk it out with you. If the problem is more significant or if you have repeated behavior issues, you might serve a teacher detention, an office detention or be suspended from school. Please become familiar with this Code of Conduct.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Students are responsible for exercising good behavior to ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and others. When misbehavior occurs, teachers and administrators will work toward the improvement of the student's behavior. Student behavior will be dealt with in an appropriate and progressive manner. In the school setting this can include, but is not be limited to:

- Being spoken to by a staff member or administrator
- \*Restorative Justice Practices
- Loss of privileges
- A telephone call being made by the staff member or administrator to parents/guardians
- Teacher detention
- Office detention (single or multiple)
- Parental meeting with the principal to discuss the behavior
- In-School or Out-of-School suspension
- Expulsion

*\*Restorative Justice Practice is a voluntary process whereby offenders, victims and members of the community collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations resulting from an offense. The purpose is to understand the impact of that offense if the offender(s) accept responsibility for their actions and makes reparation to the victim or to the community in which the harm occurred.*

The following list is not exhaustive, but provides guidance to students with respect to school rules and behavioral expectations. The Ryan School Administration reserves the right to impose discipline that it deems appropriate under the circumstances. This handbook shall be used as a guide in making such determinations.

- Tardiness to class
- Cutting/skipping class without permission
- Being in areas of the building without staff permission
- Any violation of an individual teacher's rules of conduct (non-cooperation, cheating, classroom disturbance, use of profanity, etc.)
- Failure to report to teacher detention
- Violation of Dress Code
- Refusal to obey a reasonable request
- Defacing, damaging or destroying school property
- Stealing
- Refusing to do work in class



- Bullying or harassing behavior (see Bullying and Harassment policies in this handbook)
- Any act which the staff member justifiably considers intolerable
- Disrespecting fellow student(s) or staff
- Violating the school's cell phone/electronics policy
- Excessive tardiness to school and/or class
- Riding or attempting to ride another bus without permission
- Cheating
- Destroying or defacing another's personal property
- Leaving class without permission
- Refusal to give unauthorized item to teacher
- Swearing or inappropriate language
- Misbehavior in the cafeteria and/or lunch recess (see Cafeteria Behavior and Expectations)
- Running and/or pushing in corridors
- Talking back
- Repeated failure to bring required materials to class
- Being in areas of the building without teacher permission
- Disruption of the learning environment
- Gum chewing
- Public displays of affection
- Possession and/or use of water pistols, yo-yos, toys, laser pointers and other items inappropriate for school use. These items will be confiscated and discarded unless a parent picks them up within the next 5 school days. It is the student's responsibility to inform the parent if he/she wishes to have the item returned.
- Frequent violation of school rules;
- Direct insubordination following a warning by a staff member
- Possession or use of alcoholic or other controlled substance in school, on the school bus, or at any school function
- Possession or use of tobacco products in school, on school property or on a school bus;
- Leaving the building without permission
- Possessing, using and/or selling drugs in school, on school grounds, or at any school function
- Setting off firecrackers or "stink bombs" on school property
- Improper behavior while on a field trip or while representing the school off school property
- Fighting or planning to fight in the school building, on school grounds, or on the bus
- Activating a fire alarm under false pretenses
- Possession or use of drug/smoking paraphernalia and drug facsimiles;
- "Pantsing"
- Improper use of the Internet or violation of Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Violation of a local, state or federal law
- Possession of a weapon
- Possession of a cigarette lighter, matches or any other incendiary device
- Truancy from class
- Inappropriate and/or unwanted/unwarranted physical contact
- Physical and/or verbal abuse
- Failure to report to detention or office when instructed by a teacher
- Using crude, offensive, vulgar, or obscene gestures and/or language (verbal or written) on school property
- Instigating, encouraging or being part of a group that encourages a fight
- Recording, videotaping, or photographing anyone during the school day including the school bus

## **DETENTION**

Team or teacher detentions generally occur at lunch/recess or after school. One or more may be assigned based on the offense. Office detentions are issued by a teacher with the consent of an administrator or by an administrator and are generally held on the day of the offense from school dismissal until 3:30pm. Any student failing to report to an office detention will receive an additional office detention. Examples of student behavior that warrant office detentions include, but are not limited to, those listed above.

## **SUSPENSION**

This policy is pursuant to MGL Chapter 71; Section 37H3/4.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section37H3~4>

New update: effective November 8, 2022

Any student who is suspended from school for more than 10 days has the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long term suspension. Students may be suspended from school for serious infractions of school regulations.

These actions may include, but are not limited to, the offenses listed above.

School administrators are authorized to conduct investigations into school related disciplinary matters, including student interviews.

A suspension may not be imposed without providing the student or the parent oral and written notice (in English or the primary language of the home), along with an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and an opportunity for the parent to participate in the hearing.

A parent/guardian must come with the student to meet with the school administration before that student can be readmitted. While on suspension, a student loses school privileges and may not attend /participate in all school activities, including athletics and social affairs.

Students will be provided with an opportunity to earn credits, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work missed while serving the suspension.

### **Tewksbury Public Schools - Education Services Plan**

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, § 21 and 603 CMR 53.13, the Tewksbury Public Schools offers and provides alternative education services to students who are expelled or suspended in or out of school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days.

The following services are made available to provide students who have been expelled or suspended in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days with an opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

☐ Online/distance learning

☐ Tutorial services

Students who are expelled or suspended in or out of school for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in a school year may select one of the above identified alternative education setting options in which to participate during the period of suspension or expulsion.

