

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENT / PARENT
HANDBOOK

2025-2026



www.frrsd.org

555 North Main Road
Otis, MA 01253

413-269-4466

Farmington River Elementary School Students strive to be good citizens and students.

A GOOD STUDENT:

- Tries their best in all subjects.
- Completes assignments and homework on time.
- Works cooperatively with others.
- Comes to school on time.
- Makes new friends.

A GOOD CITIZEN IS:

- Trustworthy
- Respectful
- Responsible
- Fair
- Caring

THE OUTCOMES OF BEING A GOOD STUDENT AND CITIZEN ARE:

- Enjoying school.
- Being able to read, write and communicate effectively.
- Using math, the arts, and technology effectively.
- Develop strong work habits.
- Increased confidence.
- Being a good friend and classmate

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

July 31, 2025

Dear Farmington River Elementary School Students and Parents,

I extend a warm and enthusiastic welcome to all our new and returning students as we embark on another exciting school year at Farmington River Elementary School. As the principal, I am truly excited to collaborate with each and every one of you to create an exceptional learning environment. Education is a journey that thrives on the partnership between educators, parents, and students. Together, we can build a safe, stimulating, and productive atmosphere that nurtures growth and achievement for all.

This student-parent handbook is a valuable tool designed to strengthen the bridge between home and school. It contains essential information about our school policies, curriculum, and programs, ensuring you are well-informed and equipped to support your child's education. Whether you are a new or returning member of our school community, we encourage you to refer to this handbook whenever you have questions or need information about Farmington River Regional School District.

Please know that we are always here for you. If you have any questions or concerns, or simply want to discuss your child's progress, feel free to reach out to their teacher or me. Our dedicated staff is committed to providing every child with the support and encouragement they need to reach their full potential. We highly value your input and welcome it at all times, as it plays a vital role in enhancing our school community.

Once again, welcome to Farmington River Elementary School! Your active participation and involvement will make a positive difference every day. Here's to a successful and fulfilling academic year!

Warm regards,

Laurie Flower
Principal

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE INFO

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	TOWN	EMAIL:
Denise Hardie (<i>Chair</i>)	Otis	dhardie@frrsd.org
Carl Nett (<i>Vice Chair</i>)	Sandisfield	cnett@frrsd.org
Douglas Miner	Sandisfield	dminer@frrsd.org
Stacey Schultze	Otis	sshultze@frrsd.org
Kate Meierdiercks	Otis	kmeierdiercks@frrsd.org

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee meets on the first Monday of each month. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 PM in the Farmington River Elementary School Library and are open to the public. The first 15 minutes of each meeting is open for public input. Speakers will be allowed three minutes to present their material. The chairperson may extend the time.

The Superintendent of Schools should receive items for the agenda the week before the scheduled meeting.

STAFF DIRECTORY

ADMINISTRATION:

Tim Lee	<i>Superintendent</i>	ext. 141	tlee@frrsd.org
Laurie Flower	<i>Principal</i>	ext. 147	lflower@frrsd.org
Michael Saporito	<i>Dir. of Student Services</i>	ext. 139	msaporito@frrsd.org
Carol Sauerhoefer, TMS	<i>Business Administrator</i>	ext. 148	finance@frrsd.org

OFFICE STAFF:

Caroline Stamm	<i>Admin. Assistant to the Superintendent & Principal</i>	ext. 149	cstamm@frrsd.org
Heidi Utenis	<i>Business Office Assistant</i>	ext. 138	hutenis@frrsd.org

TEACHERS:

Rebecca Hamill	<i>Early Kindergarten</i>	rahamill@frrsd.org
Amy Maxton	<i>Kindergarten</i>	amaxton@frrsd.org
Meaghan Martin	<i>First Grade</i>	mmartin@frrsd.org
Sarah Tracy	<i>Second Grade</i>	stracy@frrsd.org
Jana Bush	<i>Third Grade</i>	jbush@frrsd.org
Bethany Mielke	<i>Fourth Grade</i>	bmielke@frrsd.org
Paige Jelliffe	<i>Sixth Grade</i>	ckeller@frrsd.org
Jamie Foster	<i>Fifth Grade</i>	jfoster@frrsd.org
Ellen Cotler	<i>Special Education</i>	ecotler@frrsd.org
Jonina Decker	<i>Special Education</i>	jdecker@frrsd.org
Corey Roberts	<i>Instructional Technology</i>	croberts@frrsd.org
Laura Catullo	<i>Art, Music: PreK-K, 3rd, 5th</i>	lcatullo@frrsd.org
Jenna Daley	<i>P.E./Health</i>	jdaley@frrsd.org
Jerilyn Beauregard	<i>Music: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th</i>	mflower@frrsd.org
Terri DiGrigoli	<i>Adjustment Counselor</i>	tdigrigoli@frrsd.org
Caroline Stamm	<i>Art: PreK-K, 3rd, 5th</i>	imarcheselli@frrsd.org

TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

Maddie Pelak	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	mpelak@frrsd.org
Terry Ferrara	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	tferrara@frrsd.org
Michael Flower	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	mflower@frrsd.org
Bridget Krans	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	bkrans@frrsd.org
Shannon Magane	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	smagane@frrsd.org
Laura Messina	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	lmessina@frrsd.org
Susan Olds	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	solds@frrsd.org
Carrie Webster	<i>Paraprofessional</i>	cwebster@frrsd.org

STAFF:

Chris Graceffa	<i>Head Custodian</i>	cgraceffa@frrsd.org
Grace Terry	<i>Nurse</i>	gterry@frrsd.org
Sarah Hopkins	<i>Food Service Director</i>	shopkins@frrsd.org
Samantha Gale	<i>Food Service/Van Driver</i>	sgale@frrsd.org
John Ayers	<i>Lead Van Driver</i>	jayers@frrsd.org
Kim Shook	<i>Van Driver</i>	kshook@frrsd.org

EDUCATIONAL MISSION

The Farmington River Regional School District is committed to providing a quality educational experience that is appropriate for all aspects of a child's development and includes the family, staff, and community in a meaningful way. It is our goal to provide each and every child with the values, knowledge, and skills needed to achieve full potential in his or her personal and work like and to contribute actively to the civic and economic life of our diverse and changing democratic society.

THE FOLLOWING BELIEFS FORM THE BASIS FOR OUR PHILOSOPHY:

If students are to succeed and meet the future's challenge, they will need to:

- Recognize the importance of education as a lifelong effort.
- Communicate effectively with others.
- Understand environmental and other issues with worldwide implications.
- Make informed decisions for themselves, their families, their communities, and their world.
- Contribute to our society.
- Take responsibility for their own behavior.

Therefore, it is our responsibility as a school district and community to:

- Foster a climate that honors education, encourages academic achievement and rewards hard and thoughtful work.
- Fulfill our joint obligation to support the school financially at the level necessary to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students to achieve at high levels.
- Build a safe environment in which all children can study, learn, and play.
- Encourage informational learning through reading and outside learning activities.
- Provide access to the newest technology.
- Assure that children have the nutritional and health care needed for healthy minds and bodies.
- Offer families access to the training and support they need to help their children learn.

ALL STUDENTS SHOULD:

- Read, write, and communicate effectively.
- Use mathematics, the arts, computers, and other technologies effectively.
- Define, analyze, and solve complex problems.
- Acquire, integrate, and apply essential knowledge.
- Study and work effectively.
- Demonstrate personal, social, and civic responsibility.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023–2025

DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT:

The Farmington River Regional School District is committed to providing a quality educational experience that is appropriate for all aspects of a child's development and includes the family, staff, and community in a meaningful way. It is our goal to provide each and every child with the values, knowledge, and skills needed to achieve full potential in his or her personal and work life and to contribute actively to the civic and economic life of our diverse and changing democratic society.

FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROFILE:

The Farmington River Regional School District is located in Otis, Massachusetts, in Berkshire County's southeastern corner. It serves students from Otis and Sandisfield, with a combined population of around 2650. Both towns boast beautiful rural woodland areas, bordered by the Farmington River and Otis Reservoir. Wildlife thrives, and the communities highly value and maintain their open spaces with support from local, state, and federal agencies.

Part of the Small Rural Schools Network, the Farmington River Regional School District has a single school housing about 130 students from preschool to Grade 6, representing Otis and Sandisfield. Upon completing Grade 6, students move to either Lee or Berkshire Hills Regional School District for further education. We offer a range of academic and support services, including regular, special, Enrichment, and Title I education. Additionally, students receive weekly instruction in art, music, physical education, health, Library Media, and instructional technology. The school provides various intramural offerings, clubs, and activities, encouraging after-school engagement and outdoor pursuits.

Our primary focus at Farmington River is promoting excellence and helping students reach their full potential. To achieve this, we prioritize providing a safe and welcoming environment from the moment students and parents enter our school. Building a strong sense of community is essential to us, and our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is engaged in school activities.

Our staff is committed to continual growth as educators. They work diligently to implement research-based best practices and seek ways to enhance their skills through professional development, conferences, coursework, and participation in professional learning communities. We place great importance on educating the whole child and teach character education, which is practiced throughout the school day. Students actively participate in community-oriented projects, such as fundraisers and food drives, fostering a caring spirit.

At Farmington River, we take pride in our robust academic offerings, supportive community, and dedication to our students' overall development. We will continue to uphold these values, ensuring a bright future for every student in our care.

**Farmington River Elementary School
Enrollment Data 2025-2026 – Total 110 Students**

PreK	EK	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
8	10	12	11	11	16	14	15	13

Enrollment Data 2024-2025 – Total 122 Students

PreK	EK	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
5	11	12	13	16	18	19	17	13

Enrollment Data 2023-2024 – Total 130 Students

PreK	EK	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
12	10	12	16	17	19	17	11	16

Enrollment Data 2022-2023 – Total 122 Students

PreK	EK	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
7	9	15	16	17	15	11	15	17

SCHOOL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2026-2028

Jennifer Hibbins

Elected Parent Representative

Charlie Ransom

Elected Parent Representative

Erika Chait

Elected Parent Representative

Simah Middleton

Elected Parent Representative

Rebecca Hamill

Teacher Representative

Meaghan Martin

Teacher Representative

Laurie Flower

Principal

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PURPOSE:

School Improvement Plans, as described by the legislation, has the following components (MA Association of School Committees - Questions and Answers on School Councils, Part Two, E):

1. An assessment of:
 - The impact of class size on student performance
 - Current Student-Teacher Ratios: The student-teacher ratio shows how many students there are for each teacher in a school. The Farmington River Elementary School student-teacher ratio is $110/12.3 = 8.94$ (this includes 8 classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers, and the equivalent of 2.3 special area teachers). The elementary school employs 1 adjustment counselor, a half-time reading specialist, and 9 paraprofessionals.

2. Professional development for the school's staff and allocation of any professional development funds in the school budget: The budget will take into consideration professional development on best practices for using assessment data to inform instruction, ensuring 100% of teachers effectively utilize data for lesson planning and targeted interventions. Furthermore, dedicated funds will be allocated for professional development specifically supporting the implementation of the new HQIM IntoReading program, improvement of our MTSS program, and other targeted literacy initiatives as part of the PRISM Grant's objectives.
3. Enhance parental involvement in the life of the school: This can be accomplished by a newsletter twice monthly, family nights, PTA events and activities.
4. School safety and discipline: The school has a complete and thorough safety plan, which is reviewed annually and incorporates positive behavioral interventions and social-emotional learning initiatives throughout the year.
5. Establishment of a school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups: This can be established through the cultural awareness goal and diversity and inclusion professional development.
6. Extra-curricular activities: The district will expand after-school programs based on student interests, aiming for increased overall participation in enrichment activities and advanced program enrollment.
7. Means for meeting, within the regular education programs at the school, the diverse learning needs of as many children as possible, including children with special needs currently assigned to separate programs: The committee can meet with the SEPAC committee to review the school improvement plan to ensure our goals are inclusive. Our enhanced Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program, a key component of our Literacy Action Plan, will provide a more structured framework for identifying and addressing the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with special needs, within the regular education setting.
8. Improvement of Early Literacy Outcomes (PreK-3): This plan strengthens early literacy outcomes by ensuring that assessment drives instruction within a robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports

(MTSS). Supported by the PRISM Grant in partnership with Gateway Regional School District, we will implement a schoolwide Literacy Action Plan that prioritizes the use of reliable, developmentally appropriate literacy assessments to identify student needs, monitor growth, and inform instructional decision-making.

Goal 1: Reduce chronic absenteeism so that fewer than 10% of students are absent 18 or more days during the school year.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	SUCCESS MEASURES
Implement a system for regular check-ins and individualized communication with chronically absent students and their families.	2026-2027 school year	School Counselor, Teachers, Administration, Nurse, Admin. Assistant.	Documentation of check-ins, communication logs, family engagement rates
Develop and implement an incentive program to recognize and reward improved attendance and consistent presence, including student recognition ceremonies and classroom rewards.	Winter 2026	Administration, PTA, Teachers	Attendance reports showing improvement, student participation in incentive programs, positive student and family feedback
Collaborate with community resources and local organizations to address external barriers to student attendance (e.g., transportation, health).	2026-2028 school years	Administration, School Counselor, Community Liaisons, Nurse	Partnership agreements, referral data, reduced absenteeism rates due to external factors
Provide targeted support to families of chronically absent students through resource navigation and problem-solving conferences.	Fall 2026 - Spring 2027	School Counselor, Administration	Documentation of family meetings/visits, case notes, progress in addressing identified barriers, anecdotal evidence of improved family engagement.
Develop and disseminate clear communication materials (e.g., flyers, website updates) to inform families about the importance of attendance and available support services.	Fall 2026	Administration, Communications Department, PTA	Distribution records of materials, website analytics for attendance information, feedback from diverse families on clarity and accessibility.
Overall Success Measure	June 2028	Administration	15% reduction in chronic absenteeism as measured by district attendance data

Goal 2: Implement Data-Driven Instruction: Support teachers in using the new assessment system, STAR Renaissance, to inform instruction, with the

goal that 100% of teachers will use data for lesson planning and targeted interventions by June 2028.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	SUCCESS MEASURES
Provide professional development workshops on analyzing STAR Renaissance assessment data, identifying student strengths and weaknesses, and translating findings into actionable instructional strategies.	Fall 2026, Spring 2027, Fall 2027, Spring 2028	Professional Development Committee, Administration, Literacy Specialist	Professional development attendance records, staff feedback surveys, evidence of data analysis in lesson planning
Establish and facilitate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on collaborative data analysis, sharing best practices for data integration, and developing targeted interventions.	2026-2028 school years	Teachers, PLC Leaders, Administration	PLC meeting notes reflecting data discussions, collaborative lesson plans
Ensure all teachers have consistent access to and comprehensive training on data tracking and visualization tools to monitor student progress effectively.	Fall 2026	Administration, IT Support	Software utilization reports, teacher comfort level surveys, accurate and up-to-date student data records
Implement a system for regular, scheduled review of assessment data by teachers and administration to identify academic trends, adjust instruction, and implement timely interventions.	Monthly, 2026-2028 school years	Classroom Teachers, Specialists, Administration	Data review meeting minutes, progress monitoring reports for targeted interventions
Develop and implement a school-wide data dashboard accessible to teachers and administrators, providing real-time insights into student performance on STAR Renaissance and other key assessments.	Winter 2027	Administration, IT Support,	Dashboard functionality and accessibility, teacher and administrator usage rates.
Establish a mentorship program pairing experienced data-driven teachers with colleagues who are developing their skills in using assessment data for instructional design.	Spring 2027 - Spring 2028	Administration, Professional Development Committee, Lead Teachers	Mentor-mentee pairing logs, feedback from participants on program effectiveness, evidence of increased data use by mentees
Share STAR Renaissance benchmark assessment results with parents three times per year via report cards.	Fall, Winter, and Spring with report cards	Administration, Teachers, Admin. Assistant	Documentation of parent communication, positive anecdotal feedback. Report cards distributed with assessment results.

Goal 3: Enrichment Learning Opportunities: Launch at least two new after-school programs based on student interests while identifying and supporting gifted students, aiming for 40% overall participation in enrichment activities and a 20% increase in advanced program enrollment by year-end.

STRATEGY	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	SUCCESS MEASURES
Conduct a comprehensive student interest survey to identify areas of high demand for new after-school programs (e.g., STEM, arts, sports, clubs).	Fall 2026	Administration, Teachers, Students	Survey results analysis report, prioritized list of student interests for new programs
Research, secure resources, and recruit personnel for at least two new after-school enrichment programs based on student interest and school capacity.	Winter 2026/Spring 2027	Administration, PTA, Community Partners	Approved program proposals, allocated budget for new programs, hired or designated program leaders
Develop and implement a clear, consistent process for identifying and providing differentiated support and advanced learning opportunities for gifted students across all grade levels.	2026-2027 school year	Specialists, Teachers, Administration	Documented identification criteria, gifted student profiles, individualized support plans or enrichment pathways
Actively promote and launch all enrichment activities (new and existing) to maximize student awareness and participation, using multiple communication channels.	Annually, 2026-2028 school years	Administration, PTA, Teachers	Program enrollment numbers, participation rates across all enrichment activities.
Design and implement a small group student enrichment pull-out program (e.g., "Challenge Group") for identified gifted students, focusing on advanced concepts and critical thinking skills.	Winter 2027	Administration, Specialists,	Program curriculum developed, student participation logs, pre/post assessment data from pull-out sessions, student and parent feedback surveys on program effectiveness.
Provide professional development for teachers on strategies for effective differentiation within the regular classroom.	Spring 2027	Professional Development Committee, Specialists	Professional development attendance records, lesson plan reviews showing evidence of differentiated instruction, classroom observation notes.
Monitor the progress of identified gifted students through regular academic checks, portfolio reviews, and opportunities for advanced placement or independent study projects.	Ongoing, 2027-2028 school years	Specialists, Teachers, Administration	Student progress reports, portfolio documentation, successful completion of advanced projects.

PUPIL SERVICES

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

The Farmington River Regional School District must provide programs designed to meet the particular educational needs of children with learning disabilities. Some children who require special education may require no more than occasional support services; some may require two or three hours of specialized instruction a day; some may require placement in a special class or even a special school. Each child determined to have a learning disability will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) designed to meet his or her needs.

REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Referrals can be made by parents, teachers, the principal or through the preschool screenings. If a parent believes his or her school-aged child is in need of special education services, that concern should be discussed with the student's teacher. Before a school-age child is formally referred, classroom modifications usually occur, such as changes in the reading, language arts or mathematics programs. Every effort is made to help the child be successful in the regular classroom before special services are provided. A Planning and Placement Team meeting may be held to discuss the child's needs if modifications prove unsuccessful. Either the teacher or parent may then initiate a referral through the principal or the Director of Student Services.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SERVICES:

The following programs and services are offered at the Farmington River Elementary School:

- Early Childhood Special Education is an integrated, school-based program of developmental learning for preschool age children, at least three years old, with special needs.
- Integrated Special Education services are for students with special social, emotional, physical or intellectual needs.
- Speech and Language Services are provided by therapists who instruct students with disorders of speech, oral language, and hearing.
- School counseling is provided to special education students individually and/or in groups.

- Psychological assessment and services are provided by a psychologist who assesses intellectual and personality functioning. The psychologist may also make referrals to outside agencies when appropriate.
- Occupational/Physical Therapy are services that are offered to special education students when required.
- Transportation is provided for those students who are unable to ride the regular school bus because of their special education needs.

HOME-BOUND INSTRUCTION:

Homebound Instruction is provided when a child's condition will cause his absence from school for at least three weeks duration. Instruction begins no later than two weeks from the first day of absence. Instruction is for five hours per week for children in grades K-6 and ten hours per week for students in grades 7-12. When appropriate, the Planning and Placement Team may decrease the instruction time. If a child is going to be absent from school for at least three weeks for medical reasons, please contact the school principal or Director of Student Services to request home-bound instruction.

TITLE I ASSISTANCE:

Academic assistance is offered to students through the federal Title I grant program. Students are recommended for services according to assessment results and teacher referrals.

504 PLANS:

Classroom accommodations for individual needs can be made according to 504 plan recommendations.

OUTREACH BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT (STUDENT FIND):

It is the responsibility of the Farmington River Regional School District to identify any child ages 3 through 21 who may have a disability who is either a resident of Otis and / or Sandisfield. This also includes children who reside in Otis, and Sandisfield who are homeschooled, or in private school as well as children ages 3 through 21 who are not yet enrolled in school. The FRRSD is also responsible for the evaluation of those students to determine if they are eligible for special education or related services.

Annual written notices or more frequent outreach include the following groups:

1. pediatric service provides in community,

2. private nursery schools,
3. day care facilities,
4. group homes,
5. parent organizations,
6. clinical/health care agencies,
7. early intervention programs,
8. private/parochial schools,
9. agencies serving migrant and/or homeless persons pursuant to the McKinney-Vento
10. Home Schooled student who may be disabled

Each Fall the Director of Student services emails and calls private schools outside the district borders, Early Intervention Program (PDC) and Parochial schools and it has no private schools or day care within district borders.

The district sends Letters regarding child find to the groups listed above on at least an annual basis.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATIONS:

Farmington River IEE procedure is to ensure that parents' rights to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) are implemented consistently and in compliance with state and federal special education law. An **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the student's education. Upon receipt of evaluation results, if a parent disagrees with an initial evaluation or reevaluation completed by the school district, the parent may request an Independent Educational Evaluations. All Independent Educational Evaluations shall be conducted by qualified persons who are registered, certified, licensed, or otherwise approved. Independent evaluators must comply with rates established by the state agency responsible for setting such rates. Unique circumstances of the student may justify an individual assessment rate higher than the standard rates. A parent may obtain an Independent Educational Evaluation at private expense at any time, regardless of income eligibility or district determinations. When a parent requests public funding for an Independent Educational Evaluation, the district shall fully fund the evaluation if the student is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or is in the custody of a state agency with an Educational Surrogate Parent. A sliding fee scale is utilized when the family's financial status is unknown with the following guidelines.

If the family agrees to provide financial information, such information shall include anticipated annual income of the family, including all sources of income and verifying documents. Financial information shall be reviewed by the district, shall be kept confidential during review by the district, shall not be copied or maintained in any form at the district except to note that information was provided and reviewed and met or did not meet sliding fee scale standards. Financial documents shall be promptly returned to the parent upon the district's determination of financial income status.

If the family's financial status is not known, the district shall provide the parent with information regarding the sliding fee scale and offer the parent the opportunity to submit family income information to determine eligibility for partial or full public funding. Provision of financial information is voluntary.

If the parent requests the **voluntary** cost-share option, the district does not have the option to request a due process hearing to show that its evaluation of the student is appropriate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day is from 8:45 AM to 3:00 PM unless otherwise scheduled. Students arriving early between 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM must wait in the cafeteria until the first bell rings at 8:30 AM. Students arriving after 8:45 AM will be marked tardy.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Farmington River Regional School District believes that regular school attendance and class participation are essential to the learning process and establish good work habits. Everyday attendance provides the student opportunities to interact with teachers and other students and is integral to the quality of the learning experience. All students are required by law to attend school every day that school is in session unless he/she is absent for one of the following reasons:

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

- Illness – after five consecutive days of illness the school may require a note from a doctor.
- Bereavement
- Documented medical or dental appointments.
- Documented court or legal commitments
- Religious holidays
- School Field Trips
- Other extenuating circumstances approved by the school administration.

Teachers are not authorized to excuse absences.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

All other reasons for absence will be considered unexcused even if the student was given permission to miss school by their parent. Students are allowed up to six unexcused absences in a six-month time period. The Massachusetts State Law specifies that a student under 16 years of age may not be absent more than six (6) unexcused

day sessions in a six (6) month period. Chronic absenteeism is defined in absences in excess of fifteen (15) unexcused days. Parents are required under the law to ensure regular school attendance of their children and are subject to a fine or other legal action if they fail to comply with the law. The local school administration or designee will be provided with the names of students with seven or more unexcused absences during a six-month period.

Some examples of unexcused absences are, but not limited to:

- Truancy
- Activities which should be conducted outside the school day, such as hair appointments, shopping, sleeping, doing homework, etc.
- Activities more appropriately related to the parent/guardian, such as providing care for siblings, absence due to parent transportation, etc.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE:

Within a six (6) month period, the following steps will be taken:

STEP 1: *Five (5) days of unexcused absences*

Principal or designee sends letter home reminding parents of attendance policy. At the discretion of the Principal, a follow up call is made to parents to further explain policy and develop plan for improved attendance.

STEP 2: *Seven (7) days of unexcused absences*

Letter from Principal and follow up conversation between Principal or designee and family to discuss child's pattern of unexcused absences. The letter states that further unexcused absences may result in a referral to the Department of Social Services and /or Berkshire District Court.

STEP 3: *Ten (10) days of unexcused absences*

Letter home indicating that the child has exceeded the legal limit. Principal or designee requests a formal meeting with parents to discuss ways school and home can work together to resolve unacceptable number of unexcused absences. In the event that parent fails to appear for formal meeting within a two-week period,

the District will initiate truancy/negligence procedures as described below.

STEP 4: *Fifteen (15) days of unexcused absences*

The District initiates a CHINS (Child IN Need of Services) filing for truancy or a Failure to Send Action, with the Southern Berkshire District Court and/or a 51-A filing for child Neglect with the Department of Social Services.

Written notification sent to parents.

Regular and punctual attendance is required and monitored. Parents must call or email the office by 9:00 if their child is absent from school and give the reason for the absence. Parents will be notified of excessive absences and tardiness. The expectation is that families will attempt to make doctor and dentist appointments after school hours or during school vacations.

It is expected that families will not take vacations while school is in session. Family vacations should take place during school vacation weeks.

Please refer to the homework policy on page 23 regarding schoolwork while on an unexcused absence.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN ABSENCE:

- a) When a child is absent from school for any reason, the Parent/Guardian must call or email the Front Office/School Nurse by 9:00 AM to indicate the reason for the child's absence.

FRONT OFFICE: 413-269-4466 frontoffice@frrsd.org

NURSE: Grace Terry 413-269-4466 ext. 146 gterry@frrsd.org

- b) If the child is absent from school for any reason and the Parent/Guardian has not called or emailed the school by 9:00 AM, the school nurse will contact the Parent/Guardian to ascertain that the child is, in fact, absent from school and what is the nature of the absence.
- c) Children who are absent from school are expected to make up their work when they return to school. Teachers will not prepare advanced assignments for students who are absent due to unexcused reasons. Parents can pick up work missed by their child at school after 3:00 PM or, they may request that the work be sent home with a sibling, neighbor or friend.

- d) Upon a child's return to school following an absence of three (3) days or more, the Parent/Guardian will provide a written letter of explanation to the School Nurse. An absence of five (5) or more days requires a doctor's letter of explanation of the absence.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES:

Unexcused Absences:

1. After five (5) days of unexcused absences, the Principal will convene a conference with the child's parents/guardians to discuss the child's attendance.
2. If additional unexcused absences occur after this conference between the parent/guardians and the Principal, the Supervisor of Attendance (Supt. of Schools or her designee) will file a complaint of truancy in Juvenile Court.

Excused Absences:

1. After ten (10) days of excused absences, the Principal will convene a conference with the child's parents/guardians to review attendance and to review completion of work missed while child was absent.
2. Follow-up conferences will be scheduled as often as necessary, as deemed necessary by the Principal.
3. More than eighteen (18) days of absence, which equals 10% of the school year, may result in grade retention.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING STUDENT TARDINESS:

- a) School begins at 8:45 AM. A child is tardy if he/she arrives to school after **8:45 AM**.
- b) The Parent/Guardian of the tardy child must sign the child into school at the Main Office upon arrival at the school.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE TARDINESS:

1. After a child has been tardy five (5) times, the Principal will convene a conference with the child's parents/guardians to address this issue.
2. Five (5) instances of tardiness will equal one (1) unexcused absence.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AN EARLY DISMISSAL:

The Farmington River Regional School District discourages early dismissal of students by parents/guardians unless it is an **absolute necessity or emergency**. Such early dismissals disrupt the educational instruction, not only for your child, but also for everyone's child.

- a) Parent/guardian must notify the School Office by 9:00 AM that their child is being dismissed early that day and they must give a specific time and reason for the early dismissal.
- b) Parent/guardian must enter the School Office and sign the student out at the early dismissal time.
- c) The student will meet the parent/guardian in the main first floor foyer for this early dismissal.

CONSEQUENCES FOR EXCESSIVE EARLY DISMISSALS:

1. After five (5) instances of early dismissal, the Principal will convene a conference with the child's parent/guardian to discuss this pattern of early dismissals.
2. Five (5) instances of early dismissals will equal one (1) unexcused absence.

DELAYED SCHOOL OPENING & CLOSINGS

In the event severe weather conditions, school closings or delayed openings will be communicated to families via a recorded message using *School Messenger*. The announcement will also be broadcast over the following radio and television stations and will be for **Farmington River Elementary School**.

**** If school is cancelled for Farmington River Elementary, no buses will run to Lee, Lenox, nor Great Barrington on that day. ****

School Delay Broadcasts:

WSBS	860 AM
WRCH	100.5 FM - Hartford
WSHM	CBS 3 - Hartford
WWLP	Channel 22 – Springfield
WNYT	Channel 13 – Albany

Website: www.cancellations.com and look up Farmington River Elementary School (01253)

When school is delayed, the following will happen:

- a) All buses will run one or two hours later, depending on the announcement.
- b) Pre-K classes for the morning session will be cancelled.
- c) Classes will start later.
- d) Breakfast will not be served, and Lunch will be at the usual time.
- e) Dismissal will be at the usual time.
- f) Drop off time is up to, but no longer than a half-hour before the start of school.

In the event of an unforeseen emergency or inclement weather, it may be necessary to close school early. We will notify parents using *School Messenger*.

IMPORTANT: Be sure that your child's Emergency Information Card has the phone number of someone who can be reached during school hours and information on your preference for their safe dismissal. The information you provide will be used when dismissing early.

NOTICE: Parents, please plan ahead where your child will stay if school is cancelled or if we have early dismissal.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Listed on the School Calendar are the early release days for Professional Development. Children will be released at 11:45 AM. Lunch will be served on these days.

APPEARANCE & ATTIRE

Proper school dress and grooming is the responsibility of the parent and the student. Shirts, hats, or other articles of clothing with inappropriate and/or explicit statements will not be permitted.

Short midriff tops, spaghetti strap tank tops, low-cut shirts, and short shorts/skirts are not appropriate school attire. Students who come to school in this type of clothing will be given an alternative shirt or shorts to wear for the day and parents will be notified. Safe and appropriate shoes are required for all students. Flip-flops and high heels are not safe in a school

environment. Any kind of roller shoes/sneakers are not allowed in school. Sneakers are required for physical education classes.

LUNCH & BREAKFAST

We provide well-balanced and delicious meals for students and staff at breakfast and lunchtime.

BREAKFAST:

- Breakfast is available between 8:00 AM and 8:40 AM
- Breakfast is to be eaten in the cafeteria, and consists of bagels, cereal, muffins, an egg sandwich, fruit, juice, and milk.

LUNCH:

- Lunch consists of a protein entrée, vegetables, fruit, starch, and milk. A salad entrée is also available. A peanut butter and jelly sandwich can be substituted for the main entrée.
- Milk is available (for \$0.35) for those who are bringing in their own lunch.

PAYMENT:

Per current guidelines of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) there will be no charge to students for breakfast and lunch as described above for the entirety of the 2024-2025 school year. Students may purchase additional food and “a la carte” items not included in breakfast and lunch via a computerized POS system (Nutrikids).

Parents can make advance payments into the food account of students by submitting online payments or by sending cash that will be applied to a student’s account. It is important that charges for a la carte are paid promptly. Parents whose child’s accounts are overcharged will be notified and students may not be permitted to purchase a la carte items until their account is positive.

As of February 2024, the Farmington River Food Service program participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the USDA. CEP allows schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. Instead, schools that adopt CEP are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students

categorically eligible for free meals based on their participation in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

PERMISSION NOTES

A signed parent permission slip must be given to the teacher before a child is allowed to leave the school grounds on a field trip, a different dismissal plan, or with another adult.

NOTICE: Only students regularly scheduled on a van or bus routes are allowed to ride on their assigned bus or vans. Limited space in the vans and buses does not allow any visitors to ride. Do not expect friends to ride home with your child on a van or bus.

All changes to a student's dismissal plan must be communicated to the front office by 2:30 PM. *Requests made after this time may not be accommodated and will be at the discretion of the administration and front office staff.* This is in place to ensure a smooth and safe dismissal process for all students. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in adhering to this deadline.

If someone else other than a parent is to pick up a child or if the child is to get off at a different stop on their regularly assigned bus, the school must be notified. We have no choice but to put the child on the regular bus route to be dropped off at their regular stop if we do not have a note. The same applies to any after-school activities.

REPORT CARDS

The District has revised the elementary report card for all students in grades 1 – 6 to a standards-based reporting system. This standards-based report card was developed by our teachers using Common Core Standards. Report cards of pupil progress are completed three times a year, in December, March, and June. These reports indicate the child's academic progress toward achieving grade-level benchmarks. Parents may schedule a parent conference at any time to discuss their child's progress by contacting the teacher. Honor Roll will continue, but only for the second and third marking

periods. The Staff and Principal will be working this fall to determine a formula to determine Honor Roll criteria.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

In the beginning of each school year, an application for school insurance is sent out. If you have any questions, contact the school office.

VISITORS

All visitors must report to the office on entry to sign in and receive a nametag.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES & CELL PHONES

The use of cell phones and electronic devices (Smart watches, iPods, cameras, etc.) is considered disruptive to the educational process. Students are discouraged from bringing this personal property to the school. Cell phones and all electronic devices must be turned off from the time the student arrives at school until after dismissal. All cell phones and electronic devices will be confiscated if these procedures are not followed. For additional information, see the policy statement at the end of the handbook.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Farmington River Regional Elementary School PTA (Parent Teacher Association) is our school's parent group. The PTA is a dedicated group of volunteers devoted to enhancing our school program. They have provided funding most recently for additional classroom technology, enrichment opportunities, field trips, and school assembly programs. They also sponsor annual events such as the Book Fair, Holiday Shop, Otis Ridge Family Ski Program, Read Across America, and Field Day. PTA funds are raised primarily through fundraising projects at various times throughout the school year.

The PTA is actively looking for parents to participate in their activities.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to become active in our school. Teachers may be contacted during the regular school day (8:30 AM – 3:00 PM). Phone calls will

not be put through to teachers during instructional time. You may leave a message for a teacher, or you may contact teachers using email. All faculty staff email addresses are available on our school website. If you have concerns about your child's learning or social experiences, please contact your child's teacher. Any changes at home that may affect your child's school performance should be communicated to the classroom teacher or adjustment counselor.

FERPA: THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

FERPA affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records.

These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School Official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Once exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an Administrator, Supervisor, Instructor, or Support Staff Member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the

School Board; a person or company with whom the student has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. *NOTE: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.*
5. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family	Policy	Compliance	Office
U.S.	Department	of	Education
400	Maryland	Avenue,	SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901			

NOTE: In addition, an institution may want to include its directory information public notice, as required by § 99.37 of the regulations, with its annual notification of rights under FERPA.

FERPA & PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that the Farmington River Regional School District, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, the Farmington River Regional School District may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Farmington River to include this

type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary

and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories - names, addresses and telephone listings - unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent. (1)

If you do not want Farmington River to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing within two (2) weeks of the first day of school. The Farmington River Regional School District has designated the following information as directory information: Note: an LEA may, but does not have to, include all the information listed below.

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level

Footnotes: 1. These laws are: Section 9528 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7908), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), the education bill, and 10 U.S.C. 503, as amended by section 544, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. 107-107), the legislation that provides funding for the Nation's armed forces.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are a part of the educational program and must be aligned with the grade-level curriculum. Parents may be invited to act as a chaperone if additional supervision is necessary for the trip. All parents requesting to be a chaperone must complete a CORI check and return the Chaperone Guidelines Form prior to a field trip. In addition to the CORI check, chaperones will now be required to submit a national fingerprint-based criminal background check, the cost of this is \$35.00.

CHAPERONE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines were developed to provide a District-approved level of supervision and protection for all children when they are on school-sanctioned outings. Persons who wish to chaperone school field trips and other events off school grounds must understand our clear general expectations. Failure to abide by these District Guidelines will result in the chaperone's removal from the chaperone list for 12 calendar months.

- All chaperones must have completed, up-to-date CORI on file with the Superintendent's Office. An individual cannot serve as chaperone until the CORI report comes back from the CORI Board and is reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or his designee.
- While chaperoning, at all times (24/7) chaperones should act as a positive role model for the student on the trip, in behavior, speech and dress, and chaperones shall maintain all school rules.
- Chaperones must abstain from using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, while on the trip and must not expose students to these substances.
- Chaperones should provide for and monitor the physical, verbal, and emotional safety of the students and should intervene in any situation where problem behavior is occurring.
- Chaperones shall avoid being alone with an individual student.

- During travel on bus, boat, or plane, chaperones should distribute and/or seat themselves throughout the student group so that all students have an adult nearby.
- Chaperones shall inform the trip leader and school administrator of any problem situations as soon as possible, including unlawful or disruptive behavior, harassment, bullying, hazing, or discrimination.
- It is the prerogative of the school to make participation in any away-from-school activity contingent upon assigned or individual chaperoning arrangements to meet student needs.
- There may be additional, trip-specific chaperoning guidelines and rules for overnight trips. Chaperones shall make themselves available to participate in any pre-trip meetings to learn about additional rules that may apply to specific trips.

BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

The following general rules apply to all school activities and are designated for the safety of all students. Any violation of state or town ordinance will be reported to the police.

1. Students will walk quietly and orderly at all times.
2. Students are responsible for their own personal property and for respecting other student's property and school property.
3. Everyone must respect others. No physical or verbal abuse will be tolerated.
4. Students must follow the directions of the person in charge of the classroom, cafeteria, or playground.
5. No Gameboys or electronic devices are to be used in school. They must be turned off and stored in a back-pack or cubby. They may not be kept on the child's person/pockets.
6. No candy, soda, or gum.
7. Please leave pets at home.

CLASSROOM:

During the first few days of each school year, teachers and students will discuss their classroom rules and consequences. The rules will be designed so that the classroom environment is a place where everyone feels safe, valued, and ready to learn. Once the rules are established, teachers will post them and send home a copy for parents. Everyone is expected to follow these rules.

CONSEQUENCES:

Each person in charge of the cafeteria, playground, or classroom is expected to maintain order so that a student doesn't distract others who are trying to eat, play, or learn. This can involve moving students away from a problem, having students discuss the difficulty, or any number of other ways to maintain order.

For students who continue to behave inappropriately, the teacher will consult with the parent, behavior specialist, and/or Principal to try to

improve the behavior. The student, parents, and teachers will work to improve behavior through appropriate means that are reasonable and respectful of student needs. For some children, these steps to self-control may not be enough. Students whose behavior continually disrupts the classroom will be suspended.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY:

Parents are expected to return all phone calls regarding discipline issues and follow up with students at home. Parents are responsible for their children at all after-school or evening activities.

Violation of Farmington River Expectation:	Consequence: 1 st Time	Consequence: 2 nd Time	Consequence: 3 rd Time
Non-compliant with classroom rules	- Warning & review in classroom	- Teacher-Driven Consequence: Parent contacted by teacher via phone or email	- Refer to Office for detention: detention to informal suspension
Inappropriate, but not aggressive, action to include rough play, swearing (not at someone)	- Warning: parent notified	- Student / Principal calls parent - Lunch/Recess Detention	- Student/ Principal calls parent. - After-school detention. - Parent/Student conference
Harassment to include sexual, verbal, physical, bullying, name-calling, exclusion, and threats - Behavior Report completed.	- Warning - Lunch/Recess detention - Student / Parent calls parent	- In-School Suspension for 1 day - Student / Principal calls parent - Letter sent home	- In-school suspension for 2 days - Student/Principal calls parent - Parent Meeting - Letter sent home
Damage to school property to include building, ground, equipment and materials within the building – Behavior Report completed	- Student / Principal calls parent - After-School detention for 1 day - Student restitution	- Student / Principal calls parent - After-School detention for 2 days - Student restitution	- Student/ Principal calls parent. - In-school suspension / out-of-school suspension for 1-3 days - Student restitution
Severe behavior to include actions that put others at risk, possession of weapons, drugs, fireworks, fighting – Behavior Report completed	- External suspension for 1 day - Student/ Principal calls parent - Letter sent home	- External suspension for 3 days - Student/ Principal calls parent - Letter sent home	- Indefinite external suspension - Parent/Student meeting with Administration

Violations that occur more than two times can result in loss of privileges, loss of field trips, loss of assemblies, and modification of schedule.

Consequences may be more severe based on actual behavior.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, OR CYBER BULLYING

The Farmington River Regional School District strives to create an emotionally and physically safe environment of courtesy, respect, and tolerance for all. We are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that impede the learning process.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Bullying Prohibited - Bullying in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. In addition, retaliation against another student or staff member who has brought forth a bullying complaint to the attention of the School District or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is also prohibited and will not be tolerated by the Farmington River Regional School District. It is a violation for anyone, including another student or staff member, to bully or intimidate a student through conduct or communication as defined in section II of this document.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops
- During transit to and from school or school-related activities
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school district.

- Through the use of technology or any electronic devices owned, leased, or used by the Farmington River Regional School District.

Bullying and cyberbullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the Farmington River Regional School District if the act or acts in question:

- Create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- Infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school;

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students or staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target.
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O for the legal definition of cyberbullying.

A hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student’s education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student or staff who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or Paraeducators.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

More information is available on the website and through the elementary principal.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROTOCOLS

Farmington River Regional School District strives to create a safe environment of courtesy, respect, and tolerance for all. To maintain a safe environment, certain items or activities are forbidden or require staff approval:

- Electronic, hand-held devices during school hours. (The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.)
- At no time are students permitted to use cell phones: before, during, or after school hours. If students need to use a phone, they should go to the office. Students will not be permitted to make calls for social arrangements.
- Toy pellet or paintball guns, other toy weapons, lighters, and laser pointers
- Smoking, matches, lighters, vaporizers, electronic cigarettes, and related paraphernalia
- Dangerous Weapons, materials, or devices (on school property or off the school grounds for any school activity, only police officers or military personnel on official assignment shall handle or transport any weapons, dangerous objects, explosives, or any other object that can reasonably be considered a weapon.) In the event a student brings or possesses a dangerous weapon, material, or device on school grounds, see expulsion procedures.
- Non-educational computer activities may result in the loss of computer privileges and parents will be contacted.
- Gum chewing
- Teachers must approve any eating or drinking in the classrooms.

In all circumstances, meaningful accountability for inappropriate behavior is applied. A student's past discipline record, individual needs, and/or 504 or IEP status will be considered prior to making discipline decisions. The school administration will exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for violations of school rules and shall consider alternative sanctions and interventions prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension for offenses not involving drugs, weapons or assaults on staff, or felony charges. The following consequences or combination of consequences may be used to hold students accountable for their inappropriate actions at school, but this list is not exhaustive, and the school administration reserves the right to impose different consequences, as appropriate. In all cases, confidentiality must be adhered to by law.

- Phone call home.
- Conference with Principal or assistant.
- Parent/teacher conference.
- Time out in the classroom or office.
- Repair or replace damaged, defaced, lost, or stolen property.
- Recess privilege denied.
- Lunch in office.
- Mediation.
- Field trip denied.
- After-school activity denied.
- Internal suspension.
- External suspension.
- Expulsion from school.

SUSPENSION CODE:

The principal or designee may suspend a student for acts of a serious nature. Some acts for which suspension will be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Open defiance of authority and/or school rules and regulations, including failure to report to the Main Office.
- Threatening, striking, and/or assaulting a student or staff member, including, but not limited to, punching, biting, and kicking.
- Damaging or defacing the property of students, teachers, or the school district, (including computer hardware/software).

- Profanity, immorality, or impropriety (word, materials, gesture, comment, or deed).
- Verbally harassing, intimidating, or provoking a student or staff member (including electronic submissions)
- Theft or attempted theft.
- Failure to abide by corrective measures for previous acts of misconduct.
- Smoking or use of tobacco or nicotine devices.
- Drug or alcohol possession or use.
- Leaving school without permission.
- Continually being deceitful, i.e., lying and/or forging information.
- Hazing.
- Sexual impropriety.
- Sexual harassment.
- Bullying

Any student who intentionally injures another student or staff member will be subject to a suspension of one or more days.

DEFINITIONS:

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days.

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. * Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Short-term suspension: the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Long-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple

disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

Written Notice: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent.

Principal: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal’s designee for disciplinary purposes.

PROCEDURES:

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION:

Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent. On or before the day of the In-School Suspension, the Principal will deliver written notice to the parent of the basis for and length of the in-school suspension and invite the parent to meet to discuss the student’s behavior if such a meeting has not already occurred.

Students have the right to appeal an in-school suspension that will result in their in-school suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSION:

In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will

be provided in English and in the primary language of the student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses, the right to review the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped.

For disciplinary offenses involving a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto, prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term suspension or an interim suspension of less than ten (10) consecutive days pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of a short-term or interim suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of any formal disciplinary proceedings.

PRINCIPAL'S HEARING:

SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION:

At the Principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student.

LONG-TERM SUSPENSION:

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

- The right to be represented by counsel or a layperson of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense.

- The right to review the student’s record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not.
- The right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student’s explanation of the alleged incident.
- The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district.
- The right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

PRINCIPAL’S DECISION:

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. The Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense and, in cases not involving possession of a controlled substance, a weapon, an assault on staff or felony charges, shall avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. If the Principal decides to suspend or expel the student, written notice of the Principal’s decision will be sent to the student and parents in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal’s decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension or expulsion, and the process for appeal. The Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

Prior to suspending a student in grades K-3 from school, the Principal will send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

APPEALS:

Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent of schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) school days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. And for exclusions imposed pursuant to

M.G.L c.71, §37H3/4, the Student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days upon request.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS:

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, makeup assignments, tests, papers, and other schoolwork as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan.

DISCIPLINE & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The following procedures apply for the suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive school days or when a student is subject to a pattern of removal exceeding 10 cumulative school days. These procedures include the responsibility of the Team and the responsibilities of the district.

A. DISCIPLINARY CHANGE IN PLACEMENT:

A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive school days, or a series of short-term suspensions that exceed ten (10) cumulative school days and constitute a pattern of removal, is considered a **disciplinary change in placement**.

B. MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION REVIEW (MDR):

Within **ten (10) school days of the decision to impose a disciplinary change in placement**, the district will convene a **Manifestation Determination Review**. The meeting will include the parent(s), relevant members of the student's IEP or Section 504 Team (as determined by the parent and the district), and appropriate school personnel.

The team will review all relevant information in the student's file, including:

- the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan

- teacher observations
- relevant information provided by the parent
- evaluation and assessment data

The team will determine:

1. **Whether the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relation to, the student’s disability; or**
2. **Whether the conduct was the direct result of the district’s failure to implement the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan.**

If the Team determines that the conduct was the direct result of the district’s failure to implement the student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan, the district will take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.

C. BEHAVIOR NOT A MANIFESTATION

If the Team determines that the behavior is **NOT a manifestation of the student’s disability**, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies applicable to all students.

However, the students eligible for special education services will continue to receive educational services so as to enable them to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress towards meeting the goals set out in their IEP beginning on the **eleventh (11th) cumulative day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year.**

D. BEHAVIOR IS A MANIFESTATION

If the Team determines that the behavior **IS a manifestation of the student’s disability**, the district will:

- Conduct a **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)** unless one has already been conducted; or
- Review and modify an existing **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** as necessary to address the behavior.

The Team will also take steps, with parent participation, to correct or revise the IEP, placement, or behavior intervention plan as appropriate.

Except as provided below, **the student will return to the placement from which the student was removed** unless the parent and district agree to a change of placement as part of the behavior intervention process.

E. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES – 45 SCHOOL DAY INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTING

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an **Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) for up to 45 school days** if the student:

- a. Carries or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function;
- b. Knowingly possesses, uses, sells, or solicits the sale of illegal drugs or controlled substance while at school or a school function;
- c. Inflicts serious bodily injury upon another person while at school on school premises, or at a school function; or
- d. When the district demonstrates that maintaining the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others and a hearing officer or court orders the alternative placement.

F. PARENT RIGHTS AND APPEALS:

Parents have the right to appeal:

- The **manifestation determination,**
- The **disciplinary change in placement,** or
- The **placement in an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)**

During the appeals process, the student will remain in the disciplinary placement determined by school authorities pending the decision of the hearing officer or the expiration of the disciplinary action, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and district agree otherwise.

Parents will be informed no later than the date of the start of any disciplinary action, the district notifies the parent of the decision and provides written notice of procedural safeguards.

INTERIM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

(IAES)

Farmington River School District maintains a continuum of Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) options to address disciplinary removals while ensuring that students with disabilities continue to receive a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** consistent with their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

1. IN-DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE CLASSROOM OR PROGRAM

Students may be placed in an in-district alternative classroom that provides a structured and supervised environment. In this setting, students:

- Continue to receive specially designed instruction aligned with their IEP goals
- Have access to related services, accommodations, and modifications as specified in the IEP
- Participate in instruction delivered by appropriately licensed special education staff

This option allows continuity of services while addressing behavioral or safety concerns.

2. SEPARATE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM OR BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT PROGRAM:

For students requiring more intensive supports, the district may utilize a separate special education or behavioral intervention program. These programs:

- Implement the student’s IEP, including specialized instruction and behavioral supports
- Provide targeted interventions to address the behavior that led to the disciplinary action
- Support progress toward IEP goals and access to the general curriculum when appropriate

3. HOMEBOUND OR VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION (TEMPORARY AND LIMITED USE):

When necessary, the district may provide homebound or virtual instruction as an IAES. In these settings:

- Instruction is delivered by certified teachers
- IEP services, accommodation, and modifications are implemented to the greatest extent possible and the focus remains on academic progress and continuity of learning

This option is used sparingly and reviewed regularly to ensure appropriateness.

4. OUT-OF-DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT:

When in-district options are insufficient to meet the student’s needs, the district may place the student in an approved out-of-district IAES. These placements:

- Deliver instruction and related services consistent with the student’s IEP
- Provide specialized support and interventions aligned with the student’s disability-related needs
- Are monitored by the district to ensure compliance and progress

Across all IAES placements, the district ensures that:

- Students continue to receive services enabling participation in the general education curriculum, as appropriate
- Instruction and services support progress toward meeting IEP goals
- Behavioral interventions address the behavior that resulted in disciplinary action
- Placement decisions are made by the IEP Team and reviewed regularly.

PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS APPLIED TO STUDENTS NOT YET DETERMINED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

- a. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
- b. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
- c. District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.

If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

LUNCHROOM EXPECTATIONS

- Show respect for all
- Please wash or sanitize your hands before lunch.
- All school rules apply
- Remain at one table – no more than 6 at a table (unless with permission)
- Students must have adult permission to leave their seats.
- Clean off your table and the area around your table
- Stay at your table until dismissed by an adult
- Please get a pass from the teacher if you will be with them for lunch and/or recess.

Any students who sit at the peanut-free table should not have peanuts/peanut items in their lunch boxes. Older students with allergies (grade 2 and up this year) whose parents have given written permission for their child to sit at any table do not have to sit at the peanut-free table. Younger students with peanut allergies, 1st grade and under, are required to sit at the peanut-free table.

CONSEQUENCES:

First Infraction:

- Warning

First Infraction:

- The student may be asked to sit at another table.

Third Infraction:

- The student is sent to the principal for the remainder of the period and the parent is notified.

Violations that occur more than two times can result in loss of privileges, loss of field trips, loss of assemblies, and modification of schedule.

Consequences may be more severe based on actual behavior.

RECESS EXPECTATIONS

Recess is a time for students to relax, play, and recharge, helping them stay focused and engaged in learning. It's our shared responsibility to keep recess safe by following school rules and treating each other with kindness and respect.

- Recess will be outside when the “Feels Like” temperature is 15 degrees F or above. An announcement will be made at 10:45 a.m. for indoor recess. Air Quality and the Heat Index will also be monitored daily.
- Younger students (grades PK-3) eager to explore the snow beyond the cleared blacktop will need snow boots and pants.
- Boots and snow pants are recommended for students in grades 4-6; however, we trust our older students to make responsible choices, ensuring they stay warm and dry while enjoying their time outside.
- Please don't throw snow, stay off the ice, and stay away from the building where icicles form.
- Please dress for the weather (coats, hats, and gloves when it's cold).
- Walk on the path and enter the playground at the end of the fence (not over or through the fence).

- Please enjoy using school-provided toys and equipment during recess. Personal items from home should stay at home to ensure everyone can participate equally and to keep belongings safe.
- Food is not allowed at recess.
- Be respectful of all students, staff, and play equipment. Please listen to staff when they ask you to stop your actions for safety reasons.
- Stay within designated areas – woods and behind bushes are off-limits. DO NOT go down the driveway or over the fence to get a ball.
- Sit on swings, swing forward & backward.
- Go down the slide, sitting on bottom, feet first.
- Return all equipment at the end of each recess.

CONSEQUENCES:

First Infraction:

- Warning.

Second Infraction:

- The student may be asked to sit at a designated location for a period of time.

Third Infraction:

- The student is sent to the principal for the remainder of the period, and the parent is notified.

Violations that occur more than two times can result in loss of privileges, loss of field trips, loss of assemblies, and modification of schedule.

Consequences may be more severe based on actual behavior.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

Category: Support Services
File: EE

1st Reading: 07-20-1998
2nd Reading: 08-17-1998
Adopted: 08-17-1998
Revised: 04-01-2002
07-07-2003
04-02-2018

Riding the bus is a privilege and all students must behave in a responsible manner. The following regulations apply to students living in Otis or Sandisfield:

1. Transportation will be provided only on state highways or town-approved roads.
2. Students may be required to walk up to one (1) mile to a designated bus stop.
3. Pre-Kindergarten transportation will be provided by a parent or guardian. Students with IEPs will have the option of van transportation with the approval of the Director of Student Services. Non-IEP students may be transported if there is ample seating with the approval of the building Principal. Approval for Non-IEP students will be decided on a case-by-case basis.
4. Students living less than one (1) mile from school may ride the bus as long as there is ample space available.
5. Kindergarten students will not be left unattended at a stop. A parent or guardian must meet the student at their designated bus stop.
6. Students will not be transported to a different stop without a permission note from a parent or guardian.
7. Whenever possible, the scheduling of bus routes shall include an attempt to eliminate the crossing of major highways by K-12 students with embarking or disembarking from a bus.
8. Students in Grades K-6, who choose to attend another school under school choice, may not ride on District buses. This policy also pertains to students 7-12 who live outside the Farmington River Regional School District.
9. The Principal/Superintendent shall develop or adjust bus routes to take into account the safety and well-being of the students on those

routes. If there is any exception to items 1-9 above, the School Committee will be notified of the exception on or before the net meeting.

The following policy applies to out-of-district ***school-choice*** students:

1. Parents may request transportation on FRRSD buses.
2. Permission is granted only on a space available, first requested, first-served basis, and will be withdrawn if a bus becomes full.
3. Students will be picked up and dropped off only on established routes. No routes will be lengthened to accommodate choice students.
4. Students may ride free, but permission will be withdrawn if there is ***any*** serious violation of the Bus Rules and Regulations of the District.

The accompanying Bus Rules and Regulations are part of the Transportation Policy.

BUS REGULATIONS & CONSEQUENCES

Parents must send in a note to the school if a child is to change any transportation arrangement. If someone else other than a parent is to pick up a child or if the child is to get off at a different stop, we have to be notified. We have no choice but to put the child on their regular bus route if we do not have a note or receive a phone call.

1. Use caution when crossing the road. Wait until the bus has stopped and look both ways before crossing and the driver signals to cross.
2. Do not play on or near the road while waiting for the bus. Do not approach a moving bus.
3. Get on the bus in an orderly manner – NO pushing or saving seats.
4. Keep the aisles clear at all times and remain seated.
5. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the bus.
6. Fooling around on the bus is dangerous as it distracts the bus driver. It will not be permitted.
7. Keep arms, hands, and head inside the bus.
8. Nothing should ever be thrown from the bus.
9. Knives and other dangerous objects are not permitted on the bus.

CONSEQUENCES:

First Infraction:

- A warning is given to the student.
- Parents will be called and notified in writing.

Second Infraction:

- Parents are called and notified in writing.
- Student may be denied rides for 1-5 days.

Third Infraction:

- Parents are called and notified in writing.
- Student may not ride for up to 10 days.

Fourth Infraction:

- Parents are called and notified in writing.
- Student is denied rides for the rest of the school year.

Alternative consequences may be used at the Principal's discretion depending on the seriousness of the infraction.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Category: Instruction

1st Reading: 12-01-1997

2nd Reading: 01-05-1998

File: IL

Adopted: 01-05-1998

Revised: 08-02-2004

11-04-2013

09-08-2014

11-04-2019

Adopted: 12-02-2019

The homework policy has been developed as an additional step in striving for a more challenging and rigorous education for the student. The policy will help enhance learning through the development of habits and attitudes that promote initiative, responsibility, and self-discipline.

Homework is an integral part of a child's academic program. It is important for extending classroom discussion, reinforcing skills taught in the classroom, and helping students prepare for class. Homework encourages communication between parents and children about their schoolwork and is a link between families and teachers.

Homework affects the child's grades. The School Committee feels that students, teachers, and parents all have responsibilities regarding homework. The School Handbook describes the responsibilities in detail.

As a valued part of our instructional program, homework will:

- Reinforce and review skills taught in school.
- Provide parents with an insight into what is being taught in school.
- Provide students and parents with an opportunity to discuss academic issues.
- Help develop responsibility, independent study habits and self-discipline in learning to use and manage time.

IMPORTANCE OF HOMEWORK:

- Homework is counted towards a child's overall grade for each marking period.

- A homework assignment that is not completed or is submitted late may result in a reduction of grade at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

TIME ALLOTMENT FOR HOMEWORK:

- The amount of time spent on homework is usually estimated at 10 minutes per grade level. In addition to the assigned homework, it is expected that all students will read or be read to each evening.
- Some children complete schoolwork faster than others and some children completes it more slowly. If your child is experiencing difficulty in completing assignments, please contact the teacher.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Complete and submit homework assignments by the due date.
- Ask for a list of missed assignments following an absence.
- Check with the teacher if she/he does not understand the assignment.
- Record assignments in your agenda (Grades 3-6).
- Ensure that each student clearly understands how to do the assignment successfully.
- Notify parents available for absent students at the end of the day, upon the student’s return, or as requested in advance by parents for unexcused absences of four days or more.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Encourage high standards in all written homework assignments.
- Provide a place in the home that contains an atmosphere conducive to working. This area should be free from outside distractions such as the television, radio, and family conversation.
- Check your child’s agendas and sign it daily (Grades 3-6).
- Maintain contact with the teacher regarding the homework policy and refer additional questions to the Principal.

HOMEWORK FOR ABSENT STUDENTS:

Teachers will prepare homework from the daily assignments at the written request of the parents if students are absent for more than one day for illness or death in the family (**excused absence**). Homework will be available for parents to pick up at the end of the school day.

For students who will have an **unexcused absence** of four (4) days or more, parents will receive a notice regarding student access to online curriculum. Parents will also receive notification of topics being taught that the students will be missing during their absence. Written notice must be given to the teacher no less than **ten (10) calendar days prior** to the upcoming unexcused absence. Students will receive credit for completed work. Upon return, the burden of making up any missed work during the absence is the student's responsibility.

*Revised and Adopted by the Farmington River Regional School Committee
on November 4, 2019*

WELLNESS POLICY

Category: Instruction

Adopted: Sept. 2017

Revised: 04-01-2024

File: ADF

PURPOSE AND GOALS:

The Farmington River School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement. Therefore, the school district has developed a comprehensive district wellness program that provides developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education, including opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence-based.

Recognizing a commitment to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity, it is the policy of the Farmington River Regional School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades PK-6 will have opportunity, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA).
- Qualified Food Service professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- Schools in our district will participate in the National School Lunch Program and will adhere to all federal and state requirements concerning the same.

- Schools are committed to providing nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services. Programs will be updated and enhanced through curriculum review.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

1. WELLNESS COMMITTEE:

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent, student, nurse, school food service director, School Committee member, school administrator, physical education/physical activity staff, member(s) of the public, and other community members as appropriate. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee. The School Committee will annually designate a wellness program coordinator(s). Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the superintendent and the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation, monitoring, review and assessment of this policy.

2. NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF FOODS AND BEVERAGES SOLD:

a. School Meals:

Meals served through the National School Lunch & Breakfast Programs will:

- be served in clean and safe settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (as defined by USDA); and
- ensure that all of the served grains are whole grain.

