

Fort River School Family Handbook

70 South East Street
Amherst, Massachusetts
2016-2017



We **W**ork Hard

We **A**ct Responsibly

We are **V**ery Respectful

We keep **E**veryone Safe

*Diane Chamberlain
Principal*

*Kris Griswold
Assistant Principal*

Dear Fort River Families,

Welcome back to our returning students and families, and if you are joining our learning community this year, we are so glad you are here! The 2016-2017 school year is going to be filled with excitement, learning, new friendships, community building, and growth.

At Fort River, we are proud of our core values represented by the acronym **WAVE**. The *W* stands for *Work hard*; we make a commitment to work hard every day to do our best and be our best selves. The *A* expresses our pledge to *Act responsibly*. The *V* stands for *Very respectful*! Our learning environment is most productive when we respect others and ourselves. The *E* represents our promise to *keep Everyone safe*. Physical and emotional safety is a top priority at Fort River!

All members of the Fort River learning community are dedicated to the development of each child, the whole child. We take pride in our commitment to valuing and nurturing all students, while challenging and meeting diverse learning styles and needs. As we embed our values to develop healthy and happy learners, our work is most effective when there are strong family partnerships in place.

We hope this handbook helps you learn about the everyday happenings at our school. Of course, we welcome you to reach out if you have anything further we can answer for you.

Sincerely,

Diane Chamberlain
Principal

Kris Griswold
Assistant Principal

We need to ensure that every student participates in a rigorous and engaging learning experience.

Commitment to Our Students and Our Community: A vision for the Amherst, Pelham and Regional Schools

We must recognize our students for who they are and must challenge them to excel while balancing their academic progress with expressive, personal, physical, civic, and social development. We must provide our students with the highest quality education possible in order to prepare them for success in a global, interconnected future. The 21st century education at ARPS will enable our students to address challenges we cannot predict, to use adaptive and creative thinking and problem-solving, to understand technology and languages, and to respect and understand diverse beliefs, cultures and backgrounds.

To achieve excellence for our students, we are committed to being the highest quality educational system possible. This includes a commitment to continual improvement, informed reflection, and the collection and analysis of data. As an educational system, we must attract and retain excellent educators who can provide a challenging, relevant and cohesive curriculum that serves the needs of our diverse students. We reaffirm our commitment to a vital and focused program of professional development for our staff and a safe environment for learning and constructive communication for our students. And we commit to the wise allocation of the resources our communities provide.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission

The mission of Fort River Elementary School is the development of the whole (intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative) child in an environment in which all students are appreciated, nurtured, and challenged according to their individual strengths and needs. A Fort River education will foster students' desire and provide the skills and strategies necessary for lifelong learning. Students will also develop a strong sense of caring and responsibility for themselves and others, their community, and our natural resources.

We believe:

- That all children can learn and achieve.
- That we should hold high expectations for all children (and ourselves).
- That all children should be aware of their strengths and challenges and have an active role in creating their success.
- That our environment should be one in which there is unconditional respect and acceptance for all individuals.
- That we are members of a professional learning community that extends to all students and families.

INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS:

FORT RIVER SCHOOL WEBSITE: <http://fr.arps.org/>

Fort River Office:

Hours: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Telephone: 413- 362-1200 /Fax: 413-256-0731

Office and Other Staff:

Principal:	Diane Chamberlain
Assistant Principal:	Kris Griswold
Administrative Secretary:	Karen Bonneau
Receptionist/Secretary:	Suzanne Severin
Special Education Secretary:	Lisa Fretwell
School Nurse:	Linda Stendlund
Kitchen Manager:	Donna Baker
Head Custodian:	Victor Maravilha
Capacidad Afterschool Program:	Danielle Phillips

Lunch/Breakfast Prices:

Student lunch:	\$3.00
Reduced lunch price:	\$.40
Student breakfast:	\$.75
Reduced breakfast price	\$.30
Adult lunch:	\$3.25
Milk or juice alone:	\$.60

School Hours:

Monday -Friday: 8:50-3:10

School Closing or Delays:

District information line: 413-362-1898

Responsibility for closing schools because of snow or other severe weather rests with the Superintendent or, if the Superintendent is not in town, the designee. The decision to cancel or delay school due to snow will ordinarily be made before 6:00 a.m.

School cancellation for severe weather or other emergencies will be announced on the following radio stations:

WRNX/WTTT – Amherst 1430 AM

WHMP – Northampton 1400 AM or 99.3 FM

WHAJ – Greenfield 1240 AM or 98.3 FM

WHYN – Springfield 93.1 FM

WMAS – Springfield 94.7 FM

WPVQ – Greenfield 93.9 FM

Channel 22 – Springfield and Channel 40 – Springfield

Should a weather-related or other type of emergency arise during the school day, it may be necessary to dismiss students after school has begun. Parent/guardians would be notified at their emergency contact numbers to ensure that all children can return home safely. The district may also notify parents via the School Messenger system of an emergency closing.

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Section 3

District Handbook

Procedures and Policies

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The school day begins at 8:50 AM and ends at 3:10 PM. To ensure the orderly arrival and dismissal of all students, we use the following procedures:

Arrival: *Children should not arrive before 8:30, as supervision is not available until then.* Students will begin the day with a morning walk around the school. At 8:42 school staff will open the doors for students to go to their classrooms. Students wishing to have breakfast may proceed directly to the cafeteria at 8:30. Morning announcements are made from the front office at 8:50. Please ask in the office if you are interested in Before-School care.

Dismissal: Students are dismissed by class and then walked to the bus area by their classroom teachers. Parents/guardian vehicles may only enter the parking lot at the side of the building during dismissal time. Buses load at the front of the school. Parents who are picking up their children at dismissal enter through the door on the kindergarten side of the building, and meet children in the Parent Pick-up Room, Cafeteria #1. ***Please note: all parent/guardians must sign their children out of the pick-up room.*** Please do not circumvent this system by asking your child to meet you on the playground or by requesting that your child be dismissed to the office after 2:45pm.

Early Dismissal/Change in Dismissal: **If anyone other than a parent or guardian is picking up your child on a given day, a written note is required to grant that permission.** Students deliver these notes to their teacher upon arrival. All families will be asked to complete a "dismissal plan" form which will be kept on file at the school. If a student is to be dismissed before the end of the day or if there is a change in the way he/she will be going home, this information should be sent in a parent note to school ahead of time. Staff members do not take phone calls for this purpose except on an emergency basis. ***In order to ensure a safe, orderly dismissal time and to avoid disrupting the classroom learning, all changes to the dismissal plan, except for emergencies, should be communicated to the school via written note the student brings to the teacher or office upon arrival. If you are unable to provide written communication, it is essential we get a call by 12:30 to ensure the teachers get the necessary information for dismissal.** If we do not receive a note or a phone call we will send the student home in the usual manner even if the student says otherwise. Written permission is required for another adult to pick up your child.

Bus Passes

Students with notes for riding alternative buses must be sent to the front office first thing in the morning so a bus pass can be provided. Students will not be allowed on the bus without a bus pass.

Drop off and pick up

All parent/guardian drop off and pick up will occur in the side parking lot. In the afternoon, parent/guardians will need to sign their child out from the parent pick up area. The parent pickup is located in the green cafeteria (cafeteria 1) which can be accessed around the back of the school near the playground and the kindergarten entrance. All students who are car riders will need to be signed out prior to leaving the building. This precautionary measure is taken to ensure that students are picked up by a parent/guardian or a designated adult who has consent to do. Please use the outside driveway in front of the school to exit to avoid the bus lane.

