



Regional Multicultural Magnet School Caregiver Handbook



2022 – 2023



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Please note: Changing circumstances, such as the need for health and safety protocols, may cause the policies and guidelines in this handbook to be revised and/or superseded. Any such changes will be communicated as soon as the change is made.

PREFACE

This handbook was developed to provide parents/guardians/caregivers and students with a summary of important LEARN policies and procedures. This handbook is not intended to be all-inclusive and does not contain all of the LEARN policies. The LEARN policies are available online at www.learn.k12.ct.us. All LEARN policies are in compliance with the United States Constitution, Connecticut, federal and local policies. Material contained in this Handbook may be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this Handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. The 2022-2023 Parent/Guardian – Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents/guardians through newsletters, web pages, and other communications. Please contact your school principal or the LEARN administrative office should you have any questions or would like additional information. Consult the district’s website (www.learn.k12.ct.us) or the individual school’s website for any significant changes.

A Letter from the Regional Multicultural Magnet School Principal

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2022 – 2023 school year at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, an IB World School. Along with the staff, I am happy to have you as part of our school family. We are entering our 31st year as part of the greater community of Connecticut. Serving Kindergarten through Grade 5 students, we provide the best possible educational experiences.

We value having a positive relationship with our families. Communication and a strong partnership with parents contribute to an important pathway to the success of the children in our school. Our Caregiver Handbook is one important step in building this partnership. Within the Caregiver Handbook, you will find valuable information regarding RMMS, which will assist you throughout the school year. This includes our Parent/Caregiver - School Compact that outlines each of our responsibilities to ensure a successful, safe and enjoyable academic environment. Please take the time to read through this document in order to gain a better understanding of who we are as a school community and what guidelines and procedures we have in place to help us accomplish our mission as a school.

As Principal of the Regional Multicultural Magnet School, I am honored to be a member of this rich, caring community. I hope you will experience a school year filled with growth and development for your child academically, socially, emotionally and physically. It is also my hope that this year you will make new friendships and connections with other parents/caregivers and staff at RMMS. Please stay familiar with the Parent/Caregiver - School Compact as it is an important commitment, we all need to make to help ensure the success of your child.

We all look forward to a great school year and trust that you will find it a positive one for you and your child.

Sincerely,

Mariana Reyes

Mariana Reyes
Principal

RMMS Quick Reference Guide

Contact Information:

One Bulkeley Place
New London, CT 06320
www.rmms.k12.ct.us
www.facebook.com/RMMS-NewLondon
twitter.com/RMMSNewLondon

RMMS Phone: (860) 437-7775
Attendance Line:(860) 437-7775 press 4
Magnet Kingdom – Ext 7340
School Nurse – Ext 7364
Library – Ext 7380

RMMS Hours

Office Hours:

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM Monday through Friday

School Hours:

Regular School Days: 8:40 AM – 3:10 PM

Early Dismissal Days: 8:40 AM – 12:35 PM

Drop off time at the Carline on Huntington Street:

8:20-8:30- Students **eating** breakfast (Grade 1-5 breakfast will take place in the cafeteria)

8:30-8:40- Students **not eating** breakfast

Any student arriving after 8:40 a.m. is considered tardy.

Magnet Kingdom Hours:

Before School: 6:30 – 8:30 a.m.

After School: 3:10 – 5:30 p.m.

Dismissal Times at the Carline on Huntington Street:

3:10 p.m. – Grades K + 1 and older siblings

3:20 p.m. – Grades 2 + 3 and older siblings

3:30 p.m. – Grades 4 + 5

Early Dismissal Days: Carline on Huntington Street:

12:10 p.m. – Grades K + 1 and older siblings

12:20 p.m. – Grades 2 + 3 and older siblings

12:30 p.m. – Grades 4 + 5

Buses & Walkers start dismissing at 12:10 p.m.

Students not picked up on time will be held at Magnet Kingdom. Parents will be charged according to Magnet Kingdom rates.

Times when Student Pick-Ups is NOT Permitted:

Children should not be picked up between **2:40 p.m. and 3:10 p.m.** on regular school days or between **12:00 p.m. and 12:35 p.m.** on early dismissal days.

Communication

School Messenger

This automated telephone communication service is a courtesy call that allows us to inform families of school closings, delays and other important announcements. The service grabs the “first number to call” from the student registration materials provided by parents. **Please be sure that we always have a current telephone number.**

Talking Points

Families have three easy ways to use TalkingPoints messaging system to communicate with your child’s teacher. You can use text messaging, download the separate app - TalkingPoints for Families - or the web at TalkingPoints for Families

School Cancellations and Late Openings

Snow Days: Due to hazardous road conditions school may be canceled. Please check our website, Facebook page, and/or the LEARN website (www.learn.k12.ct.us) for cancellation information. Notification will also be sent via School Messenger and Talking Points.

TV and radio stations will also carry information about school closings:

WFSB (TV3). ABC (TV 8). NBC (30/4)

WNLC - 1510 AM WICH – 1310 AM

WCTY – 97.7 FM. WSUB – 980 AM

Q105 – 105.5 FM. WOLF – 104.7 FM

Please Note: It is important to check school closings in your home district as well as RMMS. If your home district school is closed there will be NO transportation to RMMS even if RMMS is open.

Start/Drop off Times -Delayed Openings

60 Minute delay: 9:40 start/9:30 drop off

90 Minute delay: 10:10 start/10:00 drop off

2-Hour delay: 10:40 start/10:30 drop off

Early Closing: If the weather causes RMMS to close early, dismissal will be at approximately 12:35 PM depending on bus arrival times. Please continue to check communication avenues (see above) if weather is questionable.

Please note that due to state regulations regarding the timing of meals- no breakfast is served on delayed openings.

RMMS School Compact 2022 -2023

The RMMS Compact is an agreement between the student, the student's family, and Regional Multicultural Magnet School. It outlines each of our responsibilities to ensure a successful, safe and enjoyable academic environment.

The 2022-23 RMMS School Improvement Plan focuses on:

- I. Teaching foundational literacy skills, aligned to our units of inquiry, to support continued academic growth in reading and writing.
- II. Teaching research-based math practices and strategies to support continued academic growth in numeracy and number sense.
- III. Teaching social skills and self-regulation skills explicitly, so that our students are accessible for academic learning and empowered to become agents of change for a more just and peaceful world.

Student Responsibilities:

To improve literacy and math skills as a student, your responsibility will be to:

- Strive to read every day at home
- Notice and use new words
- Think about how numbers are used every day in your life
- Learn your math facts

To support an environment in which students are prepared, healthy, and happy, the student's responsibilities are to:

- Come to school on time every day ready to work and learn.
- Come with homework done and any necessary paperwork completed.
- Come ready to cooperate with all students and all adults.
- Be caring and respectful to all children and adults.
- Get plenty of exercise and rest at home.
- Spend more time on other activities (playing outside and reading) rather than on electronic games and T.V.
- Be willing to try new things.
- Try your best.

To increase overall success in school, the student's responsibility will be to:

- Participate in community building events.
- Make good choices and participate fully in the classroom community.
- Take responsibility for having a positive impact on the community.

- Deliver important information from parents/caregivers to school.
- Follow classroom and school essential agreements

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities:

To improve literacy and math skills as parent/caregiver your responsibility will be to:

- Read at home as much as you can
- Talk about new words with your child
- Support your child's math learning by using math resources provided by your child's classroom teacher
- Help your child learn their math facts at home by practicing them daily

To support an environment in which students are prepared, healthy, and happy, the parent/caregiver responsibilities are to:

- Provide opportunities for your child to experience reading and oral language development every day at home with family.
- Be sure that your child is in school every day on time (8:20-8:40 AM).
- Plan for your child to stay the full day and communicate dismissal changes to the office and your child before 2:20 p.m.
- Attend all goal setting and parent conferences and complete all required school forms in a timely manner.
- Ensure that the school always has current telephone numbers and emergency contacts.
- Monitor the appropriateness and the amount of time your children interact with electronic media.
- Provide the time, space and support for your child to complete homework.
- Inform the school/teacher of any unusual events happening in your child's life that may impact school life.
- Encourage your child to get plenty of exercise and enough sleep.

To increase overall student success and improve communication, the parent/caregivers' responsibility will be to:

- Provide communication regarding your family and your child's needs.
- Attend at least one community-building event.
- Supply timely and clear communication to the school regarding any updated information regarding your child.
- Read communications that are sent home, on the website or any other social media.
- Take the initiative to contact your child's teacher regarding any wonders or questions about your child's learning experiences and/or interaction.
- Play an active role in supporting the success of our school community by reading communications, attending events, and giving of your time, as able.

School/Teacher Responsibilities

To support continued literacy and math growth and development as a school, our responsibility will be to:

- Provide a rich focus on vocabulary development and background knowledge for all students
- Provide rich learning experiences in numeracy that helps each child become a mathematical thinker
- Make reading and math material available at an appropriate level

To support an environment in which students are prepared, healthy, and happy, the school's responsibilities are to:

- Be welcoming and supportive to all children and families.
- Provide an environment that supports the value of all cultures and backgrounds.
- Provide a strong academic curriculum that meets state standards.
- Provide an emphasis on the social development of compassionate children.
- Partner with families to provide the best possible learning outcomes.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide families with timely and clear communications.
- Communicate a love of learning.
- Encourage the importance of exercise and provide an appropriate amount of time for physical activity each day.

To increase overall student success and improve communication, the school's responsibility will be to:

- Create opportunities for parents and teachers to have a common experience that brings our school community together
- Provide consistent and clear communications to families regarding classroom activities and each student's academic and social/emotional progress.
- Provide community-building events in the classroom.
- Support attendance at school-wide community events.
- Collect and act on feedback from students, families, and community partners.

Daily Routines

4.1 School Attendance

Absenteeism Procedure:

Absences have adverse effects on educational progress. Students who are absent from class for any reason are deprived of educational opportunities, student-teacher interaction, and learning experiences shared with their classmates. Although teachers provide opportunities for make-up work for classes missed, there is no way to reproduce or recapture classroom activity.

By Connecticut State Law, parents or those who have the care of children from seven years of age to sixteen years of age are obligated to have each child attend public day school or its equivalent. Students are to attend school regularly during the hours that school is in session. RMMS keeps accurate records of each child's attendance.

If you know that your child is going to be absent or tardy from school, please call the school 860-437-7775 (select 3, then 4 from the menu options) and leave a message providing the following information:

- your name
- your child's name
- teacher's name
- reason for the absence or tardiness
- if your child will need lunch

Whenever a student is absent from school, no matter what the reason or circumstance, *a note from the parent must accompany the student upon his/her return to school.* The written note should include the following information:

- date the note is written
- name of the student involved
- reason for the absence
- date of the absence
- signature of the parent or guardian

When a child is absent for three or more consecutive days for health reasons, the child must bring a *doctor's note* (including the date the child was seen by the physician) to the school nurse for re- entry.

The following definitions are for use by Connecticut school districts and schools for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of section 10-198a of the Connecticut General Statutes (Policies and procedures concerning truants), and for the purpose of reporting truancy pursuant to subsection

(c) of Section 10-220 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The use of these definitions for state purposes does not preclude districts from using separate definitions of excused and unexcused absences for their internal uses (including decisions on promotion/ retention, grading and disciplinary action).

Excused Absences: *A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten*

school days of the student's return to school or in accordance with Section 10-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes and meets the following criteria:

- *For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation.*
- *For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:*
 - A. *Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence);*
 - B. *Student's observance of a religious holiday;*
 - C. *Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;*
 - D. *Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);*
 - E. *The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or*
 - F. *Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators*

Unexcused Absences: *A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:*

- A. *the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements);*
- B. *or the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.*

Disciplinary Absences: *Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from these definitions.*

Tardiness/Early Dismissal Procedure: Please make every effort to have your child at school on time (8:40 AM) every day. Tardiness negatively impacts your child's learning as well as that of the other children in the classroom. He/she will be issued a late slip for admission to the classroom.

