



ALBERT F. FORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

STUDENT AND PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

2009 ~ 2010

TEL (508) 998-0265

<http://www.acushnetschools.us/ford>

OUR MISSION

Our mission at Ford Middle School is to provide an opportunity for each student to grow and learn in a safe, caring, and responsive learning environment. Through our celebration of diversity, students will be encouraged to recognize and value the uniqueness of themselves and others. Ford Middle School is dedicated to fostering respect, wise decision-making and skillfulness for lifelong learning. The successful implementation of this mission will enable students to recognize their value and place in society and achieve academic success.

This agenda belongs to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

STUDENT NO. _____



PLEASE NOTE: The front cover is sensitive to extreme heat. Do not leave in direct sunlight!

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

I am excited about the upcoming school year at Albert F. Ford Middle School. We have designed a school program that seeks to provide each student with a quality education.

Our school program offers a wide variety of academic, specialty, and extra-curricular activities that will provide our students with opportunities to explore, think, and gain knowledge about the process of learning. Each grade level is organized around a team of teachers who share the common goal of educating students and helping them to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

This handbook was developed to help you better understand our school program and how our school functions. I ask that you please read this handbook carefully so that you will thoroughly understand our school procedures, rules, and expectations, and sign and return to the school the page that states you read this handbook.

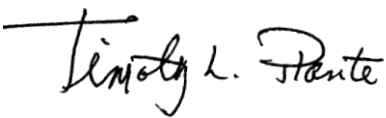
It is my belief that the key to a student's success at Ford Middle School is the ability for a student to understand what is expected of him/her, and the ability for a student to give his/her maximum effort towards meeting those expectations. A successful student will:

- 1) Stay organized
- 2) Work hard at his/her studies
- 3) Ask for help when he/she needs it
- 4) Obey the rules of the school
- 5) Maintain a positive attitude
- 6) Take pride in his/her school
- 7) Show respect for his/her peers, the staff, his/her parents/guardians, and himself/herself
- 8) Take care of oneself, physically and mentally

Here at Ford Middle School, we are committed to making this a stimulating, productive, and successful school year. We ask you to make the same commitment.

Have a great year!

Sincerely,



Timothy Plante
Principal

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:

The philosophy of the Ford Middle School is centered on students who are passing from childhood to adolescence. This philosophy recognizes that this age group is in a unique stage of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. As a result, our students must be shown how to adapt to these changes so that they will have a better understanding of themselves and others.

The teaching strategies utilized at this level must address the diverse needs of these students and establish a climate, which will make the students comfortable and generate positive feelings for learning, now and in the future. Instruction should be child centered, enabling each student to achieve his/her ultimate potential. Therefore, our philosophy of education is designed to establish a school setting in which students may achieve mastery of basic skills and acquire the knowledge necessary to develop a positive self-image and to foster academic and personal growth. This philosophy can only be achieved with the collective cooperation of students, faculty, administration, parents and the community.

SCHOOL VISION:

We envision a school that is permeated by an attitude of acceptance of differences and views faults and mistakes as opportunities for learning.

We will strive to use techniques and resources to aid each individual student in the skills of problem solving and decision-making.

We seek a school which recognizes individual learning styles and develops the potential of each student to become life long learners.

SCHOOL MISSION:

Our mission at Ford Middle School is to provide an opportunity for each student to grow and learn in a safe, caring, and responsive learning environment. Through our celebration of diversity, students will be encouraged to recognize and value the uniqueness of themselves and others. Ford Middle School is dedicated to fostering respect, wise decision-making and skillfulness for lifelong learning. The successful implementation of this mission will enable students to recognize their value and place in society and achieve academic success.

Please note: A copy of every rule, regulation, or law referenced in this handbook is available at the main desk of the school.

EMAIL CONTACT INFORMATION:

To email a member of our staff, use the first initial and last name, followed by @acushnet.k12.ma.us

For example, the email of our principal, Timothy Plante, is tplante@acushnet.k12.ma.us

TELEPHONE CONTACT INFORMATION:

To contact a member of our staff by telephone, you may call the main desk. The secretary will then put you through to the voice mail for the staff member you wish to speak with. Alternately, school staff information, including phone information, is available on our school website, <http://www.acushnetschools.us/ford>.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS: It is expected that students will arrive at school between 8:00AM and 8:10 AM. Students should not be dropped off early, as students are not allowed into the building until 8:00 AM. Please do not drop your child off before 8:00 AM; because they will not be supervised since, contractually, teachers do not start their day until 8:00 AM.

At the start of the school day, students are required to report to their homeroom to await general announcements and opening exercises. The first class of the day begins at 8:15 AM. The last class ends at 2:40 PM at which time all students report to homeroom to await dismissal at 2:45 PM.

VISITING THE SCHOOL: All school doors are locked and video surveillance is in use at all times. All visitors must gain admission through the main entrance. Visitors who are determined to have legitimate school business will be required to sign in at the office and will be issued a visitor's pass. Visitors must sign out and return the visitor's pass prior to leaving the building. Any person without legitimate school business who attempts to gain access or who gains access to the building will be considered a trespasser. Police intervention may result.

VOLUNTEERING: For the protection of our students, all volunteers must agree to a criminal background check (CORI) and receive clearance before they are able to work as a volunteer at the middle school. If you are interested in becoming a school volunteer, please ask for a Parent/Guardian/Community Member Volunteer Form and CORI Request Form from the main office.

DROPPING OFF/PICKING UP A STUDENT: Between 8:00 AM and 8:10 AM, parents/guardians are to drop off their child at the north entrance nearest to the elementary school. After 8:10 AM, parents/guardians are to drop off their child at the main entrance in the front of the building closest to Middle Road.

At 2:45 PM (dismissal time), parents/guardians who wish to pick up their child should do so at the north entrance nearest to the elementary school.

BICYCLES & SKATEBOARDS: Students who are riding bicycles or roller blades are required to wear an approved helmet, when riding to and from school. It should also be noted that students who are allowed to ride or blade are subject to all rules of the road, pertaining to bicycles, in accordance with Massachusetts law. This is not only mandated, it

promotes a safe practice for riders while operating on roadways and in traffic. Students who do not wear approved helmets will not be allowed to ride on the property and must walk the bike once on school grounds. Bicycles must be parked in the bicycle racks on the south side of the building, and should be locked when not in use.

Skateboards may not be carried or ridden to school. There is no room in the school building or on the school buses to store skateboards. Please leave them at home.

AFTER SCHOOL HOURS: In most cases, students remaining after school for teacher assistance, a school club, or for a detention will be dismissed at 3:30 PM. Unless the activity he/she is staying after for is scheduled to end later, a student should be picked up at 3:30 PM. There is no supervision available after 3:30, and your children should not remain without direct supervision from an activity supervisor or teacher.

A parent/guardian that chooses to pick up his/her child after school, should do so at the main entrance in front of the building at 3:30 PM. In the interest of safety, we ask each parent/guardian to wait for his/her child in the parking lot or on Middle Road rather than in the circular drive directly in front of the school.

Students who take private transportation must also make arrangements to stay after school with a teacher. If a teacher allows a student to stay after school with him/her, then the student must write down his/her name but not his/her address on the bottom portion of the teacher's after school slip.

Parents/Guardians must arrange for private transportation for their children on the days where there are no late buses or for any student who is kept after school for disciplinary purposes.

LATE BUSES: Late buses, if available, leave the school at approximately 3:35 PM, depending on weather conditions or on other atypical and unforeseen circumstances. Students who ride the late bus must first make arrangements to stay after school with a teacher. Once a student gains permission to stay with a teacher, the student must write down his/her name and address on the teacher's after school slip before 1:50 PM. Upon dismissal from the after school session, students will board the late buses at the south entrance nearest to the Superintendent's Office.

Students detained for disciplinary matters are not entitled to the privilege of late bus transportation per school committee policy.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE: A student requesting an early dismissal from school should report to the main office by 8:15 AM with a note from his/her parent/guardian. The note should include the person who will be picking the student up from school, the time he/she will be picking up the student from school, and should be addressed to the assistant principal.

When it is time for the student to be dismissed, the authorized adult dismissing the student must come to the main office and sign the student out. No student will be dismissed to a waiting car. Appropriate ID (including picture) is required when a person dismissing a student is unknown.

TARDINESS: Students who arrive at the school after 8:12 AM are tardy, and must sign in at the office. Students should provide a written note signed by a parent/guardian stating the reason for the tardiness. Please see the school rules section of this handbook for an explanation of the consequences for chronic tardiness.

ABSENCES: Chronic absenteeism only serves as a constant interruption to a student's learning process. Frequent absenteeism is directly linked to poor grades and lack of academic progress. The more absences a student accumulates, the less he or she can be expected to adequately participate in and understand classroom activities. In addition, Massachusetts state law requires that every boy and girl attend school each day that school is in session unless unable to do so because of illness or some other legitimate reason (MGL, Chapter 76, Section 2).

Each day that a student is absent from school, parents/guardians should call the main office by 10:00 AM and report their child's absence by informing the main office secretary that their child will be absent. If a parent/guardian is unable to reach the main office secretary regarding this matter, he/she should leave this information on her voice mail by pressing 0. The school nurse will attempt to contact each parent/guardian who fails to contact the school to inform the school of their child's absence.

Any student who is absent from school due to illness is not allowed on school grounds for extracurricular activities until they have returned from their illness.

A student who is out for three or more consecutive days because of an illness or injury must bring in a doctor's note to verify the illness or injury. This doctor's note must specify the date(s) the doctor feels the student was too ill or injured to attend school.

An absence is defined as a student missing all or any portion of a school day. There are two types of absence: unexcused or excused.

Excused absences are legitimate reasons for being absent from school. The following absences are considered excused:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Medical appointment
(with doctor's note) | 4. Court appearance |
| 2. Death in family | 5. Suspension |
| 3. Religious holiday | 6. School approved visit
to a high school |

PLEASE NOTE: All other absences are considered unexcused.

Unexcused absences are unacceptable reasons for being absent from school. Parents/Guardians will be warned via letter after a student's 5th and 7th unexcused absence within a period of six months. Upon a student's 9th unexcused absence within a period of six months, a letter may be sent to the parents/guardians and to the school attendance officer, who may refer the matter to the Bristol County Juvenile Court for violation of state law.

FAMILY VACATIONS: Parents/Guardians are required to notify the school administration in writing prior to family vacations taken during school time. Vacation forms can be obtained through the main office, and must be returned at least one week prior to the family vacation. Please note that MGL, Chapter 76, Section 2, requires students to attend school while it is in session unless a valid reason exists, so these absences are considered unexcused absences (see ABSENCES, above).

No schoolwork will be provided before family vacations. The student bears the responsibility of the completion of all work missed due to absences because of a family vacation. Students will be permitted to make-up all of the work missed within a period of time equal to half the number of days of the family vacation (not to exceed seven school days). Any work not made up after the allotted time will receive a zero.

MAKE-UP WORK: Students will be permitted to make-up all of the work missed within a period of time equal to the number of days absent, except in the case of a vacation (see above). Any work not made up within the allotted time will receive a zero.

Make-up work will be given out only if the child has been absent for **two or more days**. For a single absence, please check the school website for homework and class work missed. A parent/guardian

can request make-up work by calling the main office secretary before 8:30 AM. The secretary will put the parent or guardian through to the team leader's voice mail. Upon retrieval of the voice mail, the team leader will make arrangements for make-up work to be gathered and sent to the office where it can be picked up by the parent/guardian in the afternoon (1:30 – 3:30 PM).

CONTACTING THE SCHOOL: Parents/ Guardians can make an appointment to speak with a teacher, team of teachers, school nurse, guidance counselor, or an administrator by calling the main office number (508-998-0265) and by speaking to the main office secretary (extension 0). She will put the parent/guardian through to the appropriate voice mail. Parents/Guardians can also make an appointment by calling a staff member's voice mail directly by dialing the appropriate extension (please consult the school staff directory located at the beginning of this handbook for a list of telephone extensions).

We ask that a parent/guardian only contact the school if a message is necessary pertaining to after school care, transportation, an important family issue, or some other emergency situation. In this case, please call the main office secretary, briefly explain the situation, and the secretary will relay the message to the child.

TELEPHONE USE: If a student needs to use the phone, he/she is encouraged to do so at lunch. During classes, students need the permission of their teachers to use the phone in the classrooms. Students are encouraged to use the telephone only for brief, necessary, and informative phone calls to parents/guardians.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS & ELECTRONIC DEVICES: A wireless communication device includes but is not limited to the following: personal digital assistants, laptop computers, cell phones, and pagers.

Electronic devices include but are not limited to the following: CD players, MP3 players, electronic games, cameras, laser pointers, etc.

Students will not be permitted to use wireless communication devices or electronic devices during regular school hours unless it is for an approved reason. (PLEASE SEE SCHOOL RULES)

Before entering the building, students shall turn off their wireless communications and electronic devices and place them out of sight (pocket, backpack, purse,

etc.). These should stay in lockers during the school day, and not be taken to classes.

BUSES: Riding the bus is a privilege. If a student does not follow the rules and regulations, the student will be reported to the administration for necessary disciplinary action. Disciplinary action will depend on the severity and persistence of bus infractions. Consequences may include but are not limited to warnings, seat assignments, bus probation, and suspension of bus privileges altogether. Each incident report will be mailed home to the child's parent/guardian.

BEHAVIOR ABOARD THE BUS:

- 1) When entering or leaving the bus, students must follow the instructions and directions of the bus driver.
- 2) Riders must remain in seats or in place when the bus is in motion.
- 3) Parents/Guardians will be responsible for any defacing or damaging of the bus by their child.
- 4) The following behaviors are prohibited:
 - a. Pushing or wrestling
 - b. Annoying or harassing other passengers, either through verbal or physical conduct, or otherwise disturbing their possessions
 - c. Talking to the driver while he/she is driving
 - d. Throwing objects within the bus or out of the bus
 - e. Climbing over the seats
 - f. Opening or closing windows
 - g. Leaning out of the windows
 - h. Littering the bus
 - i. Whistling and shouting
 - j. Smoking

BEHAVIOR AT THE BUS STOP: Bus stops are viewed as an extension of the school. There will be consequences for students who do not behave properly at bus stops. Orderly behavior and respect for private property are required. Bus riders must be on time at the bus stop. Bus drivers will not wait.

CHANGING BUS STOPS: Students must get on and off of the bus at his/her regular bus stop for the entire school year. This bus stop will be determined within the first week of the year, but may be changed as determined by the bus company and school administration.

A student who brings in a note to gain permission to ride a different bus will be denied his/her request. The administration has made this decision in order to avoid overcrowding and to maximize safety

on our buses. This policy applies to all Ford Middle School students. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please direct your phone calls to the bus dispatcher (see contact information, school website).

NON-DISCRIMINATION: No person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

INTERNET WEBSITES:

Acushnet Public Schools Website:

www.acushnetschools.us

Ford Middle School Website:

www.acushnetschools.us/ford

Acushnet Elementary School Website:

www.acushnetschools.us/AES

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS: Please do not call the school. School cancellations may be heard on WBSM 1420 AM radio, WNBH 1340 AM radio, WCTK 98.1 FM radio, and WFHN 107.1 FM radio. Cancellations will also be posted on the following television stations and websites: Channel 5, Channel 6, Channel 10, Channel 12, Channel 25, and the New Bedford Standard Times website at: www.southcoasttoday.com

SUPERINTENDENT’S OFFICE: The office of superintendent is open on weekdays from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM (see contact information, school website).

USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS: Arrangements for building use by local organizations during after school hours must be made through the superintendent’s office (see contact information, school website).

RESIDENCY: In accordance with MGL C. 76, S. 5 & 6, students must attend the public school in the town where they actually reside. A student may not claim residence in a town for the sole purpose of attending school there. If this is found to be the case, a parent/guardian may be held legally and fiscally responsible. If you have a question on this, please contact the main office of the school.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL: When withdrawing from Ford Middle School, a parent/guardian must notify a guidance counselor. Please be prepared to provide the name and address of the new school from which your child will be attending and your new place of residence. Students

transferring will be issued a transfer card, immunization records, academic grades up to the point of withdrawal, a current IEP if applicable, etc. All academic and health records will be forwarded to the new school.

ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

Non-custodial parents are entitled access to their child’s information unless they are currently denied legal custody or visitation, are subject to supervised visitation, or are subject to protective orders. Parents requesting information are to do so in writing to the school principal. (MGL c.71, s34H)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORMS:

Parents/Guardians of each student are asked to complete an emergency information form in order that we may locate parents/guardians or an approved adult in the case of an emergency or school business. Only adults authorized on the form will be allowed to dismiss the listed student.

In order to keep our records up to date, please inform the office if you change your address, phone number, or work number.

SCHOOL PICTURES: The school offers individual pictures as a service. Purchase of pictures is voluntary.

INSURANCE: Student insurance is offered early in the school year at a nominal fee and is optional.

DRESS: The objective of this dress code is to ensure that student dress does not interfere with the educational environment of the school while allowing students to dress comfortably within these limits. We expect students to maintain the type of appearance that is not distracting or offensive to students, teachers, or the educational process of the school. There is appropriate and inappropriate attire for all of life’s activities. Keeping these ideas in mind, please help your student adhere to the following guidelines.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Tops with low necklines, without backs, or that expose the midriff will not be permitted.
- Halter-tops, basketball tank top jerseys, muscle shirts, and tank tops or spaghetti straps will not be permitted unless a shirt or t-shirt is worn underneath.
- Underwear exposed in any form will not be permitted.
- Pajamas, slippers, and other sleepwear will not be permitted.

- Shorts, skirts, or skorts should reach mid-thigh or longer.
- Hats, caps, hoods, scarves, bandanas, sweatbands, and sunglasses will not be permitted except on spirit days.
- Any clothing or jewelry with obscene, profane language or pictures will not be permitted.
- Clothing which promotes act or substances that are illegal for the student's age will not be permitted.
- Students are not permitted to bring or wear outdoor clothing to class, with the exception of physical education. Outdoor clothing should be removed and secured in lockers for the duration of the school day. Outdoor clothing includes but is not limited to: coats/jackets, knitted hats, gloves/mittens, and scarves.
- Non-jewelry chains, chain wallets, and studded wristbands will not be permitted.

The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose dress is considered inappropriate for school will be required to make arrangements for other, more appropriate dress and may be removed from school.

LOCKERS/LOCKS: Lockers and/or locks assigned to students belong to the Acushnet Public Schools. As such, there is no expectation of privacy for these lockers. School officials reserve the right to inspect such property when they deem it necessary and appropriate. Each student may not use his/her own lock. If a student uses his/her own lock, then it will be cut off of the locker. Locks and lockers are provided to all students at no cost. These locks are the student's responsibility and must be paid for if lost or stolen. For this reason, students must not give their lock combination to anyone. Lockers are to be kept neat and clean and locked at all times.

VALUABLES & STUDENT BELONGINGS: Students are responsible for safeguarding their belongings. Valuables or sums of money should not be brought to school. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged belongings.

LOST AND FOUND: Any item found in the building or on school grounds should be turned into the office. Lost items not claimed after an extended time period will be donated to charity. If you have lost an item, check with your teachers first and then with the office.

SCHOOL RECORDS: A student's school record includes all information concerning a student maintained in any form by the Acushnet Public Schools that is organized on the basis of the student's name.

Upon notice that a student will be transferring to a new school district, the Acushnet Public Schools will automatically transfer all student records to the receiving district, or the student, where applicable. If it is found that a student has moved from the district without notifying the Acushnet Public Schools, the student's records may be forwarded to their new school without parent signature.

Except where the regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals or organizations other than the parent/guardian, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed access to information in the student's record without specific, informed written consent of the parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian wishes to examine their student's records, please make a request in writing to the child's guidance counselor at least 48 hours prior to the time these are needed.

If you have any questions regarding the student records policy or desire more detailed information concerning the state regulations, please contact the guidance office.

GUIDANCE SERVICES: Counseling services are available to all parents/guardians and students for either school related or personal problems. Our guidance counselors provide individual and crisis counseling, coordinate referrals to outside agencies, monitor each student's emotional, social, and academic progress, work with students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators to improve student achievement, register new students, maintain school records, provide career awareness, exploration, and planning, and assist eighth grade students with choosing a high school and their ninth grade academic courses. Parents/Guardians or students wishing to see a counselor should make an appointment through the main office secretary or by dialing a guidance counselor's direct extension (see contact information, school website).

LIBRARY: Use of the library is encouraged. All students may make use of the library with permission of a teacher or during their library-flex class. When in the library, each student must follow library rules and exhibit proper behavior.

All resources checked out of the library are the responsibility of the student that signs for them. Any lost books or materials must be paid for by those students by the end of the school year. Failure to do so will disqualify the student from extra-curricular activities.

CAFETERIA: Students are required to conduct themselves in an orderly manner to and from the cafeteria. Once in the cafeteria, good manners, courtesy, and proper eating habits are expected. Students may choose their own tables and companions. However, students may be assigned an eating location in or outside of the cafeteria if rules are not followed.

Hot lunches and milk are available daily under the direction of the cafeteria manager. The cost for school lunch will be \$2.00 for students. Food and/or drinks are not to be removed from or consumed outside of the cafeteria. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing “power drinks” or soda to school at any time.

LUNCH LOANS: Tickets for lunch or milk may be borrowed from the cafeteria. The loan is made only when a student has lost or forgotten his/her lunch money. The loan is for one lunch or milk and must be repaid on the next day of school. The parents of habitual borrowers may be contacted to devise a plan to remediate the issue.

FREE/REDUCED LUNCH: Parents/Guardians must correctly fill out the free and reduced lunch form in order for their child to qualify for free or reduced lunch. Please note: If a parent/guardian has one child in the elementary school, and one child in the middle school (or more than one in each), a separate form does not need to be filled out for each child.

Upon receiving a child’s free and reduced lunch form, a school administrator will determine if the child is eligible for free or reduced lunch. A student will qualify for the program if the parents/guardians receive food stamps or TANF, if the student is a foster child, or if the parents/guardians meet the income eligibility guidelines published every year by the federal government.

If your child received free or reduced lunch the previous school year, this doesn’t automatically make him/her eligible to receive free or reduced lunch the following year, as the federal income eligibility guidelines change annually.

A student may not sell or give his/her free/reduced lunch ticket to another student. If a student performs such an act, he/she will be referred to the administration for disciplinary action. A child’s free and reduced lunch status is confidential, and may not be disclosed without the consent of a parent/guardian.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: The Acushnet Public School System requires students to take an active part

in physical education and to participate to the best of their ability.

Students at this level are required to come prepared for physical education with a complete change of clothing. Shorts, sweatpants, tee shirts and sweatshirts are considered appropriate clothing. Sneakers that fasten or tie securely are appropriate footwear. Inappropriate or unsafe clothing includes any articles containing drug or alcohol advertisements and/or obscene language or pictures, half-shirts, frayed shorts, high-soled sneakers, tank tops, body jewelry, and earrings.

Any student who fails to comply with the above stated requirements will be given a written assignment relative to the scheduled activity. Consequences will be provided to all students who consistently come unprepared for class.

Students may be excused from physical education classes at the recommendation (in writing) of a physician. Written documentation from a physician should be submitted to the school nurse. The school nurse may also excuse a student from physical education class if she provides the physical education teacher with a note for an occasion of illness/injury.

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS: Occasionally, field trips may be arranged to compliment our school programs. Students are to conduct themselves as if they were in school during field trips. In addition, as a condition of being allowed to attend field trips, all students are required to have permission slips and a signed release form on file prior to the activity or they will not be allowed to attend. For health and safety issues, the parent/guardian may be asked to accompany the child on a school field trip.

The school nurse will contact the parents/guardians of student going on a field trip if he/she regularly takes prescribed medications at school. Written authorization must be provided by a parent/guardian in order for a student to gain permission to administer medications to himself/herself during the field trip.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS: Each area of the building has assigned emergency exits. During evacuation drills, students are to leave the building quickly and orderly. Silence is to be maintained throughout the entire drill so that instruction from the teachers and/or fire officials can be heard. Emergency exits are posted in each room of the building. If an evacuation occurs while a student is separated from his/her class, they are to exit the building through the closest exit and report to the nearest teacher.

SCHOOL DANCES/PARTIES/FUNCTIONS:

Students who display good conduct are eligible to attend school dances, parties, and functions.

Admission to the dances, parties, and functions may require the purchase of a ticket. Receiving an out of school suspension or obtaining two or more poor conduct grades in a given term may exclude participation in school-sponsored dances, parties, and functions that take place in that term.

Any students attending these activities must remain at the activity; students may not be dropped off and stay outside, nor may they pass back and forth from inside to outside.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Extracurricular activity guidelines have been implemented regarding the selection process of club/activity members and the participation in all inter/intramural sports at Ford Middle School. These guidelines are nondiscriminatory with regards to race, sex, color, religion, National origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness. The Ford Middle School teams, clubs, and activities are an extension of the school. Students/Players/Club Members are expected to exemplify the qualities upon which the school is based. These qualities are respect, wise decision-making and skillfulness in life long learning.

Procedure: Eligibility of interested students is reviewed with teaching teams and teachers of specialty subjects. Students experiencing academic difficulty and/or demonstrating inappropriate behavior will disqualify a student from eligibility and will prohibit him/her from trying out for a team or from participating in a club or activity. Academic eligibility will be determined by reviewing report cards prior to every marking term. Academic difficulty is defined as: a failure in any academic or specialty subject area, as well as the repeated failure to complete classroom and homework assignments. Inappropriate behavior is defined as: two or more poor conduct grades and/or an out of school suspension in a marking term.

INTER-INTRAMURAL SPORTS/FITNESS

CLUB: In regards to inter/intramural sports, the selection of eligibility is based on skill, ability, and coachability, as determined by the advisor or coach of the team.

Participants must have a current physical on file with the school nurse and complete and return a medical form/permission slip. These physicals are valid 12 months from the date of issue. After the expiration date, they must be redone in order for the student to continue participating in the activity.

Selected participants must continue to meet the above-mentioned criteria throughout the season or risk dismissal from the team. In addition:

- 1) Three unexcused misses from practices and/or games may result in dismissal from the team.
- 2) A participant who receives a Saturday detention or suspension during the season may receive a one game suspension on the first offense. A second Saturday detention or suspension may result in dismissal from the team.

SCHOOL COUNCIL:

The school council is based on Section 59C of the School Reform Act of 1993, which states, "... *The school council shall meet regularly with the principal of the school and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, in the review of the annual budget, and in the formulation of a school improvement plan...*"

If anyone is interested in serving on the school council, they should request a School Improvement Council Form and return it to the Ford Middle School main office.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY: We are a participating member of the National Junior Honor Society. Students are selected based on the five criteria of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character. Interested students may inquire at guidance, but students may not apply for membership in the National Junior Honor Society. Membership is granted only to those students selected by the Faculty Council.

Health Department Policies

The Ford Middle School has a nurse available during the school day to address students' needs. The health department follows the regulations and guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the attending school physician and the school committee. The school nurse uses nursing assessment to determine whether a child should be sent home ill or retained in school. The nurse is responsible for maintaining confidential health records, immunization records, providing first aid, illness assessment, administration of medications and is available to discuss questions or concerns related to your child. If a health issue is of a concern to us, we will request that your primary care physician or emergency department of your choice evaluate your child.

Allergy Medication: All parents/guardians of students with a known anaphylactic food or insect allergy should provide the school with notification of this condition and an epi-pen. If an epi-pen is not provided,

please provide a physician's note stating that there is not a need for an epi-pen at school.

Field trip/medication: Teachers are instructed by the nurse in the administration of oral and epi-pen medications during field trips. This delegation is authorized through MA General laws. Students receiving other medications, will be accompanied and administered these medications by the school nurse or the parent during the field trip.

First Aid: Treatment will be administered for minor injuries during the school day. When a student becomes seriously injured, the parent/guardian is notified immediately. If they cannot be reached in an emergency, a person designated on the child's emergency information form will then be notified and then transported to St. Luke's Hospital. All open areas of the skin must be covered with a band-aid, dressing or clothing. Minor injuries such as swelling or sprains will be treated with ice and splints or ace wraps.

Illnesses: Children who are sick **should not** be sent to school. They should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. The school nurse will send home sick any child who she feels is ill or who is not able to perform effectively during the school day. Each morning that your child is sick, a call to the school explaining his/her absence is required. The nurse will then call each parent/guardian of those who have unexplained absences. If your child is ill for 3 consecutive days, a note from the doctor is required.

The school nurse will send home any child she feels is ill-using the following guidelines:

Temperature of 100 or above

Vomiting/Diarrhea

Continuing malaise after rest and quiet

Discovery of pediculi (head lice)

Suspected Positive Strep Culture

Any other medical or emergency conditions unable to be resolved within the framework of allowable treatments.

Similarly, certain communicable diseases require exclusion from school for a particular period:

Pediculi (Head Lice): Child must be checked by school nurse and determined to be free of NITS before return to school.

Chicken Pox: Child must be excluded for 5 days after last eruption or receipt by school nurse of permission to return to school from child's doctor. We report these cases to the Board of Health.

Strep Throat: Child is excluded and may return after 24 hours of medication or earlier with permission note from doctor.

Conjunctivitis: Child must be excluded and may return with a doctor's permission 24 hours after treatment is begun. If the child has a noted history of allergic conjunctivitis, he/she is not considered contagious.

Immunizations: The following immunizations are required for **all** students entering the 7th grade; 1 booster of Td (Tetanus/Diphtheria) or Tdap (unless it has been more than 5 years since the last dose of DTaP, DTP or DT was given). An updated physical dated within one year of the start of 7th grade is also required. Students, who are not in compliance, will not be allowed to enter the 7th grade until documentation is received. All other immunizations should also be up to date. Immunizations and physicals are available with the child's primary care physician or the New Bedford Well Child Clinic in New Bedford.

Physical examinations: The Department of Public Health requires that the public schools have on file a **physical examination upon entrance or transfer into the school system and every 3 or 4 years thereafter**. A physical examination is required before entry in to the 7th grade. Please provide your doctor with a Massachusetts Physical Form (available upon request from the main office). If your child receives yearly physicals, please provide a copy to the health office so that your child's records are kept up to date.

Screenings: The school provides every student with a yearly vision, hearing, weight, height and postural screening. If your child does not meet the standards on these screenings, the school nurse will send a letter home to inform you. You will be requested to have a follow up evaluation done by your physician. Please provide the health department with the documentation of the follow up.

Administration of Medications: It is the responsibility of the school nurse to supervise the taking of prescription or over the counter medication by students. The following conditions apply:

1. The school nurse must have a **dated written or verbal order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner or physician's assistant to administer any medication either prescribed or over the counter.**
2. A **Medication Order** form is available upon request from the health office. This form should be used whenever receiving an order for medication from a physician. Medication orders are valid until the end of that school year.
3. A written parent/guardian permission slip is also required. This form, labeled

Authorization for Dispensing Medication, is also available at the health office, and should be used when allowing permission for a medication to be dispensed.

4. The medication must be in a container labeled by the physician or pharmacist.
5. The medication must be **brought to the school by the parent/guardian (or an adult designated by this person: 18 years old or older)**. Students **are not** allowed to carry medications on their persons **at any time**.
6. Any remaining medication, or a change in medication, must be picked up from school by the parent/guardian or designated adult. The school nurse will discard any medication that is not picked up by the last day of school.
7. All medication is stored in a locked cabinet.
8. One other option is for the parent/guardian or designated adult to bring the medication to the school and administer the medication to the student either at the designated time or on an as needed basis.
9. The school nurse must agree to dispense the medication.
10. Notes from parents are acceptable for the use of cough drops and bottled water. The school nurse will review all notes, cough drops and water for acceptability.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

STATE TESTING: The state of Massachusetts requires the administration of certain testing, including the Massachusetts Comprehensive Academic Standards (MCAS). We administer these tests as directed by the state Department of Education.

SUPPLIES & MATERIALS: Students are expected to come to school with the tools necessary to do their work. Students should have a supply of pencils, pens, notebooks, book covers, and other general supplies that may be needed.

LOST OR DAMAGED SCHOOLBOOKS:

Examples of schoolbooks include: library books, textbooks, and any other book for use in school. Students are expected to be prepared for class by bringing all materials expected of them including books. All textbooks must be covered throughout the year. Students are responsible for the care and protection of each schoolbook issued.

Parents/Guardians of students who damage or lose a schoolbook must pay the school to have it replaced. An administrator, who will take into consideration the initial cost of the item, condition of the item when issued, and the copyright/purchase date, will determine

the cost of repayment. A letter will be sent from the school to any student who has lost or damaged a school textbook or book. Charges for lost or damaged books must be paid in full within 30 days of the mailing of the letter.

HOMEWORK: Homework is an important part of school. It is a learning activity, which should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. If homework is not completed or turned in on time, it will have an adverse effect on a student's grades, and may result in a teacher-assigned detention. Each student is provided with a homework planner, which they are responsible for. Replacement planners may be available at a cost to the student. Students should keep track of their daily assignments in this planner. Each student should be prepared to spend, on average, one hour to one hour and a half per night on his/her studies.

The homework and day's class work for grades 5-8 is posted every night on the school's website under the homework page link. The school's website address is located on the front cover of this handbook.

EXTRA HELP/MAKE-UP WORK: Arrangements can be made with teachers for students to remain after school to complete make-up work or to receive extra help. It is the student's responsibility to make up any work that he/she misses due to absence or discipline. Failure to do so may result in failing grades. See the make-up work citation located in the general information portion of the handbook regarding make-up work due to an absence, and the out of school suspension citation located in the student discipline section of this handbook regarding make-up work due to an out-of-school suspension.

MARKING SYSTEM: Report cards are issued at the end of each marking term. Academic subjects and some specialty subjects are graded:

A+	98-100	Excellent
A	93-97	
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good
B	84-86	
B-	80-83	
C+	77-79	Fair
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D	65-69	
F	Below 65	Fail

Other specialty subjects are rated:

- P – Pass
- F – Fail
- Inc. – Incomplete

NG – Not Graded
Med. – Medically Excused

Conduct is also graded using a system ranging from excellent to poor:

1-Excellent; 2-Good; 3-Fair; 4-Poor

Weekly scholastic reports are issued upon request of a parent/guardian or at the discretion of the school.

Progress reports are issued five weeks into each marking term for all students.

HONOR ROLL & STUDENT RECOGNITION: At the end of each term an honor roll of students is published. Eligibility is based on the following:

High Honors: A's (90 or better) in all academic and specialty subjects.

Honors: B's (80 or better) and A's in all academic and specialty subjects.

Conduct: If a student receives a 4 (poor) in conduct, or if they receive 2 (or more) 3's (fair), they are ineligible for honor roll in that term.

Special recognition can be issued at any time by any staff member for special work, effort, or improvement.

Awards are presented at the close of the year to recognize student achievement, improvement, or for special considerations.

STUDENTS AT RISK: It is the policy of the Acushnet Public Schools and Ford Middle School to provide an optimum educational environment for all students and to identify a student's educational difficulties/problems as close to their inception as is possible.

At various times during a school year, a student may require special assistance in order to achieve his/her fullest potential. To achieve this goal, the following procedure has been developed.

Any parent/guardian, teacher or other professional staff member may refer a child for discussion at the weekly academic support meetings or may wish to schedule a parent/teacher-guardian conference. Please contact a guidance counselor or team leader to make such a referral and/or appointment. It is suggested that a referral and/or appointment of this type be made for:

*Any student who is in danger of failing a major subject.

*Any student who is experiencing a wide disparity between their ability and actual performance.

*Any student who is demonstrating chronic behavior problems

Please consult the school web page for a listing of Team Leaders and members.

STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS: An individual student success plan will be developed for each student who has scored below level two on the English Language Arts or Mathematics MCAS. The plans describe the available activities and supports that will be used to help each student succeed in passing the English language arts or mathematics MCAS tests.

TEACHER ASSISTANCE TEAM: The Teacher Assistance Team, (TAT), which is a function of regular education; enables staff members to meet as a team to address the individual needs of children. Classroom teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators explore program options and instructional modifications within regular programming to help address the student's need. If needed, testing or a special needs evaluation may be initiated after consultation with the child's parents/guardians and written permission has been received.

SECTION 504: Section 504 is a federal statute that prohibits a qualified individual with a disability from being excluded in the participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance because of his/her disability.

The Ford Middle School 504 Coordinator is Mr. Timothy Plante, (508) 998-0265.

The following is the grievance procedure, which was adopted by the Acushnet School Committee:

Step 1: Title IX & Chapter 622 Coordinator
If not resolved within 10 working days.

Step 2: Superintendent of Schools
If not resolved within 10 working days,

Step 3: School Committee
If not resolved within 10 working days,

Step 4: Regional Director, Office of Civil Rights,
Boston, MA

If you have any questions regarding Section 504, please direct your inquiries to your child's principal (see contact information, school website).

SPECIAL EDUCATION: Special education is provided to eligible students in Massachusetts in accordance with the Massachusetts Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, and the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These

laws compel schools to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to students who, because of a disability, are unable to progress effectively.

If a parent/guardian, teacher, or other educational personnel, as well as any student eighteen years of age or older, suspect that he/she has a disability which may require special education and/or related services to allow him/her to make effective progress in the school, that individual may refer the student for an evaluation pursuant to 603 CMR Section 28.04.

PROMOTION POLICY: A student must pass four out of five academic subjects for the year to move on to the next grade. If a student fails two subjects in a school year, he/she must take and pass at least one course in summer school. If a student fails three academic subjects for the year, then he/she must take and pass at least two summer school courses.

Every summer school course taken must be one of the courses the student failed for the year to count towards promotion.

The academic team, principal, parents/guardians, and other appropriate staff members will discuss the promotion of students failing to pass the necessary academic subjects. However, the final decision regarding promotion of a student rests with the principal.

GRADE 8 GRADUATION POLICY: Only eighth grade students who are academically promoted to the ninth grade may attend the grade eight promotional ceremony.

GRADE 8 GRADUATION DANCE POLICY: The use of limousines or the purchase or rental of tuxedos or prom gowns for students is not appropriate for the grade eight graduation dance and parents/guardians are encouraged not to incur such unnecessary expense for this school event.

Attending the graduation dance is a privilege. Students will not be able to attend this activity if they are not academically promoted to the ninth grade. In addition, students who are chronic disciplinary problems during the school year may have their right to participate in the eighth grade graduation dance suspended at the discretion of the administration. Attendance at school is required on the day of the graduation dance for students to be eligible to attend. The graduation dance is for Ford Middle School eighth grade students only.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION RELATIVE TO SEX EDUCATION: The Acushnet School Committee has adopted this policy (in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 32A) 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 in our school will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer 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 the 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.

We strongly recommend that all students participate fully in our health classes, and we encourage parental communication and respect family values. Should you have concerns or questions, please contact the administration.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

In order to create a comfortable, working, safe, and productive learning environment, it is essential that students conduct themselves in a way which maintains order and respect for others and property. Students who by their behavior and actions interfere with the responsibility of teachers to teach and prevent others from the opportunity to learn may be subject to detention after school, Saturday detention, suspension from school, or expulsion from school.

After a behavior complaint is made, a complete investigation will take place. This investigation, in accordance with MGL c. 76, s. 5, is nondiscriminatory, and will take into account explanations from all involved parties and witnesses. Upon conclusion of the investigation, all consequences that are given to students are deemed confidential. The school administration will not discuss the consequences that are given to a student with any party save for the child's legal guardians.

According to School Committee policy, bus transportation will not be provided to students who stay after school for reasons of discipline. Parents/Guardians must provide after school transportation in such cases. Each student receiving a detention will be given 24 hours notice in order to arrange for private transportation from school on the day of his/her detention. It is still possible for a student to serve his/her detention on the same day that the student committed the infraction provided that a student's parent/guardian is given verbal notification of the detention, and is able to arrange transportation for the student.

TEACHER DETENTION: A teacher detention may be issued as a consequence for a minor infraction of school rules, and is not recorded at the office. Teachers issue and administer teacher detentions. Failure to attend a scheduled teacher detention, despite being given proper notification, may result in an administrative detention. Any student who does not

behave appropriately during a teacher detention may be required to repeat the teacher detention, or may be referred to the office. Teacher detentions will be served on weekdays after school, from 2:45 PM to 3:30 PM.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION: An administrative detention may be issued as a consequence for a consistent pattern of infractions of school rules. Administrative detentions may also be issued for a single infraction of school rules. Administrators assign administrative detentions. Administrative detentions are recorded at the office and on the student's permanent record.

Parent/Guardian notification of an administrative detention will consist of the mailing home of a student behavioral referral form that provides information as to the nature of the infraction, and the consequence given. Administrative detentions will be served after school on weekdays from 2:45 PM to 3:30 PM. During this period of time, each student will be monitored and required to create a student behavior plan. Any student who does not adequately complete the student behavior plan, or does not behave appropriately during the administrative detention may be required to repeat the administrative detention. Failure to attend a scheduled administrative detention, despite being given proper notification, will result in a Saturday detention.

SATURDAY DETENTION: A Saturday detention may be issued by an administrator for a serious or continued infraction of school rules. Parent/Guardian notification of a Saturday detention will consist of the mailing home of a student behavioral referral form that provides information of the nature of the infraction, and the type and scope of the consequence given. Saturday detentions are recorded at the office and will be served on Saturdays. Saturday detention will begin at 8:00 AM and end at 11:00 AM.

A student who receives a Saturday detention must arrive at school by 8:00 AM. Failure to attend a scheduled Saturday detention may result in the assignment of two Saturday detentions or an in-school suspension. In addition, any student who does not behave appropriately during the Saturday detention, will be required to repeat the Saturday detention.

SUSPENSION: Suspension is a serious form of discipline that does not allow the student to enter school property and is issued by an administrator for a major infraction of school rules. The length of the suspension will reflect the offense and will be determined by the school administrator, school department policy, due process requirements, and the

law. Suspensions are generally one to ten days, but may be longer if decided by the Superintendent of Schools. Parents/Guardians will be notified by telephone and in writing of any incident, which results in suspension.

Parents/Guardians who have been advised of a suspension may request a due process hearing and appear at school the morning following the notification of suspension with their child or at a mutually agreeable date and time. In the event that circumstances prevent a parent/guardian from appearing at school the next morning, a request for a waiver will be honored.

A suspension will be deferred, pending a hearing, provided that the student's immediate separation from school is not warranted. If the nature of the offense requires immediate separation from school, as determined by the administration; a suspension will be enforced prior to a hearing.

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: Every effort will be made to ensure that the student who receives this consequence will serve his/her in-school suspension as close to the day that the violation was committed as possible. When a student serves an in-school suspension, he/she should first report to his/her locker. At this time, he/she should check in with his/her homeroom teacher, gather all assignments for the day, books and other materials, and report to the main office. During in-school suspension, students will be monitored and totally separated from the general school population. Students will be required to complete the day's class work, tests, and a student behavior plan. Any student who does not adequately complete the student behavior plan, or does not behave appropriately during the in-school suspension may be the subject of further discipline.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION: In addition to being prohibited from engaging in any school-sponsored activities, students who are issued an out of school suspension are not allowed to appear on school property for the duration of the suspension. Students will be responsible for completing all schoolwork and tests missed during the time of the suspension. A student who receives an out of school suspension must make up all of the work missed within a period of time equal to the number of out of school suspension days. Any work not made up after the allotted time will receive a zero.

EXPULSION: Students who are expelled from school are not allowed to attend school. The school system

has no obligation to provide alternative education for students expelled from school.

Expulsion provisions will be followed in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.

In accordance with Mass. Gen. L. chapter 71, section 37H:

- a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- b. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

- c. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/ her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.
- d. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is

made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Prior to being enrolled, a student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal laws or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

ADDENDUM TO EXPULSION PROVISIONS:

The principal, pursuant to Mass. Gen. L. ch. 71, 37H ½, may suspend a student who has been charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The statute also allows the principal to expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

SPECIAL NEEDS DISCIPLINE: The disciplining of students with disabilities is governed by federal and state special education law and the regulations promulgated thereunder. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1400, *et seq.*; 34 CFR Section 300.519-529 *et seq.*, and Massachusetts General Laws, c. 71B.

Students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are expected to abide by the same rules as non-disabled students. Anytime school personnel seek to remove a student from his or her current educational placement for more than ten school days in a school year, this constitutes a "change in placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. When a change of placement occurs, a student's I.E.P. Team must reconvene to determine if the conduct in question was "caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability"; or if the conduct in question was the "direct result of the local school's failure to implement the IEP." If the I.E.P. Team concludes that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the

district may discipline the student in accordance with its applicable discipline code. However, the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of exclusion, if the exclusion goes beyond a total of ten days in any given school year. If a parent disagrees with the Team's manifestation determination or with the Team's decision regarding the placement of a student, the parent may request a hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).

"School personnel may also order a change in the placement of a student with a disability to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days if a student: (1) carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises or at a school function; (2) knowingly possesses, uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school, school functions or a school sponsored event; and (3) inflicts serious bodily injury while at school, on school premises, or at a school function. Additionally, a Massachusetts Department of Education Hearing Officer, under certain circumstances, may order a change in the placement of a student with disabilities eligible for Special Education to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days."

For more details on these procedures, please contact the special education department.

STUDENT SEARCHES: School authorities are authorized to conduct searches of students, their property, or their lockers when there is a "reasonable suspicion" that a student is in possession of an item or substance that is illegal or violates school rules or constitutes a threat to safety and property of staff and students. The administration will attempt, wherever possible, to conduct searches of students in a private manner. The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the goals of the search, and not excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the violation and the age of the student. Immediately after a search of a student or a student's belongings, the school official must notify the building principal/superintendent, and that student's parent/guardian to notify him/her of the outcome of the search.

TITLE IX AND CHAPTER 622 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: All aspects of public education must be open and available to members of both sexes and members of legally protected groups. No school may exclude or discriminate against a child on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. Complaints under one of these statutes should preferably be placed in writing. It is the

intent of the Acushnet Public Schools to investigate and resolve any complaints or charges of such discrimination as quickly and equitably as possible.

The Acushnet Public Schools Title VI and Title IX District Coordinator is Mrs. Danielle Coffin, (508) 998-0258.

The following is the grievance procedure, which was adopted by the Acushnet School Committee:

- Step 1: Title IX & Chapter 622 Coordinator
If not resolved within 10 working days.
- Step 2: Superintendent of Schools
If not resolved within 10 working days,
- Step 3: School Committee
If not resolved within 10 working days,
- Step 4: Regional Director, Office of Civil Rights,
Boston, MA

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: All forms of sexual harassment are prohibited at Ford Middle School. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Forms of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to the following: a) Verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes or slurs. b) Physical harassment, such as unnecessary or offensive touching or impeding or blocking movement. c) Visual harassment, such as derogatory or offensive posters, cards, cartoons, graffiti, drawings or gestures. Any student who is found to be responsible for sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension, or permanent exclusion from school. The severity of the disciplinary action will be based upon the circumstances of the infraction.

If a student believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment or has witnessed the sexual harassment of another student, then he/she should report the incident to the assistant principal or any other administrator with whom the student feels comfortable. A student may also register such a complaint with a guidance counselor or teacher, who will notify an administrator in order that they can initiate an investigation.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT: Pursuant to Mass. Regulations 603 CMR 46, all public school districts must have a physical restraint policy on file. The Acushnet Public Schools Physical Restraint Policy is available for review in the principal's office of either school building in the district.

HAZING: MGL, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19, makes it a crime to participate in organized hazing and provides for a punishment of a fine, imprisonment or both. In accordance with the laws of the State of Massachusetts, Albert F. Ford Middle School does not condone hazing in any activity associated with the school, including athletics, academics and co-curricular clubs and organizations.

COMPLAINT PROCESS: Parents are requested to discuss concerns with the appropriate school personnel as quickly as possible. It is expected that parents will meet with a child's teacher first in an attempt to resolve the problem. The proper process is as follows:

1. Parents must first speak with the child's teacher to resolve an issue.
2. If the issue is not resolved after speaking with the teacher, the parents will meet with their child's principal/assistant principal. When the issue reaches this level, parents should put in writing a description of the problem and the attempts to resolve it.
3. If the results of the meeting with the administrator are not satisfactory, parents may choose to meet with the Superintendent of Schools.

SCHOOL RULES

MINOR INFRACTIONS OF SCHOOL RULES (these include but are not limited to):

- Gum chewing (not allowed at any time)
- Eating candy (may be eaten only in the cafeteria)
- Lack of book covers (no "stretchy" book covers are allowed – these allow damage to the binder of the books)
- Not prepared for class
- Late to class
- Untimely use of lockers
- Wearing hats, jackets, or other inappropriate items
- Inappropriate lavatory use
- Inappropriate behavior
- Any item(s), which lends itself to classroom disruption

The Ford Middle School follows a graduated discipline policy, where the consequences increase as the frequency of minor infractions increase. The consequences for violation of minor infraction standards are:

1. Documentation/Verbal Warning
2. Parent/Guardian contact: If the student continues to commit the documented infraction, the teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian.
3. Teacher/Team retention after school: If the student continues the unacceptable behavior, the teacher should schedule a detention and make an appointment with the student's parents/guardians and/or notify the administration.

TARDINESS: Students are expected to arrive on time and to be in their homerooms by 8:12 AM. If a student does not arrive on time, then he/she will be marked as tardy. If a student is tardy for two days in a term, then he/she may receive an administrative detention. If a student is tardy for an additional two days (4 days) in a term, then he/she may receive an administrative detention. If a student is tardy for an additional two days (6 days) in a term, then he/she may receive a Saturday detention. For each subsequent tardy in a term after 6 days, a student may receive a suspension and/or an administrative hearing with written notification to the attendance officer documenting this behavior.

TRUANCY: By law, students are required to attend school daily. The following will be classified as truancy:

1. Students absent from school in violation of the law.
2. Students who leave the school without proper authorization.

Students classified as truant will be required to make up missed work. A truant student may be required to serve two Saturday detentions for each day truant. In addition, written notification will be forwarded to the attendance officer documenting the truancy.

FAILURE TO REPORT FOR A TEACHER DETENTION: Students must receive permission from the appropriate teacher to be temporarily excused from a teacher detention. If a student is unable to stay for a teacher detention on a given day, he/she must bring a note from a parent explaining the reasons for failing to remain after school. Failure to report to a teacher after school will result in the issuance of an administrative

detention. If violations continue, a conference will be requested or a Saturday detention will be issued.

FAILURE TO REPORT FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION: Students must receive permission from the administrator who issued the administrative detention to be temporarily excused from an administrative detention. Failure to report for administrative detention will result in the issuance of a Saturday detention.

Parents/Guardians are urged to make all appointments or plans involving a student after 3:30 PM

FORGERY OF SIGNATURES: This may include but is not limited to any school paper that requires a parent or teacher signature, a note for an excused absence, a letter of suspension, a permission slip to attend a school function, or any other document issued by the school or school authority requiring a parent/guardian signature.

First Offense: Administrative Detention or Saturday detention

Second Offense: Saturday detention or Suspension

CHEATING: This may include any student caught copying another student's work. In addition to the following consequences, students caught cheating will receive a zero for the test or assignment on which they cheated.

First Offense: Administrative detention or Saturday detention

Second Offense: Saturday detention or Suspension

PLAGIARISM: This may include any student caught copying print or electronic sources without the appropriate documentation. **PLEASE NOTE:** This will automatically result in a zero for the work. **First Offense:** Saturday detention or In-School Suspension

Second Offense: In-School Suspension or Out-of-School Suspension

INAPPROPRIATE USE OR POSSESSION OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES: See the wireless communications and electronic devices citation located in the general information section of this handbook for more information regarding these devices.

First Offense: Confiscation of the device and parent/guardian notification

Second Offense: Confiscation of the device and Saturday Detention or Suspension

ROUGHHOUSING: Roughhousing compromises the safety and orderliness of a school. Pushing, shoving, kicking, and general horseplay, even if the two involved students claim that their actions were not intended to be malicious, will not be tolerated at Ford Middle School.

First Offense: Administrative detention or Saturday detention

Second Offense: Saturday detention or suspension

BULLYING/HARASSMENT: All students at Ford Middle School are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from bullying, harassment, threats or intimidation of any form, including (but not limited to: race, color, National origin, sex, religion, or sexual orientation).

First Offense: Saturday detention or suspension

Second Offense: Suspension or (in extreme cases) expulsion

EXTORTION: Extortion is receiving money and/or some item or favor from a person by threatening or intimidating him/her with real or perceived danger. This could be a physical threat or mental intimidation.

First Offense: Meeting of student, parent, and principal. Immediate suspension.

Additional Offense: Parental conference required, and a suspension of up to ten days. In all cases a report to the police may be filed.

FIGHTING/ASSAULT: Fighting or assaulting another student in school, on school grounds, or on school buses is dangerous and will not be tolerated. Students are expected to avoid conflicts that might escalate into fighting. Students are encouraged to seek advice from staff if a problem occurs which could escalate into a fight.

First Offense: Saturday detention or suspension

Second Offense: Suspension

SMOKING/USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS: Smoking and/or the possession or use of tobacco products and lighters within the school building, the school facilities, or on the school grounds or school bus is prohibited.

First Offense: Saturday detention or suspension

Second Offense: Suspension

STEALING: Stealing will not be tolerated at Ford Middle School. Any student caught stealing will immediately return the item taken and offer an apology to the victim. This will take place in the presence of a guidance counselor or an administrator. The student's parents/guardians will be notified, and the offending student will serve the suitable disciplinary consequence.

First Offense: Saturday detention or suspension

Second Offense: Suspension

SELLING ITEMS IN SCHOOL: Students are not allowed to sell goods in school without the permission of the Acushnet School Committee.

First Offense: Confiscation of the goods sold

Second Offense: Confiscation of the goods sold and a Saturday detention

DISRESPECT TO STAFF: Students are expected to be responsible in showing respect to all staff members. Students are expected to use appropriate language and to conduct themselves in a courteous and polite manner.

First Offense: May range from a teacher detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the disrespect as determined by the administrator.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the disrespect as determined by the judgment of the administration.

PROFANITY/VULGARITY: Swearing, vulgar language, or derogatory remarks regarding race, color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, intellectual abilities, exceptionalities, and gender, whether intended or not to demean or ridicule another, will not be tolerated. This includes all forms of expression. Such expressions foster prejudices and stereotyping which research has shown is often at the root of violence. We strive for our school to be a safe and comfortable atmosphere for everyone. Diversity should be celebrated, not ridiculed.

First Offense: May range from an administrative detention to suspension depending upon the severity and/or frequency of the offense as determined by the administration.

Second Offense: May range from a Saturday detention to suspension depending upon the severity and/or frequency of the offense as determined by the administration.

VANDALISM – DESTRUCTION OF

PROPERTY: Tampering with property belonging to another student or staff member is an invasion of personal rights, disrespectful, costly, and will not be tolerated. Any student vandalizing or destroying another's property will be required to make restitution. Police notification may result.

First Offense: May range from an administrative detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the offense as determined by the administration.

Second Offense: May range from a Saturday detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the offense as determined by the administration.

DISRUPTING THE LEARNING

ENVIRONMENT/PROCESS: All students have the right to an education free of disruptions. Continuous and intentional classroom disruptions of any manner, which interfere with the teacher's ability to teach, will not be tolerated. A disruptive student will be warned to change his/her behavior; continuation of the behaviors will result in the following:

First Offense: May range from a teacher detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the offense.

Second Offense: May range from an administrative detention to suspension depending upon the severity of the offense as determined by the administration.

STAFF ASSAULT: Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, paraprofessional or other school staff member on school premises or at school-sponsored events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district pursuant to state law, Mass. Gen. L. chapter 71, section 37H.

POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON OR A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE:

The Education Reform Act of 1993 states: "Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal." In addition, there is a minimum one-year expulsion for any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school, subject to modification by the superintendent on a case-by-case basis.

Any student who is charged with staff assault, possession of a dangerous weapon, or possession of a controlled substance shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing.

At the discretion of the school administration, all penalties for violating the school rules listed may be increased or decreased depending on the severity of the violation and other circumstances. In addition, any offense to school order not mentioned in this handbook will be handled at the administration's discretion.

If the preceding disciplinary procedures have been unsuccessful in changing the unacceptable behavior of a student, the parents/guardians will be contacted by the administration and may be asked to come into school to meet with their child's team of teachers and/or the administration. Excessive and repetitive violations of school rules may result in the school filing a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) Petition with the Bristol County Juvenile Courts.

PLEASE SIGN, DETATCH, AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER

Please sign below to indicate that you and your child have read the rules, regulations, and policies that pertain to the Ford Middle School and that you and your child agree to abide by the regulations and policies set forth herein.

Thank you.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Printed Student's Name

Grade Level

Homeroom

If you would like this handbook in an alternate language, please note this below:

Se você gostaria deste manual em uma língua alternativa, por favor observe isto em baixo:

Si le gustara esta guía en una lengua alterna, por favor note este abajo:

Eu gostaria deste manual no português.

Me gustaría esta guía en español.