After School Care: capacidadprograms.org

The Out-of-School Time partnership between the Amherst Public Schools and the Town of Amherst will continue to serve children with activities and enrichment opportunities that are well-aligned across all three elementary schools. These opportunities will include visual and performing arts, instrumental lessons, cultural and language activities, outdoor education, health and wellness programs, and academic intervention and enrichment through the Five-Colleges Partnership.

Danielle Phillips will once again be the director of the after school program, Cultural Awareness Program in the Arts for Children (CAPACIDAD), at Fort River. Families interested in enrolling their children should contact 413.253.5659 or the link above.

Attendance

Daily attendance is fundamental to a child's success at school. It is imperative that we communicate about your child's attendance so they can be their most successful. We will monitor all students' attendance and late arrivals closely. If we begin to be concerned about the number of student's absences or late arrivals we will send you a letter to alert you of the situation. The guidance counselor, assistant principal or principal will contact you if the problem continues and will set up a meeting to discuss the issue. This plan will support our partnership in working together to ensure that all children have good attendance. The attendance/tardy policy is cited in more detail in the district handbook pages.

Absences

Parent/guardians are asked to call the attendance school number @ 413-362-1201 before 9:25 AM if their child will be absent. This is a voice mail system to report absences. Please include the reason for the absence so we can determine if it is "excusable" or not. Under Massachusetts law, only the superintendent and/or his/her designee (in this case the principal) can officially excuse absences. Absences due to illness, death/major family crisis, court case or religious in nature can be excused and parents/guardians must call the school by the time designated each day the student will be out. If you do not call this number you will receive a message from our School Messenger system, and your child will be marked for an 'unexcused absence'. Absences are tracked daily by our office staff who will be monitoring our attendance records. A doctor's note is required when your child is absent three or more days from school or when concerns have arisen about a child's attendance. After five unexcused absences a letter of concern will be mailed to families. Once a child has reached 10 unexcused absences, a conference will be held involving the principal and the guidance counselor to create a plan to address this concern. Please be aware that three unexcused tardies will equal one absence. When a child accumulates a number of absences it begins to seriously impact his/her learning. Therefore, please plan family vacations to coincide with the regularly scheduled school vacation days

Tardiness

Children are expected to be in their classrooms at 8:50 AM ready to begin class. Arriving on time helps children settle into their day in school. The beginning of the day is also important since teachers may have morning meetings, give directions and set an agenda for the day. This is essential information for students. Students who are tardy must sign in at the main office and take a late pass to class. Tardies will be monitored by the office staff. Once a child has received 10 unexcused tardies a letter will be sent home. If tardiness continues, at 20 unexcused tardies a conference will be held with the parents, an administrator, and a guidance counselor to develop a plan to improve the child's timelines.

On-going Absenteeism and Tardiness

A child's attendance and timeliness to school are very essential to their academic success. Therefore, once a student reaches 15 unexcused absences or 30 unexcused tardies, the school will consider this level to be neglect of parental responsibility of ensuring that a child attends school on a regular basis. The school will contact Department of Children and Families (DCF). Fort River follows district policy and abides by MA regulations on student attendance.

When to Keep Your Child at Home

In general, these symptoms warrant keeping a child home for the day:

- **Fever of 100 or more:** Stay home for 24 hours after the fever is gone and encourage fluids.
- **Vomiting or diarrhea:** Stay home for 24 hours after the last episode and encourage fluids.
- **Sore throat:** Note that Strep throat may be present without fever, and may have symptoms of headache and stomach ache.
- **Runny nose, cough:** Often a day or two of rest, and a light diet with extra fluids will help resolve a cold and will help in minimizing the spread of cold virus at school. A child who is feeling run down, losing sleep due to their cold or actively sneezing and coughing is not going to be able to attend to learning.
- **Earaches:** If an earache lasts more than a day or if pain is severe, please see your health provider.
- **Impetigo or other skin rash:** Please have these identified and treated 24 hours before returning to school. Consult with the school nurse with any questions.
- **Pinkeye or conjunctivitis:** A draining, itchy eye that is red must be treated with antibiotic eye medication before the child returns to school.

Please refer to district health policies concerning physical examinations, immunization requirements, accidents, medication policies, vision and hearing tests, head lice, and scoliosis screening in the back of this book.

Visiting Days

An effective way to learn about your child's classroom and the school is to make a personal visit. We have specific days designated for that purpose. There are no visiting days scheduled for the months of September or June. The Fort River School is open to visits each Tuesday and Thursday, October 1st through the month of May. All visitors should sign the log book in the school's main office upon entering the school and obtain a visitor sticker to wear during your visit. Special visits or conferences may also be arranged by contacting your child's teacher. All student information that is observed during a visit must remain confidential. Please note that the goal of visits is to learn about the teaching and learning in our classrooms. Resolving concerns is best handled in meetings with staff and/or administration.

Visitor Admission and Protocols

To best maintain the safety of our students, we will be utilizing the follow protocol to monitor who comes into our building during the school day.

- All visitors will enter the school building through the front door.
- All school doors shall remain locked during the regular school day. Access will be granted to the school via the front door after utilizing the door access bell.
- Access will be granted by school office personnel, the building principal or other authorized person after visual identification is made or the visitor's purpose for requesting access to the school is accepted.
- All visitors will be directed to the school main office where they will sign a visitor log and obtain a School Department Visitor Badge.
- Visitors who fail to report to the main office to sign-in or obtain a visitor badge will be reported to the building principal or other authorized person for investigation.

Breakfast and Lunch

Breakfast and lunch are served each school day. Breakfast is served from 8:30 to 8:50 a.m. Children may either bring lunch or buy a hot lunch (including milk) at school. Each month's menu is posted on the website so that parents/guardians may plan ahead accordingly, and the monthly menu is posted on the school's web site. Hot lunch costs \$3.00 per day, milk or juice alone is \$.60 and breakfast is \$.75. Please make checks payable to the Amherst Public Schools. Parent/guardians may also pre-pay for their child's lunch online. The Food Service Department of the Amherst Schools provides parent/guardians a convenient, easy and secure online pre-payment service to deposit money into your child's school meal account at any time.

Online Pre-payment system for the cafeteria:

This service also provides parents the ability to view your child's account balance through a web site called MyNutriKids.com.

By having money in each child's account prior to entering the cafeteria, we find the lunch lines move along much faster so your child has more time to eat and be with friends. Also, parents will have the ability to print out a copy of their child's eating history report. This history report will show you all dates and times that your child has purchased a breakfast and or lunch within the past thirty days.

To access these services:

1. Simply go to the district web site at www.ARPS.org.
2. Click on the Food Services link.
3. Click on the MyNutrikids.com link. From this site you will create your account and add money to your child's school meal account. All you need is your child's name, student ID number and school ZIP code (01002). The instructions listed on the back of this page will guide you through the easy online account setup process. Please contact the school office for more information.

Families may be eligible for free or reduced lunch meals. Information and applications are sent home at the beginning of the

school year. If you believe you may qualify, please fill out an application. Children who received free or reduced lunch price meals last year continue to receive them through the first few weeks of the new school year, but new applications need to be filed as soon as possible.

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Allergy Awareness /Food Safety

There are children in our school with very severe, potentially life-threatening food allergies. These children have anaphylactic reactions if they eat, and some cases, come in contact with these foods. The reactions can cause a closing of the airways, and possible death, if emergency treatment is not administered immediately.