To obtain more information regarding the available alternative education setting options and to confirm your selection of and enrollment in one of these alternative education setting options, please contact the school principal. Upon selection of an alternative educational service by the student and the student's parent or guardian, the school or school district will facilitate and verify the student's enrollment in the service.

## **CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS**

When eating in the cafeteria, it is expected that students will:

- Behave in an appropriate manner
- Select one seat for the entire lunch period
- Clean their table and floor areas
- Dispose of trash properly
- Ask permission to leave the table (restroom use, get a utensil, etc.)
- Enter and exit the cafeteria in an orderly fashion
- Not throw objects or food
- Not make excessive noise
- Not push or cut in the lunch line
- Not move from table to table

Any student whose account is at the charge limit and does not bring a lunch from home will be offered an alternative cold reimbursable meal (i.e., sandwich or yogurt with fruit, vegetables and milk).

If parents or guardians continue to carry a balance or doesn't provide lunch money to a student who does not qualify for the free or reduced meal benefits, the Principal or Business Manager will be informed by Food Service to determine the course of action.

If a student violates cafeteria rules, he/she will be disciplined accordingly. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, seating change or suspension of cafeteria privileges.

## **RECESS REGULATIONS**

### **Outdoor recess rules:**

- Play in designated areas only
- Use recess type equipment properly and safely
- Report hurtful actions to an adult immediately
- Use proper language
- Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself
- No eating or drinking during outdoor recess

### **Indoor recess rules:**

- Children must be seated in a chosen area engaged in a quiet activity
- Permission must be received before leaving one's seat
- Outdoor recess-type equipment is not allowed

## CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

Students who use school buses are subject to school rules while on the bus and at bus stops. Riding the school bus is a privilege which may be suspended whenever a student fails to follow bus rules. Severe or continuous misbehavior may result in permanent bus suspension. Students should be at their stop 7-10 minutes prior to scheduled pick-up. Buses leave school on or about 2:25pm. There are no late buses **guaranteed at this time** if a student stays for an activity, detention, or extra help.

Students are **not allowed to** switch buses except for significant extenuating circumstances. In such cases, requests must be made in writing and permission must be granted from the administration and transportation director.

### RULES FOR BUS CONDUCT

- Students must obey all directions of the bus driver quickly and courteously;
- Students may not throw any objects in or out of the bus;
- Students may not open windows or doors without the driver's permission nor put arms, head or hands outside the window;
- Students may not do anything which will disturb or distract the driver;
- Horseplay or roughhousing is forbidden;
- Student's parents or guardians must pay for any damage that the student has caused on the bus;
- Students may not open emergency exit doors unless instructed to do so by driver;
- Stairs and aisles must be kept free of any large objects;
- Students must remain seated;
- Eating and/or drinking are not allowed;
- The use of any drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products are forbidden;
- The use of obscene or inappropriate language is forbidden
- **No cell phone use**

*Examples of major bus offenses which may result in an immediate bus suspension include:*

- lighting matches/smoking/tobacco use;
- throwing objects in or out of bus;
- hanging out windows;
- using obscene or inappropriate language;
- having or using drugs or alcohol;
- tampering with bus equipment;
- destroying property, i.e. tearing seats, breaking windows, etc.;
- fighting;
- physical abuse to others;
- verbal abuse to others
- inappropriate use of electronic devices
- setting off firecrackers or any incendiary devices

These procedures apply when a bus discipline problem occurs:

- The bus driver will provide the administration with a **School Bus Incident Report**. The administration will then issue a consequence to the student including, but not limited to: warning, written assignment, detention, temporary bus suspension, permanent bus suspension.
- Students will be suspended from the bus for three (3) consecutive days for 3 minor offenses or three (3) consecutive days for one major offense. The administration will rule as to the type of offense.
- Continuous misbehavior will result in additional consequences and may lead to permanent bus suspension.
- When a student is suspended from the bus, parents/guardians are responsible for transportation to and from school.

## **SECURITY VIDEO CAMERAS ON SCHOOL BUSES**

The Tewksbury Public Schools has implemented a policy regarding Security Video Cameras on School Buses. Please refer to Tewksbury Public Schools Policy Manual, Section EEAEF/ECAF – Use of Video Cameras on School Buses.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying behavior is not tolerated at the John F. Ryan School. Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c. 71), as added by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, outlines a bullying prevention and intervention plan. All school policies and procedures regarding bullying and cyberbullying behavior will follow our school handbook, state law, and the policy and procedures of the Tewksbury Public Schools.

### **BULLYING is defined as:**

the repeated use by one or more students or staff members of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a school.

### **CYBERBULLYING is defined as:**

Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by more than one person, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Students with differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnancy or parenting status, sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning), mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or who by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics, will be provided support and anti-bullying skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment of the student with differentiating characteristic(s) and the peer group.

Anyone wishing to report a suspected act of bullying may fill out a Bully Report Form available in the Ryan School office or the Tewksbury Public Schools website. In addition, a suspected act of bullying may be reported by telephone to any staff member. All reports will be fully investigated by the Ryan School staff.

## **CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students are responsible for the safekeeping of all books, supplies and other school equipment. If a student willfully damages such school property, he/she will be required to pay for its replacement and may face disciplinary action. Parents/guardians will be notified and, possibly, the police department as well. The school will seek restitution from parents or guardians and may work with the police to resolve the issue if needed. Lost books must be paid for before the student leaves in June for summer vacation. Failure to pay for lost materials could also result in disciplinary action.

