

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

The School Committee seeks to educate students in the democratic tradition, to foster recognition of individual freedom and social responsibility, to inspire meaningful awareness of and respect for the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Fairness in procedures will be observed both to safeguard the legitimate interests of the schools and to exhibit by appropriate example the basic objectives of a democratic society as set forth in the Constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth.

LEGAL REF.: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## **SCHOOL YEAR/SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The school calendar for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval annually. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the following standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:

1. The School Committee shall schedule a school year which includes at least 185 school days for each school in the District.
2. Elementary school will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every elementary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 900 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.
3. Secondary schools will operate for a minimum of 180 days. Schools shall ensure that every secondary school student is scheduled to receive a minimum of 990 hours per school year of structured learning time, as defined in regulation. Time which a student spends at school breakfast and lunch, passing between classes, in homeroom, at recess, in non-directed study periods, receiving school services, and participating in optional school programs shall not count toward meeting the minimum structured learning time requirement for that student.

For the information of staff, students, and parents/guardians, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session; holidays and vacation periods; in service days; and parent conferences.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 69:1G; 71:1; 71:4; 71:4A; 71:73; 136:12  
603 CMR 27.00

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help ensure the safety of all children, parents/guardians will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until the start of the official day unless circumstances require earlier admittance.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 15:1G; 69:1G; 71:59  
                      603 CMR 27.00

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION**

Curriculum is defined as the content and skills taught to students, the assessment of student learning, and the instructional strategies used at the appropriate levels/areas or in courses in the District schools. The curriculum shall be designed and delivered based on the beliefs of the District's Strategic Plan and on the commitment toward personalized student learning.

The Plymouth Public Schools strive to offer a strong and effective curriculum. This is accomplished by updating and modifying the curriculum, recognizing the demands made of students in a constantly changing world. In order to provide a curriculum that meets the needs of students and the expectations of the community, the following will be done:

1. The School Committee will monitor the curriculum to ensure, at a minimum, compliance with the state requirements.
2. Curriculum will regularly be reviewed, evaluated and modified where needed. Under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Instruction, Directors, Curriculum Coordinators and/or Lead Teachers will set yearly goals for curriculum work, which may include needs assessment, curriculum development, implementation of a new program, assessment of an existing program, or any other aspect of curriculum development as needed. Principals and teachers will be made aware of all curriculum projects and provide input and consultation on programs.
3. Consistent with the School Committee's Calendar, regular curriculum updates will be made to the School Committee by Coordinators, Directors, and Department Chairs, when appropriate, but at least every three years.
4. The School Committee will be sensitive to changing conditions that may require or suggest corresponding changes in the curriculum. The Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Instruction, Directors, and Curriculum Coordinators will be aware of curriculum offerings in other area schools as well as changing college entrance requirements, changing entry-level skills necessary for work, new technologies, new methodological approaches, community needs, etc.
5. Each major curriculum area will be reviewed at least every five years and modified where needed. The appropriate director, curriculum coordinator, and/or Principal will be responsible for reviewing the curriculum under the direction of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Instruction.
6. When a curriculum and/or curricular materials have been adopted, it is the responsibility of the staff, directors, curriculum coordinators, Principals, and Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Instruction to ensure that the program is implemented fully for the students for whom it is intended.
7. Appropriate professional development regarding curriculum shall be provided in the development, revision, and adoption process and in the actual use of the curriculum.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 15:1G; 71:1; 69:1E  
603 CMR 26:05

## **STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAMS**

The Director of Student Support Services shall be responsible for all services for students who are not eligible for Special Education assistance, such as psychological services, speech correction, homebound and hospital teaching and such other programs as may be assigned.

CROSS REF.:           ACE, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

## **HEALTH EDUCATION**

The School Committee believes that the greatest opportunity for effective health education lies within the public schools because of their potential to reach children at the age when positive, lifelong health habits are best engendered and because the schools are equipped to provide qualified personnel to conduct health education programs.

The School Committee is committed to a sound, comprehensive, research-based health education program as an integral part of each student's general education. Health education will be taught as a separate academic discipline in grades K through 5 and as a separate class in other grades 6 through twelve.

The health education program will emphasize a contemporary approach to the presentation of health information, skills, and the knowledge necessary for students to understand and appreciate the functioning and proper care of the human body. Students also will be presented with information regarding complex social, physical and mental health problems, which they might encounter in society. In an effort to help students make intelligent choices on alternative behavior of serious personal consequence, health education will examine the potential health hazards of social, physical and mental problems existing in the larger school-community environment.

In order to promote a relevant, dynamic approach to the instruction of health education, the School Committee will continue to stress the need for curricular, personnel, and financial commitments that are necessary to assure the high quality of the district's health education program.

LEGAL REF.:           M.G.L. 71:1

**HEALTH EDUCATION  
(Exemption Procedure)**

Exemption will be granted from a specific portion of health education curriculum on the grounds that the material taught is contrary to the religious beliefs and/or teachings of the student or the student's parent/guardian.

A request for exemption must be submitted in writing to the Principal in advance of instruction in that portion of the curriculum for which the exemption is requested. The request must state the particular conflict involved.

The Principal will confer with the teacher to determine the length of time a student will be exempt. The teacher will develop an alternative activity for which the student will receive credit.

The Principal will inform the parent/guardian of disposition of the request within a reasonable number of school days of receipt of the request. The Principal will inform the Superintendent or designee of the request and disposition.

LEGAL REF.:       M.G.L. 71:1

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION**

In accordance with law, the Plymouth School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues. The Superintendent of Schools will determine the administrator(s) responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/ guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given written notice at the time of enrollment. If the planned curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
2. inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the materials at the school and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the principal concerning notice access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

The Superintendent of Schools will distribute a copy of this policy to each Principal by September 1 of each year.

LEGAL REFS:       M.G.L. 71:32A  
                      603 CMR 5



## **TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS**

In accordance with state and federal law, the District shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:1 ;71:96

CROSS REFS: GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy  
JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS  
(PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS)**

The goals of this school district's Special Education program are to allow each child to grow and achieve at their own level, to gain independence and self-reliance, and to return to the mainstream of school society as soon as possible.

The requirements of law and regulation will be followed in the identification of children with special needs, in referrals for their evaluation, in prescribing for them suitable programs and in assessing their educational progress. In keeping with state requirements, all children with special needs between the ages of three to twenty-two who have not attained a high school diploma, or its equivalent will be eligible for special education.

The School Committee believes that most children with special needs can be educated in the regular school program if they are given special instruction, accommodation, and the support they need. These children should also be given the opportunity to participate in the school district's non-academic and extracurricular activities.

The Committee recognizes that the needs of certain children are so great that special programs, special classes, or special schools may be necessary. When appropriate programs, services, or facilities are not available within the public schools, the Committee will provide these children with access to schools where such instruction and accommodations are available.