Therefore, we are a tree nut free zone. All food items including nuts and nut butters are not permitted.

We need your cooperation in reducing the danger of exposure to these students by doing the following:

Sending food items for classroom/school celebrations that **are packaged with ingredient labels** or fruit/veggies . We are not able to allow home baked items

In addition, please remind your children that ***there is no eating or handling of food on the bus to and from school.*** Also, on the bus:

- No breakfast is to be carried on to the bus
- Food must remain in lunch boxes.
- There is to be absolutely no sharing or trading of food at any time.

Fragrances

Some of our students and staff members suffer from severe chemical sensitivity. Their reactions to a variety of fragrances can cause a multitude of symptoms including severe migraines, respiratory difficulty, asthma episodes, vomiting, red itchy eyes, etc. A reaction can be triggered from exposure to the softest scent or to a combination of multiple scents. Each individual responds differently. What we do know is that the reactive person can become very ill. Potentially, a multitude of perfumes, colognes, lotions and hair products could come into our building on any given day. **For this reason we ask children and adults to refrain from wearing fragrances in the school building.**

Field Trips

Field trips are organized throughout the school year to enhance classroom curriculum. Permission from a parent/guardian is required for children to participate. Permission slips will be sent home before each class field trip. Students are expected to follow the same standards of behavior that are expected while on school grounds. Students choosing not to follow these standards of behavior while on a field trip may be returned to school and/or lose the privilege of going on subsequent trips. If there is a cost for field trips that is a financial burden upon parents, please contact the school as scholarships are available. **No student will be prevented from attending due to financial reasons. A signed and completed permission slip is required for every field trip.**

All parent/guardians attending field trips, as chaperones, are required to complete a CORI form. Forms are in the main office.

Homework Guidelines

As a school community, we believe that homework creates an opportunity to create a link between school and home as well as the promotion of life-long learning skills. Specifically, homework can help students to develop skills (e.g., reading comprehension, study habits, computational fluency) related to student achievement. Homework can support students to become responsible for their own learning. Homework serves as a communication tool between home and school. Toward this end, teachers provide feedback to students. Teachers monitor the frequency and quality of completion to inform instruction and to facilitate school-home communication. Homework completion information is communicated to students and parents/guardians.

- If students are experiencing difficulty with homework assignments, students and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to communicate with the classroom teacher such that homework assignments can be modified to minimize frustration and promote student independence. Parents and students are encouraged to write comments/notes on the homework.
- The purpose for students to engage in independent (and shared) reading on a nightly basis is to promote the love of reading. Parents/guardians are encouraged to read and to talk with their child about the books they are reading. The

classroom teacher can provide assistance in identifying high-interest books that can be read independently.

- In grades 3-6, students may have the opportunity to work on multi-day projects which promote executive functioning and planning skills. It is assumed that these projects can be completed independently without home assistance.

Becoming Independent Learners

Families can support their children's development in becoming independent learners in many ways. Setting up a quiet work place and establishing a regular homework routine create good study habits. Homework helps children take responsibility for their own learning. Even if a child says that he/she has no homework, the time can be used for independent reading. Children can also learn how to organize their school work and backpacks for the next day.

Telephone Policy

We ask parents/guardians to plan ahead so that phoning children at school is unnecessary except in emergencies. We also ask families to plan ahead for appointments and limit early pick-up as much as possible, limiting incoming messages to students for emergencies. We will always deliver phone messages from parents and guardians to their children, but under normal circumstances, we will not page children to come directly to the phone. We will not deliver messages to children from people unknown to us without permission.

Teachers are not generally available to speak with parents and guardians on the phone during the school day. Ordinarily, if a parent/guardian calls a teacher, we will take the message to the teacher who will return the call at her/his earliest convenience. We also encourage email as a form of communication with teachers.

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Students should not have cell phones or devices at school. However, if you feel it is vital for your student to have one for before or after school, please send in a *signed permission note* to the teacher so we know you are in agreement that the student must have it. To ensure student attention is focused upon school, students are not permitted to use or view cell phones/electronic devices during the school day, so they must be stored out of sight. If a parent/guardian must contact a child during the school day, please call the Main Office (362-1200). If a student is using or viewing cell phones/electronic devices (including text messaging, game system and other functions) in the school building, the cell phone/electronic device will be confiscated and will be returned to only the student's parent/guardian. We also ask that adults refrain from using phones or devices in public spaces in the school. We cannot be responsible for the loss or damage of such electronic devices.

Internet Safety and Social Networking Sites

The internet is a wonderful and wide reaching tool for adults and children alike. However, it also can pose dangers if precautions are not taken. Unsupervised access can put both your child and your own data at risk from predators. Some children also have access to the internet with cell phones which are even harder for parents to monitor.

Social networking sites, like Instagram, Facebook, and even Club Penguin and Mind Craft have become especially popular with children and teens and can have both benefits and hazards which should be addressed. Though many social networking sites do have age limits, children as young as 7 and 8 have been known to violate these rules by signing up with false birth dates and/or names. In addition, young people often post their full names, contact information and other revealing facts about themselves on their pages. While there are safety features on social networking sites that can prevent strangers from viewing some information, children and teens often do not use these privacy options, and even when they do, their information is never completely private.

Because the content of these networking sites is uncensored, your child can be exposed to all sorts of profanity, inflammatory, violent or sexually-charged language, whether it comes from a "friend," ads targeting adults, or from other apps they may have purchased. This uncensored on-line environment is the perfect backdrop for 'cyber-bullying,' in which students are harassed online (or by cell phone) by other young people. This can take the form of e-mails, texts, chats, personal quizzes, or photos posted to make another person uncomfortable. As there are many areas online where students are exposed to confusing and possibly inappropriate and hurtful material, it is important to be actively involved in your children's internet life and be aware of what sites they are using and how they are presenting themselves. Please contact a school administrator immediately if your child has been a victim of any form of 'cyber bullying'. Since children and teens are fully involved in experimenting and

exploring the internet, their use should be supported in a supervised and productive way so that they will grow to be responsible digital citizens. For more information on keeping your child and yourself safe online, visit some of the following sites: www.wiredsafety.org/, www.staysafeonline.org, <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/>

Internet Safety Tips for Families

- Keep the computer or devices in the family room or another open area of your home.
- Talk to children about not responding to offensive or dangerous e-mail, chat, or other communications. Report any such communication to local law enforcement. Do not delete the offensive or dangerous e-mail.
- Look into safeguarding programs or options your online service provider might offer. These may include monitoring or filtering capabilities.
- Talk to children about what to do if they see something that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. Show them how to turn off the monitor and emphasize that it's not their fault if they see something upsetting.
- Remind children to tell a trusted adult if they see something that bothers them online.

Standards of Dress and Appearance

The intent of these standards is to encourage all concerned to dress, groom, and conduct themselves in keeping with an atmosphere which reflects an awareness of the overall purposes and functions of the school.

- Students should wear shoes or sandals held securely on the feet for protection when on school grounds and aboard school buses.
- Students should not wear decorations, symbols, mottos, or designs on the body or clothing showing unacceptable products (such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs) or inappropriate pictures or words. Students should not wear clothing that contains obscenities, fighting words, incitement or defamation on them.
- Students should arrive each day at school with clean clothes, bodies, and hair, in keeping with the practice of good hygiene.
- Students should not wear see-through clothing or halter or tank tops with thin straps, nor should they wear tops that leave the stomach showing, back showing, short shorts, or miniskirts. (You can use the tips of your fingers with your hands at your sides as a good estimate of an appropriate length for your shorts or skirts.)
- Students should wear clothing that lets them move and play safely, especially when physical education is scheduled: for example, sneakers, shorts/pants, and t-shirts.
- Students' clothing should be worn appropriately. For example, pants are to be held securely at the waist.
- Jewelry should be worn in a way that does not present a safety or health hazard nor cause a major distraction to the educational process. Wallet chains are not permitted.
- Students should not wear hats inside the school building unless previously approved by either a teacher or principal.
- Wheelies are not permitted.