Please make every effort to see that your child stays in school for the entire day [until 3:10 PM on regular days, or 12:35 PM on half days]. Early dismissal is detrimental to your child's learning as well as that of classmates. When a child leaves early it disrupts instruction. Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of regular school hours. Should you find it necessary to have your child released early, **you must sign her/him out at the front**

**desk prior to 2:40 PM on regular days, and 12:00 on half days.
Children will not be released between 2:40 and 3:10 PM on regular days or 12:00 and 12:35 on half days.**

4.2 Request for Release of Student

No student shall be permitted to leave the school premises during the school session without authorization from the Principal or his/her designee.

In cases of divorce or legally separated parents, of which case the Principal has been notified, the Principal or his/her designee will require that a legal statement designating the custodial parent or guardian be entered in the child's cumulative file as a decision-making guide for the Principal or his/her designee.

If a child is going home with someone other than the parent or legal guardian, the school office must have a note **and** receive a call from the parent/guardian. We will not release a child to anyone other **than a parent, legal guardian or emergency contact** unless arrangements have been made in advance. Bussed children must go on the bus unless adult contact is made with the school.

Written notice should be sent to the teacher if the child is to be picked up early or will not be riding the bus home. Do not expect us to rely on a child's word, as this is a safety issue.

When a child is picked up prior to the end of the school day, he must be picked up by 2:40 PM on regular days, or 12:00 PM on half days, and the parent must sign the child out in the school office.

4.3 Student Drop-Offs and Pick-Ups Procedures

At RMMS we pride ourselves on having fast, efficient, and safe dismissal procedures. For those families wishing to pick up and drop off their children we have a Carline on Huntington Street and use a program called School Dismissal Manager. [see below for information about School Dismissal Manager] Additionally, adults line up daily on Huntington Street and Bulkeley Place to guide and support students into the school building.

Student Arrival & Dismissal Times

Arrival

8:20-8:30- Students eating breakfast (Grade 1-5 breakfast will take place in the cafeteria)

8:30-8:40- Students not eating breakfast

Any student arriving after 8:40 a.m. is considered tardy.

Dismissal

Carline on Huntington Street

3:10 p.m.- K/1 and older siblings

3:20 p.m.- 2/3 and older siblings

3:30 p.m.- 4/5

Buses & Walkers start dismissing at 3:10 p.m.

Early Dismissal Days:

Carline

12:10 p.m.- K/1 and older siblings

12:20 p.m.- 2/3 and older siblings

12:30 p.m.- 4/5

Buses & Walkers start dismissing at 12:10 p.m.

Information on School Dismissal Manager:

1. New parents have been issued a username and temporary password via email. Returning parents can use their existing parent login credentials.
2. New/Incoming parents will need to add the SDM App to a smartphone, tablet, or web browser **via the link included in this sentence**. The app is compatible with Android and Apple devices.
 - **Android** – Go to the Install tab from the dropdown menu within your SDM account or open a Chrome browser window, go to www.schooldismissalmanager.com, tap *Add to Home Screen*, and follow the onscreen instructions to install the app.
 - **iPhone** – Go to the Install tab from the dropdown menu within your SDM account or open a Safari browser window, go to www.schooldismissalmanager.com, then tap the *Share* button, scroll down, and tap *Add to Home Screen*. Enter the name *SDM* and select *Add* to install the app.
3. The Parent Login area is found at the top right of the SDM homepage.
4. When you log in for the first time, you will be required to change your password immediately.
5. Please refer to the [Parent Guide for Creating Exceptions](#) and How-To videos upon login for details on how to use the system.
 - Default Dismissal = your child's typical dismissal plan
 - Exception = a change in your child's typical dismissal plan

6. As you begin to use School Dismissal Manager, if you have questions, please check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) link found in the Parent login area at the top of the SDM homepage.
7. **Do not** use the Recurring Dismissal feature to put in your child's "default" dismissal.
8. Each school day, School Dismissal Manager will send a comprehensive dismissal report to the school immediately following the cut-off time, allowing administrators and staff to facilitate a smooth dismissal.

Important Safety Information

- Children should leave their car using the door facing the sidewalk and cross *only* at the crosswalk area with staff supervision.
- **Please, NO U-Turns** at the carline on Huntington Street.
- Parents and children should only cross the street at the crosswalk, not between buses.
- **Parents are not permitted to walk their children into the school building unless previously authorized by administration.**

4.3 Safety and Security Procedures

As part of our ongoing review of safety and security procedures, the Emergency Planning Committee has implemented the following procedures:

All students and parents must enter the school through the **front entrance** of the school.

8:40 AM through the remainder of the day, all outside doors into the building are locked. In order to have the front door opened, visitors to the school, including parents, need to contact the front desk by pressing the button on the brick wall to the right of the doors.

For any parent/caregiver who is picking up a child from RMMS at any time, you are required to show an ID and sign the child out at the front desk.

For afternoon Magnet Kingdom, all parents/caregivers must enter the school through the playground entrance, show an ID and sign out their child at the front desk.

4.4 Before and After School Care - Magnet Kingdom

Magnet Kingdom is the before and after school program at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School. The program operates in the morning from 6:30 to 8:30 AM, and in the afternoon from the end of school until 6:00 PM. The program offers a blend of academic, enrichment, and recreational opportunities. For more information visit our Website, or call Adriana DeGrafft at extension 7340.

4.5 School Breakfast

Breakfast is available to students each day. This year, breakfast will be in the cafeteria for students in Grade 1 – 5 and in the classroom for students in Kindergarten. The cost for breakfast is \$1.45. The cost for those students who receive reduced lunch is .30 cents. Those who receive free lunch are also eligible to receive a free breakfast. Breakfast is served from 8:20 – 8:40 AM each day. Due to state regulations, no breakfast is served on delayed opening days.

4.6 School Lunch

Lunch is served in our cafeteria. Students will be served cafeteria style and will have assigned seating. Students may also bring lunch from home. Students will be expected to clean up their own area.

SLA Management provides lunch for RMMS students. Menus are available on our website. The lunch price, including milk, is \$2.85 per day. The cost for reduced lunch is .40 cents. Milk is also available separately for .75 cents; regardless of free or reduced lunch status. There is no provision for milk only at a reduced or free rate.

Payment in advance is expected. Breakfast/Lunch can be paid for in advance for a week, month, or even the entire school year, using cash, checks, or credit cards. SLA has an online system that is easy and convenient for our families to manage their student's account with the click of a button. LEARN and RMMS strongly encourage families to utilize the online system to manage your student's cafeteria account. To create an online school account please use this link:

<https://www.schoolpaymentportal.com/Default.aspx>.

If a family decides not to use the online account system, a student may bring money to the front desk and pay for food daily, weekly or monthly. Payment should include your child's name and teacher's name. If you have any questions, contact SLA's Customer Service at 1-407-740-7677 and send an email to online@slamgmt.com

Free and reduced lunch applications are mailed home over summer vacation and must be returned to the main office prior to the return of students to school for the upcoming school year.

4.7 Lunchroom Behavior Practice



A very important part of our focus as a school is the Responsive Classroom philosophy and practice. For the first few weeks of school, staff and students will model and practice positive and safe behavior while children are having their lunch. While they are eating, they will carry out the following important rules and practices:

- Using kind words in asking for help and in talking to others
- Facing their tables and food while eating and waiting until they swallow their food before talking to others.
- Cleaning up after themselves when they finish eating.
- Using inside voices when having a lunchtime conversation.
- Practicing appropriate social conversation with friends at their table using inside voices while having a meal.

These behaviors are practiced and reinforced throughout the school year.

Parents/caregivers can reinforce these behaviors and practices at home. All of these steps will contribute greatly to the students' development in this area.

4.8 Homework

Homework is an integral part of the instructional and learning process and an extension of the classroom. Homework allows the student to review, reinforce and supplement the material which is taught during the school day. Students who do constructive homework shape useful skills, learn self-discipline, time management, responsibility, and develop constructive attitudes.

Homework may include written responses, reading assignments, project work, playing math games or discussing ideas. The amount of time required for homework varies depending on the student's personal organization, desire and background in the subject matter.

Homework assignments will:

- be related to classroom instruction
- be age and developmentally appropriate
- be appropriate to the needs and ability of the child
- be appropriate to each student's language proficiency level
- provide reinforcement and enrichment of classroom instruction
- emphasize critical thinking and problem- solving
- emphasize quality over quantity
- be reviewed in a timely manner and oral or written feedback will be given to the student as needed to support student learning
- be as relevant to the student's life as possible
- be the responsibility of the student
- be monitored by parents/caregivers who should provide guidance, but not answers

Guidelines for homework in a typical week. Students can expect to have written homework Monday through Thursday. This may vary based on other school activities. These amounts of time include the child's daily reading. Family situations will be accommodated. Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of personal and family well-being, and the wide array of family obligations experienced in our society today. Communication between home and school is important in helping us best meet your child's needs.

Level Homework (including reading)

Kindergarten	10-15 minutes
First grade	10-20 minutes
Second grade	20-30 Minutes
Third grade	30-40 Minutes
Fourth grade	40-50 Minutes
Fifth grade	50-60 Minutes

Completion of assigned homework

If a student is regularly unable to complete homework in the amount of time specified for their grade level, caregivers should communicate with the classroom teacher

If homework is not completed for a specific reason on a given day, parents/caregivers should communicate with the classroom teacher regarding reasons.

If a student repeatedly does not complete homework, the teacher will contact the parent/ caregiver to discuss strategies to help the student be more successful. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to communicate with their child's teacher with any thoughts or questions regarding their child's homework.

Guidelines for Nightly Reading Assignments

The purpose of daily reading is to help develop reading as an essential life-long skill and to build reading stamina. Reading every day helps improve vocabulary, concentration, memory, discipline, creativity, and compassion. Reading embodies the RMMS spirit: Empowering children with knowledge and respect for our world while preparing them for the future.

- It is recommended that students read every night.
- Reading to your child is an essential part of their development as life-long learners.
- Listening to audio books, reading to the child, reading environmental text are all examples of a child's nightly reading.
- Parents/caregivers are encouraged to read to their children in their first language. **These reading activities count as part of their daily reading.**
- Reading practice should continue through the weekend and vacation periods, including the summer months.
- Below are guidelines by grade level for recommended nightly reading

K - 1	10 - 15 minutes
2 - 3	15 - 20 minutes
4 - 5	20 - 30 Minutes

Long Term Projects

Once or twice a year, long-term projects such as 4/5 Music, K/1 "100 Day" projects and 2/3 Special Day projects need to be worked on consistently both inside and outside of school while balancing other homework and activities.

*In partnership with families, students might also bring home assignments to support ongoing goals. *

4.9 Dress Code

RMMS assumes that children will come to school dressed appropriately to engage in a wide variety of activities. Children go out for recess every day in good weather and will need comfortable shoes to fully participate in activities.

- In winter it is important that children wear gloves and hats to keep warm. On snowy days, boots will help to keep children's feet dry.
- Children are requested to wear hats for outdoor activities only. They are not to be worn in the classroom.
- Children are encouraged to wear safe shoes every day. "Flip-flop" sandals are not considered safe shoes and **should not** be worn by students.

We expect all children to dress in a manner that is appropriate and respectful to others. Some examples of clothing considered inappropriate include:

- T-shirts or shirts with inappropriate slogans or pictures.
- Hats (unless it is a special day).

For safety reasons, it is important that children wear sneakers for gym class. Children wearing open toe shoes (sandals), heels (including cowboy boots), and shoes with open backs (like clogs) will not be allowed to participate in PE class. Please see that your child wears appropriate footwear on PE day so that he or she can participate fully in the physical education program.

