

## **SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS**

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community, and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

- Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.
- Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.
- Recognition programs that publicly honor our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in their individual and collective accomplishments.
- Community service efforts enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.

## **SCHOOL-PARENT/GUARDIAN RELATIONS GOALS**

It is the general goal of the District to foster relationships with parents/guardians, which encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents/guardians are individually responsible for their children, the District provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents/guardians regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of student conduct.

Additionally, involvement of parents/guardians in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and District programs.

## NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

1.0 A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:

The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or

The parent has been denied visitation, or

The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or

There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

~~2.0~~ The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to regulation.

3.0 In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

4.0 Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in regulation.

5.0 The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

6.0 Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to law, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H  
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents  
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

## **RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS**

To enhance communications between parents/guardians and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations, including booster organizations, at each school building. For this purpose, the Committee will officially recognize parent organizations. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent.
2. A vote, open to all parents/guardians of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request.
3. All parent organizations shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

## **PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS**

In accordance with state law, all grants and gifts to the District shall be reviewed and accepted by the School Committee before expenditure or use. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school district. Any gift of cash, regardless of donor intent, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee kept separate from the general fund, and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

The Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given all donors.

To assist groups wishing to donate items or equipment and to insure that donations will receive the maximum use and benefit to the school system, the procedures outlined below are established and will be followed in all Plymouth Schools.

It is the responsibility of the building administrator to inform any group or individual wishing to donate items or equipment to the schools of this policy.

### NEW EQUIPMENT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts statewide bid awards for new equipment shall be used as a preliminary guide to determine value.

Lists of equipment to be donated shall be submitted to the Business Administrator for prior approval so that the most appropriate equipment is chosen for a specific task at a reasonable cost.

The Business Administrator shall consult with individual department administrators, as appropriate, for equipment for specific tasks.

Business Administrator will make the final determination of what items or equipment are to be purchased and will communicate this information to the donor.

New equipment that is offered for donation without prior discussion and approval by the Business Administrator may not be accepted for use in the school district.

### USED EQUIPMENT

A description of the equipment must be sent to the Business Administrator for evaluation of condition and potential benefit to the school district. The Business Administrator will make the final determination to accept the potential donation(s).

The school district will not be held responsible to repair equipment that has not received approval before acceptance.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 44:53A, 71:37A

CROSS REFS.: DD, Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects  
GBEBD, Online Fundraising and Solicitation--Crowdfunding

## **PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW**

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other legally confidential matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

The Plymouth Public Schools will send an actual or estimated invoice to the person or institution requesting information. Upon receipt of a check, the information will be prepared or released.

All commonly available public record documents of the School District shall be posted on the district's website. The length of time such records shall remain posted on the district website shall be in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention Manual. In addition, the official minutes of the Committee's, written policies and regulations, and financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during the hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent/guardian).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents/guardians and others in the school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

The Records Officer for the Plymouth Public Schools is the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes  
GBJ, Personnel Records  
JRA, Student Records

## **COMMUNITY USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Technology or designee, the District shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access, including the use of wireless internet access, systems will be available to the community.

Those using the district systems as a member of the community must abide by the District's procedures regarding responsible use.

All guests will be prompted to and must accept the District's digital use form before accessing the district network.

The Superintendent or designee may revoke such access at any time.

CROSS REF:           INJD ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES  
                          INJDC ACCEPTABLE USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

## **DISTRICT WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

The School Committee wishes to ensure accurate delivery of information, and as such, the Plymouth Public Schools will maintain a District website and such District and school social media accounts as authorized by the Superintendent. All such online platforms will be maintained by District staff, acting in their professional capacities.

In order for public communication with the School Committee and District personnel to be responded to in a timely manner, in line with the legal requirements for public communication, commenting on all District and school sites will be turned off. Every school and District site will clearly indicate this policy and will direct those wishing to contact the school and District personnel to the appropriate venues to do so.

Unauthorized use of District or school name is prohibited.

A high priority will be placed on such platforms being accessible, frequently updated, and user friendly.