The Fort River School Administration will contact you if we determine that a student's dress/appearance does not meet school standards.

Winter Wear Guidelines

In our elementary schools, children go outside for recess on a daily basis so it is important for them to dress appropriately for the weather. When the temperature is cold outside children should wear additional clothing (i.e. sweatshirts or jackets and long pants) when going outdoors. When the weather approaches freezing temperatures, the children should have a hat, mittens or gloves and warmer clothing when going outdoors. To walk in snow, students must wear waterproof boots. To play in the snow, (go sledding, roll around, etc.) students must wear snow pants. Please send your child to school with clothing appropriate for varied weather conditions. In particular, please note that students should have shoes, sneakers or slippers for indoor wear, if they are planning to walk in the snow.

On very cold days our staff will look closely at the wind chill factor in order to ascertain if there is any danger of frostbite. If there is no threat of frostbite we will hold outdoor recess even on cold winter days. Proper clothing ensures that this winter play is comfortable, safe and fun.

Lost and Found

Many items of clothing, lunchboxes, etc., turn up in our lost and found. Check in with the office if your child is missing something and they will direct you to the Lost & Found. Periodically items are put on display for parent/guardian viewing. At the end of the year, unclaimed items are donated to charity.

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Items brought from home

Unless you have made a special prior arrangement with your child's teacher, or there is a specific "share day" only books should be brought to school for general sharing. Please refrain from allowing your child to bring electronic equipment, or other items that can be broken or misplaced, particularly iPods, Game Boys, and other small electronic devices. The school cannot be responsible for items that are lost or damaged.

Classroom Placement

Our professional staff will meet in the spring to carefully construct the class placements for the upcoming year. We spend a great deal of time and devote much thought as we examine possible combinations and revise our lists. Our goal is to create balanced classrooms which will thrive as learning communities. In doing so we take into account the individual needs and strengths of all of the children. Parent/guardian requests for specific teachers will not be considered as part of the placement process.

Library Policy

Literacy is the foundation of the Fort River library program. The Fort River Library has a wide selection of up-to-date books and materials that are provided to support both the academic work of students and their personal interests at a variety of reading levels. The instructional curriculum teaches information literacy with emphasis on research skills in order to develop skilled consumers of information and life-long, independent learners.

In regular visits, The Fort River library introduces students to all the genres of children's literature. Fort River students are nurtured to become lifelong readers and lifelong library users. Students are encouraged to borrow books on a regular basis. When a student borrows a book, he/she is responsible for its safe return. Books are borrowed for two weeks and can be renewed. Overdue notices follow after three or four weeks. If the book is not returned, students are then restricted to borrowing one book at a time until the overdue items are returned or renewed. Students are responsible for the replacement of lost or damaged books.

Bus Rules

Respectful and safe behavior, both at the bus stop and on the bus, is essential. The bus is where many of our students begin and end their school days, so we want the bus ride to be a positive experience for all. If your child complains of problems on the bus, please let his/her teacher, the principal or assistant principal know immediately. Children who misbehave on the bus will receive a 'bus conduct report' which will be sent home to be signed. If the problems continue they may have their bus privileges suspended for a period of time. Eligible riders will not be permitted to get off the bus at any stop other than their usual one unless they have a note from a parent/guardian. For their own safety, kindergarten children must be met by a parent/guardian or designated adult at their bus stop or they will be taken back to the school and a parent/guardian will be called to pick them up.

State law requires that cars stop whenever a school bus indicates it is loading or unloading children by flashing red lights and showing a stop sign. This law also applies to the bus entrance in front of Fort River School.

BUS RULES (Parents, please review the following rules with your child. We also ask that you supervise children as they wait for the bus)

1.) STUDENTS WAITING FOR THE BUS

- A.** Be on time for the bus, but do not arrive at your bus stop earlier than ten minutes before the time at which the bus usually arrives.
- B.** Do not allow younger children who are not yet attending school to accompany you to the bus stop.
- C.** Observe all safety precautions while waiting for your bus.

1. Do not play in the road.
 2. If possible, avoid crossing streets.
 3. Whenever you must cross a street, do so only if you are sure that no moving vehicles are approaching you from either direction.
 4. Do not push, pull or chase any other pupils.
 5. Avoid trespassing on private property and being noisy
- D.** As your bus approaches, line up at least six feet off the highway and do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the Driver has opened the door. Again, avoid pushing others in line.

2.) LOADING ON THE BUS

- A.** Get on your bus quickly and be seated at once.
- B.** Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver. At school, stay behind the white line while waiting to get on your bus.

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3.) RIDING ON THE BUS

- A.** Eating food is prohibited on the bus.
- B.** Throwing items on the bus is not allowed.
- C.** Keep all body parts inside the bus.
- D.** Stay in your seat.
- E.** Avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract your driver and lead to a serious accident.
- F.** Help to keep your bus clean and sanitary.
- G.** Be courteous to other pupils.
- H.** Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver.

4.) UNLOADING FROM THE BUS

- A.** Do not leave your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door.
- B.** Again, obey any directions issued by the driver.
- C.** Leave the bus quickly but in a courteous manner without pushing any other pupils.
- D.** If you must cross a street as you leave the school bus, be sure to walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus. If you get too close to the front of the bus, the driver will not be able to see you, and a serious accident could occur.
- E.** Be sure to observe all safety precautions as you travel from your bus stop to your home.

5.) LOSS OF RIDING PRIVILEGES

- A.** Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus for a specific period of time.
- B.** Any suspensions will be initiated by school principals with prior notification to parents.
- C.** Suspension of riding privileges for a specific period of time is automatic with a third bus misconduct notice, but suspension for serious infractions may occur after any one infraction.

Cafeteria Rules

In keeping with the district's philosophy to provide a climate that promotes healthy human relationships and to enhance the quality of life for children as well as adults, we believe that everyone has the right to eat in an environment that is clean, positive and safe. To maintain this environment, all students must adhere to the following rules and procedures:

- Manage your time
- Raise your hand for an adult's attention
- Commit to recycling
- Clean up after yourself
- Fuel your body with healthy food
- Inside voices

- Table manners
- Follow adult directions
- Enter, line up and exit quietly
- Eat only your own food
- Stay seated

School Climate and Responsibilities: **A School Where Everyone Feels Safe and Included**

Responsiveness Initiative

The Amherst-Pelham Public Schools has established a comprehensive Responsiveness Initiative to ensure that we have a safe learning environment in which all children know that it is “okay to tell” when they feel uncomfortable about a situation at school or in their lives. The message that we want to give to children is that talking to a trusted adult about a concern is the responsible thing to do. We are striving to create a school where our students know that they can speak up about teasing, bullying or anything that is giving them an uncomfortable feeling without fear of retribution, and that adults will listen and respond to remedy the situation. All adults working in the schools have been trained to be a “First Responder” who will listen to our children and then pass on the concerns to a “Second Responder” who is a member of each school’s Responsiveness Committee. At Fort River the “Second Responders” are Diane Chamberlain, Principal, Kris Griswold, Assistant Principal, Ana Encarnacion, Guidance Counselor, and Ruth Killough-Hill, Adjustment Counselor. This group will make sure that each concern that is brought up is examined and addressed in a timely fashion. Of course, parents/guardians can also communicate issues that their children bring to their attention to the school. At the beginning of each year we will review the importance of ‘responsible telling’.