4.10 Student Records

- While students are enrolled at RMMS, a permanent record is kept for that child. The LEARN policy #5125 provides specific information regarding responsibilities for and access to student records.
- Once a parent/guardian decides to remove their child from the RMMS school program, they need to sign a *Release of Records* form to allow RMMS to send the school records to a receiving school.
- The *Release of Records* can also originate at the student's new school. Once a signed *Release of Records* form has been received from the new school by RMMS, the student's original school record will be sent to the school.
- A copy of the student's school records are not kept by RMMS. Once the files are sent and signed off, they are "owned" by the new school. If parents contact us for information or change their minds regarding the school after the files have been delivered, they have to contact the school to which the files have been delivered.

5. Travel Before, During, and After-School

5.1 Field Trips

Field trips are enrichment programs that are an essential part of the curriculum and are scheduled throughout the school year. Permission slips to cover all walking field trips are sent out with registration information. Additional permission slips will be sent out to cover each educational and cultural trip that utilizes bus transportation. Please return these slips promptly to ensure that your child can participate in these experiences.

Students are usually charged a field trip fee to cover the cost of admission to special programs and bus transportation. Though the fees are necessary to make the field trips possible, they are not intended to exclude anyone. Often parents are asked to make additional field trip donations to make possible scholarship monies for those students in need.

Parents may be asked to serve as chaperones on field trips. Only a specified number of parents can be taken on trips. When a parent attends as a chaperone, they are **not** to bring other siblings along. Parents who are not selected to attend should not show up at the field trip location and expect to join the trip. Court cases involving insurance coverage have held schools responsible for additional attendees on field trips even when the school did not authorize the additional persons. We cannot risk losing our insurance coverage by adding unauthorized participants on our trips. Unless it is an emergency, parents should not go to the field trip destination to pick up their child.

Students should not be dropped off at the field trip location unless specific arrangements have been made with the teacher or administration staff.

5.2 Bus Discipline

Safe conduct on the bus is required so that the driver can concentrate on driving. Major incidents of bus misbehavior will be reported to the school by the bus drivers. An administrator or designee speaks with the child, and then calls the parent/caregiver to make them aware of the situation and to discuss consequences. The consequences include verbal warnings, assigned seating, and bus suspension.

If a parent/caregiver is concerned about bus behavior, the school should be contacted through our behavior specialists. At times, if children on a bus require assigned seats, parents will be notified regarding the arrangement. For safety reasons, food and drinks are not allowed to be consumed on the bus.

6. Health Procedures

All parents/caregivers who come to the school to visit the Health Room will need to do the following:

- Wait at the front lobby area until the front desk receptionist calls the Nurse in the Health Room to see if/when they are available to meet with the parent/caregiver. This includes when a sick child is being picked up from school.
- The health of a child is a cooperative effort of home and school. It is necessary for the home to see that each child has a good night's rest and a good breakfast before coming to school. Children should be sent to school clean. Hygiene and good selfcare habits are important for good health. A child with a severe cold, fever, sore throat, vomiting, rash, head lice, eye infection or any other symptom of a contagious disease should be kept home. If a child is well enough to return to school, he/she should be able to participate in all activities. **A child will not be kept in from recess unless there is a note from the doctor.** If a child is permitted to come to school on a doctor's recommendation with crutches, cast, etc., there should be a letter from the doctor giving limitations, if any, and any changes in transportation procedures from parents.

Children who are sent home from school with a fever or vomiting should not return to school until the child is free of fever or vomiting for 24 hours. Children who have had head lice or scabies must be checked by the nurse before readmission.

Children with impetigo, bacterial infections of the eye, or streptococcal infections may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic therapy has begun. This policy is two-fold: A child recovering from an illness has a weakened resistance and is susceptible to other illnesses and it is to protect other students from any lingering illness your child may have. A note from a physician stating the child is free from communicable diseases will be accepted in all cases.

If your child is to be given medication at school, state law requires a permission form signed by the doctor and the parent. This permission form and the medication must be given to the nurse.

Forms are available in the nurse's office. Children are not allowed to carry medication to school to take on their own (e.g. aspirin, throat lozenges). Parents are welcome to come to school to give a dose of medicine.

Several routine health screenings are given to each child during the school year. These include hearing, vision, and postural screenings. Should your child need

further examination by a professional, the parent/caregiver will be notified by the school nurse.

Immunizations:

All students entering the school system **must have up-to-date immunizations** for polio, rubella, measles, DPT, mumps and Hepatitis B, as well as a hematocrit test. A physical examination is required prior to admitting new students entering kindergarten or coming from out of state.

Chronic Diseases:

It is the responsibility of the parents of children with chronic conditions to report such conditions to the nurse or administrator. School personnel shall abide by the instructions of the private physician and Health Care Plan written by the LEARN nurse.

Children Wearing Glasses:

It is of utmost importance that each child take the responsibility of seeing that his/her glasses are brought to school every day. Otherwise a day of learning is lost. Safety glasses are encouraged for sports activities.

6.1 Health Emergencies

If a child becomes ill and needs to go home, parents/caregivers will be notified. It is their parent's responsibility to come and get the child. If this is impossible, arrangements should be made with an authorized person to do so. Please make sure your emergency contacts and numbers are kept current.

6.2 Allergy Guidelines

Regional Multicultural Magnet School Students with Special Health Care Needs (Adopted January 2014) The Regional Multicultural Magnet School recognizes that allergies may be life-threatening. For this reason, our school is committed to developing strategies and practices to minimize the risk of accidental exposure to allergens and to ensure prompt and effective medical response should a child suffer an allergic reaction while under school supervision. We further recognize the importance of collaborating with parents and appropriate medical staff in developing such practices and encouraging strategies to enable the student to become increasingly proactive in the care and management of his/her allergy, as developmentally appropriate. We have adopted the following administrative regulations related to the management of life-threatening allergies for students enrolled in our school. It is recognized, however, that the school cannot guarantee the elimination of allergens from the school environment. While this plan focuses on life-threatening allergies, treatment of serious allergic reactions

and/or anaphylaxis will be managed via individual health care plans (IHCP) whether caused by food, insect sting, latex, or exercise-induced

Overview

In severe allergic cases, consuming a food, being stung by an insect, or being exposed to the allergen to which one is allergic can cause a life-threatening reaction called anaphylaxis - a systemic allergic reaction that can be severe and sometimes fatal. The first signs of anaphylaxis may be a feeling of warmth, flushing, tingling in the mouth, or a red, itchy rash. Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure, but may be delayed. Sometimes symptoms resolve, only to recur or progress a few hours later. Without immediate treatment, anaphylaxis may cause death.

Prevention is essential in managing life-threatening allergies but is prepared for emergencies. Anaphylactic reactions caused by food allergies can be potentially life-threatening. Those who have experienced an anaphylactic reaction to food must strictly avoid that food. Students need to know how to use (age-appropriate) injectable epinephrine and antihistamines to treat reactions due to accidental ingestion. Call 911 if an EpiPen is administered or an emergency situation exists.

Symptoms of Anaphylaxis

Symptoms of anaphylaxis can be reversed by treatment with injectable epinephrine, antihistamines, and other emergency measures. Anaphylaxis is a "systemic reaction," which means that various parts of the body are affected that are a distance from the allergen's initial entry site (e.g., a sting site for insects or the stomach for foods). Symptoms of anaphylaxis can vary from mild to severe and are potentially deadly.

Here is a list of possible symptoms that may occur alone or in any combination:

- Skin: hives, swelling, itch, warmth, redness, rash
- Breathing: wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion/hay fever-like symptoms, trouble swallowing
- Stomach: nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, itchy mouth/throat
- Circulation: pale/blue color, poor pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, low blood pressure, shock
- Other: anxiety, feeling of "impending doom," itchy/watery eyes, headache, cramping of the uterus, itchy/red eyes

Substances That May Trigger Reactions

Foods: Essentially any food can trigger an allergic reaction, but some of the most common ones that cause severe anaphylaxis are: peanuts, nuts from trees (e.g., walnut, cashew, Brazil nut), shellfish, fish, milk, soy, wheat, and eggs. Food additives such as sulfites can also sometimes trigger anaphylactoid reactions.

Stinging insects: The venom of stinging insects such as yellow jackets, honey bees, paper wasps, hornets, and fire ants cause discomfort for most people who are stung. However, reactions can be severe and even deadly for people with allergies to these venoms.

Medications: Virtually any medication can trigger an allergic reaction. Common categories of drugs that cause anaphylaxis are antibiotics and anti-seizure medicines.

Latex: Some products made from natural latex (from the rubber tree) contain allergens that can trigger reactions in sensitive individuals.

Exercise: Although rare, exercise can also trigger anaphylaxis. Oddly enough, it does not occur after every exercise session and in some cases, only occurs after eating certain foods before exercise.

Other: Anaphylaxis has rarely been associated with exposure to seminal fluid, hormones, and exposure to extreme temperatures. When no cause is found and the reaction is definitely anaphylaxis, it is termed idiopathic anaphylaxis.

If a student begins experiencing severe allergy symptoms, immediately implement the student's Emergency Care Plan. The sooner the reaction is treated, the less severe it is likely to become.

Prevention - Strategies to Minimize the Student's Risk for Exposure Classrooms

- Use non-food items as incentives, rewards, or in connection with celebrations.
- Encourage hand washing as often as reasonably throughout the day.
- Carefully monitor identified children, especially in the younger grades.
- Encourage students not to exchange food or utensils with other students.

Cafeteria

- Identify a peanut/tree nut-free table

- Instruct food personnel about necessary measures required to prevent cross-contamination during food handling, preparation, and serving of food.
- Discourage students from swapping food at lunch or other snack/meal times.
- Follow OSHA standards for cleaning and sanitation purposes.

Individualized Health Care Plans and Emergency Care Plans

- If the district determines that a child has a life-threatening food allergy or special health care need, the district shall develop an individualized health care plan (IHCP) for the child. Each IHCP should contain information relevant to the child's participation in school activities and should attempt to strike a balance between individual, school, and community needs while fostering the normal development of the child.
- The IHCP should be developed by a group of individuals, which shall include the parents and appropriate school personnel. Such personnel may include, but are not limited to, the school nurse, school or food service administrator(s); classroom teacher(s); and the student, if appropriate. The school may also consult with the school's medical advisor, as needed.
- IHCPs are developed for students with special health needs or whose health needs require daily interventions. The IHCP describes how to meet the child's health and safety needs within the school environment and should address the student's needs across school settings. Information to be contained in an IHCP should include a description of the functional health issues (diagnoses); student objectives for promoting self-care and age appropriate independence; and the responsibilities of parents, school nurses, and other identified school personnel. The IHCP may also include strategies to minimize the student's risk of exposure. For the student with glycogen storage disease, the IHCP may include strategies designed to ameliorate the risk of such disease and support the student's participation in the classroom. IHCPs for such students may include such considerations:
 - classroom environment, including allergy-free considerations;
 - cafeteria safety;
 - participation in school nutrition programs;
 - snacks, birthdays, and other celebrations;
 - alternatives to food rewards or incentives;
 - hand-washing;

- location of emergency medication;
- risk management during lunch and recess times;
- special events;
- field trips;
- extracurricular activities;
- school transportation;
- the provision of food or dietary supplements by the school nurse, or any school employee approved by the school nurse;
- staff notification; and
- transitions to new classrooms, grades, and/or buildings

The IHCP should be reviewed annually, or whenever there is a change in the student's emergency care plan, changes in self-monitoring and self-care abilities of the student, or following an emergency event requiring the administration of medication or the implementation of other emergency protocols.

For a student with glycogen storage disease, the IHCP shall not prohibit a parent or guardian, or a person designated by such parent or guardian, to provide food or dietary supplements to a student with glycogen storage disease on school grounds during the school day.