To ensure high quality nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging. Schools should engage students, through taste-tests of new entrees, in selecting foods sold

through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices.

b. Free and Reduced-priced Meals:

Schools will make available free and reduced meal applications for families who qualify. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

c. Meal Times and Scheduling:

Schools:

- will, to the extent possible, provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch and 10 minutes after sitting down for breakfast.
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks
- will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

d. Water:

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available with school meals. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry approved water bottles filled only with water with them throughout the day. The district will participate in required Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Lead and Copper Sampling Program to ensure all water sources meet (or exceed) required standards.

e. Qualifications of School Food Service Staff:

Qualified Food Services professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools will be regularly offered. Staff development programs include appropriate certification and/or training programs for Cafeteria Site Managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

f. Sharing of Foods and Beverages:

To the extent possible, students will not be allowed to share their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some student's diets.

g. Foods and Beverages Sold Individually:

Foods and beverages sold outside of reimbursable school meals (such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.) during the school day shall comply with the Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards; MA Competitive Foods Act of 2012.

h. Elementary Schools:

The school food service lunch program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools will be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually will be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

i. Beverages:

Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain 100% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (as defined by USDA);

Not allowed: soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain caffeine).

j. Foods:

A food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
- will have no more than 35% of its calories from added sugars;
- will contain no more than 200mg of sodium per food item; and no more than 480mg of sodium per a-la-carte item (main meal).

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines), as long as they meet the above foods standards.

k. Portion Sizes:

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to the USDA portion standards and CDC nutrition standards.

l. Snacks:

Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthy snack items to parents and staff.

m. Fundraising Activities:

All fundraising groups of Farmington River Regional School District, striving to enrich the curricular and extracurricular activities for our students, will be encouraged to consider and support student's health and school nutrition-education efforts. It is suggested that fundraising sales include items that are not food related and will promote physical activity. The district will disseminate a list of healthy fundraising ideas to parents and staff.

n. Rewards:

Schools will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. A list of non-food rewards will be made available to parents and staff. Non-food rewards will be strongly encouraged.

o. Celebrations:

Schools will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Each party should include no more than one food OR beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages. For the health and safety of all staff and students, all food and beverages brought from home for parties MUST be in

sealed, store packaging with a clear list of ingredients and allergens. Homemade and unlabeled food is NOT allowed for classroom distribution.

2. NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTION AND FOOD MARKETING:

a. Nutrition Education and Promotion

FRRSD aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should endeavor to provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but, to the extent possible, also classroom instruction in all subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff who support nutrition education and optional activities that faculty/staff can access to learn more and improve their own wellness.

b. Communications with Parents:

The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. To the extent possible, the district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, and post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports, to the extent feasible, will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

c. Food Marketing in Schools:

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. To the extent possible, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold

individually (above). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

d. Staff Wellness:

FRRSD highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The Wellness Committee, in concert with the School Business Office, should participate in developing, promoting, and overseeing a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

3. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

a. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

Students will receive a regular amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 15 minutes per day to the extent possible of structured or unstructured time). For students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to

maintain a physically- active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;

- Physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate. A list of ideas will be provided to staff. See appendix for additional resources along with subject specific energizers / movement ideas.

b. Physical Education (PE) K-6:

All students in grades K-6, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education for a minimum of 135 minutes every two weeks. Students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

c. Daily Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Schools will discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active. A list of activities will be disseminated to appropriate staff to assist in incorporating activity in the classroom in the event of indoor recess.

d. Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School:

All schools will encourage, to the extent possible, extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school enrichment programs, to the extent feasible, will provide and encourage - verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities - daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

e. Physical Activity and Punishment:

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity whenever possible (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

g. Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours:

To the extent possible, school spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. To the extent possible, these spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and community organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times (reference school committee policy KF-R: Community Use of Schools' Facilities/Grounds and Equipment).(sent to school committee)

4. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

There is a need across schools, community providers, and out-of-school time partners to support the emerging social-emotional (SEL) needs of children. Increasing incidence of trauma requires that providers have a common language, clear definitions, and a set of evidence-based techniques to work with children in schools and within the community. SEL is an area of ongoing focus for Farmington River Elementary and as such;

- Character education will occur in the classrooms. Lessons will be taken from research-based programs.
- Lessons will be taught to empower students to develop self-regulatory behaviors and coping skills to be used in everyday life. The school will implement the curriculum in the classrooms to address character education, problem solving skills, peer relations, peer mediation, bullying, etc.
- Anti-bullying will be addressed through a research-based program per DESE regulations and Chapter 86 of the Acts of 2014, which amended MGL c. 71 section 370 (see district policy on Bullying Prevention).
- Students will be taught and encouraged to follow ADL's (activities of daily living), which include healthy eating, good sleep habits, personal hygiene, etc.
- Students will be taught to recognize and manage their emotions and to be aware of and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. The school will implement activities, role-playing, and curriculum in the classroom to address: bullying, problem-solving, character education, peer mediation, etc.

- Teach children and families appropriate methods for relaxation and mindfulness.
- Educate families regarding services and organizations available to them in the county

Find more resources at FRES Wellness Resources Page

5. SUPPORTING (ADDITIONAL) HEALTHY BEHAVIORS:

It is important that, additionally, particular healthy habits are reinforced within and beyond the school walls. As such, Farmington River School will:

- Encourage students to practice proper hygiene daily (showering, tooth brushing, flossing, deodorant, clean change of clothes)
- When necessary, encourage students to wear sunscreen
- Offer a fluoride program to all students in grades 1-6 when available through the Massachusetts department of public health.
- Allow a dental preventist to visit FRES semi-annually to offer cleanings, fluoride treatments and sealants.
- Encourage proper hand washing before eating and after bathroom use
- Offer flu vaccine to students and staff in the fall in concert with the Health Office and the local Department of Public Health.
- Partner with the community to assist with health care, as appropriate. Dental Preventist, Department of Public Health, Local Dental programs (classroom education), Berkshire Health Systems: Advocacy for Access (insurance) & Operation Better Start.

6. MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW:

a. Monitoring:

The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent. In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district, and will

make the summary available to the public. As possible, annual updates will be offered to the Farmington River School Committee.

b. Policy Review:

To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, the school will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of this assessments will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated tri-annually to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

*LEGAL REFS.: Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act, 2010
The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Section 204, P.L. 108 -265
The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 - 1769h The Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1771 - 1789*

*REGULATIONS: US Department of Agriculture Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Nutrition, Health and Safety
105 CMR 225.000: Nutrition Standards For Competitive Foods And Beverages In Public Schools*

*CROSS REF.: EFC, Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services
IHAMA, Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs KI, Public Solicitations/Advertising in District Facilities*

MEDICAL & HEALTH INFORMATION

NURSE

Farmington River Elementary has a full- time school nurse in attendance during the school day. They attend only to illness or injury that occurs during school hours. Any student desiring medical services must have the permission of the adult in charge before going to the nurse's office. Is it recommended that parents keep copies of their children's physicals and immunizations for their own files.

MEDICATION

Under Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 112 Section 80B, a licensed nurse must have a medication order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant(provider) and written parental/guardian consent in order to administer any medication, whether it is a prescription or over the counter (including cough drops).By law, only a school nurse, or trained staff member can administer medications in schools.

A form is available from the school nurse that will authorize the dispensing of medication in school. A provider must complete this form and it must be returned to the school nurse.

- If it is necessary for your child to take a prescription medication temporarily (such as an antibiotic) during school hours, please adhere to the following procedure: Place the medication in the original labeled pharmacy container (The local drug store will give you a second one upon request) and fill out the top portion of the medication dispensing form and sign the parent consent section. Call or e-mail the school so the medication administration plan can be put into place prior to administration to student.
- No psychotropic medication (Ritalin, Adderall, Vyvanse, Clonidine, and Dexedrine) may be carried to school by a student. An adult must bring the medication in a labeled prescription container to the nurse. At the

end of the school year, an adult must pick up all unused medication. If not, it will be discarded.

- Students will be allowed to keep their asthma medication and epinephrine auto-injectors with them if they have written parental/guardian, physician and nurse approval. If an inhaler is used, the student needs to report its use to the school nurse. If your child needs to take his/her asthma inhaler on a field trip, please notify the nurse several days in advance so arrangements can be made.
- Students who take medication at lunchtime during the school day, will not receive the noontime dose on half days unless prior arrangements are made with the school nurse.

SCREENINGS

Regular State-mandated screenings are conducted in the following grades:

- *HEARING: K-3, 6th Grade*
- *VISION: PreK- 6th Grade*
- *VISION: PreK-6th Grade*
- *HEIGHTS & WEIGHTS WITH BMI CALCULATION: 1st & 4th Grade*
- *POSTURAL: 5th & 6th Grade*

IMMUNIZATIONS

It is Massachusetts state law that students who are not up to date with immunization requirements for school entry are excluded from school. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide current immunization records in a timely fashion to avoid exclusion of their child. The school nurse is available to help parents/guardians in this area. Families whose religious beliefs preclude the students from being immunized are precluded from this exemption and must provide documentation each school year.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Physical examinations are required prior to entry of Preschool, Early K, grades K , 4th, 7th and 10th. Because your family physician or pediatrician has a comprehensive knowledge of the health status of your child, private physician's examinations are encouraged.