Social Justice Commitment

The ability to take the perspective of others is an important developmental task for all children to learn. In our elementary schools we attempt to infuse our students’ experiences with opportunities to understand and appreciate others. In creating these learning experiences we build upon children’s natural curiosity and their awareness of the similarities and differences of all human beings. We openly talk to our students about embracing differences and treating others with respect.

The Right to be Safe, Included and Visible

All of the Amherst-Pelham Elementary Schools are dedicated to creating communities in which every family feels welcomed and each child experiences a safe learning environment. We want all children to feel proud of their heritage, to be comfortable being ‘themselves’, and to feel free to express their own interests and talents.

It is important to address all types of biases in elementary schools so that we can prevent the development of prejudices and promote respect when children are young.

There is much we can do to promote a supportive atmosphere for all children and their families. Prejudice persists when members of a particular group are invisible or are unknown or are spoken of in a derogatory manner. As a staff we will interrupt every incident of all types of name-calling and prejudicial slurs. We will openly discuss why these put-downs are hurtful. It is every family and child’s right to be visible, safe and included in our school.

To support our students who may be questioning their gender or identifying as transgender or gender neutral, all of the bathrooms in our quads will be gender neutral. Students will be allowed to use the bathroom one at a time in the quads so that we can ensure safety and respect for all.

Key Messages

The more that school staff and families can work together and give our children consistent messages, the easier it will be for them to understand our expectations. We can build a child's foundation for learning with three basic messages:

1) *What we are asking you to do is important.* 2) *You can do it with effective effort.* 3) *We are not going to give up on you.* The underlying meaning embedded in these three statements is that intelligence or 'smarts' is something that you 'get' through effort and that your abilities can grow throughout your life.

Habits of Mind/Growth Mindset

Schools try to teach students *thinking skills* which will enable them to become life-long learners. These *Habits of Mind* help you when you are faced with new learning challenges. We want our students to take ownership for their learning by saying, "I can try" when faced with a new challenge, by asking questions when they do not understand a concept, by accepting help when it is offered, and finally, by not giving up and working hard to achieve mastery. Mistakes are a necessary part of the learning process. By explicitly teaching thinking skills and modeling 'thinking out loud' students can begin to understand the steps involved in solving a problem. We have infused the work of Carol Dweck and the growth mindset into our school community and will directly teach this to your children.

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Perseverance

Perseverance is an important Habit of Mind which helps students to solve any challenging problem or situation. For example, when children get discouraged and say to themselves, 'I will never learn my times tables,' we can try to teach them ways to develop perseverance. People who persist often are able to step back and analyze a problem and then create a systematic approach to completing the task. Breaking down big goals into smaller steps may help. If our first attempts fail, staying flexible will lead to thinking of alternative strategies. Of course, in order to persevere, students need to manage their frustration level. Being patient and trying to remain calm help them find a solution. The following three questions might help our students persevere: *What do I need to help me succeed? What do I do next if I don't get it right away? How do I continue when the task seems too difficult?*

Assemblies

One important way that we create a vibrant school culture and a strong sense of community at Fort River is by having regular assemblies. These assemblies are vehicles to celebrate our students and their contributions to the school community. During these gatherings we showcase the learning and projects that take place in each classroom. Whenever possible, classroom teachers will inform you in advance when your child's class will be making a presentation at an upcoming assembly.

Zones of Regulation

Another way to strengthen students is by giving them a way to communicate their feelings. We teach students the Zones of Regulation as a way of naming how they feel so that we can best support them, with the goal of returning to their academic tasks (the green zone!).

PBIS

Fort River School is utilizing a PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) model to improve school climate. Our four core values will be taught in a variety of contexts in the school. The Matrix on the following page communicates how students can show their commitment to these values. The PBIS model is a school-wide approach to ensure that we are both clarifying our expectations for student behavior and recognizing the many instances when students are going above and beyond our expectations.

Fort River “ Catch the Wave” BEHAVIOR MATRIX

School Wide Expectations	All settings	Classroom	Cafeteria	Hallway	Bathroom	Playground	Bus / Vans
Work Hard	Strive to be the best person you can be.	Complete all classwork & homework	Manage your time	Follow rules without reminders	All trash in receptacles	Have a plan	Encourage younger students to follow the rules
		Actively listen & participate	Raise your hand for an adult’s attention		Return to class quickly	Agree on rules before starting & follow them	Leave the bus clean
Act Responsibly	Interrupt and report unkind words and actions	Be prepared with all materials	Eat your lunch	Walk quietly	Flush	Line up quickly and quietly	Stay at designated bus stop area
		Manage your time	Clean up after yourself	Keep coat hook and boot well tidy	Alert adults to problems	Invite & include others in play & games	
		Be a positive learning partner	Separate trash from recyclables		Turn off water	Care for and return equipment	Alert adults to unsafe situations
Very Respectful	Treat others kindly	Use inside voice	Use Inside voices	Keep hands at your sides away from walls	Respect privacy of others	Accept skill differences	Use inside voice
		Use positive statements	Say please and thank you		Clean up after yourself	Take turns and be a good sport	Wait for your bus Calmly
		Support others to learn their own way/pace	Follow adult directions			Use appropriate language (no put- downs)	Greet and thank the bus driver
Everyone’s Safe	Stay in control of your body at all times.	Always Walk	Walk slowly	Walk on the right	Always walk	Stay within boundaries	Walk on/off the bus
		Carry materials safely	Eat only your own food	Walk facing forward	Keep water in sink	Use equipment correctly	Stay seated
		Use furniture properly	Stay seated	Watch where you are going	Use facility appropriately	Keep hands and feet to yourself	Keep body to yourself
					Wash hands with soap and water		Walk directly to your destination

AGREEMENTS THAT GUIDE OUR BEHAVIOR:

OUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Fort River is an inclusive school community devoted to learning. Every member of Fort River has important rights and responsibilities which help us create a safe, welcoming community. By honoring this agreement, we will work together to ensure everyone's success.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LEARN IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS FREE FROM DISRUPTION

WE WILL 'DO OUR PERSONAL BEST' AND PARTICIPATE FULLY IN OUR LEARNING ACTIVITIES WHILE RESPECTING EVERYONE ELSE'S LEARNING. **WE WILL:**

- Arrive at school on time
- Be ready to learn on time
- Have materials organized and prepared
- Complete homework on time
- Face the teacher/speaker
- Actively listen and participate
- Always do our best and produce high quality work
- Use appropriate voice level
- Stay on task
- Move quietly throughout the building

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FEEL RESPECTED AND INCLUDED

WE WILL TREAT EVERYONE AT FORT RIVER WITH RESPECT AND HELP OTHERS BELONG TO OUR SCHOOL. **WE WILL:**

- Use appropriate words and tone of voice
- Take charge of our own work and behavior, letting others take charge of theirs
- Include others in our conversations and activities
- Express our own ideas, opinions, feelings and needs, and listen respectfully to others
- Accept responsibility for our own actions

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE PHYSICALLY SAFE

WE WILL RESPECT EVERYONE'S BODIES AND PHYSICAL SPACE. **WE WILL:**

- *Be a walking school*
- Keep our hands, feet, and bodies to ourselves, except when being invited to be helpful
- Face forward while walking in the building
- Use school equipment carefully and appropriately

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO A COMFORTABLE AND CARED FOR ENVIRONMENT

WE WILL TAKE CARE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, OUR PROPERTY AND THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS. **WE WILL:**

- Leave work areas and eating areas clean
- Enjoy bulletin boards and displays by looking and not touching
- Keep our hallway floors clean
- Touch only our own personal property or the property of others we have been given permission to touch
- Reuse and recycle

****There are some students that need more support to meet these agreements than others, and there may be times of disruption for us to manage. If necessary, we will develop individualized plans for students so that they can learn and meet these expectations.**

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and/or bullying (including cyber bullying) of students or staff are extreme violations of the Standards of Behavior. It can also be a violation of civil and criminal law. It will not be allowed in school or at school sponsored activities. Any such offense will result in disciplinary action. If you need to report an alleged bullying incident, please use the form on our web site or contact the Administration or Guidance Counselor.