Emergency Care Plan for a child with a life-threatening food allergy. In addition to the IHCP, the district shall also develop an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) for each child identified as having a life-threatening food allergy. The ECP is part of the IHCP and describes the specific directions about what to do in a medical emergency. For the student with a life-threatening food allergy, the ECP should include the following information:

- The child's name and other identifying information, such as date of birth, and grade;
- The child's specific allergy;
- The child's signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction;
- The medication, if any, or other treatment to be administered in the event of exposure;
- The location and storage of the medication;

- Who will administer the medication (including self- administration options, as appropriate);
- Other emergency procedures, such as calling 911, contacting the school nurse, and/or calling the parents or physician;
- Recommendations for what to do if the child. parents/family and medical provider(s).

Emergency Care Plan for children with glycogen storage disease.

In addition to the IHCP, the district shall also develop an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) for each child identified as having glycogen storage disease. The ECP is part of the IHCP

and describes the specific directions about what to do in a medical emergency. For the student with glycogen storage disease, the ECP should include the following information:

- The child's name and other identifying information, such as date of birth, grade, and photo;
- Information pertaining to the child's condition;
- The child's signs and symptoms of a diabetic emergency;
- The medication, if any, or other treatment to be administered in the event of same;
- The location and storage of the medication;
- Who will administer the medication (including self- administration options, as appropriate);
- Other emergency procedures, such as calling 911, contacting the school nurse, and/or calling the parents or physician;
- Recommendations for what to do if the child continues to experience symptoms after the administration of medication. Emergency contact information for the parents/family and medical provider.

In developing the ECP, the school nurse should obtain current health information from the parents/family and the student's health care provider, including the student's emergency plan and all medication orders. The school nurse or other appropriate school personnel should obtain consent to consult directly with the child's health care providers to clarify medical needs, emergency medical protocol, and medication orders.

- A student identified as having a life-threatening food allergy or glycogen storage disease is entitled to an IHCP and an ECP, regardless of his/her status as a child with a disability, as that term is understood under 504, or the IDEA.
- The district shall ensure that the information contained in the IHCP and ECP is distributed to any school personnel responsible for implementing any

provisions of the IHCP and/or ECP and that any procedures in the IHCP and/or ECP comply with the district's policies and procedures regarding the administration of medication to students.

- Whenever appropriate, a student with a life-threatening food allergy and/or glycogen storage disease should be referred to a Section 504 Team for consideration if/when there is reason to believe that the student has a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by Section 504. Whenever appropriate, students with life-threatening food allergies and/or glycogen storage disease should be referred to a PPT for consideration of eligibility for special education and related services if there is reason to suspect that the student has a qualifying disability and requires specialized instruction.
- When making eligibility determinations under Section 504 and/or the IDEA, schools must consider the student's needs on an individualized, case-by-case basis, in accordance with applicable state and federal requirements as they may be amended from time to time.

6.3 School Based Health Center

The Child & Family Agency of Southeastern CT operates a School Based Health Center at RMMS. The goal of this program is to provide accessible preventive health care for all children.

Services include:

- Physical examinations
- Immunizations
- Diagnosis/treatment of minor illnesses & injuries
- Individual and group counseling
- Social skills development
- Referrals to health and mental health services in the community

All children **MUST** have written parental permission to participate in the School Based Health Center. Permission forms are available in the school office.

7. School Culture

7.1 Birthday Policy

At RMMS we do not celebrate birthdays. Thus, parents should not send snacks, party supplies, or invitations to school. Class Lists can be used by parents to send invitations home. If birthday items come to school, the teacher will return the items home with the student. Teachers and peers may certainly acknowledge a child's birthday by wishing the child a Happy Birthday.

7.2 Holiday Observances and Respecting Diversity

It is part of the mission of RMMS to give respect to the holiday observances of different cultures. If your child will be absent from school for a religious or cultural observance, please notify the classroom teacher in advance in writing.

We do not celebrate specific holidays, have classroom parties or have classroom holiday parties. Neither do we dress up for Halloween. However, it is acceptable for the RMMS community to extend greetings to each other during holiday times.

Holidays can promote positive cultural identity, appreciation of other lifestyles, awareness of the larger society, and positive social interactions among children.

At RMMS we explore many holidays as part of our study of cultures. These explorations are student/family generated or tied to the curriculum. Holidays will be presented as part of a comprehensive worldview. Holiday studies as part of our multicultural focus will be historically accurate and developmentally appropriate. Differences in how each family celebrates holidays will be part of ongoing classroom discussion. Recognition will be made that all people do not celebrate all holidays.

National Holidays: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Juneteenth, Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Thanksgiving Day will be taught with historical accuracy.

7.4 Patriotic Issues

Early in the school year, teachers will explain the words and the history of the pledge of allegiance and appropriate behavior during flag salute. Each morning before Morning Meeting, the student will choose or not choose to salute the flag (based on parental response to the flag salute option on the RMMS Registration Permission Form). A teacher or student will direct the flag salute in one area of the room. Non-participating students will be silent during the pledge.

Patriotic songs may be taught and sung in music class in association with historical units in line with the curriculum. Classroom teachers will collaborate with the music teacher in regard to parental concerns.

7.5 Silent Meditation

The 1995 Connecticut Education Laws Sec. 1016A. Silent Meditation, states as follows: Each local or regional board of education shall provide opportunity at the start of each day to allow students and teachers who wish to do so, the opportunity to observe such time in silent meditation. The Regional Multicultural Magnet School complies with this law. Teachers will discuss with students what they might do with this time.

7.6 WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

- Collecting cards (e.g. sports/Pokémon cards, fidget spinners)
- Electronic games/devices
- Laser pens
- Toys

It has been found that the use of these items in school can cause distractions and issues between students. These items will be confiscated from the child, and the caregiver will need to contact the school to retrieve the item.

8. Wellness and Nutrition

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that children’s health is essential to their success in school. Research studies over the past decade have consistently concluded that student health status and school achievement are directly connected and, in fact, that student health is one of the most significant influences on learning and achievement. Healthy eating and regular physical activity are essential components of a healthy lifestyle. Well-planned and effectively implemented nutrition and physical activity programs have been shown to enhance students’ overall health, behavior and academic achievement. A focus on wellness and nutrition is included in our Compact.

8.1 Development of Guidelines

At RMMS, we are continuously looking at our current practices regarding Wellness and Nutrition in order to develop guidelines that will meet our goal as a school and during our after-school program (Magnet Kingdom) to enhance students’ health, behavior and academic achievement. These guidelines are listed below:

- Any food served as part of a classroom activity needs to follow the state nutritional guidelines.
- Food should not be given as a reward for good behavior at RMMS.
- All food allergies and protocols will be followed.
- All food allergy guidelines previously established based on an individual student’s needs through a health care plan will be followed.
- A “no food or utensil sharing” policy is encouraged.
- An allergen-free table is available in the cafeteria.

- No candy or soda is allowed in school. Students will not be permitted to consume these items and parents will be contacted to send in alternative items.

8.2 School Nutrition

It is important that as a school we take steps to ensure that we are doing everything we can to support healthy nutrition for our students.

Food students bring into school for snacks. Eating nutritional food is a habit that we are all responsible for helping children develop. Please do the following:

- Have your child pack a healthy snack for school.
- Talk to your child about healthy food.
- It is one of the best investments you can make for your child's life.

Below are a few websites that offer ideas for healthy snacks!

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/diet-nutrition/a40156696/healthy-snacks-for-kids/>

<https://thenourishedchild.com/filling-snacks-for-kids/>

<https://www.cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/nutrition/healthy-school-snacks>

9. **Recess**

Each day, weather permitting, we take students outside for recess. Students are taken to the playscape and to several city parks. We believe that students need outdoor activity as part of our social and physical education program. Thus, children will go outside every day, except for in extreme weather. Our School Nurse and Principal will decide, using the State of Connecticut Guidelines when to have recess inside. If you believe there is a medical reason why your child should not be going outside, we will **need a note from the doctor**, which we will be glad to honor.

Recess is an important part of life. No matter how old we are, we all like to play. For play to be fun and safe, some common expectations are set for all. If a student cannot abide by these expectations, then they temporarily lose their privilege to go to recess. Because recess is important to a child's physical and social development, a child should only lose the opportunity for participating in recess as a logical consequence of inappropriate or unsafe behavior. The rules of recess are the same as they are throughout the school day. We expect everyone to be safe and to treat each other with respect. Students should develop healthy lifestyles that incorporate physical activity in their daily practice as a positive and rewarding experience. To encourage this positive life skill, RMMS does not permit withholding recess or using exercise as punishment but should instead develop alternative practices for promoting appropriate behavior. Opportunities for physical activity are not to be withheld as a consequence of incomplete school assignments.

10. Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom is a very important part of everyday life at RMMS. Responsive Classroom is intended to help our entire school community establish and live in a manner which supports respectful behavior. This belief, which is often called the Golden Rule, is a major belief of almost all cultures of the world. We believe that this helps all of us create a respectful model for our own behavior and establish an environment, which supports this practice in our community. This belief system guides our rules and consequences. Responsive Classroom includes thoughtful classroom organization, Morning Meeting, Rules and Logical Consequences, Guided Discovery and Academic Choice, Assessment, Recess and Reporting to Parents.

10.1 Morning Meeting

Morning Meeting takes place in each classroom every morning between 8:55 and 9:25 AM. There is an established format of the meetings, which includes a greeting, sharing, group activity, and news and announcements. Visitors are welcome. Morning meetings develop a community in the classroom. This helps everyone feel ownership in the decisions that are made by the community. Morning meeting gives students an opportunity to:

- understand and practice ways of expressing their own opinions in a respectful manner
- become good listeners
- engage in problem-solving
- recognize the value of each individual in the group
- honor what others share and what is unique about each of them
- feel good about themselves
- increase their personal confidence and ability to present their thinking to a group

These are important life long skills that must be taught. Society today offers children fewer and fewer opportunities to learn these practices in other areas of their lives. To be positive contributors to society and for themselves, all must understand and practice these skills.

10.2 Guided Discovery and Academic Choice

The process of helping students understand the appropriate use and care of materials and acceptable behavior in classroom areas is called Guided Discovery. If we take a computer as an example, rather than just telling students the rules of computer use, we begin a discussion about what we can do on a computer and why we would use it in the ways described. We then look at some of those ideas and begin to talk about how to make them happen. We also talk about problems that might occur. From this discussion we generate a list of guidelines about using the computer. We also talk about how to handle problems that might occur if a rule is

not followed. Everyone is asked to commit to following those guidelines and procedures - sometimes this is done with a signed agreement among all. Guided Discovery is also used with smaller, more ordinary items (e.g. pencils, crayons, etc.) The goals of Guided Discovery are to help students understand and respect the materials we use and to recognize our responsibility to the school, our class, and each other.

Academic choice activities are provided to students throughout the year. Students are sometimes given a variety of ways of demonstrating their learning. Academic Choice is also taught so students will understand the process of making a choice when they are presented with learning opportunities.

10.3 Rules and Logical Consequences

Students have a variety of learning experiences throughout their day, week, and year, which foster positive behavior skills, and problem-solving strategies. We concentrate our instruction in these areas during the first six weeks of school. During these six weeks students develop their classroom rules. We work to understand those rules and determine what behavior is required of each of us in following those rules. These behaviors are then clarified for use in classrooms, cafeteria, hallways, playground, parks, gym, buses, etc. Not only do students understand the rules and expectations, they also learn what happens when they have trouble meeting an expected behavior standard. RMMS rules set an expectation that everyone will behave safely, help everyone learn, exhibit respect for all belongings and school property, and listen to all adults.

Our school-wide Essential Agreements guide all that we do. We are a community and we:

- Take care of ourselves.
- Take care of others.
- Take care of our school.
- Take care of our learning.
- Take care of our environment.

In order to help all students and adults operate as consistently as possible, we have common understandings of what we do to help students modify their behavior. This is established through a program of logical consequences. These consequences are designed to occur in a manner that is empathetic to children and allows them to maintain their dignity. They also help to preserve the dignity of the classroom. What is required of the child is determined by the type of problem. These guidelines include but are not limited to actions such as:

- If you break it, you fix it.
- Loss of privilege that is **realistic and relevant**
- Take a Break

In all instances students are assisted to carry out an *apology of action*.