LEGAL REF:           Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Declaration of Rights,  
                          Article 16 Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment 1  
                          MGL Ch. 66  
                          MGL Ch. 30A

REF:   A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (Secretary of the Commonwealth)

CROSS REF:         BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS  
                          GBEE - PERSONNEL USE OF TECHNOLOGY  
                          BHE - USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
                          MEMBERS



## **NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES**

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the successes, challenges, programs, planning, and activities of the school district.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that school district publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. The School Committee Chair will be the official spokesman for the Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a district-wide or of a sensitive nature or pertain to established Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school district.

## **PUBLIC COMPLAINTS**

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

The Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher/Team Leader
2. School building administrator/Department Head
3. Superintendent or Designee
4. School Committee (In areas the School Committee has authority act)

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit their complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 76:5  
                          603 CMR 26.00

## **COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

It is the School Committee's desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the Committee's intent that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

Use of school buildings and other facilities by organizations will be permitted only when a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose is served; or a substantial group of citizens from the community will be benefited.

School facilities will be used according to the regulations and rental fee schedules recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee. A full description of services and fees can be found in the Business Office manual.

Applications for the use of facilities can be obtained through the Plymouth Public Schools Business and Facilities Office, located at 11 Lincoln St., Plymouth, Ma. 02360 or online at [plymouth.k12.ma.us](http://plymouth.k12.ma.us) under the Community tab.

## **DONATIONS BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS**

To assist groups wishing to donate items or equipment and to ensure that donations will receive the maximum use and benefit to the school system, the procedures outlined below are established and will be followed in all Plymouth Schools.

It is the responsibility of the building administrator to inform any group or individual wishing to donate items or equipment to the schools of this policy.

### NEW EQUIPMENT

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts statewide bid awards for new equipment shall be used as a preliminary guide to reasonable selections.

Selections shall be submitted to the Business Administrator for prior approval so that the most appropriate equipment is chosen for a specific task at a reasonable cost.

The Business Administrator shall consult with individual department administrators, as appropriate, for equipment for specific tasks.

The Business Administrator will make the final determination of what items or equipment are to be purchased and will communicate this information to the donor.

New equipment that is offered for donation without prior discussion and approval by the Business Administrator may not be accepted for use in the school district.

### USED EQUIPMENT

A description of the equipment must be sent to the Business Administrator for evaluation of condition and potential benefit to the school district. The Business Administrator will make the final determination to accept the potential donation(s).

The school district will not be held responsible to repair equipment that has not received approval before acceptance.

## **PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS**

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools.

In consultation with the School Committee, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing school district employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the Committee's policy on staff solicitations.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 44:53A

CROSS REFS.: GBEB, Staff Gifts and Solicitations  
JJE, Student Fund-Raising Activities  
KHB, Advertising in the Schools

## **ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS**

The School Committee may grant permission for advertising of commercial products or services in school buildings or on school property under guidelines or regulations it may approve. Otherwise, no advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school property. Publications of the school district will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school district to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

CROSS REF.:           KHA, Public Solicitations in the Schools

## **DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Distribution of materials (i.e., flyers, advertisements and notices) in the Plymouth Public Schools shall be limited to state, local and federal government, and school activities.

### Distribution Approval Process

District-wide distribution shall be at the Superintendent's or designee.

School-wide distribution shall be at the Building Principal's discretion.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS**

The School Committee welcomes visitors to our schools and there is a process in place to ensure student and staff safety. All visitors are asked to come through the main entrance of the school, sign in upon arrival, and note their specific destination. They should bring an ID so that they can receive a visitor badge through our school security software program. Upon finishing the visit, the visitor should exit via the main office and notify the staff that they are leaving the premises.

Students are not allowed to have visitors attend our schools who do not attend the particular school. Any type of tours and/or visits to see the school by non-students should take place after the school day.

If a classroom visit is requested by a parent in accordance with Observation of Special Education Programs, it must be requested at least seventy-two hours in advance and the time/date will be approved and decided by the school. In addition, the visitor must be accompanied at all times by school staff members.

CROSS REF.: IHBA, Observations of Special Education Programs



## **RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES**

The School Committee and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

The School Committee will participate in local and state planning functions that could directly affect District schools and their immediate environment.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community and ensuring the rights of all concerned.