When is it harassment or bullying?

According to Massachusetts State Law: “Bullying means the severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of: (i) causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or damage to the other student’s property; (ii) placing the other student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; (iv) infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”

It is harassment when a student talks inappropriately about a person's ethnic or national origin, race, color, religion, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or handicap. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- calling a person names and/or putting a person down
- writing comments about a person; for example, on a wall or in a note
- teasing a person about his/her body
- Intentionally omitting a person from an activity

School Safety Plan

Fort River has a comprehensive Safety Plan. Emergency procedures are reviewed and as part of our safety preparedness, we have many drills that we conduct with students present. Each room has displayed a well-marked fire exit plan map and evacuation plans and the staff are trained to respond to several specific safety concerns. We conduct fire drills four times during the school year and bus evacuations twice a year. Fort River also conducts **emergency response** drills with students. Our emergency response drills are focused on evacuation (fire drills) lockdown and shelter-in-place procedures.

We will always communicate to you about any incidents that occur which cause us to implement a crisis safety response at school. Typically, if there is no immediate threat to our school population, we will send a letter home on the day of the response with the students. Safety plans have become standard practice in schools and help us all feel prepared to respond to any situation.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Our school, in conjunction with all of the Amherst Regional Schools, has adopted a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. Response to Intervention is an instructional framework which uses multiple assessment tools in an ongoing way to understand students’ learning needs. At Fort River, the student academic data that we examine includes Teachers’ College reading and writing assessments, the end-of-unit math assessments, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and MCAS scores. Based on this up-to-date data, students receive focused instruction in small groups in their specific areas of need. There will be ongoing progress monitoring to assess how the students are *responding to the intervention* in order to guide our instruction. Our Intervention staff will be using what are called ‘evidenced-based curriculum programs’ since they have been proven to support students’ learning in a systematic way. We have created a half-hour period called the Enhancement Block, which is a time that has been set aside for us to reteach, reinforce or extend skills and concepts in reading and math. While this learning period will take place in addition to the classroom instruction in reading, writing and math, children may also receive extra support during the regular reading and math periods. This model is based on the understanding that students may need extra time and/or support to develop mastery of skills and concepts. As educators and parents we can give our children key messages about learning such as, *we all have strengths and weaknesses* and that *the way to ‘get smarter’ is by sustained, focused effort*. We strive to teach children that with the right combination of support and effort they can master skills that they thought were challenging. The Response to Intervention Model does promise to provide a structure for us to meet the needs of our students in a timely way. If your child is receiving this extra help you will be contacted by the school and informed about what specific skills he/she is working on and how you can support this learning at home.

Second Step and Steps to Respect

The Second Step Program teaches social and emotional skills to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and increase their level of social competence. The lessons, which are taught by our school guidance counselor and classroom teachers, teach, model, practice and reinforce skills in empathy, impulse control, problem-solving, recognition of emotions and anger management. The Steps to Respect program teaches upper grade students to recognize, refuse, and report bullying, be assertive, and build friendships

Home-School Partnership & Communication

Home-School Partnership

The relationship between families and the school is centered on our aspirations for our children. Developing mutual trust is an essential part of this relationship. We want families to be an integral part of every child's educational team. We value each family's viewpoint and know that parents /guardians are a child's first teacher and they offer a unique perspective into the hearts and minds of their children.

School Council

A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, and community members required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C. Meetings are open to the public and parents are encouraged to attend. The function of the Council is to assist the principal in:

- Adopting educational goals for the school.
- Conducting parent surveys.
- Identifying the educational needs of students.
- Formulating a school improvement plan.
- Reviewing the school's annual budget.

We need parent volunteers to serve. If you are interested, please contact sarah.fortriver@gmail.com. We will elect the parent members at our fall open house on October 13.

Parent Guardian Organization (PGO)

The Fort River PGO works to enhance the educational opportunities of our children through fundraising, parent/guardian education, and community-building events. All Fort River parents and guardians are automatically members of the PGO, and no sign-up is needed. We welcome all parents and guardians to participate in any way that is comfortable and convenient for their family. Events and ways to be involved will be included in newsletters, as well as posted on the internet on the Fort River PGO Blog at www.arps.org, click on the Fort River icon, then click on parents, then the PGO link. Also, join the Fort River PGO Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Fort River PGO](http://www.facebook.com/FortRiverPGO).

Student Photographs

Each year the Fort River PGO makes arrangement for a commercial photographer to take individual and class pictures. Photos may be purchased by interested families at a reasonable cost. Picture Day this year is October 18.

School Directory

The PGO publishes an annual directory of school families which helps when organizing PGO events, when children want to call their friends, etc. Please fill out the form at the start of the year so you can be included! Parents and guardians who do not want this information released should notify the school and their information will not be published.

Volunteering in the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools provide a rich array of volunteer opportunities which address the educational needs of all students and support educational programming and school community needs. Fortifying school success for all students fosters language, literacy, social and initiative skills. Community members, college students and parents are encouraged to become volunteers to support learning and to facilitate positive community involvement, partnership and collaboration. There are many volunteer opportunities in our schools throughout the year. Examples are as such: academic tutoring, classroom/office/clerical support, afterschool programs, computer lab, athletic coaching, community events, music and dramatic productions and Parent/Guardian Organizations.

Home-School Communication

Open communication is the foundation of a successful partnership between home and school. We would like to encourage families to communicate directly to their child's teacher about any concerns. Arranging a time to meet, rather than having a brief chat 'on the run' in the hallway, is the best way to discuss serious issues. Each teacher will set up a format for families to get in touch with him/her as well as ways to share information. Our voice mail system makes it easy for families to leave messages for teachers. Individual parent/guardian-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall to discuss your child's progress. A second conference may be scheduled in the spring at the request of either the teacher or the parent. School-wide and classroom newsletters are a valuable source of information. Please develop a system with your child to make sure you get all of your 'mail' in order to avoid missing important news from school. Please check backpacks daily!

Conferences and Report Cards

Report cards are distributed at the beginning of February and at the close of school in June. Individual conferences for all grades are offered in late autumn, primarily during the early release days on October 21st and October 24th. Spring conferences are scheduled at the discretion of either the teacher or the parent/guardian. Parent/guardians are strongly urged to use these conference times to discuss their child's progress. While these are specific occasions to discuss concerns, please contact your child's teacher any time you have a question.