10.4 Take-A-Break

Time out is used to help students have an opportunity to reflect, recover and return. When a student is directed to take-a-break or chooses to take-a-break, it is intended to allow the child some time to: reflect on what they did which was a problem, recover from the emotional state which was a problem, return ready to be part of the class.

If a student is having a problem following a rule, he/she will be given a reminder. If the reminder does not help redirect the behavior, then the student will be directed to take some time separate from the group to reconsider his/her behavior and decide how he/she will solve the problem upon return. The student will sit in a specified location in the classroom for a short period of time to reflect on these issues.

If a student returns to a group and again has problems with his/her behavior, the student will be sent to take-a-break in another classroom, designated their class' "buddy room." This is usually for a little longer period than the first time out and is in another part of the building. The student is escorted to the "buddy room," where the student sits alone and again has a chance to reconsider his/her behavior and to decide what he/she is going to change upon reentering the classroom.

When the student returns to the classroom or shortly after he/she returns, the teacher and student will confer to determine what the student is going to do differently. The student must take responsibility for the problem and have a plan of action to prevent another incident.

If an incident of significant misbehavior occurs, a student will be sent directly to an administrator without prior steps taking place. Some examples of this would be:

- punching or other significantly inappropriate physical contact
- using racially inappropriate language, gestures, etc.
- using harassing language

When a student is having a problem behavior which does not respond to the normal steps, school personnel, the child, and family will meet together to set some immediate and long range behavior goals, develop a plan of implementation and evaluation of success, and get commitment from everyone to proceed with the plan.

10.5 C.A.R.E.S Room

The C.A.R.E.S. Room is a space within the school which assists students in dealing with behavioral challenges. The C.A.R.E.S. Room is a place for students to regain their composure, develop a plan, and return to class to problem solve with their teacher. While a student is in the C.A.R.E.S. Room they focus on cooling-off, reflecting on the problem behavior, and getting back to the classroom to problem solve with the teacher.

C - Cooperation

A - Assertion

R - Responsibility

E - Empathy

S - Self-control

11. Significant Behavior Issues

11.1 In-School Suspension

For significant behavioral issues, an administrator can assign an In-School Suspension. Students on In-School Suspension will complete the work for the day in a separate setting. They do not attend lunch, specials or other activities with their classmates. The parent and student will need to have a meeting with an administrator before the child may re-enter the classroom. As a result of that meeting, the administrator will determine if the student is ready for re-entry.

11.2 Out-of-School Suspension

For significant behavioral issues, an administrator can assign an Out-of- School Suspension. In which students will not attend school for a period of up to 10 days; schoolwork will be sent home. The parent and the student will need to have a meeting with an administrator before the child may reenter the classroom. As a result of that meeting, the administrator will determine if the student is ready for reentry.

11.3 Bus Suspension

For significant behavioral issues on the bus, a Bus Suspension may be assigned to a student for a period of days, which would mean parents/caregivers would need to arrange transportation to and from school.

11.4 Drug Discovery

If a student has an item that appears to be drugs or drug related, an administrator will immediately be brought into the situation. Suspected items will be handled with care. Police will be notified. Questioning of the student by police will be done in the presence of a staff member. If the police remove a child from the school, a staff member will accompany the child. The family will be

notified by school personnel or the police who may also notify DCF. A determination will be made if a suspension is warranted. If so, parent and child will need to attend a meeting with the administrator for re-entry.

11.5 Dangerous Weapons in School

It is a violation of school policy and the law for a student to have any form of dangerous weapon on school property or at a school event. Weapons and dangerous instruments shall include but not be limited to:

- Firearm of any description
- Any knife or similar item
- Chemical or explosive devices or weapons
- Any device having a sharp point
- Any other dangerous instrument that is capable of inflicting injury.

Upon discovery of any dangerous instrument, the administrator and police will determine the appropriate course of action. Parents will be notified. DCF may be notified. A suspension will occur. The child and parent will meet with the administrator for reentry purposes.

12. Curriculum

The RMMS Curriculum is designed to reflect the Common Core State Standards established by the Connecticut State Department of Education. Our teachers are trained in understanding these standards and how to deliver them through our curriculum.

12.1 INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAM

The Regional Multicultural Magnet School is the first authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) elementary school to offer the Primary Years Program in southeastern Connecticut. The IB is “a worldwide community of schools, educators and students with a shared vision and mission to empower young people with the skills, values and knowledge to create a better and more peaceful world.”¹

International-mindedness and the Learner Profile

As an IB PYP school, RMMS seeks to develop international mindedness which encourages students to think, be and act with a global perspective and see the commonalities of all people. At the heart of an IB education is the Learner Profile. RMMS students notice these characteristics and strive to embody them on a daily basis.

Inquirers: We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable: We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers: We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyze and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators: We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled: We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded: We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring: We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

Risk takers/Courageous: We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

In addition to the Learner Profile, another distinct aspect of IB PYP schools is the broad, balanced, conceptual and connected curriculum which help students to become knowledgeable about the world and think deeply. Learning occurs through an inquiry approach in which students ask questions and construct their understanding. While Connecticut standards are being met, students are learning real world examples across local and global contexts. Students are encouraged to use their learning to spur taking action as they learn to be change agents.

The curriculum is organized in six transdisciplinary themes:

Who We Are: Inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; person, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human

Where We are in Place and Time: Inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationship between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives

How We Express Ourselves: Inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic

How the World Works: Inquiry into the natural world and its laws, the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.

How We Organize Ourselves: Inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.

Sharing the Planet: Inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and other living things; communities and the relationship within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

12.2 Assessment and Reporting to Parents

In Responsive Classrooms, we work to make our student assessment and reporting to parents as meaningful as we can. Teachers meet with parents and children prior to the opening of school to set goals for the year and to establish ways to assess those goals.

Reporting to parents is done at two conferences, one in November and one in March. Families are expected to attend these meetings. A written progress report is sent home with students in January and June.

12.3 Promotion, Acceleration & Retention

Promotion, acceleration, and retention of a student to a particular grade shall always be made in the best interest of the student.

Teachers shall recommend promotion or non-promotion of pupils. Administrators shall review a recommendation and after consultation with the parent, make a decision on placement for the child. In case of a student who receives special education services, decisions would be based on PPT recommendations.

Promotion, acceleration, and retention in the elementary school shall be based on the following:

- The achievement of the student in the present grade.
- The ability of the child to do work in the succeeding grade.
- Recommendations and information provided by the professional staff.
- Input From the parent/caregiver.
- Other data relevant to the decision.

These decisions will be made at a meeting of school administration, the parents, classroom teachers and other support staff who work directly with the child.

12.4 Collaboration/Enrichment Program

The Collaboration/Enrichment Program Begins in October and ends in April. Each child has Enrichment throughout the year. During this time, community partners are brought into each classroom to provide students with a variety of enrichment activities that reinforce the curriculum using art, music and dance. As a result, classroom teachers are provided important time to meet with one another for curriculum and other planning.

12.5 Standardized Testing Dates

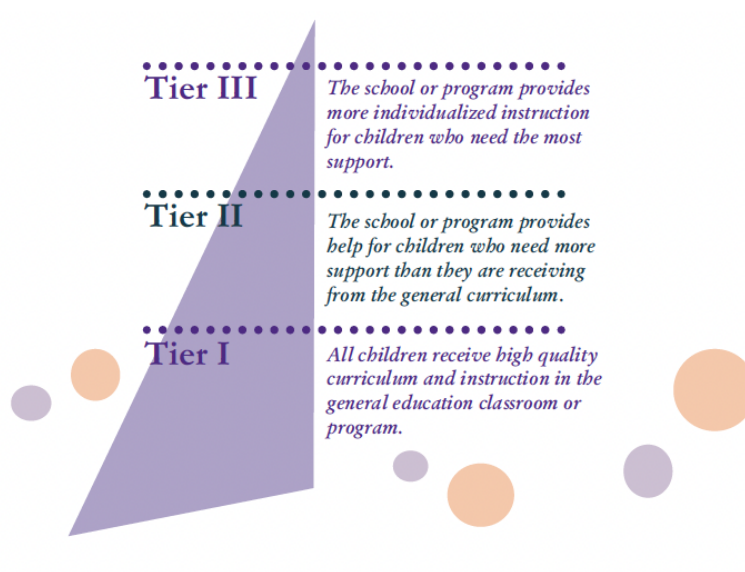
Universal assessments are given to all students three times per year in the areas of literacy, writing, and math.

The Smarter Balanced Assessments are administered during April and May to students in grades 3-5. Look for a more detailed schedule on February's Newsletters or contact your child's teacher or Mariana Reyes with any questions.

13. Student Support Services

13.1 Multi Tiered Systems of Support [MTSS] & Child Study Team (CST) process

MTSS are a way to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling at school. A child's progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports. MTSS are most commonly used in addressing needs in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. A "continuum of support" is developed by school districts and programs to meet the needs of the children they serve.



In the classroom, teachers strive to meet the individual needs of students by providing different approaches and expectations based on the child's needs. This is called differentiation as part of Tier 1 instruction. When it appears that even with the teacher providing additional help or interventions your child is struggling, the teacher will work with our reading and math coaches to determine if Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention is needed. At times, if a child is receiving Tier 3 intervention and parent input on the interventions would be valuable, the team would request a Child Study Team meeting. The Child Study Team Process (CST) helps staff and parents focus on students who may be struggling with academic or behavioral progress during the school year.

If a child is being referred for a Child Study Team meeting, your child's teacher will contact you by telephone or talk to you in person about the concerns and let you know that a meeting has been scheduled. You will also receive communication from the school to let you know about the meeting and when it will take place. It is very important that the parent or caregiver attends the meeting as you are a very important part of helping your child be successful at school.

In addition to the teacher and parent, the meeting is attended by an educator who facilitates the meeting and possibly other staff who may have some input to share regarding how to help your child be more successful.

Parents and staff who are attending discuss progress and any concerns and develop a plan to help your child be more successful in some areas. The plan will usually have some additional support the teacher might provide and have some responsibilities for the parent to provide for his/her child (examples: additional help at home learning math facts, reading to the child). At the end of the meeting it is decided when to meet again in order to review progress and decide on next steps.

13.2 Special Services

At RMMS, staff collaborate with partner districts, community resources and parents in order to provide appropriate high-quality services to students identified as needing specialized instruction based on an identified disability. A range of services are provided depending upon the needs of the students. Programs are provided in the least restrictive environment with a goal of maximum inclusion in the general education setting. Parents are valued partners in this process and are encouraged to attend all meetings and participate fully in the development and implementation of the students' Individualized Education Plan to help them reach their personal best.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Process

The purpose of conducting a PPT meeting is to determine if a child is eligible for direct services through special education resources, school social work or other related services.

Procedure:

- Child is identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services.
- Child is evaluated in all areas related to his/her areas of concern.
- Eligibility is decided by a group of qualified professionals and the parents.
- Parents may ask for a hearing to challenge the decision made by the team. *
- If a child is found to be eligible for services the team will write an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The child's local school board of education is responsible for the PPT and any costs of services that may be recommended.
- Services are provided. The school makes sure that the child's IEP is being carried out as it was written. Parents are provided with a copy of the IEP. Each of the child's teachers and service providers has access to the IEP and knows his or her specific responsibilities as related to the IEP. This includes accommodations, modifications, and support that must be provided to the child.
- Progress is measured and reported to parents. These reports are given to parents three times a year along with regular classroom progress reports.

The child's IEP is reviewed by the team including parents at least once a year, or more often if the parents or school feel it is warranted. If necessary the IEP may be revised more than once a year at these meetings. At least every three years a child who receives services must be re-evaluated. This is often called a triennial. Its purpose is to determine if the child continues to be eligible for services.