It is the desire of the Committee that the schools work closely with parents/guardians in designing and providing programs and services to children with special needs. Parents/guardians will be informed, and conferred with, whenever a child is referred for evaluation. In the event of any disagreement concerning diagnosis, program plan, special placement, or evaluation, the parents/guardians will be accorded the right of due process.

The Committee will secure properly trained personnel to work with the children with special needs. Since the financial commitment necessary to meet the needs of all these children is extensive, the Committee will make every effort to obtain financial assistance.

LEGAL REFS.:       The Individuals with Disabilities Ed. Act (PL 108-446, adopted 12/03/04)  
                          Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
                          M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq.  
                          603 CMR 28 :00 inclusive

**STUDENT SERVICES PROGRAM  
(Section 504)**

In order to offer educational opportunities to all students that will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives, the District shall provide appropriate educational opportunities to all resident students in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes.

LEGAL REF.: Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

## OBSERVATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

1. Parents'/guardian's request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made at least five days in advance with the Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal.
2. The Special Education Director or designee shall contact the parent(s)/guardian for initial scheduling conversation within five (5) days of receipt of the parents'/guardian's request.
3. When a parent/guardian requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Director or designee will seek approval from the Director of Special Education and the building principal before it is processed. Such approval may only be withheld for those reasons outlined within law and DESE regulation.
4. The Special Education Director or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).
5. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
6. If the observer is not the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must sign a release for the individual to observe.
7. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
8. The observer will be informed that they are not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If their presence presents a problem, they will be asked to leave. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents/guardians can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.
9. The observer will be asked to submit their report of the observation in advance of any follow-up TEAM meeting.
10. The observer will be informed that they are there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. They are not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform their contractual job duties.
11. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

12. A school administrator, or designee, also will observe at the same time and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical concerning the period. This observation summary will be placed in the student's file and provided to the parent(s)/guardian prior to any follow-up TEAM meeting.

LEGAL REF.: MGL 71B:3  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009

CROSS REF.: KI, Visitors to Schools

NOTE: The following quotes from the DESE Advisory are important points of understanding to the implementation of this policy.

“School districts and parents/guardians have reported that, typically, observations are between one and four hours. While useful as a general rule, the Department recommends that district policies and practices specify that the duration and extent of observations will be determined on an individual basis. Districts should avoid rigid adherence to defined time limits regardless of the student's needs and settings to be observed. The complexities of the child's needs, as well as the program or programs to be observed, should determine what the observation will entail and what amount of time is needed to complete it. Discussion between school staff and the parent/guardian or designee is a good starting point for resolving the issue.”

“The observation law states that districts may not condition or restrict program observations except when necessary to protect:

- the safety of children in the program during the observation;
- the integrity of the program during the observation;
- and children in the program from disclosure by an observer of confidential or personally identifiable information they may obtain while observing the program.”

**COMPENSATORY EDUCATION  
(Title 1)**

Title 1 funds shall be used to provide educational services that are in addition to the regular services provided for District students. By adoption of this policy, the School Committee ensures equivalence in the provision of curriculum materials and supplies.

LEGAL REF.: Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended

CROSS REF.: DEC, Federal Funds Supplement Not Supplant Policy

## **ENGLISH LEARNER EDUCATION**

The District shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations and guidance.

The District shall identify students whose dominant language may not be English through

- home language surveys that identify a primary home language is other than English.
- observations
- intake assessments
- recommendations of parents/guardians, teachers, and other persons.

Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language.

The District shall certify to DESE each year those students whose dominant language is not English, including specification of the number of non-English languages identified as dominant languages and the number and percent of students who speak each non-English language as their dominant language.

The District shall provide additional information as required by DESE to comply with federal law.

LEGAL REFS.:       Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended  
                          42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)  
                          603 CMR 14.00

## **HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION**

The schools may furnish homebound instruction to any student who must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical and/or psychological reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school they will not be at a disadvantage because of illness or the hospitalization.

To qualify for the program, the student needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to the Director of Student Support Services.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Licensed teachers shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent or designee.

LEGAL REF.:           603 CMR 28.03 (3)(c)



## HOME SCHOOLING

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home-Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for their child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator 14 days before the program is established and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents/guardian to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents/guardian.
4. Periodic standardized testing of children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A Student being educated through an approved home education plan shall be allowed to participate in public school activities of an extra-curricular nature. Home-educated students participating in extra-curricular activities are subject to the same participation fees, state and local regulations, and district policies and procedures as enrolled students.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles  
Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399 Mass. 324  
(1987)

## **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

The School Committee will provide alternative education programs where these needs have been identified, where establishment of such programs is feasible, and where the proposed programs fall within the function normally associated with the public school district.

These alternative educational programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic, social, and vocational experience to aid these young people either to reenter the regular school district, move into another educational setting, or prepare them for successful employment.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 71:37I; 71:37J  
                      603 CMR 17.00

## REMOTE LEARNING

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such an emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee. The remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency.
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.
- Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.

- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
  - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
  - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
  - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

LEGAL REFS.:        20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)  
                          15 U.S.C. §§ 6501–6506 Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

CROSS REFS.:        EBCD – Emergency Closings  
                          IGA/IGD – Curriculum Development  
                          IGB – Support Services Programs  
                          IHBEA – English Learner Education  
                          IJND – Access to Digital Resources  
                          IJNDB – Empowered Digital Use  
                          IJNDC – Internet Publication  
                          IJNDD – Policy on Social Media  
                          IHBEA – English Language Learners  
                          JB – Equal Educational Opportunities  
                          JBB – Educational Equity

## **SUMMER SCHOOLS**

The school district shall make available summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year, when funding for such programs is available. The focus of the program will be credit recovery.

Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer school credit recovery programs. Credit towards graduation requirements may be granted high school students in line with regulations of the School District.

All summer programs will be subject to annual approval by the School Committee in the budget process.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:28

## **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The School Committee believes that materials appropriate to the needs of the school program must be available to each student and teacher. These will be furnished by the School Committee subject to budgetary constraints.

The task of selecting instructional materials for programs will be delegated to the professional staff of the school district. Because instructional programs and materials are of great importance, only those that meet the following criteria will be approved by the Committee:

1. They must present balanced views of global, national, and local issues and problems of the past, present and future.
2. They must provide materials that stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic and ethical values.
3. They must help students develop abilities in critical reading and thinking.
4. They must help develop and foster an appreciation of cultural diversity and development in the United States and throughout the world.
5. They must provide for all students an effective basic education that does not discriminate on the basis of race\*, age, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, physical disabilities or sexual orientation.
6. They must allow sufficient flexibility to meet the special needs of individual students and groups of students.