Newsletter

The Fort River Family Newsletter is published monthly. Individual classroom newsletters will also be published monthly, usually distributed on a Friday. It contains announcements, classroom and school activities, and other information relating to school affairs.

Open House

This annual event will take place on the evening of **Thursday, October 13**. Parents and guardians will have the opportunity to meet members of the staff and obtain information about instructional programs. Details will follow in upcoming newsletters.

Questions or Concerns

All questions or concerns about school operations may be initially directed to our secretarial staff. In most cases they will be able to help you immediately.

When you are concerned about school performance, social issues, or things impacting your child, please contact the teacher or guidance staff. It is also important to notify the teacher or guidance staff if an unexpected event occurs at home that may affect your child in school (e.g. death in the family or a separation).

Contact an administrator if repeated efforts to resolve problems directly with a staff member have been unsatisfactory.

Emergency Planning

It is essential that we have a means of contacting every parent or guardian at all times. For the most part, our School Nurse will contact you if your child becomes ill during the school day. Accidents, minor or otherwise, need to be communicated immediately to parents, as well. Our Safety Team uses the Connect-Ed automated calling system for communicating with families in the event that we must unexpectedly close school (such as for a major snow storm), or evacuate the school in case of emergency.

As soon as a child enters school, we must have the following:

- A completed emergency health form

This form ***MUST*** remain up to date and contain multiple approved contacts, so that if you are not available, we can call the person you have designated. **Please keep the school office informed of any changes or additional contact numbers**, at any time during the year. These forms must also be updated at the beginning of each school year, for each child in the family.

FORT RIVER STAFF 2016-2017			
		T= teacher,	P = paraeducator
<u>K-2</u>		<u>Specials Teachers</u>	
Deb Felix	T	Anne White	Music
Susan Raker	P	Nicole Singer	Art
<u>K-3</u>		Kaileigh Keizer	Physical Ed.
Ann Shea	T	Trevor Takayama	Computer Tech
Thyda Ty	P	<u>Library</u>	
<u>T-1 (1st)</u>		Fran Ludington	Librarian
Krista Rondeau & Trish Lagrant	T		P
<u>G-4 (1st)</u>		<u>Guidance Counselors</u>	
Laurie Hickson	T	Ana Encarnacion	
<u>D-1 (2nd)</u>		<u>Adjustment Counselor</u>	
Kim Prince & Karen DeMatteo	T	Ruth Killough-Hill	Room 12
<u>D-4 (2nd)</u>		<u>School Psychologists</u>	
Emily King	T	Pat Schumm	Room 15
<u>H-1 (3rd)</u>		David Rutherford	Room 8
Phoebe Taffel	T		
<u>H-2 (3rd)</u>		<u>Speech & Language</u>	
Stephen Lott	T	Amy Pilger	Room 14
<u>C-1 (4th)</u>		Emily McClung	Room 16
Daniel Bodkin	T	<u>Occupational Therapy</u>	
<u>C-2 (4th)</u>		Karen Duplissie	
H-3Tim Sheehan	T	<u>Physical Therapy</u>	
<u>C-3 (4th)</u>		Mary Lee Austin	H-3
Jonathan Severence/Vera Goodwin-Brown	T		
<u>C-4 (4th)</u>		<u>Health</u>	
John Keins	T	Linda Stendlund	Nurse
<u>F-2 (5th)</u>			
TBD & Carrie Doggett	T	<u>Administrators</u>	
<u>F-3 (5th)</u>		Diane Chamberlain	Principal
Carrisa Ackroyd/Brian Kline	T	Kris Griswold	Asst. Principal
<u>F-4 (5th)</u>			
Omar Almodovar	T	<u>Secretaries</u>	
<u>E-2 (6th)</u>		Karen Bonneau	Administrative
Deb Sawicki	T	Suzanne Severin	Receptionist
<u>E-4 (6th)</u>		Lisa Fretwell	SSO
Tim Austin & Tammy Sullivan-Daley	T		

				21
			<u>Paraeducators</u>	
<u>ELL</u>			Miguel Aquino	P
Victoria Weed	T		Jane Vincent	P
Sylvia Fisher	T		Trish Daole	P
Jane Costello	T		Gail Whitlock	P
Seiha Krouch	P		Camela Moskin	P
<u>Resource Staff</u>			Mellisa Brooks	P
Marie Webber	Room 2		Anne Gage	P
Pam Barsalou	G-2			
Rachmana Santorelli	Room G-3		<u>Building Blocks/Aims</u>	
Betsy Dinger	Room 7		<u>Room A</u>	
Andrea Lyons- ELA Paraeducator	G-1		Kelly Gowan	T
Anne Kornblatt			<u>Room B</u>	
Amy Chang	Room 1		Meghan Carroll	T
Kristen Lynch- Math Paraeducator	G-1		Jen McIntire	BB/Aims
				Coordinator
<u>Instrumental Music</u>			Melanie Collins	Autism Specialist/
Katie LaFond	Winds/Band			Behaviorist
Heather O'Mara	Strings/Orch		Jessica Rudnik	BB Psychologist
Bob Castellano	Strings			
			<u>Paraeducators:</u>	
<u>Custodians</u>			Maria Aquino	P
Victor Maravilha	Head		Jonathan Chavez	P BB
Danny Potter			Linda Petrides	P BB
Eric Alexander			Catherine Campbell	P BB
James Battistoni			Diane Bradway	P BB
			Matthew Chieffo	P BB
<u>Cafeteria Staff</u>			Abby Crouse	P BB
Donna Baker	Manager			
Sunita Timko			Molly Cooksey	P AIMS
Elaine Ryan			Jon Foster	P AIMS
			Nicole Wells	P AIMS
			Tesia Volker	P AIMS
			Dixie Luddy	P AIMS
			Peg Sutfenfield	P AIMS
			Brian Mackey	P AIMS

		Aaron Jensen	P AIMS
		Ashley Robitaille	P AIMS

Amherst-Pelham Public Schools

Code of Conduct Introduction

We believe everyone deserves a safe, supportive, and orderly learning environment.

We encourage appropriate behaviors by teaching, guiding, directing, and providing opportunities for new learning to occur.

We create opportunities for students to practice and succeed in making responsible and effective choices in order to reach their academic potential and contribute to the school community.

In Amherst-Pelham Public Schools, students have rights and privileges as well as responsibilities. While the school system has an obligation to provide an education for all students, we have set high standards for students to conduct themselves in a way that is respectful and helps to build a climate essential for learning. All of the elementary schools have identified core values as part of the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

The purpose of the Code of Conduct Handbook is two-fold:

1. To illustrate expected appropriate and respectful student behaviors
2. To describe inappropriate or disruptive behaviors and the levels of interventions and consequences associated with the behaviors

Equally important to sharing what is expected of students is that school and district instructional practices support character development, the development of self-control, and positive behavior choices. Developing positive and effective student behaviors is best achieved through collaborative partnerships with school, home, and community organizations and agencies. Some important character traits we can assist students in learning are: **responsibility**, **respect**, **trust**, **citizenship**, and **caring**.

Responsibility is demonstrated by doing your best, thinking about consequences, being accountable for choices, and doing what one is expected to do. **Respect** is shown by treating others the way you wish to be treated, using good manners and appropriate language, dealing peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements, and accepting differences among people. **Trust** is built by keeping promises, telling the truth, being reliable, and building a good reputation. **Citizenship** has to do with making your school and community a better place, obeying laws and rules, and respecting authority. And finally, **caring** is showing concern for the well-being of others around you.

We support appropriate student behaviors that facilitate learning and minimize disruption in several ways. *Second Step*, a social skills program which is designed to teach empathy, problem solving skills, self-regulation, and emotion management, is taught in our elementary schools. The Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) framework enables our schools to work towards the development of a culturally responsive climate that promotes positive student learning outcomes with a focus on prevention of behavioral challenges that may interfere with learning.

The focus of this Code of Conduct Handbook is to guide student behavior, to link interventions to improve student behavior, and inform others that will assist school staff in creating safe and orderly environments. The rules and expectations outlined have been developed so that a combination of consistent, fair, proactive, corrective, and instructive strategies will be implemented in every classroom and every school, and opportunities for teachers to teach and students to learn will be achieved. As a result, students, staff, and parents/guardians all benefit.

Levels of Interventions

The Amherst-Pelham Schools utilizes the Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) framework which includes proactive strategies for defining, supporting, and teaching appropriate behaviors to create positive learning environments. Attention is focused on sustaining a tiered system of support to enhance student learning. Students often need encouragement and new skills to improve their behavior and assistance in learning to do so. School staff recognizes that maintaining and changing student behaviors involves a continuum of acknowledgements, supports, and interventions.

(Center for Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, University of Oregon)

Three Levels of Intervention

Level 1—All Students

Includes:

- General curriculum enhanced by acknowledgments of positive behaviors, and clearly stated expectations that are applied to all students

Level 2—Targeted Interventions

Focus on:

- Specific interventions for students who do not respond to universal efforts
- Targeted groups of students who require more support
- Interventions that are part of a continuum of behavioral supports needed in schools

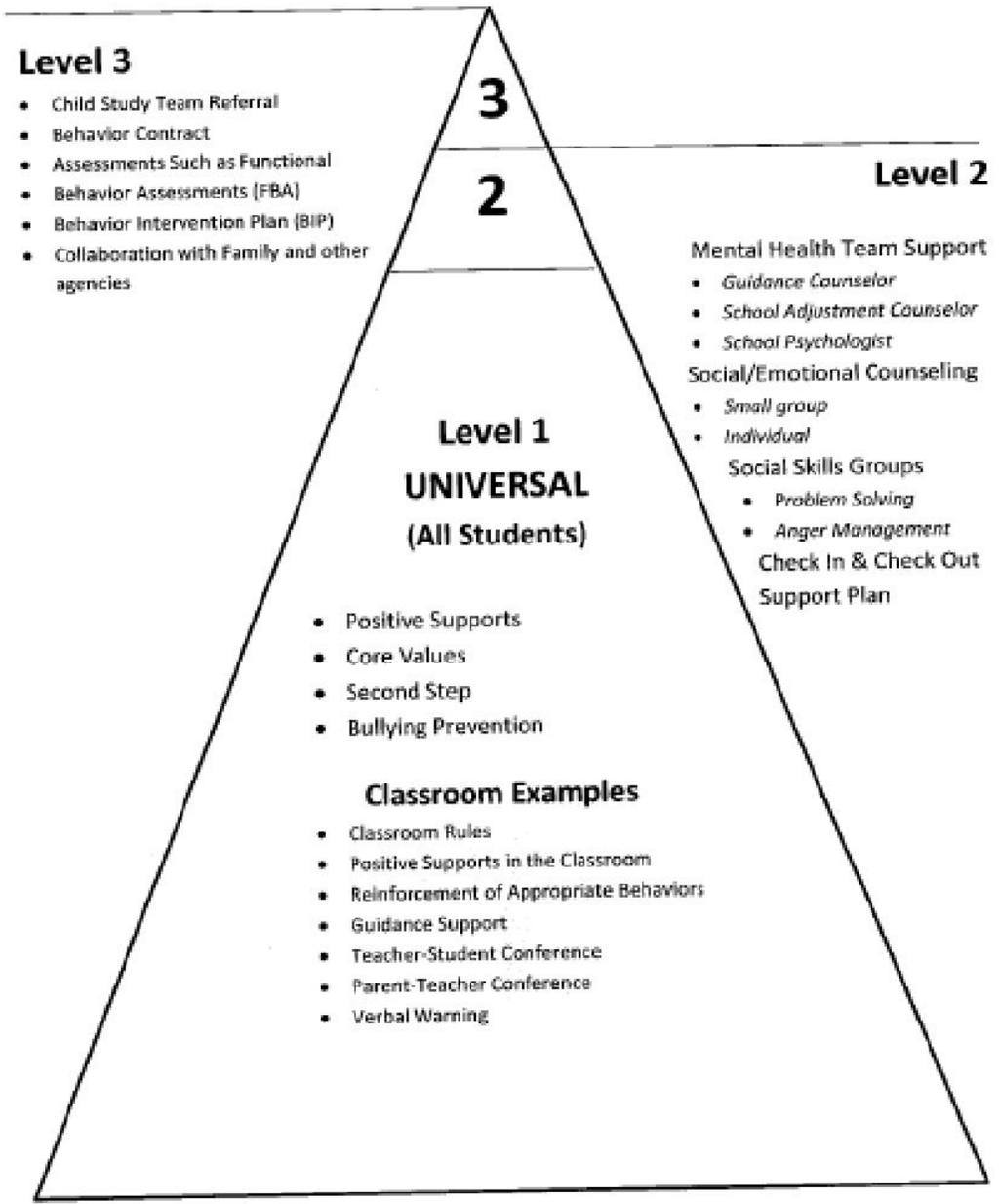
Level 3—Intensive Individualized Interventions

Focus on:

- The needs of individual students who exhibit a pattern of problem behaviors
- Diminishing problem behaviors and increasing the student's social skills and functioning
- Interventions involving functional behavioral assessments and behavioral intervention plans

The Three Levels of Intervention

Interventions may include (but are not limited to) the examples below



The Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all students at all times on school property, including:

- in school buildings
- on school grounds
- in all school vehicles
- at all school, school-related, or Board-sponsored activities, including but not limited to:
 - school field trips
 - school sporting events (*whether such activities are held on school property or at locations off school property, including private business or commercial establishments*)

Levels of Interventions and Consequences for Violations of the Code of Student Conduct

As with any incident of student behavior, school administrators must exercise informed judgment as to whether a student's actions constitute a violation the Code of Student Conduct. The levels, shown on the following page, guide administrators to use progressive interventions to change student behaviors. The administrator always has the option to use an intervention from a lower level as long as one from the prescribed level is also employed.

Levels of Disciplinary Response

When students are disruptive or behave inappropriately, school personnel respond logically, appropriately and consistently. The Amherst-Pelham Public Schools *Code of Conduct 2014-15* describes four levels of possible response to inappropriate or disruptive behavior. Each inappropriate or disruptive behavior category is assigned to one or more of these levels of intervention and response. School personnel should use only the levels suggested for each behavior. If the inappropriate or disruptive behavior is assigned to two or more levels, then the lowest level of intervention and disciplinary response should be used first. For example, if a student refuses to follow directions, school personnel should first use intervention strategies and responses in Level 1 before moving to Level 2. When school personnel respond to student misbehavior, they are expected to take into account the age, health, or special education status of the student; the appropriateness of the student's academic placement; the student's prior conduct and record of behavior; the student's willingness to repair the harm; the seriousness of the behavior and the degree of harm caused; and the impact of the incident when determining the level of intervention and consequences **Repeated chronic or cumulative offenses may require higher levels of interventions/consequences.** For serious violations, interventions/ consequences may begin at a higher level.