* For a complete list of Parental Safeguards go to: www.state.ct.us/sde

13.3 Section 504

Section 504 is a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

To be covered under Section 504, a student must be "qualified" as having a disability that impedes a major life activity. An impairment as used in Section 504 may include any disability, long-term illness, or various disorders that "substantially" reduces or lessens a student's ability to access learning in the educational setting because of a learning-, behavior- or health-related condition.

If you have further questions about Special Services or Section 504, please call RMMS 860 - 437- 7775 and contact: April Christensen, *Special Education Supervisor* (achristensen@learn.k12.ct.us) or Mariana Reyes, *Principal* (mreyes@learn.k12.ct.us).

After-School and Summer Programs These are intended to provide additional support as well as enrichment experiences. Students who are interested in being part

of these programs, but who need transportation home from the activity, should inform the program directors.

13.4 Behavioral and Emotional Support Team (BEST)

The BEST team is comprised of the following staff:

- School Social Workers
- Community-based Social Worker
- School Nurse
- School Assistant Principal
- School Principal

The BEST team provides some of the essential components of our child and family advocacy framework. Any information that is brought to the attention of a member of the team regarding a child or family in need or crisis is shared (as appropriate) with the team in order to broker resources in a manner that efficiently and effectively addresses the need of the child or family. Families are encouraged to contact any member of the BEST team to ask for help or share concerns or challenges they or their child are facing. The BEST team also acts as a liaison with teachers and parents/caregivers with communication and partnering.

Strategies that support the work of the BEST team include:

- Weekly BEST team meetings to review any present student/family challenges and report on progress and updates regarding past student concerns
- Participation by at least one and often several BEST team members in parent/caregiver – teacher conferences and Child Study Team meetings
- Develop home and community supports with parents
- Develop a support system for students who need to use the Recovery Room. This can include check- in & check-out for students at the beginning and end of the day, brain breaks, reward breaks.

14. Media and Technology

14.1 Library Media Center

The RMMS Library Media Center collection consists of a diverse collection of materials including multicultural and bilingual books, big books, Literacy 2000 books, audio books and educational videos. The collection supports all areas of the curriculum. The school library media staff, in collaboration with classroom teachers, invites students to enjoy the Media Center's resources.

Students are encouraged to check out these resources for both research and pleasure. All parents and caregivers are welcome to visit the Media Center during school hours and are encouraged to volunteer.

14.2 Technology Availability

Classrooms are equipped with 1:1 devices for all students – iPads [K + 1] and Chromebooks [2 – 5]. Students also have access to laptop carts and computers in the technology lab. It is expected that all students will demonstrate computer proficiency.

14.3 Acceptable Use Policy for Using Computers, the Network and Internet

The Regional Multicultural Magnet School offers students access to electronic devices, a network and the Internet. Students save their files to the RMMS network folders. There are valuable educational benefits and opportunities available from Internet use.

a. **Expectations:**

- Access to the Internet enables students to conduct research and access educational sites.
- Students are responsible for appropriate digital behavior when using the school's network and Internet. It is expected that users will comply with school standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources.

b. **Regulations:**

- Privacy – Network storage areas, such as classroom and student folders, are subject to review to ensure the students are using them responsibly. Students should only go into their own folders to access their work. Students should not intrude into, delete or change other people's files. Download and search history is recorded on the devices when a student is using a school machine for schoolwork related Internet research.
- Illegal copying - Students should never download or install any commercial software onto the school devices. Students should not copy and paste other people's work directly to their own work.
- Inappropriate materials or language - Profane, abusive or impolite language should not be used to communicate, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of responsible, moral and ethical digital behavior. The students are advised not to view, send or access materials, which they would not want their teachers or parents to see. If students encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately.

c. **Basic Guidelines Summary:**

These are guidelines to follow to prevent the loss of technology privileges at school:

- While using the devices, respect other people and their work.
- Take good care and consideration of any electronic device and accessory.
- Students are not allowed to download or install any software on the RMMS devices.
- Follow copyright laws. (Don't copy someone else's work and claim it as your own)

- If an offensive message or picture is encountered, immediately report the incident to an adult.
- Access only your own folder, work and files.

15. Family Partnership and Advocacy

As a school community and culture, partnership with families is embedded in all that we do. We truly believe that each child belongs to all of us, and it takes a whole village to raise each child. Every staff member at the Regional Multicultural Magnet School is an advocate for your child. RMMS is committed to:

- Open lines of communication with families
- Contact with parents/caregivers on a regular basis
- Helping network parents/caregivers for transportation to school events.
- Bringing parental concerns forward within the school to determine if there is a broader school issue.

15.1 Parent / Caregiver Organization (PCO)

The Parent/Caregiver Organization (PCO) includes all the members of our school community. Its function is to help provide understanding about the school to everyone within and outside of our school community and to offer opportunities for active involvement of all members. In addition to many of the tasks normally done by active school parent groups, there is a strong emphasis on providing growth experiences for all members.

15.2 RMMS Foundation

The RMMS Foundation is a non-profit organization that supports the mission and programs of the school through fundraising and endowment.

15.3 School/Home Communication

- **Goal Setting Conferences**

During the summer of each school year, parents/caregivers receive information to welcome them to the new school year. Included in this information is a copy of the School/Family COMPACT and a form to help the child and parent/caregiver think about 1-2 goals as a focus for the school year. During two days before the actual start of the school year, each child and parent/caregiver is scheduled to meet with the child's teacher for about ½ hour. The objectives of this meeting are to focus on the child as a person and learner and the important connection between school and home. The child, with input from the teacher and parent/caregiver develops 1- 2 goals for the school year. These goals are continually revisited throughout the school year.

- **Student led school-parent/caregiver conferences-** In November and March, school- parent/caregiver conferences are scheduled. During these meetings, which are often student-led, the child shares successes and challenges in a manner that supports his/her ownership of learning and reinforces that we are all a team supporting these

successes. The child's goals are revisited, and adjustments made as needed.

- **Translations-** As a school with a high population of Spanish speaking families, we have made a commitment to translate for all family's information that we send home through newsletters, progress reports and on our website.

15.4 Volunteers

A major component of RMMS is our parent/caregiver involvement. Volunteers are welcome to assist with classroom activities and serve on committees including PCO. In accordance with safety guidelines, all volunteers must undergo a background check and fingerprinting through LEARN prior to starting. Any cost associated with this is the responsibility of the volunteer. Any approved volunteers will be forwarded to LEARN by administration.

15.5 Visitors at RMMS General Guidelines

RMMS maintains a philosophy of partnership with parents. As such, parents and caregivers play an important role in working with the school to provide the best possible learning and growing experiences for your child. We provide many opportunities for the parents/caregivers to be actively involved in the school program. Any visitors must be approved by the administration prior to entering the school building in accordance with safety guidelines.

We also look forward to a close partnership with parents regarding the success of your child at RMMS. We build this partnership through numerous opportunities for communication with parents/caregivers, including scheduled meetings and conferences, emails and agenda notes.

It is important to reasonably limit other visits to students during the school day for the following reasons:

- Unscheduled "visits" with a child during the school day can be disruptive to the child and other students in the class.
- Unscheduled drop-in conferences with teachers can be disruptive to the educational flow of the classroom instruction. A reminder that we are asking all parents/caregivers who are visiting the school to do the following when entering the school:
- If a parent/caregiver is dropping a child off in the school in the morning, the parent/caregiver needs to sign in at the front desk.
- After the morning drop-off, all parents who visit the school must sign in at the front desk and get a visitor's pass. The parent/caregiver must indicate where/who they are visiting. The front desk receptionist must call ahead to the staff member to make sure the visitor is expected. This procedure includes visits to the nurse's office.

16. Student Recruitment

16.1 RMMS Sibling Admission Policy

The RMMS Sibling Admission Policy is designed to provide a cohesive experience for families, while maximizing the number of spaces available to the community for admission. A sibling is defined as a child who lives in the same household with a current RMMS student and shares a common legal guardian.

Sibling admission is provided for students entering kindergarten at the beginning of the school year, while their sibling is simultaneously enrolled at RMMS. ***Sibling applications must be received between January and March of the calendar year that the younger sibling will enroll in kindergarten. Applications received after the March deadline will not be considered under the sibling admission policy nor under the general lottery admission policy.***

If a family believes that their unique family circumstance should be considered for sibling admission, they may appeal in writing to the Director of RMMS who will render a decision about admission.

Admission to RMMS is null and void if accurate, truthful information was not provided during the time of application. The RMMS Sibling Admission Policy is for admission to the school only and does not extend to selection procedures for Dual-Language Program (Puentes) at RMMS, or to any other magnet school, charter school or private school in the area. In cases of shared custody or court appointed guardianship, court documentation must be provided to verify custodial relationship and residency. Temporary guardianship must extend three months into the school year. Documentation is due at the time of the application.

16.2 Seeking Admission For More Than One Child

A new family seeking admission for more than one child will receive one chance in the lottery per family, not one per child. If a kindergarten student who gains admission through the lottery has a kindergarten sibling(s) then the sibling(s) will also be accepted. If the accepted kindergarten student has an upper level sibling(s), admission would be based on availability of openings.

16.3 Puentes Entrance Policy

As part of the admission procedure, students are assessed to determine their dominant language.

- Kindergarten students who are native Spanish speakers are automatically accepted into the program.

- Siblings of current Puentes students are also automatically admitted. In the case that there are more than 5 English dominant Puentes siblings in the pool, a lottery will take place for 5 slots.
- Incoming kindergarten students who are not fluent in Spanish are admitted by lottery.
- A waiting pool is generated following the lottery. Your child will remain on the Puentes waiting pool for his/her entire stay at RMMS. English-dominant students are generally not accepted into the Puentes program after third grade.
- Entry into the program of first and second graders is based on space availability and language need.

LEARN Policies

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. LEARN will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such a basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director (bghickey@learn.k12.ct.us) and Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director (rdonlon@learn.k12.ct.us) are the designated district compliance officers, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided a free and appropriate education (FAPE) and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

It is the intent of the LEARN to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity after enrollment, may also take a screening exam.

All individuals who are disabled or “handicapped” are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be “handicapped” under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with “handicaps” are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from public education and programs, and a 504-accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise. Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

- 1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;**
- 2. has a record of such an impairment; or**
- 3. is regarded as having such an impairment**

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students’ strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to, providing a structured learning environment; repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments; supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions; adjusting class schedules, modifying test delivery; computer-assisted instructions; using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please call either your child's school principal or the Civil Rights Coordinator, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director for LEARN School District at 860-434-4800.

Any eligible person, including any student, parent/guardian, staff member or other employee who feels that they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability may submit a written complaint to the district's designated Section 504 Coordinator (Bridgette Gordon-Hickey) bghickey@learn.k12.ct.us within 30 days of the alleged occurrence.

504 Plans are collaboratively created and implemented in partnership with the student's home district.

ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building's occupants. LEARN has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Requests to review these plans may be made in the school office.

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents/guardians to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly during the hours and terms the school is in session. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed due to a legitimate absence. Students are required to attend school on a regular basis both in-person and virtually (when determined appropriate or necessary). Additional specific information regarding attendance procedures can be found on the LEARN website: www.learn.k12.ct.us

Absences are any days during which a student is not considered "in attendance." Absences can be "excused" or "unexcused"

A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at their assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at

least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension, or an expulsion will always be considered a “disciplinary absence.”

A child whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than 10 percent of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a “chronically absent child.” The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

All children attending district schools must obtain the required immunizations unless they have medical contraindications or religious objections. This obligation may be waived for students experiencing homelessness.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless they graduate or get written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absence

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent/guardian determines that an absence is necessary, they are requested to contact the school by 8:40 am on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

Parents/Guardians are requested to send a written excuse with the student upon return to school. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents/guardians should discuss with administration any needed plans for learning during an extended absence.