\*race to include traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30B:7; 71:48; 71:49; 71:50  
BESE regulations 603 CMR 26.00

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints  
IGA/IGD, Curriculum Development and Adoption

## RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Material that is challenged usually belongs to one of the three basic categories: religion, ideology, or profanity/obscenity. Board policies regarding these areas shall be as follows:

- **Religion -- Factual, unbiased material on religions has a place in school libraries.**
- **Ideologies -- Libraries should, with no thought toward swaying reader judgment, make available a balanced collection of primary and factual material, on the level of their students on various ideologies or philosophies which exert or have exerted a strong force, either favorably or unfavorably, in government, current events, politics, education and other phases of life.**
- **Profanity/obscenity -- Materials shall be subjected to a test of literary merit and reality in context using the criteria established.**

When a problem concerning instructional resources in a school arises, the disposition of the problem will be made in a reasonable period of time using District adopted procedures.

In accordance with the statement of philosophy, no questioned materials shall be removed from the school pending a final decision. Pending the outcome of the request for reconsideration, however, access to questioned materials can be denied to the students of the parents/guardians making the complaint, if they so desire.

Despite care taken to select materials that are needed and appropriate, objections to a selection may be made by the resident public. The responsibilities of the staff must be defended when materials are selected within the guidelines established by this educational materials policy.

Any resident citizen or parent or guardian of a student may make a complaint regarding materials used in the schools. When a citizen disagrees with the content of particular material in the schools, meeting with the appropriate Program Manager and/or the principal with the purpose in mind of concluding, to the satisfaction of all concerned, the disagreement, in an amicable manner. All objections to materials should be settled informally, if possible. If at the conclusion of this informal meeting the complainant is not satisfied, and still believes that it does not belong in the school, then the complainant should follow the procedure outlined below.

The following procedure shall be followed whenever this is a formal request for the evaluation of material.

- 1.0 Challenged material will remain in use in the school pending final decision.
- 2.0 The Superintendent shall establish an ad hoc review committee broadly representative of:
  - 2.1 Teacher competent in the area of the content covered by the print material but not involved in the use of the material in question.
  - 2.2 Administrators, directors, and supervisors appropriate to the level and/or subject for which material is used, but not involved in the use of the material in question.
    - 2.3 A media specialist shall serve on the review committee.
    - 2.4 Member of the School Committee.
    - 2.5 Member of the community not involved in the challenge of the material.

- 3.0 Superintendent, or school building where the complaint originated.
  - 3.1 Evaluation of Material Forms must be filed with the Superintendent.
  - 3.2 Superintendent refers to Ad Hoc Committee.
- 4.0 Ad Hoc Committee meeting action on a written request shall be taken no later than fifteen (15) school days after receipt of the request.
- 5.0 A written report of the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee shall be submitted to the Superintendent no later than twenty (20) school days after the receipt of the request. The Superintendent shall then communicate his/her decision to the person requesting the evaluation within ten (10) calendar days.
- 6.0 Should the decision of the Superintendent not satisfy the person requesting the evaluation, said person shall have five (5) school days to submit a written request for a hearing to appeal his/her decision to the School Committee.
- 7.0 The School Committee may hold a special hearing to review the Superintendent's decision within ten (10) school days of the receipt of the written request.
- 8.0 The School Committee will have five (5) school days following the special hearing to respond in writing to the complainant.

If the decision of the School Committee is that the questioned instructional resource be retained, the District will not convene a Review Committee relative to the same complaint for a period of three years. If a substantially different point of view is advanced, it will be investigated. (The period of three years does not apply in this instance).

If an individual or a group undertakes action to keep material from the shelves by checking it out and failing to return it, or by taking turns in keeping it checked out so that it is not available for student use, the Superintendent shall request, in writing, the return of the material. If it is not returned within thirty (30) days, a bill for the current replacement cost of the item shall be rendered to the party holding the item.

After the School Committee has adopted new materials or approved certain methods, that decision will not be reconsidered for a period of three years beginning with the end of the school year when the adoption is made.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

REFERENCE: American Library Association – Library Bill of Rights



## USE OF VIDEOS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMING

### EFFECTIVE VIDEO UTILIZATION

Sound instructional principles that maximize instructional time should always be employed (e.g. show only relevant clips, inform students of the instructional purpose, stop and start video to integrate other instructional activities, use pre/post questions and discussions and assessment, etc.)

Lesson plans including intended instructional objectives and curriculum standards addressed must be provided to the appropriate administrator in writing prior to viewing in the classroom.

All videos must be previewed by the teacher before showing.

### VIDEO USAGE

Instructional Use: The primary use of videos is for instructional purposes. By law, any video that does not include "public performance rights" must comply with the "fair use" provision of copyright law. This requires that videos to be used with students in "face-to-face" instruction with the teacher:

- be correlated to instructional objectives.
- be shown in a normal instructional setting, (not in large group settings such as in an auditorium or assembly hall).

Non-instructional Use (**Public Performance Site License REQUIRED**) : Only videos that include "public performance rights" may be used for reward and entertainment. Videos shown solely for reward or entertainment must be approved by the building administrator.

### ONLINE CONTENT

Teachers should use professional judgment when using online video content to support instruction

## **LIBRARY MATERIALS SELECTION AND ADOPTION**

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books will be accepted in keeping with the above policy on selection. Complaints about library books will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

CROSS REF.: KE, Public Complaints

REFERENCE: American Library Association – Library Bill of Rights

## **LIBRARY RESOURCES**

The primary objective of the library/media center is to implement its resources to enrich and to support the educational program of the school.

### Definition of Library Resources

Library resources are those print, non-print, and digital materials found in school libraries which support curricular and personal information needs.

### Criteria for Selection of Library Resources

The criteria for selection of library resources in the District are:

- Needs of the individual student  
Based on knowledge of students  
Based on requests of parents/guardians and students
- Needs of the individual school  
Based on knowledge of the curriculum of the school  
Based on requests from the professional staff
- Provision of a wide range of materials on many levels of difficulty with a diversity of appeal and the presentation of different points of view.
- Provision of materials of high artistic quality.
- Provision of materials with superior format.
- Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids are consulted as guides.

In accordance with the District's policy of providing instructional materials on opposing sides of controversial issues, it should be noted that neither the media centers nor the District serve as advocates for the ideas expressed in any materials, nor does the presence of any material indicate automatic endorsement of the ideas expressed therein.

### Disclosure of Information/Privacy of Circulation Records

Circulation records shall not be made available to anyone except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized by law.

### Re-evaluation (Weeding) of Library Resources

The continuous review of library/media center materials is necessary as a means of maintaining a useful and active collection. As new materials are selected and added, some older materials are withdrawn. The responsibility for determining which materials are to be withdrawn rests with the professional staff.

Among the reasons for withdrawing an item are the following:

- Curricular changes have rendered superfluous some materials (or multiple copies of materials) formerly used but no longer in demand.
- Some materials contain factual material that is no longer accurate nor current.
- Some materials intended for recreational reading have become dated or unattractive and are no longer in demand. (Some such books, which are deemed “standards” or “classics”, will be retained even though they rarely circulate).
- Some materials have become worn out, damaged or physically deteriorated and have lost utility and/or appeal.
- Some materials have been superseded by newer items, which present the same information, but in superior format.

Withdrawn library/media center materials are processed in one or more of the following ways:

- Made available to be used as resource or supplementary material by teachers.
- Offered to other media centers in the District, as it is possible that a material, which lacks utility in one building, may have some usefulness in another.
- Contributed to appropriate charitable or educational agencies.
- Discarded, when warranted.

Continuing evaluation is closely related to the goals and responsibilities of library/media centers and is a valuable tool of collection development. This procedure is not to be used as a convenient or expedient means to remove materials presumed to be controversial or likely to be disapproved by segments of the community. Materials are not to be proscribed or removed because of actual or potential partisan or doctrinal disapproval, nor because of the origin, background or views of those contributing to their creation.

## ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

The School Committee supports the right of students, employees, and community members to have reasonable access to various information formats and believes it is incumbent upon users to utilize this privilege in an appropriate manner. The School Committee intends to support such use with appropriate budgetary allocations, providing for timely updates to technology as necessary.

The Superintendent, in conjunction with the Director of Technology, shall develop and implement appropriate procedures to provide guidance for access to digital resources.

LEGAL REFS: 47 USC § 254

**Note: FCC regulations that went into effect April 20, 2001, implementing The Children's Internet Protection Act (47 U.S.C. § 254) require each school/district to certify compliance with certain policy requirements in order to maintain eligibility for Internet access discounts and other services provided by the federal government.**

## **STUDENT INTERNET SAFETY AND TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE**

Plymouth Public Schools provides Internet access for educational purposes for their students, ensuring that students develop global communication and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Plymouth Public Schools filters the Internet in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Student use of the network, associated Plymouth Public Schools' technology devices, and Plymouth Public Schools applications, programs, or accounts is restricted to educational purposes only. Personal electronic devices are subject to the same restrictions.

### **Scope of Acceptable Use Policy**

This policy and all Plymouth Public Schools technology policies, guidelines, and rules refer to all computing and electronic devices (including but not limited to: computers, mobile web enabled devices, Chromebooks, iPads, MP3 players, portable memory storage devices, calculators with interfacing capability, cell phones, digital cameras, etc.) peripheral devices (including but not limited to devices for printing, storing, duplicating and receiving information), technology infrastructure, and/or software.

Further, this policy and all Plymouth Public Schools technology policies, guidelines, and rules apply to any and all computing or electronic communication devices owned by, leased by, in the possession of, or being used by students and/or staff that are operated on the grounds of any district facility or connected to any equipment at any district facility by means of web connection, direct connection, or any other type of connection.

This policy and all Plymouth Public Schools technology policies, guidelines and rules apply to all computing, network access, and network infrastructure, regardless of whether it is accessed from school or off-campus and regardless of whether it is accessed during or after school hours.

This policy and the Acceptable Use Policy Agreement also applies to any online service provided directly or indirectly by the Plymouth Public Schools for student and/or staff use, including but not limited to: Google Apps for Education accounts, Email, Calendar, and Aspen.

The privilege of using Plymouth Public Schools technology resources is not transferable or extendable by students to people and/or to groups outside the district and terminates when a student is no longer enrolled in Plymouth Public Schools.

Due to the changing nature of information technology, not all circumstances may be anticipated or addressed in this policy and the associated Acceptable Use Agreement. All users are expected to comply with both this policy as written and the spirit of this policy and show good judgment in their use of technology resources.

### **District Responsibilities**

The Coordinator of Educational Technology and Instructional Media (CETIM) and the Technology Systems Engineer or their designee(s) will oversee access to the network and will establish processes for the following: individual and/or class accounts, authorization for software installation; back-up and archiving of databases; virus protection; and compliance with filtering laws and regulations.

The Principal or designee will maintain signed user agreements and be responsible for enforcing the Technology AUP.

When using the internet for class activities, teachers will make every attempt to preview and select material appropriate to the students and relevant to the course objectives. Teachers will provide guidelines and resources to assist their students in developing the necessary critical thinking skills to access online information.

### **Access to the System**

The Technology AUP will govern all utilization of the network. Student use of the system will also be governed by applicable sections of the Plymouth School Committee Policy Handbook and the Student Handbook.

Parents/Guardians may specifically request that their children not be provided such access by checking the appropriate box on the signature page of the AUP Agreement and returning it to their child's school. Upon receipt of that form, Plymouth Public Schools will make its best effort to restrict all internet access.

The internet will be for educational purposes only. Students will be educated about appropriate internet and technology behaviors, including cyber bullying awareness and response. Furthermore, accessing or knowingly and willingly causing or providing access to data or computer software through a computer, computer system, or computer network within the scope of the district school system is prohibited (see Plymouth Public Schools Anti-Bullying Policy File: JICFB).

### **District Limitation of Liability**

Plymouth Public Schools makes no guarantees of any kind, either expressed or implied, that the functions or the services provided by or through its network, network infrastructure, or district-owned or leased devices will be error-free or without defect. The district will not be responsible for any damages users may suffer, including but not limited to, loss of data or interruptions of service caused by any reason, or personal physical, psychological, or monetary damages.

The district is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. The district will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations arising through the use of the system. Parents or guardians agree to accept financial responsibility for any expenses or damages incurred as a result of their student's inappropriate, prohibited or illegal activities on the Plymouth Public Schools network, and the Plymouth Public Schools will not be responsible for financial obligations arising through the use of technology, including but not limited to the district's network.

Parents and guardians agree to reimburse the Plymouth Public Schools for any expenses or damages incurred in the use of district-owned or -leased devices such as Chromebooks, mobile electronic devices, or other devices provided to the student.

### **Due Process**

When using the network, the user agrees to take full responsibility for his or her actions. The Plymouth Public Schools will not be held liable for the actions of anyone connecting to the internet through this network. Therefore, all users shall assume full liability, legal, financial, or otherwise, for their use of the network.

Violations of the Technology AUP could result in the immediate suspension of the user's privileges, suspension, and/or expulsion. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Administration of the Plymouth Public Schools and/or Town, County, State or Federal authorities. Any question or allegations concerning adherence to the Technology AUP should be brought to the attention of the CEITM.

### **Monitoring and Privacy**

The network is the property of the school department and its storage systems are therefore subject to inspection by the administration at any time. System users have a limited privacy expectation in the contents of their personal files stored on or accessed through the network. Records of electronic device use may be subject to public records law and may be discoverable in criminal or civil proceedings.

All Plymouth Public Schools email and files, either downloaded or copied from the Plymouth Public Schools system, that are accessed through a user's home computer or any other non-Plymouth Public Schools computer or device, are Plymouth Public Schools' property and should be used and protected according to this policy and other applicable policies and laws governing information confidentiality and security.

An individual search will be conducted if there is suspicion that a user has violated the AUP, the law or the disciplinary code. The nature of the investigation will be in the context of the nature of the alleged violation.

Technicians and computer system administrators maintain full access rights to all storage devices, and may need to access/manage such storage devices as part of their duties.

The Plymouth Public Schools prohibits the use of camera and audio recording functions on any equipment, including but not limited to personal cameras, personal camera telephones, and/or school-issued devices, at school or school-sponsored events, except when specifically authorized by school administration or staff and with knowledge and consent of the participants. In no event should any photographs or video be taken of confidential information, nor should photographs, audio, or video recordings be made without knowledge of the subjects. Audio recording without the consent of the individuals recorded may result in criminal felony charges. M.G.L. c. 272 § 99.

### **Unacceptable Use**

The user of any Plymouth Public Schools network, Plymouth Public Schools owned or leased electronic device, or any personal electronics device connected to the Plymouth Public Schools network is expected to abide by this policy, along with the Code of Conduct and rules set forth in the Student Handbook. The user will not use the Plymouth Public Schools network, Plymouth Public Schools owned or leased electronic device, or any personal electronic device connected to the Plymouth Public Schools network for any unacceptable purpose including, but not limited to:

- using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
- engaging in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
- knowingly or recklessly posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization or posting information that could cause damage or disruption; this includes, but is not limited to, the posting of broadcast messages or other actions that cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.



- installing or downloading unauthorized software, applications, extensions, routers, or joining listservs or newsgroups without expressed permission of instructional staff.
- attempting to go beyond his or her authorized access, making deliberate attempts to disrupt system performance or destroy data (by spreading computer viruses or by any other means), or engaging in other illegal activities.
- disseminating passwords, codes, access telephone numbers, or account numbers to unauthorized persons.
- using the network to access or send material that is profane or obscene (e.g., pornography), advocates illegal acts, or advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (e.g., hate literature).
- changing in any way the configuration of a computer or network without permission of instructional staff.
- engaging in plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty.
- damaging or vandalizing computers, computer systems or networks.
- trespassing in other's folders, work or files or using another's password.
- using computers / internet to play non-educational games or other non-academic activities.
- participating in any type of teleconferencing or chat without permission of instructional staff.
- using e-mail without instructional staff permission / supervision.
- The network may not be used for personal and commercial purposes, such as, but not limited to, offering or purchasing goods and/or services for personal use.
- Engaging in electronic forgery, credit card fraud, or other illegal behavior.

### **Safety**

The safety of the internet user is of utmost concern. Users should never provide personal information of themselves or anyone else. Users will not agree to meet with someone they have met on-line without parent/guardian approval and participation. Users will promptly disclose to their teacher or other school employees any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

### **Web Publishing**

The Plymouth Public Schools web site is designed to provide a portal to enable communication among teachers, students, staff, administration and the community, both local and global. Material posted on the District's web site must reflect the high educational standards of the Plymouth Public Schools.

To ensure the safety of our students and the accuracy and security of district information the guidelines and procedures listed below must be followed:

- No student's personal information, such as SIMS (Student Information Management Systems) data, last name, home address, and telephone number may be posted on the web site. Students must submit a signed permission form from their parent/guardian granting permission to post the student's work or picture.
- Requests to post material on the Plymouth Public Schools' Web site must have prior approval of the Principal or designee.

- Student directory information may not be published.
- The creator of a home page on the District's network is responsible for ensuring that the information contained therein is of the highest editorial standards (spelling, punctuation, grammar, style, etc.). The information should be factually accurate and current. If errors are observed, the CETIM or designated school page editor should be contacted to make the necessary corrections.

It should be noted that the Plymouth Public Schools name or logo may not be used on a personal web page without permission of the Superintendent.

### **Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement**

Existing copyright law will govern the use of material accessed through the network. The user will not plagiarize works found on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours. All copyrighted material used must have the express written permission or appropriate citation of the person or organization that owns the copyright. Plymouth Public Schools will cooperate with copyright protection agencies investigating copyright infringement by users of the computer systems and network of the Plymouth Public Schools.

### **Use of Plymouth Public Schools Owned or Leased Devices**

Plymouth Public Schools may provide a 1:1 electronic device (such as a Chromebook) to students through a 1:1 electronic device initiative to promote equitable access to technology, enhance the Plymouth Public Schools learning environment, and allow for seamless integration of technology under the direction of school staff.

Use of a 1:1 device requires Parent/Guardian (and Students over 18) agreement to the terms of the Plymouth Public Schools' Loan of Technology Agreement, this Acceptable Use Policy and Associated Agreement, the 1:1 Chromebook Handbook for Students and Families, and the Plymouth Public Schools Student Handbook.

All devices and accessories remain the property of the Plymouth Public Schools. Any information accessed through the Plymouth Public Schools network or on a Plymouth Public Schools device may be monitored and/or reviewed by Plymouth Public Schools. All files stored on the student's loaned device or in the student's Plymouth Public Schools account are subject to individual review and monitoring.

Students may only log in under their assigned username. Students may not share their password or log in information with any other student.

Parent supervision of the use of 1:1 devices and regular communication with school staff is strongly encouraged. While Plymouth Public Schools filters the content accessible to students, the ability to filter all internet content is not perfect. Parents are encouraged to supervise device usage during non-school hours given the 24/7 availability of the 1:1 device.

Devices that malfunction, are lost, stolen, or otherwise require repair must be reported immediately to the school Building Technology Designee.

### **Use of Personal Electronic Devices (Bring Your Own Device)**

Students may be permitted to utilize their own mobile electronic device at school and during school-related educational activities to assist and enhance their learning experiences, subject to the terms of this Acceptable Use Policy and the Procedures and Rules established by each building Principal. Each school's administrative team may set forth rules and guidelines to fit the needs of the school learning community, however any changes may not supersede the guidelines set forth in this School Committee Acceptable Use Policy.

Student use of personal electronic devices is a privilege that may be taken away by school personnel.

Only the network connection provided by the Plymouth Public Schools may be accessed from a Student's personal device while on campus.

Plymouth Public Schools is not responsible for the security or maintenance of students' personal electronic devices.

### **1.0 Remote Learning and Acceptable Use**

During periods of remote learning, as necessitated by public health concerns, emergency orders, or any other reason deemed necessary by the Superintendent, students must continue to abide by the Plymouth Public Schools' Code of Conduct, Rules, and this Acceptable Use Policy.

By participating in remote learning, the parent/guardian understands and agrees that their child's image and voice may be transmitted over the internet and that the Plymouth Public Schools cannot guarantee or warrant confidentiality of such. Students' voices/images may be heard/viewed by school staff members conducting or supervising remote/online services, other students participating in their remote learning cohort, and by any other individuals who may be present in the location in which another student is participating in the remote/online service.

Unauthorized recording by a parent or student of remote/online services provided by or through the Plymouth Public Schools and/or the dissemination of such recording is a violation of this policy, Plymouth Public Schools school, rules, and may result in a referral to law enforcement authorities and the potential issuance of criminal charges.

### **Modification of this Policy**

The Plymouth Public Schools School Committee reserves the right to modify or change this policy and related implementation procedures at any time.

### **Student Technology AUP Access Agreement**

Your signature on this document is legally binding, and indicates that you have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance and consequences. This policy is further supported by the rules and regulations found in each school's student handbook and discipline policies.

## **POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

- 1) Improper fraternization with students using social media or other electronic means.
  - a. Teachers may not friend or follow current students on social media.
  - b. All electronic contacts with students should be through the district's computer and telephone system, except emergency situations.
  - c. Team, class, or student organization pages, accounts, or groups will be created only in conjunction with the coach or faculty advisor. All groups must include the appropriate administrator as a member. Access to the page will remain with the coach or faculty advisor.
  - d. All contact and messages by coaches and faculty advisors with team members shall be sent to all team members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the appropriate administrator.
  - e. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
  - f. Inappropriate contact via phone or electronic device is prohibited.
- 2) Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
- 3) Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
- 4) Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
- 5) Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
- 6) The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line if warranted or a need arises. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the School Principals and Superintendent will promptly bring that inappropriate use to the attention of the staff member and may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## **FIELD TRIPS, EXCURSIONS, AND OTHER STUDENT TRIPS (Excluding Academic or athletic competitions)**

Recognizing that the first-hand experiences provided by well-planned field trips are a worthwhile means of learning and an important source of enrichment to the extent that field trips provide an alternative means for accomplishing general curriculum objectives, field trips may be authorized under the following established regulations:

Approval of a proposed trip as described in items below must be granted prior to the distribution of informational material to students or parents.

A proposed school-sponsored trip may be authorized in writing by the building principal provided that:

- The trip does not leave the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- The trip is not an overnight trip;
- The trip is in keeping with School Committee policy.
- The completed Field Trip Form, including financial breakdown, is included. Showing itemized expenses (transportation, ticket prices, etc.)

School-sponsored trips out-of-state or overnight require the approval of the School Committee no less than sixty (60) calendar days before the departure date of the trip (exceptions for trips occurring as a result of various competitions will be considered individually).

- The Director of School Health Services must be informed of all overnight and out-of-state field trips sixty (60) calendar days in advance of departure to ensure a school nurse is available for the trip if medically indicated.

Proposed school-sponsored trips or excursions that involve either international and/or trips that result in student absences for three or more consecutive school days shall be part of a course of studies and must have concept approval by the principal, Superintendent of Schools and approved by the School Committee no less than sixty (60) calendar days before the departure date of the trip (exceptions for trips occurring as a result of various competitions will be considered individually).

Subsequent to the approval of the superintendent's office, and/or the building principal, and/or coordinator, and/or the Director of Student Health Services, all contracts required for field trips must be reviewed and signed by the school business administrator.

In evaluating field trip requests, administrators and the School Committee shall consider, prior to approval, the following:

- The relevance of the proposed field trip to the Common Core of Learning established by the Board of Education;
- Provisions for adequate adult supervision to ensure student safety and welfare;
- Suitability of the activity and distance traveled for the age level;
- Degree of access to the field trip and subsequent education follow up by all students involved in the unit of study (every member of a class may not be able to attend a field trip);
- Evidence of thoroughness in planning, including provision for making up, missed classwork, and provision for students not participating in the trip financial cost.

Educational field trips shall be planned and conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

- The teacher will provide the parents with a detailed itinerary of the field trip to include, but not limited to, the following: destination of the trip; transportation and eating arrangements; date and time of departure; estimated time of return and the relation of the trip to the unit of study.
- A signed parental/guardian permission slip is required for each student participating in a field trip. Slips will be distributed to parents at least one week in advance of the due date.
- In addition to the teacher, the following adult chaperones will be required as follows:

<u>Students</u>	<u>Chaperones</u>
1-10	1
11-20	2
21-30	3
31-40	4
41-50	5
51-60	6
61-70	7

After 70 students, add one (1) additional chaperone for every ten students beyond seventy.

During overnight trips, the same student/chaperone ratios shall apply. Assignment of chaperones will take into consideration the need for male and or female adult supervision.

- The teacher planning the trip and the principal will be responsible for arranging an appropriate educational experience for students who do not participate in the field trip.
- The teacher planning the trip will be responsible for sending in advance to all faculty a list of students who will be going on the trip.
- The teacher planning the trip must follow the Medication Guidelines policy 6.4 for all students requiring medication. In keeping with the above policies, a registered nurse may be required to accompany students on field trips and excursions. The teacher/field trip organizer must provide the school nurse with a list of students attending the field trip at least ten (10) school days prior to the trip. The school nurse will review the students' medications and other health needs and provide any specific recommendations to staff, if necessary. The school nurse will request the Director of School Health Services for a nurse to attend the field trip if deemed necessary. Such request will be made no later than five (5) days prior to the scheduled field trip.
- Should an emergency occur, the teacher is responsible for notifying the principal as soon as possible.
- Administrators approving field trips, excursions, or student trips that allow students to enter a body of water for swimming or like activities must be assured in writing that an American Red Cross or Ellis and Associates certified lifeguard will be on duty for the entire time students are engaged in such activity. All recommended guidelines for safety will be followed as outlined in the American Red Cross Water Safety Manual and/or the Ellis and Associates Comprehensive Aquatic Risk Management Handbook
- Students are not to use any water vessel of any kind in any body of water that is not captained by an individual licensed by the United States Coast Guard or any commercial vessel not captained by an individual licensed by the city or town in which it is operated and is certified in water safety by the American Red Cross. The Swan Boats in the Boston Public Gardens are the only exception to this portion of the policy.

Tournaments that have overnight stays

DECA

Marching Band

Since participation in either athletic or academic competitions may not allow the time needed to follow the above procedures for approval, the SC authorizes the Superintendent or designee to approve last minute overnight or day trips to allow students to participate or compete in the competition.,

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS/ SPEAKERS**

Community resources are those individuals or groups who are invited into the schools to present supplementary information and ideas to the classroom course of study. These experiences afford students the opportunity to benefit from community viewpoints. Care should be taken in selecting these speakers so that they are individuals who have expertise and/ credentials in the topic of discussion, respect diversity in thinking and varying views, and who are not attempting to inappropriately influence points of view.