## **DRESS CODE**

In accordance with Massachusetts State Law there is an expectation that students dress in keeping with reasonable standards of safety, health and cleanliness, so as not to detract from, or disrupt, the educational process. The administration reserves the right to ask students to change any attire that disrupts the educational process or environment, promotes illegal activities or violates health or safety and cleanliness standards. Footwear must be worn at all times.

Sunglasses (without a doctor's note) are not considered appropriate for the classroom.

Hats or head coverings of any type, except those worn for religious or medical purposes, shall not be worn.

Clothing which could create an actual disruption or disorder to the learning environment includes, but is not limited to:

- Clothing or jewelry that displays slogans, insignias, or designs that advertise alcohol, drugs or sexual material and/or promote products or activities that are violent, illegal, profane or suggestive.
- Clothing or jewelry which is disparaging to others in the school environment and contains slurs regarding race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities or sexual orientation.
- Clothing that does not sufficiently cover the torso, chest, legs, or back are not appropriate.
- Clothing must be opaque and not see through.
- Any display of undergarments is prohibited. Pants or shorts must be worn so as not to expose underclothing such as boxer shorts or other types of underwear.

- Coats or jackets should not be worn in classrooms, and backpacks must be stored in the student's locker.

Students will be asked to change the article in question by any staff member. This dress code is in effect for all school events. Issues relating to dress code will be handled in a discreet and respectful manner. Parents will be notified and may need to be available in the event that appropriate school attire is needed.

## **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS ON EDUCATIONAL PLANS**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior set forth in this handbook. Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws (also known as Chapter 766) requires that additional provisions be made for children with special needs. The following additional requirements apply with respect to discipline of students with special needs.

1. The Individual Educational Program (IEP) for a special needs student will indicate whether the student is expected to meet the regular discipline code or if the student's condition requires a modification. Any modification will be described in the student's IEP.
2. For special needs students who may be removed from their educational program for more than ten days, cumulatively, in a school year, a review of the relationship between the misconduct and the student's disability will be conducted.
3. If, after conducting such review, the student's special education Team determines that the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability, the Team will discuss a modified program for the student. If the Team determines that the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his/her disability, the student may then be subject to the school's disciplinary code. In that event, an alternative setting for the student to receive instruction will be determined.
4. A Functional Behavioral Assessment will also be conducted with respect to a special needs student whose behavior violates the school's disciplinary code.
5. If a student's conduct involves weapons or drugs, the team may place the student in an alternative educational setting.

When a student is on an educational plan he/she must abide by the Ryan School rules and regulations unless his/her plan states otherwise. Suspensions will be reported to the Administrator of Special Education. Plans will be reviewed by a special education team when a student has accumulated 10 days of suspension from classes in a school year. Similar procedures apply to students with plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

## **SAFE SCHOOLS LEGISLATION**

### **MGL Chapter 71; Section 37H3/4**

#### **Suspension Policy**

This policy is pursuant to MGL Chapter 71; Section 37H3/4.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section37H3~4>

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Any student who is suspended from school for more than 10 days has the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long term suspension.

The School Committee intends that the administration and school principals be given a full range of authority in accordance with the guidelines of the Educational Reform Act of 1993 in order to prevent, address, and hold accountable those responsible for school related violence and other behavior that is not conducive with attendance in a public school.

Two important pieces of legislation related to safe schools are summarized as follows:

#### **MGL Chapter 71; Section 37H**

- Any student who is found on school premises, on school buses, or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter 94C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- 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.
- Any student who is charged with a violation of either of the preceding paragraphs 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 their discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either of the preceding paragraphs.
- 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 (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of the 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.
- 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 pupil's expulsion.

#### **MGL Chapter 71; Section 37H1/2**

- Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, a principal may suspend such student for a period of time determined to be appropriate by said principal if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for the suspension prior to the suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of the right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided,



however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent. The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the right to overturn or alter the decision of the principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

- Upon a student's being convicted of a felony or upon adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such felony or felony delinquency, the principal may expel said student if such principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. (Due process procedures including notification, request for appeal and appeal hearing mirror those procedures outlined in the first paragraph above). Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT AFFECTED BY THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT**

(Violent Behavior, Possession of Weapons and Controlled Substances, and Violations of Others' Civil Rights)

(A.) If a student is involved in fighting or other violent behavior or is involved in acts of vandalism or violation of other students' civil rights, on school premises, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events, including athletic games, said student will be immediately suspended for an indefinite period of time, and may be subject to expulsion from school.

(B.) If a student is found on school premises or at school-related events, including athletic games, to be in possession of a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to, a gun or a knife; possession of ammunition for a weapon; or of a controlled substance as defined in chapter 44C (including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin) said student will be immediately suspended for an indefinite period of time, and, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(C.) If a student assaults anyone on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, said student will be immediately suspended for an indefinite period of time and may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

## **STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS**

Students are expected to abide by all State and Federal Laws, and any violation of these laws will be cause for disciplinary action, including police involvement.

## SEARCH AND SEIZURE

Students have a legitimate right to privacy; however, this right must be balanced against the school department's responsibility and commitment to maintain a safe school environment that is conducive to learning. School officials are not required to obtain a warrant before searching a student under their authority provided there is a basis for reasonable suspicion. If there is reasonable suspicion, the school administration has the right to search a student and or their possessions, including but not limited to backpack, locker, vehicle, electronic devices, and platforms (such as cell phones and smart watches). If inappropriate items that disrupt or interfere with the educational process are discovered, they may be confiscated and students will be subject to the disciplinary process. Furthermore, if illegal articles are discovered, they will be confiscated. In this instance, law enforcement officials may be notified and students may be subject to legal action.

In the interest of the safety of all students, the police department K-9 units in cooperation with school officials may conduct random searches of school property which may lead to probable cause for student searches.

Resources:

- [ACLU Massachusetts Resource](#)
- [Mass.gov Juvenile Justice](#)

## Questioning/Interviews by Administration and/or designee:

The school department has a responsibility and is committed to maintain a safe school environment that is conducive to learning. The school administration, including principals/assistant principals, counselors, and designated staff, are permitted to question and examine a student at school without notice by the school administration to the student's parents/guardians. These interviews may be conducted for various reasons, including but not limited to:

- Investigating disciplinary incidents or behavioral concerns.
- Assessing academic progress or educational needs.
- Providing counseling or support services.
- Addressing issues related to student safety or well-being.

Information discovered during questioning/interviews that indicates illegal activity may be reported to the Tewksbury Police Department.

Information discovered during questioning/interviews that indicate abuse or neglect will be reported to the Department of Children and Families, as required by Massachusetts Mandated Reporter Law (51a)

Information discovered during questioning/interviews that indicate a student may engage in self-harm or hurting others could result in a mental health/Safety assessment, which could be performed by TPS or TPD and other partner clinicians.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

### Excused Absences

Aspen Code: AE-with reason:

A parent/guardian must call the child's school on the morning of the absence or email [ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us) with the student's name in the subject heading.

A student's absence is classified as excused for the following reasons:

- A medical reason or hospitalization (health care provider documentation required)
- A court appearance (court documentation required)
- A religious observance (parent/guardian call or note required)
- A death in the immediate family: parent, grandparent, sister brother, aunt, uncle (parent, guardian call or note required)
- Suspension from school

These types of absences do not count toward the total number of unexcused absences.

- Students are responsible for making up missed assignments, tests or quizzes within a reasonable number (usually equivalent to the number of days absent) of days.
- Extensions may be granted with administrative approval

### Unexcused Absences

Aspen Code: AC

***Absent Confirmed (non-exempt)***: For an absence to be confirmed, a parent/guardian must call the child's school on the morning of the absence or email the school at [ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:ryanattendance@tewksbury.k12.ma.us) and include the student name in the subject field of the email. The student must present a note from the parent/guardian upon return to school. It is considered an unexcused absence until it satisfies one of the reasons above.

An absent confirmed still counts toward the total number of accumulated unexcused absences.

Aspen Code: AC

***Absent (Truant, non-exempt)***: When a student is absent from school and no phone call, email, or note has been received from a parent/guardian, the student's absence is classified as unexcused or truant. Performance of household or babysitting duties, school visits, and family travel or vacation are considered **unexcused** absences.

Aspen Code: A

***Absent***: When a student is absent from school and no phone call, email, or note has been received from a parent/guardian, the student's absence is classified as unexcused or truant.

This type of absence counts toward the total number of accumulated unexcused absences.

- Students may not be eligible to make up work when truant.

### **Absenteeism and the Massachusetts General Laws:**

- The parents or guardians of each pupil shall, annually, at the commencement of each school year, be sent a notice instructing them to call a designated telephone number at a designated time to inform the school of the absence of a pupil and the reason. Said notice shall also require such parent or guardian to furnish the school with a home, work or other emergency telephone number where they can be contacted during the school day. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified by the designated time, the school shall call the telephone number or numbers furnished to inquire about said absence.
  - (Massachusetts General Law Title XII, Chapter 76, Section 1A)
- The notification process shall be designed to ensure that each school notifies a parent or guardian of the child's absence if the school has not received notification of the absence from the parent or guardian within 3 days of the absence.
- Following the 5th unexcused absence, a letter will be generated from the Principal's office, or the Principal's designee, notifying the parent/guardian, in writing, of the student's absence, and requesting a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance. The letter will direct the parent/guardian to contact the Principal's office, or the Principal's designee, within 5 school days to schedule a meeting. If the parent/guardian does not contact the Principal's office or the Principal's designee, within 5 school days, the Principal's office, or the Principal's designee, will call the parent or guardian for purposes of scheduling a meeting. At the meeting, the Principal (Assistant Principal or other designee), the parent/guardian and the student must develop action steps to address the student's attendance. Other relevant school personnel and officials from public safety, health and human services, housing and nonprofit agencies, may offer input into the development of action steps.
  - (Massachusetts General Law Title XII, Chapter 76, Section 1B)
- Following non-exempt (unexcused) absences of seven (7) full days or fourteen (14) half-days within any period of six (6) months, a supervisor of attendance may choose to file a "failure to send" complaint against the parent or guardian in the juvenile court.
  - (Massachusetts General Law Title XII, Chapter 76, Section 2)
- Whoever induces or attempts to induce a minor to absent himself unlawfully from school, or unlawfully employs him or harbors a minor who, while school is in session, is absent unlawfully therefrom, shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars.
  - (Massachusetts General Law Title XII, Chapter 76, Section 4)
- Following the eighth (8th) non-exempt (unexcused) absence in one quarter, the Principal or designee may choose to file a "Habitual Truant" Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) in the juvenile court to support the student in attending school.
  - (Massachusetts General Law Title XVII, Chapter 119, Section 39 E&G)

### **Attendance Protocol in the Tewksbury Public Schools:**

1. Following the fifth (5th) unexcused absence, a letter will be sent home to parents or guardians notifying them of their child's attendance and a copy of the letter will be placed in the student's file. This may be accompanied by a phone call home expressing concern to arrange a meeting with the Principal or designee and/or the School Guidance Counselor.

2. Following unexcused absences of seven (7) full days or fourteen (14) half-days within any period of six (6) months, a supervisor of attendance may choose to file a “failure to send” complaint in the juvenile court. (Massachusetts General Law Title XII, Chapter 76, Section 2)
3. Following the twelfth (12th) unexcused absence, a second letter will be sent home to the parent/guardian notifying them of their child’s attendance and a copy will be placed in the student’s file.
4. Between twelve to fifteen (12-15) absences the Supervisor of Attendance and/or Resource Officer may make phone contact or visit the home of the parent/guardians.
5. Following the eighth (8th) unexcused absence in one quarter, the Principal or designee may choose to file a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) in the juvenile court to support the student in attending school. (Massachusetts General Law Title XVII, Chapter 119, Section 39 E&G)

**Please be advised that students who received attendance interventions in the previous school year(s) may be subject to more serious and immediate interventions should signs of continued attendance concerns be observed during the current school year.**

## **TRUANCY**

Truancy, which is an absence from school without permission, is against the law. Any student who has been proven to be truant will be disciplined by the school and may be referred to a higher authority for action.

## **TARDINESS**

Each student is to be in his/her homeroom no later than 8:05 AM. If a student arrives at school after 8:05 A.M., he/she must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to the main office. The student must obtain an admission slip from the office before reporting to class. If a student is frequently tardy, the student may be assigned an after school or lunch-detention or, at the discretion of the school administration, the student may be restricted from taking part in school activities and/or privileges.

## **DISMISSALS**

- Dismissal notes should be given to the homeroom teacher and state the following: Student’s first name, last name, homeroom, time of dismissal, reason for dismissal, room number where the student will be at that time, and parent signature.
- No student will be dismissed from school unless a responsible adult is available to escort him/her home.
- A student dismissed before 10:50 AM is considered absent unless the student returns to school.

**Under no circumstance should a student when feeling ill use a cell phone/electronic device to contact a parent/guardian to be picked up from school without first reporting to the nurse’s office. During the school day, cell phones/electronic devices are not to be used without teacher permission. If the nurse is unavailable, the student is to report to the main office.**

## **EARLY ARRIVAL**

Students who do not take the bus in the morning will be unable to enter the building prior to 8:00 AM. Teacher supervision begins at this time and we are unfortunately unable to guarantee the safety of students who arrive earlier.

## **VACATIONS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

December, February and April vacations are included in the school calendar. Family vacation taken while school is in session is contrary to Student Attendance Policy voted by the School Committee and is strongly discouraged. It has been our experience that students do not complete work while on such vacations. Should a student miss school because of a vacation, makeup work will be assigned upon his/her return to school. Teachers may, at their discretion, assign work before students leave on vacation.

## **NO SCHOOL/DELAYED OPENING/EARLY RELEASE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Schools will be closed only in the case of severe, inclement weather. Announcements relative to closing schools for inclement weather will be carried by TV stations, **Twitter@tpsdistrict**, and through the district's telephone notification system "**One Call Now.**"

Delayed Openings: Superintendent will notify the public by the same procedure as "no school" announcements. Parents and students are requested not to call the Police Station, Fire Station, Bus Contractors, School Principals, or the Superintendent of Schools for "no school" information. Information will not be available from these sources.

*Early dismissals are highly unusual.* In the event we must dismiss schools early due to inclement weather or other conditions, an announcement will be made on television stations (Channels 4, 5, 7, 25 and NECN), on One Call Now, our telephone notification system, and on *Twitter*. System-wide early dismissal will be in the following order: High School, Wynn, Ryan, Center Elementary, Heathbrook, and Dewing Schools. Hopefully, we can avoid some school cancellations during the winter by use of this plan. It is advisable to arrange for a safe home for your student to go to in the event that you may not always be at home. Your cooperation is appreciated.

## **GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT**

School counselors are available to every student in the school. These services include counseling in the areas of academics and social issues. A student can make an appointment to see a school counselor. The school counselor will make arrangements to meet with the student at a mutually agreeable time.

## **Food Services**

Our Food & Nutrition Services are happy to provide free healthy school breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines at all schools for all students. We are still encouraging our households to fill out a Free/Reduced Meal application because the benefits do not stop at just free school meals. Free and reduced lunch applications are available on the school website or you may obtain a hard copy through your school office. Other school fees may be free and reduced for those who qualify. While complete breakfast and lunch meals are free, students would have to pay

for double meals and/or a la carte menu items; charging will not be permitted. Payment options are through paypams.com account which is available 24/7, cash or check made out to Tewksbury Food & Nutrition Services. Note: monies paid into the paypams account will carry over year to year. Refund requests must be submitted to Food & Nutrition Services in writing.

## Health Services

**1. ACCIDENT/ILLNESS Forms:** Please correct and return as soon as possible. Any recent health problem that is not reflected in your child's health record should be brought to the school nurse's attention immediately. The importance of correct forms cannot be overemphasized. Please update the school with any changes during the school year.

**2. Screenings:** State law mandates the following screenings:

- Height, weight and BMI measurements in grades 1, 4, 7 and 9. Vision screening is conducted during the year in grades PK-5, 7 and 9. Parents/guardians will be informed if the child requires follow-up. These screenings are not to be used as diagnostic studies.
- Hearing screening is conducted during the year in grades K-3, 7 and 9. Parents/guardians will be informed if the child requires follow-up. These screenings are not to be used as diagnostic studies.
- Postural Screening is conducted on all students in grades 5 - 9. This is mandated by the state of Massachusetts. You will be notified prior to the screening and if your child requires follow-up.
- Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT): All students in grades 7 & 9. Confidential verbal screening for substances using a validated screening tool.
- A Parent / guardian may refuse any screening for their child in writing to the school nurse.

**3. Physicals and Immunizations:** State law mandates that students **entering** into the **7th grade** require a **TDAP booster and Meningococcal vaccine before the beginning of seventh grade.**

In addition to the required immunization, **state law** also mandates a **complete physical after January 1 of the year entering 7th grade.** Please submit all required medical documentation to the school nurse.

**4. Medication: State law** Please call the school nurse in your child's school for medication order and parental permission forms. **NO Medication, prescription or over the counter** can be administered without these forms. All medication must be in a pharmacy labeled container or unopened original manufacturer's container. Please contact the school nurse for any medication administration including prescribed, over the counter medications, inhalers etc. Forms are currently available from the school nurse. Self - administration is not permitted for over the counter medications. **Inhalers require Health Care Provider's orders and written parent permission for self administration prior to review by the school nurse.**

**5. Illness, Injuries and Surgeries:** Please call the school when your child is absent. In the event of a physician documented contagious illness, it is important for the school nurse to know. This is for the protection of your child as well as the other students and staff that may be susceptible to infection. **A doctor's note is required when the student returns to school when there are any restrictions in activity, including the nature of the restriction and the time/ length of the restriction especially in**



**cases of hospitalization and surgery. Students must documentation from a MD before returning to school, with splints, braces, crutches, slings, and stitches etc.**

**6. Concussion and Head Injuries:** Head injuries/concussions must be reported to the school nurse, when reporting back to school. **Documentation from the health care provider must be provided to the school nurse that the student may return to school along with any restrictions in activity or academics that may be required. Please contact the school nurse prior to returning to school. Please visit [www.tewksbury.k12.ma.us](http://www.tewksbury.k12.ma.us) District Info Policy Manual to access TPS Policies regarding Concussion. Refer to File: JJIF ATHLETIC CONCUSSION POLICY and File: JJIF-R ATHLETIC CONCUSSION REGULATIONS.**

**7. When to keep your student home:**

1. Fever over 100 °F. Students may return to school when fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.
2. An unexplained vomiting episode, or 3 or more loose, watery stools or loss of control of stools. The student may return after 24 hours after last episode, and has returned to normal diet.
3. Conjunctivitis: Any drainage from the eye can signal infection. Please have it checked and provide written clearance from a health care provider. Keep the student home until 24 hours after the first dose of medication.
4. Antibiotics: these are prescribed for infections. Please avoid spreading infection by keeping the student home until 24 hours after the first dose of medication.

Please call your school nurse if the student requires medication, or has any change in their medical condition. If you are not sure, check with your nurse.

**Please call the school nurse at your child's school for any questions and for more information regarding these procedures.**

**Medications**

- By law, all medications, prescription or over the counter, must have a written physician's order and written parental permission to be administered in the school setting. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Motrin), and Antacids (such as Mylanta, Maalox, or Tums) may be administered at the school nurse's discretion with established protocols developed by the consulting school physician when a signed parental permission form is on file in the health office.
- All other medications that may need to be taken during the school day, whether routine or as needed, must have a written physician's order as well as a completed parental permission form that can be downloaded from the school website or obtained at the health office. Every effort should be made to schedule medications outside the school day, such as daily meds and those given two or three times a day. If special circumstances prevail, please speak to the school nurse to establish a plan.
- Medication must be in a pharmacy labeled container or unopened original manufacturer's container. Ask your pharmacist for a second prescription-labeled bottle if medication needs to be



taken between home and school. Medication will not be given from any other type of container. Please notify the school nurse of any changes in medications or dosages.

- Medication must be taken in the nurse's office under the supervision of the school nurse. If special circumstances exist, please call the nurse to explain and to establish a plan for self-administration. Students with self-administration privileges must be capable of keeping the medication to themselves during the school day. Sharing medication with other students is not permitted.
- By law, students are allowed to carry emergency medications, including respiratory inhalers, insulin, and epi-pens with prior knowledge of the nurse. Please be sure to have the necessary physician and parent signed forms on file in the health office.
- Please call the school nurse's office at (978) 640-7880 or email with any questions you may have or to make an appointment.
- Failure to adhere to the above policies and procedures may result in suspension.

## **LOCKERS - STUDENT ASSIGNMENT AND USE**

Students are assigned a locker for books, coats and jackets at the beginning of each year and are given a lock with a unique combination to use during the school year. Students can go to their lockers before and after school, at the beginning of lunch period, and any additional times as decided by the team of teachers. Students should keep the combination to their locks a secret. The school is not responsible for items stolen from a locker. All items stored in lockers must be related to an authorized school activity. School officials may, without prior warning, examine the contents of a locker when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the locker may contain prohibited items.

- Backpacks/book bags are not allowed to be carried from class to class; they must be placed in lockers and remain there throughout the school day. Teachers will schedule locker times that will allow students to access their belongings at various times throughout the day.
- Students are held responsible for the proper use and care of the locker assigned to them.
- Students must **never** leave locker combinations **unlocked**.
- The school assumes **NO** responsibility for lost articles.

## **VALUABLES**

Students should not bring large amounts of money or expensive items to school. If necessary, students may place money in a sealed, labeled envelope and store it temporarily in the safe in the main office. **DO NOT LEAVE** money, watches, rings, purses or other things of value in lockers or classrooms. A student may ask a Physical Education Teacher to hold valuables for a student during Physical Education classes. Tewksbury Public Schools is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

When a student finds something that isn't his/hers, bring it to the office. A student may look through "found" items in the cafeteria area to find something that was lost and turned in within a reasonable period of time.

## TELEPHONE USE

The office phone and classroom phones are for emergency use only. Students who require use of a school phone need to request permission from the office or a teacher. Our priority is not to disrupt class work and student learning during the school day.

## WALKING TO SCHOOL

Students may walk home from school if parents submit a letter granting the student permission to walk home that day. A parent may also write one letter that permits the student to walk home at any time during the school year. Students who are walking may leave at **first dismissal**.

## RIDING A BICYCLE TO SCHOOL

Students are permitted to ride a bicycle to school if they have turned in a [\*Student Bicycle Riding Contract\*](#) signed by student, parent/guardian and administrator which states, in part:

- In accordance with the Massachusetts Bicycle Helmet Law, **all individuals, 16 or younger, must wear a bike helmet when riding a bicycle to school.**
- Students riding a bicycle will leave on **first dismissal**.
- Students should use a bike lock of their own to ensure its safe keeping while at school.

## FIELD TRIPS

A student's parent/guardian must complete a field trip form which must be given to the teacher before a student may get on the trip bus. During the trip students will stay with teachers or chaperones. A student may be excluded from a field trip if behavior has been consistently inappropriate. This decision will be made by the student's teachers and an administrator. Any parent volunteer accompanying a field trip must complete a CORI request form.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### FIRE ALARM DIRECTIONS

Students should be aware that fire exit directions are posted in each classroom. Students should:

- Locate and consult these directions when entering each classroom or school area;
- Follow those directions quickly and quietly when the alarm sounds;
- Leave the school building immediately with teachers;
- Follow the prescribed route and ask teachers if there are any questions concerning the fire exit directions;
- Use alternate routes other than posted instructions in case the fire is blocking established routes, e.g. rear doors adjoining one class with another, outside exits, different staircases, etc.;
- Listen to any additional instructions given on the public address system and follow these;
- Not enter the building until directed to do so by a teacher;
- While outdoors, remain at least 50 feet from the school building with teachers;
- Treat every fire alarm as a real alarm.

**NOTE: Pulling a false alarm is an unlawful act and will be treated as a police matter.**

## **EVACUATION**

An evacuation of the building could be used by the administration to evacuate the building for any reason other than a fire. Evacuation for a fire will always be done via the fire alarm system. An alternate evacuation will begin with an announcement made over the intercom system.

Students should be aware of the alternate evacuation route for the room that they are in. The evacuation route for each room will be posted next to the fire exit sign in each room. If there are any questions about the evacuation procedure, students should ask their teacher. When evacuating the building for any reason, it is important that it be done in a calm and orderly manner. Classes must stay together with their teachers so that an accounting of all students can be done.

## **LOCKOUT**

LOCKOUT is a procedure to be used when dealing with a threat or potential threat to the school building or occupants from outside of the building.

The Administration or designee will initiate LOCKOUT over the intercom. Students will be instructed to go into their assigned room. All students will rejoin their class or activity.

## **LOCKDOWN**

LOCKDOWN is a procedure to be employed when dealing with a threat or potential threat to the school building or occupants from within the building.

The Administration or designee will initiate LOCKDOWN over the school intercom. Students will be instructed to go to the nearest room and evacuate the hallways.

Students and staff will utilize this approach as part of the A.L.I.C.E response (see below).

## **A.L.I.C.E. PROTOCOL**

Students and staff are trained in the A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) protocol and are able to choose from the above response options in determining the most effective way of ensuring their physical safety when faced with an imminent threat.

## **NEW STUDENT REGISTRATION**

Families wishing to enroll a student within the Tewksbury Public Schools need to schedule an [appointment](#). A checklist of required documentation along with registration paperwork is available for [download](#) on our central registration site. It is important to note that a representative for the Office of Student and Family Support will provide you with a link to a virtual meeting for the date and time you have scheduled. Please contact the Office of Student and Family Support with any questions or concerns 978-640-7800 x 218.

## **ADDRESS CHANGE**

Families who have moved to the town of Tewksbury must contact the Office of Student and Family Support. All address changes are verified with a fully executed Purchase and Sales / Lease along with a statement from a utility company indicating service has been turned on, or a current utility bill. All documentation submitted must be current, including name(s) and the new address.

## **POLICIES**

### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS**

Before a student can use the school computers, he/she and a parent/guardian must read and sign the Acceptable Use Policy. Those policy forms will be distributed during the first week of school. Violation of the acceptable use policy could lead to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, loss of computer privileges, detention, or suspension.

### **AHERA**

As per the requirements of 40CFR 763 section 84 (f) of the AHERA regulation, Asbestos Inspections and Management Plans are available for review at the office of the building principal during normal working hours.

### **ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG POLICY**

A student will be suspended from school and may be subject to expulsion if he/she is found to be in possession of alcohol or other drugs (or under the influence of, or distributing) while on school premises, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events such as dances and athletic games. The school will report violators to the police. This policy also applies to any student found to be in possession of drug paraphernalia and drug facsimiles.

### **APPROPRIATE USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Radios, iPods, tablets, cell phones and other personal electronic devices are prohibited in the school without consent from the Principal or as designated in a student's IEP or 504 plan. Students found in possession of such items will have them confiscated and parents/guardians may pick them up at the main office that same day.

Use of a personal electronic device's audio or visual recording features is not permitted without prior approval of an administrator or teacher. Massachusetts law makes it a crime to secretly record an in-person or telephone conversation without the consent of all parties to the conversation. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy will result in disciplinary action and may result in suspension.