Excused Absence

A student’s absence from school shall be considered “excused” only if a written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student’s return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences one through nine, a student’s absences from school are considered “excused” when the student’s parent/guardian approves such absence and submits a signed note to the office.

B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:

- 1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.**
- 2. Students in observance of a religious holiday.**
- 3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.**
- 4. Court appearances which are mandated. (Documentation required)**
- 5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends.**
- 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.**
- 7. An additional 10 days for children of military service members.**

A phone call with no written follow-up will automatically be coded as an unexcused absence. The responsibility for makeup of work lies with the student, not the teacher. All makeup privileges must be completed within a reasonable amount of time after the student returns to school.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences. Students missing school may miss important learning opportunities which cannot be replicated, such as class discussions; as such, unexcused absences may negatively affect a student's grade.

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents/guardians informed within the limit of its capability, parents/guardians and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards when issued. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to contact the teachers, guidance counselors and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

Chronic Absenteeism

A student whose total number of absences at any time during a school year is equal to or greater than then percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year is considered to be a “chronically absent child,” Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education. LEARN will also collect and analyze data on student attendance, truancy, and chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities.

Truancy

Truancy is defined by statute as absence(s) from school without the knowledge or approval of parents/guardians and/or school officials. A student aged five to eighteen inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered a truant. Truant students are subject to progressive discipline. Academic work missed in class that day will be recorded as a failing grade.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff are mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Information about truancy will also be posted in the annual district report cards required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Board of Education policies are available on the district’s website at www.learn.k12.ct.us. The policies are subject to modification by the LEARN Board at any time.

BULLYING

LEARN is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a positive learning environment where all students are welcomed, supported, and feel socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe in school.

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent, or pervasive which:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual,**
- B. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm,**

- or their property,
- C. infringes on the rights and opportunities of an individual at school.
- D. create a hostile environment at school for such students; or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (*The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.*)

Other definitions include but are not limited to:

A. “Cyberbullying” means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

B. “Electronic communication” means 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;

C. “Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying among students is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the school climate:

D. “Mobile electronic device” means any hand-held or other portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more individuals, including, but not limited to, a text messaging device, a paging device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, equipment that is capable of playing a video game or a digital video disk, or equipment on which digital images are taken or transmitted;

E. “Prevention and intervention strategy” may include, but is not limited to, (1) implementation of a positive behavioral interventions and supports process or another evidence-based model approach for safe school climate or for the prevention of bullying identified by the Department of Education, (2) school rules prohibiting bullying, harassment and intimidation and establishing appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, (3) adequate adult supervision of outdoor areas, hallways, lunchroom and other specific areas where bullying is likely to occur, (4) inclusion of grade-appropriate bullying education and prevention curricula in kindergarten through high school, (5) individual interventions with the bully, parents/guardians and school employees, and interventions with the bullied child, parents/guardians and school employees,(6)school-wide training related to safe school climate, (7) student peer training, education and support, and (8) promotion of parent/guardians involvement in bullying prevention through individual or team participation in meetings, trainings and individual interventions.

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Physical violence and attacks**
- 2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethically based or gender-based verbal put-downs**
- 3. Threats and intimidation**
- 4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions**
- 5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school**
- 6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)**
- 7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental physical, developmental, or sensory disability. Student who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education,**

or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- o creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,**
- o infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or**
- o substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspensions, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials.**

Each LEARN school has a school climate plan that addresses bullying. These comprehensive plans:

- 1. Permit anonymous reports of bullying by students to teachers and administrators and written reports of suspected bullying by parents or guardians; Requires teachers and other school staff to notify school administrators in writing of bullying acts they witness, and students' reports they receive;**

- 2. Require school administrators to investigate parents'/guardians' written reports and review students' anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;**

- 3. Require each school to maintain a publicly available a list of the number of verified bullying acts that occurred there, and within available appropriations, report such number to the Department of Education annually and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;**

- 4. Requires each school to have prevention and intervention strategy, as defined by statute, for school staff to deal with bullying, including language about bullying in student codes of conduct and in all student handbooks;**

- 5. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of all students involved in a verified act of bullying and invite them to attend at least one meeting. The notice shall be simultaneously mailed to the parent/guardian if requested. The notice must describe the**

school's response and any consequences that may result from further acts of bullying;

6. Require the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing reported incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetuated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;

7. Require students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make reports of bullying;

8. Require the identification of appropriate school personnel, which may include, but shall not be limited to, pupil services personnel, responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint;

9. Are included in the LEARN staff development program for all school staff;

10. Require each school to notify parents or guardians of students who commit verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation;

11. Require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such acts were directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and to prevent further acts of bullying;

12. Prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;

13. Require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct.

LEARN expects prompt and reasonable investigation of alleged acts of bullying. The principal of each school or their designee is responsible for handling all complaints of alleged bullying. This policy shall not be interpreted to prohibit a reasonable and civil exchange of opinions, or debate that is protected by state or federal law. Parents/guardians of the alleged perpetrator of the bullying act and the parents/guardians of the student against whom such alleged act was directed will receive prompt notification that such investigation has begun. The results of the investigation will be provided not later than 48 hours after its completion, verbally and by electronic mail. Parents/guardians of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school. Safe School Climate Specialists are required to receive mental health first aid training.

Annual Bullying Notice

Bullying behavior by any student in the LEARN schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means any repeated overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts committed more than once against any student during the school year

Students and/or parents/guardians may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying or teen dating violence to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with their rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5007 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail and are available to students and their parents/guardians on the LEARN website and by school personnel per request.

Informal/Verbal complaints of Bullying by Students

Students may make complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbally reporting to a teacher, administrator, or other professional

employee such as a guidance counselor, school psychologist, nurse, social worker or school therapist. Student complaints of bullying should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including the time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A teacher, or other professional employee, or administrator who receives a student complaint shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing, including the information provided by the student. The written report by the teacher, other professional employee and/or administrator shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal (or other responsible program administrator) for review and action.

Formal/Written Complaints of Bullying

Students and/or their parents or guardians may also file formal written complaints of conduct that they consider to be bullying. Such written reports should specify the actions giving rise to the suspicion of bullying, including time and place of the conduct alleged, the number of such incidents, the target of such suspected bullying, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any teacher or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the building principal for review and action.

The complaint procedure is also posted on the LEARN website and the school website.

Anonymous Complaints of Bullying

Students who make complaints of bullying to a teacher and/or administrator may request that their name be maintained in confidence by the teacher(s) or administrator(s) who receives the complaint. Should anonymity be requested, the principal or their designee shall meet with the student to review the request for anonymity and the impact that maintaining anonymity of the complaint may have on the investigation of the complaint and/or possible remedial action. At such a meeting, the student shall be given the choice as to whether to maintain the anonymity of the complaint. Anonymous complaints shall be reviewed, and reasonable action will be taken to address the situation, to the extent such action may be taken that (1) does not disclose the source of the complaint, and (2) is consistent with the due process rights of the student(s) alleged to have committed acts of bullying. No disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All LEARN school employees, including teachers, superintendents, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, school counselors, paraprofessionals, social workers, psychologists, licensed nurses, physicians, licensed behavior analysts, and substitute teachers are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault a report will be made. The school will work with the parents/guardians and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

LEARN will post in each school the telephone number of the Department of Children and Families' child abuse hotline, Careline, and the Internet web address that provides information about Careline in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages appropriate for the students enrolled in the school.

CONDUCT

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. They must accept responsibility for misbehavior and engage with school staff to identify how a different choice of action could result in a better outcome. LEARN has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction

includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off-campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

- 1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.**
- 2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.**
- 3. Being dressed appropriately.***
- 4. Showing respect toward others, engaging in civil discourse.**
- 5. Behaving in a responsible manner.**
- 6. Paying required fees and fines.**
- 7. Abiding by the code of conduct.**
- 8. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.**
- 9. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.**
- 10. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.**

Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary action and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

- 1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.**
- 2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.**
- 3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.**
- 4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward other students or staff.**
- 5. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.**
- 6. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers or other school employees.**
- 7. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.**
- 8. Committing robbery or theft.**

- 9. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.**
- 10. Disobeying school rules on school buses.**
- 11. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.**
- 12. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.**
- 13. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.**
- 14. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.**
- 15. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.**
- 16. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana; a controlled substance or drug; or an alcoholic beverage.**
- 17. Possessing a deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, firearm, martial arts weapon, or weapon facsimile.**
- 18. Possessing prescription drugs which are given to a person other than to whom the drug is prescribed.**
- 19. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.**
- 20. Hazing, bullying**
- 21. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school environment or educational process.**
- 22. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, without prior approval of the principal.**
- 23. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy and/or Online Social Networking Policy.**
- 24. Cheating, plagiarizing, including by electronic means.**
- 25. Threatening in any manner, including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student.**
- 26. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.**

27. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.

28. Damaging in a willful manner school electronic equipment and/or software.

Students are urged to participate in efforts to build a positive school climate as well as alternatives to exclusionary discipline such as restorative circles or peer monitoring.

Students are subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion, for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of publicized LEARN policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. In determining whether conduct is “seriously disruptive of the education process” for purposes of suspension and expulsion, the administration in cases of suspension, and the Board of Education or impartial hearing board, in matters of expulsion may consider, but consideration is not limited to (1) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school, (2) whether other students were involved, or whether there was gang involvement, (3) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence, or the unlawful use of a weapon and whether any injuries occurred, and (4) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.

Smoking

Students shall not possess nor smoke or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on all school property both inside and outside, or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law.

Substance Abuse

As stated in the CONDUCT section of this handbook, the school prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to progressive disciplinary action.

In addition to the prohibition pertaining to alcohol, drugs, tobacco and inhalants, the Board of Education prohibits the use of performance-enhancing drugs, including anabolic steroids and food supplements, including Creatine, by students involved in school-related athletics or any co-curricular or extracurricular school activity or program, other than use for a valid medical purpose as documented by a physician.

Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, delivering, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any substance containing cannabidiol (CBD) or tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), regardless of whether it constitutes a controlled substance under federal laws.

Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interests of the student, school population and community in mind and with due consideration of the rights of students. However, consideration must be given to the fact that substance abuse is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Unauthorized possession, distribution, sale or consumption of dangerous drugs, narcotics or alcoholic beverages may result in a recommendation for expulsion.

Students are encouraged to consult with teachers, administrators and other professional staff on substance abuse problems. A staff member who is contacted by a student regarding a drug or alcohol problem may elect to keep that information confidential and not disclose it to any other person in accordance with state law. However, the student will be encouraged at the earliest appropriate time to seek help from parents or guardians.

In such cases, the decision to involve the parents/guardians will be arrived at jointly by the student and educational team unless, in the judgment of the team, the mental or physical health of the student is immediately and dangerously threatened by drug/alcohol use. If such danger is imminent, the parents/guardians and health officials will be notified so that appropriate action can be taken.

As required by statute, instruction will be provided regarding the “knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and avoid the effects of alcohol, of nicotine, of tobacco, and of drugs.”

DISCIPLINE

A student who violates the district’s code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. LEARN disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as a restorative justice model, detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education setting, in school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time. The school district believes that exclusionary discipline practices (suspension, expulsion) limit students’ access to classroom instruction and fail to improve student outcomes and school climate. These practices will be used as a last resort.

Suspension

Actions Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

Students may be suspended or expelled for conduct that endangers persons or property, or whose conduct, on or off school grounds, is seriously disruptive of the educational process or violates a publicized policy of the LEARN Board.