Final decisions on approving speakers shall rest with the Assistant Superintendent.

CROSS REF.:            ADDA, Background Checks



## **SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators.

CROSS REF.:            ADDA, Background Checks

## **STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give periodic reports of a student's progress and grades. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents/guardians. The School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported with the proper maintenance of confidentiality.

A report depicting the student's progress will be issued periodically following an evaluation by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.

In addition to the periodic reports, parents/guardians will be notified when a student's performance warrants attention.

Grading and promotion will be based on improvement, achievement, capability of the student, and the professional judgment of the teacher and Principal.

Major changes in the reporting system shall be preceded by a cooperative study and evaluation by teachers, principals, parents/guardians, and the Assistant Superintendent, who will submit the proposal to the School Committee for consideration and approval.

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS**

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents/guardians, but the final decision will rest with the Building Principal.

## **PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION CEREMONY**

All students who have satisfied the necessarily required number of credits and met the attendance requirements as stated in the student handbook will be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.

**In Accordance with CH 71B, Section 16**, a school-age child with a disability, in this section called a student, who is completing the twelfth grade but who has not yet earned the competency determination as required under Section 1D of Chapter 69 for high school graduation, shall be allowed to participate fully in high school graduation ceremonies and activities conducted or sponsored by the school or school committee even though the student will not receive a diploma during the ceremony if:

- a) The student has maintained at least a 95% attendance level, meaning no more than 9 days of absence from school in a 180 day school year, during the school year before the twelfth grade, but, a student's absence from school due to disability, illness, religious observance or other reason that constitutes an excused absence under the school's or school committee's rules shall not be counted for purposes of this section;
- b) The student has taken the grade 10 MCAS examination in each subject area in which the student did not achieve a passing score at least 3 times, or has participated in the MCAS alternate assessment by submitting at least 2 portfolios; and

Nothing in this section shall compel a student to participate in the high school graduation ceremony and activities. The superintendent shall consider the recommendation, if any, of the student's individualized education program team as well as the student's own expressed preference. A student's participation in the high school graduation ceremony and activities without award of the high school diploma shall not affect or limit the student's eligibility for special education services.

Students shall be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremonies only one time.

**SIGNATURE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR ON DIPLOMAS AND PRESENTATION OF GRADUATION DIPLOMAS**

The seated Chair or designee of the Plymouth School Committee will sign all graduation diplomas and certificates of attainment, The Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary will present said diplomas and certificates of attainment at graduation. The School Committee may allow, upon request, a current or former member of the school committee to present the diploma to said graduate.

## STUDENT SUBMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

In this policy, "surveys, analyses, or evaluations" refer to methods of gathering data for research purposes.

Without the prior written consent of the student's parent/guardian, or of the student if they are at least 18 years of age, no student shall be required as part of any program wholly or partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education to submit to any survey, analyses, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent/guardian;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents/guardian; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for school programs or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

All instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available upon request for inspection by the student's parent/guardian. For the purpose of this policy, "instructional material" does not include academic tests or assessments.

A parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student.

The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for implementing any procedures necessary to protect the privacy of participating students and to provide parents/guardians with access to surveys within a reasonable time before administration or distribution.

The School District will notify parents/guardians of this policy at least annually at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time of any substantive change in policy.

The District will directly notify parents/guardians annually at the beginning of the school year, and during the school year, when surveys, analyses, or evaluations are scheduled or anticipated. Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to opt their child out of participation in any survey, analysis, or evaluation. Students who are 18 years of age or older may opt out of such surveys, analyses, or evaluations.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

LEGAL REF.: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h

CROSS REF.: [JRA](#), Student Records

## **TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES/CONTROVERSIAL SPEAKERS**

An important goal of the schools is to help prepare students for intelligent and conscientious participation as citizens in our democratic society. One step toward meeting this goal is to introduce students to reasoned and dispassionate approaches to the analysis of contemporary social and political issues. To insure that these issues can be examined in an atmosphere as free from emotion and prejudice as the times permit, the School Committee establishes the following guidelines for discussion of controversial issues in the schools.

### Teacher-Planned Classroom Discussions

1. Controversial issues selected by teachers for classroom discussion must relate directly to the objectives and content of courses approved by the School Committee for inclusion in the curriculum.
2. The teachers' right to introduce controversial issues in classroom presentations does not include the right of advocacy. Teachers must refrain from using their positions to express partisan points of view.
3. The approach to discussion of these issues in the classroom must be objective and scholarly with minimum emphasis on opinion and maximum emphasis on intelligent analysis.
4. Teachers must ensure that the reasoned arguments of all sides of an issue are given equal presentation and emphasis in classroom discussions.
5. Teachers may invite visitors from outside the schools to give presentations on controversial issues when the visitors offer qualifications and resources not available in the schools. All visitors are to be guided by the standards of language usage that prevail in the classrooms and by the standards of scholarly inquiry set forth above. Whenever possible, teachers who invite visitors to present one side of an issue will also invite visitors to present the other side(s).
6. In all cases teachers must obtain from the appropriate Principal permission to invite visitors for classroom presentations. Permission must be requested at least 48 hours before the scheduled time of presentation and in compliance with Policy IJOB.

### Student-Initiated Forums on Controversial Issues

Student groups may request permission to conduct forums on controversial issues in the schools. The Principal may grant such requests under the following conditions:

1. Preparation for presentation of a forum will not cause any student or teacher to miss class and will not cause the cancellation of any class.
2. Adequate advance planning must be conducted for each forum. A request to hold a forum must be received by the Principal at least three weeks before the scheduled date of presentation. For each request the Principal will appoint, after consultation with the requesting student group, an adult advisory group consisting of at least two parents/guardians and two faculty members.

3. The standards for approach to discussion, style of presentation, and use of visitors as defined above will apply to student-initiated forums.

Requests from Groups or Individuals Outside the Schools

No permission will be granted non-school groups or individuals to make presentations on controversial issues in the schools during school hours. Requests for after-school or evening use will be processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on community use of school facilities.

No permission will be granted outsiders for distribution of literature on controversial issues to students in general or to class groups.

A Principal may grant an outside group or individual permission to post one notice of a public meeting for discussion of issues if the language of that notice conforms to the standards that prevail in the community. The Principal will determine the appropriate bulletin board for such notices.

CROSS REF.: IJOB, Community Resource Persons/Speakers



## SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use the religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging artwork that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR 26:05

## **ANIMALS IN SCHOOL**

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

The Principal, in consultation with the School Nurse, shall review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

### **Educational Program**

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

### **Student Health**

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have their health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

## **SERVICE ANIMALS IN SCHOOLS**

The School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.

For purposes of this policy, a “certified service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.” The regulations further state that “a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability.”

Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. There are several kinds of service animals that assist individuals with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to, animals that:

- assist individuals who are blind or have severe sight impairments as “seeing eye dogs” or “guide dogs;”
- alert individuals with hearing impairments to sounds;
- pull wheelchairs or carry and pick-up items for individuals with mobility impairments;
- assist mobility-impaired individuals with balance.

The District shall not assume or take custody or control of, or responsibility for, any service animal or the care or feeding thereof. The owner or person having custody and control of the animal shall be liable for any damage to persons, premises, property, or facilities caused by the service animal, including, but not limited to, clean up, stain removal, etc. The District requires a copy of a certificate of insurance for the service animal.

If, in the opinion of the School Principal or authorized designee, any service animal is not in the control of its handler, or if it is not housebroken, the service animal may be excluded from the school or program. The service animal can also be excluded if it presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the school. The parent or guardian of the student having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the service animal from District premises immediately upon notification by the School Principal.

If any student or staff member assigned to the classroom in which a service animal is permitted suffers an allergic reaction to the animal, the person having custody and control of the animal will be required to remove the animal to a different location designated by the Building Principal or designee and an alternative plan will be developed with appropriate District staff. Such plan could include the reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff and will include the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

LEGAL REF.: 28 CFR, Part 35

SOURCE: MASC 2023

Therapy animals

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOGS

Emotional support dogs, which can be called therapy dogs, comfort dogs, or social-emotional assistance dogs and are not service animals as defined by Massachusetts law or Title II or Title III of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). This policy addresses these non-service dogs who provide companionship, comfort and affection and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. This policy also addresses emotional support dogs who provide people with therapeutic contact, to improve their physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning. Service dogs are not restricted to the limitations in this policy. The ADA permits a student with a disability who uses a service animal to bring the animal to school and the district's Service Animal Policy applies to service animals.

An Emotional Support Dog may only be brought into a Plymouth Public School or any of its affiliated programs or facilities under the direction of the School Principal or designee and with the permission of the Superintendent or their designee for Instructional Purposes. Instructional purposes are defined as "having animals present to support the learning strategies of a specific educational program." Other emotional support animals, including requests for Emotional Support Dogs from individuals, are not permitted in the Plymouth Public Schools.

All requests shall be submitted to the Superintendent in writing. The Superintendent or their designee reserve the right to request documentation supporting all requests. Such documentation may include documentation from a veterinarian that the Emotional Support Dog is in good health and up to date on all vaccinations as required by local ordinances and regulations.

If a request for an Emotional Support Dog is granted by the Superintendent or their designee, the owner of the Emotional Support Dog is responsible for ensuring that the Emotional Support Dog does not unduly interfere with school activities and is solely responsible for any damage to persons or school property caused by the Emotional Support Dog.

### PROTOCOL FOR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOG

1. At the request of school principal or designee, a handler will apply to bring an emotional support dog onto the Plymouth Public Schools property or to Plymouth Public Schools activities or events in writing. Approval must be received prior to the dog attending school activities or events or being present on school property.

An Emotional Support Dog may only be brought into a Plymouth Public School or any of its affiliated programs or facilities at the sole discretion of the Superintendent or his or her designee.

2. The handler must provide the following documentation prior to receiving approval:
  - a) Evidence from a veterinarian of the dog being up to date with required vaccinations, including rabies and receiving a clean bill of health.
  - b) Appropriate licensure from a local dog licensing authority.
  - c) Affirmation that the dog has regular flea prevention treatment and will be well-groomed while on school property or at school activities/events.

- d) Evidence that the owner has liability insurance which would cover any damages or injuries caused by the dog's presence at school and/or school activities and events.
  - e) Statement that the handler is responsible for any damage caused by their Emotional Support Dog animal.
  - f) Evidence that any Emotional Support dog has received an Emotional Support Dog certification from a national therapy dog organization. Exceptions may be made for Emotional Support Dog(s) undergoing training by the Plymouth Police Department to serve as a therapy dog for the benefit of the schools.
3. The Emotional Support Dog must be obedient, calm as well as affectionate and friendly to strangers.
  4. The Emotional Support Dog will only be permitted in authorized areas within and outside of the school building.
  5. When using an Emotional Support Dog in a school setting, the dog must always be under control of the handler with either a harness or a leash no longer than four feet, unless holding such a leash would interfere with the Emotional Support Dog's safe, effective performance of its work or tasks. The handler shall maintain control of the Emotional Support Dog at all times and shall not tether the Emotional Support Dog to any individual or object. The school is not responsible for providing the handler or for handling the dog.
  6. The handler and Emotional Support Dog will wear appropriate identification identifying them as a registered handler and Emotional Support Dog.
  7. Volunteer handlers shall sign themselves and their Emotional Support Dog in upon arrival at any school and shall sign both out on departure from the building. Handlers who are School Resource Officers shall sign their Emotional Support Dog in upon arrival and sign him/her out on their departure.
  8. The handler fee shall not borrow money or personal items, or receive any personal gratuity, gift, or tip, such as money or jewelry from staff or students in the district.
  9. The handlers of an Emotional Support Dog are responsible for the supervision and care of the animal while on school property including feeding, exercising, and cleaning up after the animal.
  10. The School Principal will notify families, students, and staff whenever an Emotional Support Dog will be present on school property or at school activities and events. Families, students, and staff will have the opportunity to express their wish to avoid the Emotional Support Dog. The handler shall remove the Emotional Support Dog to a separate area as designated by the school administrator in such instances where any student or school employee who suffers dog allergies or aversions is present in an office, hallway, or classroom. Students who are unable to participate in class activities will be provided with an alternative learning experience or be provided with accommodation, as appropriate.

11. The handler shall confirm whether or not there will be any other Emotional Support Dog(s) on site prior to scheduling any visit with an Emotional Support Dog and shall take steps with appropriate staff to ensure that the dogs do not engage inappropriately while on school property. When multiple Emotional Support Dogs are engaged in a planned activity on school district property, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs have an opportunity to greet each other prior to entering the school building. Once inside the building, the handlers shall ensure that the dogs are each on a four-foot leash, given workspace at least eight feet from each other, and are given no opportunity for contact or socialization with each other while working.
12. The Superintendent or his/her designee may withdraw approval for an Emotional Support Dog at any time at his/her sole discretion.

Exceptions to these provisions may be made by the Superintendent for the inclusion of the Plymouth Police Department's Emotional Support Dog in school-related activities and events.

CROSS REF: IMG – Animals in Schools  
IMGA – Service Animals in Schools