Please remember that students who bring these devices to school do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for the loss, damage or theft of a student's property at school, on the bus, or at school events. It is expected that all electronic devices are charged at home.

### **NONDISCRIMINATION**

Tewksbury Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability in its admission of students in, or access of students to all programs or activities offered by Tewksbury Public Schools including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Tewksbury Public Schools strive to prevent, oppose and prohibit harassment or discrimination based on a student's race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability and will respond promptly and appropriately to any complaint or report of discrimination or harassment. (File: AC, ACA, ACAB in School Committee Policy)

## **FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION OF STUDENT (MGL: Ch71, S. 37H1/2)**

1. Upon issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon issuance of a felony delinquency complaint, the principal may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal 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.

2. Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such felony or felony delinquency, the principal may expel such student 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.

In both sections 1 and 2, a student and parents have the right of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools.

## **PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES SECTION 504**

A student, parent/guardian or employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against on the basis of his/her disability shall report such grievance to the principal, or in the alternative to the Superintendent of Schools. The procedure for filing such a grievance is set forth in the district's Section 504-grievance policy, a copy of which is available in the principal's office.

In addition, if a complainant remains dissatisfied with the district's resolution of his/her complaint, he/she may file a complaint with one or more of the following agencies. A statute of limitations of 180 days may apply to the filing of such complaint.

Office of Civil Rights  
United States Department of Education  
J. McCormack Post Off. And Courthouse  
Room 701  
Boston, MA 02109

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Bureau of Special Education Appeals  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148

## **DISCRIMINATION, OTHER FORMS**

If a student believes that he or she has been subject to discrimination on the basis of race, color, religious creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, genetic information or ancestry, he or she may report such discrimination complaint using the same procedure set above for disability under Section 504.

## **EXPULSION**

By law the Tewksbury Public Schools must give the student and parents/guardians a fair hearing before separating him/her permanently from the school for misconduct. The principal conducts this hearing and must provide the student with:

- Written notice of the charge of misconduct;
- Notice that he/she may be represented by an attorney or advocate (at student's expense);
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing;
- Access to all documents the school intends to use at the hearing;

- The right to question witnesses; and,
- A reasonably prompt, written hearing decision supported by specific findings of fact.

## **HARASSMENT, CIVIL RIGHTS AND RESPECT**

"Harassment" is conduct that is personally offensive, degrading or threatening to others. It is strictly prohibited at the John F. Ryan School. The school's policy against harassment refers to/but is not limited to, insulting or harmful comments or actions based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, physical characteristics or disability. Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, name calling, put downs, threats, sexually suggestive remarks, unsolicited physical contact, unwelcome and insulting comments and gestures, and the display or circulation of written materials or pictures that are degrading to any individual, or any ethnic, religious or gender group. All members of the Ryan School Community are expected to adhere to this policy and are strongly encouraged not to tolerate, even by silence, any violation of it by others. Consequences for violating this policy can include mandatory counseling, exclusion from school social events, and suspension from school ranging from one to ten days with notification to the police. Repeated or extreme forms of harassment may result in a recommendation of expulsion from the Ryan School.

Incidences of harassment may result in a hearing conducted by the principal. The parents will be contacted. The totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated. After due process has been afforded, a decision will be rendered. Harassment will be treated on an equal basis with those incidents involving bias or hatred. Since harassment may involve state and/or federal law, the Tewksbury Police may be asked to offer assistance, clarification and/or direction. For compliance issues, parents should contact:

Assistant Superintendent  
Tewksbury Public Schools  
139 Pleasant Street  
Tewksbury, MA 01876  
Telephone 978-640-7800

Principal  
John R. Ryan Elementary School  
135 Pleasant Street  
Tewksbury, MA 01876  
Telephone 978-640-7880

## **TITLE IX and CHAPTER 622 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Tewksbury Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, color, or national origin in the educational program, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments and Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971. Complete policy available in the Main Office.

A student or employee in the Tewksbury public schools who feels that he/she has a grievance under Title IX or Chapter 622 shall file it in writing to the following:

- Level 1 - Principal
- Level 2 - Assistant Superintendent
- Level 3 - Superintendent of Schools
- Level 4 - School Committee

Students are prohibited from knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during a grievance process, including but not limited to harassment and bullying reports and investigations.

# **HARASSMENT**

## **ACAB Policy**

### **HARASSMENT: SEXUAL**

All students should show respect toward each other in the school setting. Bothering another person with unwanted verbal or physical advances of a sexual nature is unacceptable. Displays of affection are not considered appropriate in the school setting or at school events. These behaviors may lead to disciplinary action.

A student who believes he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should consult the district's sexual harassment complaint procedure, a copy of which is available in the principal's office.

An individual who feels that he/she has been sexually harassed may file a complaint with the following agency. A statute of limitations of 180 days may apply to the filing of such complaints.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA. 02108

### **HAZING LAW**

Massachusetts General Laws - Chapter 269

C. 269,S.17. Crime of Hazing: Definition: Penalty

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or any other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage or 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 other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as defense to any prosecution under this action. Added by St. 1985,c.536; amended by St. 1987,c.665.

C.269,S.18. Duty to Report Hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger of peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable.

Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.  
Added by St.1985,c.536; amended by St.1987,c.665.

**NOTE: If a student is found guilty of hazing at the Ryan School, he/she will be subject to possible expulsion.**

## **FURTHER POLICIES**

This Handbook is amended by any policy or procedure subsequently enacted by the Tewksbury Public School.