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for infraction of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or their designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such an instance an informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or their parents/guardians.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the (school nurse). Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the (school nurse). If it is necessary that a medication be given during school hours, the following procedures must be followed:

- All prescription and over the counter medication administered at school requires a medication authorization form signed by a health provider and the parent/guardian.**
- Medications must be in the original container picked up at the pharmacy each time the medication is refilled. The appropriate pharmacy or medication label must be intact. The school nurse will send home a notice and/or call a few days prior to needing a refill.**
- All medications are to be kept in the nurse's office, unless there is an approved medication authorization that allows the student to self-carry and self-administer their own medication.**

- **When a parent/guardian and health care provider authorize a student to self-carry and self-administer a medication, they are responsible for confirming that the student understands the condition which the medication is used, and can safely store, correctly administer, and know when and how to use the medication, and when to ask for help.**
- **If a student does have the proper authorization to self-carry and self-administer a medication, the student needs to review the plan for taking that medication with the school nurse at the beginning of each school year or at the onset of that medication authorization.**
- **No student is allowed to share any type of medication with anyone else during school hours and events.**
- **All prescription-controlled substance medications (i.e., for ADHD) must be delivered to the nurse by an adult. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that all means of delivering medication to the school nurse is safe and appropriate.**
- **Medications authorizations for the following chronic health conditions require emergency or action plans for the use of those medications:**
 - **Asthma – Asthma Action Plan**
 - **Epilepsy – Seizure Action Plan**
 - **Potential anaphylactic allergies – Emergency Allergy Plan**
 - **Diabetes – Diabetes Medication and Management Plan**

Any COVID-19 specific procedures for bringing and picking up student medication will be outlined in school communications directly from the school nurse.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified school employee” may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to their child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a “qualified/school employee” may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student’s individual seizure action plan.

Written parent/guardian permission and written order from a physician is required.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect them from serious harm or death. Written parent/guardian permission and written order from a physician are required.

School bus drivers are trained to administer epinephrine in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction to a student who is in need of emergency care due to a medically diagnosed allergic reaction.

LEARN does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The LEARN liaisons for children experiencing homelessness are Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director and Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director. The school social worker serves as the school liaison as well. LEARN has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Children and youths experiencing homelessness are defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence”. Children experiencing homelessness have the right to attend the school of origin “to the extent feasible,” unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student’s parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Any child or youth experiencing homelessness denied school accommodations shall continue in attendance or will be immediately enrolled in the school selected by the child in the school district. A written explanation of the reasons for denial of school accommodations in a manner and form understandable to such child or youth experiencing homelessness, or parent/guardian, will be provided. Information will also be provided regarding the right to appeal the decision of the denial of

accommodations. The child or youth experiencing homelessness is entitled to continue in attendance during all available appeals.

A student experiencing homelessness who is not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian shall have full access to their educational and medical records in the Board's possession.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. It serves to help all students reach their instructional goals.

Specific homework assignments may strengthen basic skills; extend classroom learning; stimulate and further interests; reinforce independent study skills; develop initiative, responsibility, and self-direction; stimulate worthwhile use of leisure time; and acquaint parents/guardians with the student's work in school. Further:

- be related to classroom instruction**
- be age and developmentally appropriate**
- be appropriate to the needs and ability of the child**
- provide reinforcement and enrichment of classroom instruction and should not be used for disciplinary purposes;**
 - emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving and written expression;**
 - emphasize quality over quantity**
 - be reviewed/assessed once submitted.**

In order for homework to be an effective support for learning, the homework policy requires a partnership among the school system represented by the teacher, the student and their parents/guardians. Without this partnership in support of learning, students will not achieve their full potential.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS/MULTI LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Parents/guardians of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students/English Learners participating in a language instructional program will be notified within 30 days of their child's placement in the program. The notification will include an explanation of why, a description of the program, and the

parent's/guardian's rights to remove their child from the English Learners program. In addition, the notification will explain how the program will help the child to develop academically, learn English and achieve the standards necessary for promotion.

Students not meeting the English mastery standard or demonstrating limited progress will be provided with additional language support services which may include, but are not limited to, English as a Second Language program, sheltered English programs, English Immersion programs, summer school, after-school assistance, homework assistance and tutoring. Students after 30 months in a bilingual program will not be offered additional bilingual education.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

It is recognized that some students may benefit from attendance at a magnet school not limited by school district boundaries. District students may enroll directly into a magnet school, with which the Students' District does not have a participation agreement, on a space available basis. The Students' District will be responsible for any tuition for such enrollment, but not for transportation, unless the magnet school is within the boundaries of the school district. Tuition will not be paid by the district for students placed by their parents/guardians in a pre-school (PK) magnet program. Parents/Guardians are required, not later than two weeks following an enrollment lottery for an interdistrict magnet school, to notify the district of their child's enrollment or placement on a waiting list for enrollment in the coming school year.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

LEARN has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

ON-CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

Students at the middle and high school level will be informed of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and

training of technical high schools and (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. Full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science and technology education centers, magnet schools, and charter schools will be provided. Military recruiters and institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings unless the student's parents/guardians submit a written request that such information not be released without their prior written consent.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONFERENCES

Parents/guardians are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Conferences with teachers are typically held during the school year. Parents/guardians and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

A parent/guardians or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are typically held during school hours, but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

LEARN recognizes that a student's education is a responsibility shared by the school, the family, and the sending school district during the entire time the student spends in the school. Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications, interactions and engagement. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the LEARN academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent/guardians-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent/guardians organizations, and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

LEARN has implemented an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan to comply with the recommendations from the Connecticut Environmental Protection Agency. Only certified pesticide applicators are used in school

for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Notice will be provided at least 24 hours in advance of the application of a pesticide either on the school's homepage or on the school or district's primary social media account.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment.

School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT

Promotion, acceleration, and retention of a student to a particular grade shall always be made in the best interest of the student. Teachers shall recommend promotion or non-promotion of pupils. When necessary, Administrators shall review a recommendation and after consultation with the parent/guardian, make a decision on placement for the child. In the case of a special education student, decisions would be based on PPT recommendations. Promotion, acceleration, and retention from grade in the elementary school shall be based on the following: 1. The achievement of the student in the present grade. 2. The ability of the child to do work in the succeeding grade. 3. Recommendations and information provided by the professional staff. 4. The expressed desires of the parent/guardian. 5. Other data relevant to the decision. In addition to the above, successful completion of the published number of credits for promotion shall be considered for the promotion, acceleration, and retention of high school students.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

School personnel are prohibited from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. School nurses, nurse practitioners, district medical advisors, school psychologists, school social workers and school counselors, may recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Further, LEARN is prohibited from requiring a child to get a prescription before they may attend school, be evaluated to determine eligibility for special education or receive special education.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as, but not limited to, Martin Luther King Day, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and Presidents Day are encouraged. LEARN reminds students, faculty and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional, and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme which conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent/guardian or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the school administration should be contacted.

Participation in any opportunities for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance is

voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students in grades K-12 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

LEARN wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to the Title IX Coordinator, Nondiscrimination Coordinator, their teacher, social worker, guidance counselor, administrator, school nurse, or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint. The administration will take action to investigate the allegations.

The district will notify the parents/guardians of all students involved in sexual harassment by student(s) and will notify parents/guardians of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent/guardians in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX Coordinator, Ms. Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, Deputy Executive Director or Dr. Ryan Donlon, Associate Executive Director.

Additional information regarding procedures for reporting, investigating, and responding to sexual harassment complaints can be found on the LEARN website (www.learn.k12.ct.us).

STUDENT RECORDS

A student's school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district

until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents/guardians, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent/guardian whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Deputy Executive Director, Bridgette Gordon-Hickey, is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of the written request form. The record's custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents/guardians of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student's records. "School officials with legitimate educational interests" include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parent/guardian consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to the release of records.

The parent's/guardian's or student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not

considered educational records, such as teachers' personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher and records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents/guardians or student.

A student over 18 and parents/guardians of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requester has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requester has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents/guardians and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents/guardians or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Copies of student records are available. Parents/guardians may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent/guardian fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parent/guardian rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents/guardians are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent/guardian, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it, unless the parent/guardian objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade

levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

Military recruiters or institutions of higher learning shall have access to secondary school students' names, addresses and telephone listings, unless a parent/guardian or secondary student aged 18 or over requests in writing that such information not be released.

LEARN will release to a school's Parent/Guardian Teacher Association / Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless LEARN is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTA/PTO for its own school activities or school business.

When a student moves to a new school system or charter/magnet school, LEARN will send the student's records to the new district within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending District is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by LEARN to comply with the Requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND YOUTH SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

LEARN is aware that suicide and other self-destructive behaviors have become critical problems for children and youth, families, school personnel and the community. LEARN is also aware that students experiencing stress or depression are less available for learning. Students engaging in self-destructive behaviors are jeopardizing their health and well-being as well as their academic achievement.

LEARN recognizes its responsibility to develop policy and procedures for dealing with youth suicide prevention and youth suicide attempts. In response to this concern, it shall be the policy of LEARN to establish programs and procedures regarding youth suicide prevention and intervention for teachers, administrators, staff and students. All school personnel will be required to act in accordance with LEARN policy and procedures and timelines whenever there is any suspicion that a student may be at risk of suicide.

TEACHER/GUARDIAN AND PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Parents/guardians have the right to request information about the professional qualifications of their child’s teacher(s). The response will indicate whether the teacher is certified for the subject matter and grade taught; the teacher’s undergraduate major and any graduate degrees or certifications a teacher may have. Parents/guardians will also be advised, if requested, as to whether the child is provided with a service by paraprofessionals and their qualifications.

TITLE I COMPARABILITY OF SERVICES

All LEARN schools, regardless of whether they receive Federal Title I funds, provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Staff, curriculum materials and instructional supplies are provided in a manner to ensure equivalency among district schools.

TITLE I PARENT/GUARDIAN AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Parents/guardians of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district’s parent/guardian and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents/guardians in the planning, review and implementation of Title 1 programs and opportunities for parents/guardians and family members to participate in the education of their children.

TRANSPORTATION

Relative to LEARN magnet schools, partnership districts often (in some cases exclusively) transport their district students to the magnet schools. The bus drivers who drive for the partner towns must report in writing any student who interferes with the safe operation of the bus to the principal. A student with special needs who attends a LEARN school must abide by the

same rules as applied to all students attending LEARN schools. A behavioral plan will be developed to address such behavior concerns on the bus.

Parents/guardians will be notified of infractions, which may result in a warning of indefinite suspension from the bus, depending on the severity and frequency of occurrence. School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a partner district Board policy or administrative regulation. Complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Director of Transportation of the sending district and the school Principal. A written record of all complaints will be maintained, and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

PARENT/GUARDIAN TRANSPORTATION

Parents/guardians should park in the designated area at each school. Cars should not be parked in undesignated areas which include on the grass, in fire lanes, on the curb, etc. at any time.

Parents/guardians who choose to drive their children to school and drop them off should drive into the designated drop off area with their vehicles, remain in the vehicle, and drop off their child.

Disciplinary sanctions and changes in transportation for a student with a disability shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and the student's sending district.

All vehicles coming into or leaving the school grounds are subject to the regulations of the school. A student may drive to school, provided the student abides by the traffic rules, has parent/guardian permission, and completes appropriate school requirements for registering student drivers.

Students are not allowed to go to their cars during school hours. In case of emergency, they will be given a pass to do so by the administration. Any violation of proper automobile use may result in the suspension of parking privileges or any such discipline which is appropriate for the circumstances.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Coordinator/District Business Manager/Finance Director. A written record of all complaints will be maintained, and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

Child's Name: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Dear Regional Multicultural Magnet School Families,

We ask that each parent/guardian read through the RMMS Caregiver Handbook and sign below. Should there be any changes or updates during the year, notification will be made through the weekly family updates. If you have any questions, please see the principal or assistant principal. Once you have read the Handbook and signed the form, please return this form to your child's teacher. Thank you for your cooperation! I have read and understand the Policies and Procedures of The Regional Multicultural Magnet School as presented in this Handbook. I agree to abide by these policies during the time my child is enrolled at The Regional Multicultural Magnet School.

Parent/Caregiver Signature:

Date:
