2021-2022 DISTRICT HANDBOOK

WWW.EWSD.ORG
Visit Us Online
www.ewsd.org
Follow us on Facebook: facebook.com/essexwestford
Follow us on Instagram: @essexwestford
Follow us on Twitter: @essexwestford
Follow us on YouTube: search Essex Westford

EWSD District Offices
51 Park Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452
58 Founders Road, Essex Junction, VT 05452
(phone) 802-878-8168; (fax) 802-878-5190

*This handbook was sent to the printer on August 10, 2021. Due to COVID-19, changes and updates could possibly be made leading up to and throughout the school year. For the latest version, please visit: www.ewsd.org/handbook*
Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year. I wish I could tell you our year will be ‘back to normal,’ but as you know, the pandemic is still present in our world and in our community. We will continue to follow health and safety measures that will allow our students to be in our schools for in-person learning and activities.

We are very excited to have all students back in our buildings! We will begin the year with all students and staff wearing masks while indoors. With no social distancing requirements, this means all students can be in our classrooms and there is no need for hybrid learning. We will continue to communicate to you often as we receive updates and new advice from the Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Department of Health.

The purpose of this handbook is to share relevant information with you. The handbook highlights expectations and legal requirements that are consistent across all 10 of our schools. As a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 system, there are expectations that are developmentally suited for the different grade level schools.

The Essex Westford School Board creates and adopts policy. Our Board has adopted a governing model called Policy Governance and over the course of the year, you will notice some EWSD policies shifting to administrative procedure. Our law-abiding policies will remain as Board policies. The EWSD policies and procedures can be found on our website (www.ewsd.org/policies).

We have learned so much through the pandemic. Working together as one, relying on each other, and by partnering with community organizations, we came out stronger than we were before.

The EWSD will continue to move forward together (#4ward2gether) for our students, staff, families, and our community. I invite you to move with us and help us to make this journey the very best it can be for all of our students.

Yours in Education,

Beth Cobb
EWSD Superintendent
## SCHOOL LIFE AND EXPECTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Nutrition Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Behavioral Expectations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hazing, Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Weapons</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Assault/Fighting</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Academic Honesty</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Enrollment</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Support Services (EST/504/IDEA)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness and School Closings</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardianship and Parental Rights</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Services</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification (ID) Badges</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaving School Grounds</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Property</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters, Announcements, and/or Displays</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Concerns</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Practices</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board Meetings</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Choice</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Dress</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Texts and Property/Equipment</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search and Seizure</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skateboards</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Usage</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephones</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I Programs</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation Services</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors and Volunteers on Campus</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal Dissection</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Access and Public Access</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learners (ELL)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) Notice</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating, Identifying and Evaluation of Students: Child Find</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Reporting</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Discrimination Statement</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy Rights and Student Surveys</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restraint/Seclusion</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FORMS

All forms mentioned throughout this handbook are available at www.ewsrd.org or can be obtained by contacting the school.
EWSD Vision
Growing hearts and minds for a better today and tomorrow: every day, every way, every one.

Theory of Action
When we deepen our commitment to each other and to continuous growth for every one, then our practices create equitable, authentic, inclusive learning experiences that benefit all students.

The Why Behind Equity
The Essex Westford School District recognizes its role in practices that cause continued inequalities for students. The purpose of our focus on equity is to eliminate all forms of racism and inequality in EWSD and secure justice for prior and future harm. We want to build and sustain our promise to equity throughout the District to really affect our results. In order for this to happen, all programs, operations, practices, resource distribution, and policies will need to hold equity as a guiding way of thinking and must be informed by past inequalities in a manner such that they undo current and past harm.

In order for this work to move forward, it is critical that we address the beliefs as well as the skills of our workers as well as the representation of many different kinds of people working within the EWSD. In order to have many different kinds of people within the big picture of decision making, we must make purposeful decisions to oppose historical structures that are overly a mixture of things that are all pretty much the same. We must also work to:

- Represent many different kinds of students and families.
- Develop and sustain different kinds and well-prepared employees.
- Create educational experiences for all students that reflect all their identities, languages, and cultures.
- Make sure decisions are made with voices from many different kinds of people and points of view across the community.
- Develop and put into use a basic structure on which bigger things can be built) for EWSD Policy review to create policies across EWSD that are anti-racist and center equity.

The Why Behind SEL
"Intertwining social and emotional learning and academics advances the ability of our students to adapt to change with the essential skills to
Within Essex Westford School District, we have identified Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as an important area of focus. It is directly connected to our vision and it’s of importance within our Continuous Improvement Plan. The research has clearly shows that when schools and teachers focus on supporting students with SEL, a large number of benefits take place.

These include:
• Improved student attitudes about self, school, and others
• Improved social-emotional skills
• Improved academic performance
• Increase in positive classroom behaviors
• Reduction in conduct problems
• Reduction in student feelings worried and/or depressed
• Reduction in drug use
• Improved graduation rates and job-related success
• Improved school climate and staff returning
• Fair and all-including support that makes sure of all students have what they need to succeed

For these reasons, we have developed a set of extremely important standards and committed to supporting SEL in a complete, thorough, and well thought out way across the EWSD.

SCHOOL LIFE AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

School Start and End Times:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
<th>Wed. Early Release</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert D. Lawton</td>
<td>8:15 a.m.</td>
<td>3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>2:15 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Tech.</td>
<td>8:05 a.m.</td>
<td>2:05 p.m.</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Elementary</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>1:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex High School</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>2:35 p.m.</td>
<td>1:35 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Middle School</td>
<td>8:15 a.m.</td>
<td>3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>2:15 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Founders Memorial</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiawatha</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>1:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Street</td>
<td>7:45 a.m.</td>
<td>2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>1:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Fleming</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westford</td>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regular attendance at school is extremely important for learning and social success. Vermont law demands regular school attendance by students. Parents and guardians of students enrolled in school (age six and up) are needed by law to make sure of their children’s attendance at school. Regular attendance is necessary to promise engagement and progress. If your child will not be in attendance, please call the school or fill out the online form to let us know they won’t be there before the start of the school day and state the reason for them not being present.

**Note:** CTE students must also call the program instructor between 7:15 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.

Valid causes for not being present include, but are not limited to: illness, participation in a religious holiday, death in the family, family emergency, or situations beyond the student’s control. Valid causes are reported to the school by the parent or person who is legally responsible in writing, in-person, or over a phone. Parents, guardians, translators, or family members in place of the parent should call the school’s attendance line as early as possible to report their child’s illness. Reporting a student not being present at school is an important method of improving student safety – we want to make sure that every student sent to school arrives at school. Parents or guardians requesting that a student not being present for an excused reason must make a written application in advance of the student not being present to the school principal.

Late students must report to the school office as soon as they arrive so that there is a true number count of people in the building for safety reasons. Being late for school puts students at a disadvantage. Events of lateness will be recorded and letters of concerns will be sent from the school when a pattern of lateness is recorded. School personnel are always available to provide parents with success plans to help them in getting their children to school on time. If you are struggling to get your child to school regularly and need support, feel free to reach out to your student’s school counselor.

If your child must leave school before the end of the day, please contact the school and include the reason for early dismissal and the student’s destination, to the office. To pick up your child, sign the early dismissal log in the school office. School personnel will call the child’s teacher to send your child to meet you in the office. Parents please respect our request by staying at the office and not going to the classroom, as of-
tentimes this can be disruptive to the learning.

A student who stays away from school without a valid cause is considered truant. Letters will be sent from the school when there is concern about the number of days that a student is not present.

CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES
EWSD believes that, in order to reach their full abilities, students' healthy eating patterns are extremely important. A well-planned and used school nutrition program positively influences students' eating habits. Eating a variety of nutritious foods helps increase healthy growth and development, and provides the necessary energy for learning. Questions about CNS? Contact Supervisor Scott Fay (sfay@ewsd.org or 857-7263).

Food and Drinks: Food and drinks are allowed at school during specified times and/or in selected areas. Unless approved by the principal, and based on the decision of the classroom teacher, consumption of snacks, candy, gum, and/or drinks isn’t permitted during instructional time.

Free Lunch and Breakfast Program: Children need healthy meals to learn. The Essex Westford School District offers healthy meals every school day. In the school year 2021-2022, all children will get free breakfast and lunch without any concern about your household income or ability to participate. It is still very important for families to submit the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals to track our community’s Free and Reduced Percentage. Filling out and returning the online form may help your family, the school, and community at large, qualify for help. P-EBT benefits to your household, grant money for the school, and getting money back from telecom companies for the community are just a few examples of the benefits of having higher Free and Reduced percentages. Information and online forms will be sent home with students the first day of school and is also available at www.ewsd.org/Page/2414. All information given on these forms is kept strictly private. Please call Scott Fay or Meghan Martin at 857-7333 for more information. Online forms can be filed at any time during the school year.

Menus: Menus will be posted throughout the school, will be on the EWSD, MealViewer, and school websites, and may be included in occasional newsletters and/or information sent home.
STUDENT BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The District tries to provide a safe and inviting place for all students and staff. Maintaining a climate of safety and respect is everyone’s responsibility. It is expected that both children and adults will respect the rights of all others in helping to create a safe place.

Kindness and respect for people and property is expected of students while in school and at school-related functions, without any concern about location.

Procedures around rules will be thought about within the big picture of the conditions.

Results may also arise for bad behavior that happens off school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where the bad behavior can be shown to present a clear and big interference with another student’s equal access to educational programs.

Restorative Justice and/or Discipline Ways of Thinking and Student Expectations and Results: We believe in the use of restorative practices, but each offense cannot be prescribed and may include disciplinary results and/or restorative practices.

Results for failure to meet student expectations and violations of school policies may result in, but not be limited to, disciplinary actions, including: loss of appropriate activity or privilege, disciplinary warning, detention, community service, probation, suspension (not allowed under eight years old), long-term suspension or other restorative or disciplinary actions as thought appropriate by school administrators.

According to policy, students who violate drug and alcohol expectations will be removed from participation from all extra and school related activities for three months. Co- and school related activities include: participation on sports teams, clubs, drama productions, attendance at athletic contests, dances, graduation exercises, and those school-sponsored organizations, activities, and events not directly related to the learning and/or testing programs. Violations of weapons policies may result in long-term suspension. Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to read the District’s policy manual for clearly stated details on suspension and long-term suspension.
While out of school, the student is expected to work on school-related tasks and complete all homework. Suspension or long-term suspension may result in the loss of credit or loss of grade for assignments due or tests taken during suspension or long-term suspension.

Long-lasting violation of student expectations will result in the increased harshness of results and may in the end result in long-term suspension and loss of credit.

Examples of behaviors that will result in restorative practices or disciplinary results include: disobedience to authority or failure to obey a reasonable request from staff; threats of any sort; cursing; bullying; harassment; fighting or attacking behavior of any type on school buildings/land or at any school function without any concern about location; lying; stealing; hazing; trespassing; carefully planned destruction of property; use of dishonesty in any school-related activity; creation of any safety danger/risk or mischievous action on purpose of any type of safety or fire alarm.

The administration and School Board may also provide restorative justice practices and/or discipline any student for bad behavior on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity when the bad behavior makes the continued presence of the pupil harmful to the welfare of the school, or the bad behavior does not happen on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be shown. Also, the administration and the School Board may discipline any student for bad behavior that does not happen on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity where the bad behavior can be shown to present a clear and large interference with another student’s equal access to educational programs.

The administration will use wisdom when making decisions, where such flexibility is permitted, in their results. Disciplinary results handed down by the administration will be final and not subject to appeal. What follows are guidelines, benchmarks, and portions/summaries of policies used most often.

Preparation for an active participation in learning: It is important for students to be engaged. Full and active participation means listening, talking, doing, creating, reading, laughing, thinking, drawing, search-
ing, or anything else involved in the learning process focused on the strengths of each student. Being prepared for class means being on time, being ready to start, having all necessary supplies, and completing homework before class begins.

Positive attitude toward learning: A positive attitude toward learning is based on an individual student’s strengths, conditions, and lived experiences and does not look the same for every student.

Respect for self, others, and the surrounding conditions: Respect is a central theme in all of our schools. Words and actions should be kind and thoughtful of people and things. This means school-appropriate language, a helpful point of view, the ability to discuss differences of opinions in ways that recognize effect and not intent, encouragement of expressing a variety of thought and many different kinds of opinions to avoid confusion between respect and agreement, and a regard for property. Students are expected to be polite and respectful to staff, teachers, and to one another.

Hazing, Harassment, Bullying, and Retaliation
The EWSD School District is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive learning area in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. It is the policy of EWSD to prohibit the illegal harassment of students based on race, color, religion, religious belief, national origin, whether someone is single, married, divorced, etc., sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and other legally protected status under federal or state law.

Revenge for making a report of HHB or participating in an investigation into legal accusations of HHB is prohibited. The District will take appropriate action against any student, volunteer, contractor, or employee of the school District who tries to get revenge against any person who makes a good faith report of HHB. Revenge against a student can take many forms and includes, but is not limited to: any form of threatening, payback, or continued hazing, harassment, and or bullying. A student that feels as if they are experiencing revenge for making a report of HHB or being involved in the investigation of a possible HHB event should immediately report the situation to a school leader.

Each school campus has at least two school leaders who are charged with receiving and asking questions about reports of hazing, harass-
ment, and bullying. Any person who believes they have been the vic-
tim of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying or the victim of revenge by
making a complaint of such behavior, or any person with knowledge or
objects that prove something of conduct which may be equal to hazing
will report the possible acts immediately to a school leader, a school
administrator, coach, or the superintendent’s office.

Teachers, administrators, volunteers, contractors, coaches, or other
workers in the school district will be especially alert to possible situ-
ations, conditions, or events which might include hazing, harassment,
bullying and/or revenge. Any such person who receives knowledge or
evidence of conduct which may be equal to these behaviors will inform
the building principal or assistant principal or school leader.

The following is a list of school leaders for HHB reporting for each school
campus:

ADL: Jennifer Wood, Brian Clark, and Nicole Williams
CTE: Robert Travers, Carolyn Dickinson, and Rich Wright
EES: Ashley Gray and Sarah Buhl
EHS: Colleen Birner, Jefferson Goodrich, and Marlon Maylor
EMS: Kevin Briggs and Ben Johnson
FLE: Matt Roy and Coori Sellers
FMS: Wendy Cobb and Joe Arigo
HIA: Katherine Grykien and Scott Evans
SUM: Suzanne Gruendling and Ashley Cate
WES: Marcie Lewis and Stephanie Jones

EWSD holds the civil rights of people with a lot of respect) and impor-
tance as we think about access to our school surroundings. We are
dedicated to creating safe and non-discriminatory conditions for all
students. Privacy is also an important issue for any student who feels
a need for privacy without any concern about gender identity or sex
assignment. In order to be supportive and to create safe spaces for all
our students, all bathrooms and locker rooms across EWSD will be for
all students and people in our schools based on their identified gender.

It is also the policy of EWSD to prohibit the unlawful hazing, harassment,
bullying of its students and prohibits revenge against students for mak-
ing complaints of HHB or their involvement in an act of questioning into
HHB.
EWSD will address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and bullying, and will take appropriate action against any person - subject to the area of legal control of the Board - who violates this policy. Nothing within this will be interpreted to prohibit punishment of a student for behavior which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined, otherwise violates one or more of the Board’s disciplinary policies or the school’s behavior rules.

**Bullying:** All EWSD schools should provide safe and kind learning conditions, free from any bullying. Bullying is a form of dangerous and disrespectful behavior not permitted or tolerated within EWSD schools.

**Definition:** Bullying means any obvious act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- is repeated over time
- is meant to criticize in a teasing way, embarrass, or threaten the student; and
- happens during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity; or does not happen during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity and can be shown to present a clear and big interference with another student’s right to access educational programs.

Please note that bullying behavior is behavior which can happen on or off school grounds and which can happen through electronic means (email, internet, cell phones, texting, etc.). EWSD schools will take appropriate steps to respond to bullying behavior that happens off school grounds as it affects the school or interferes in a big way with any student’s ability to access educational programs at school.

**Reporting Bullying:** If a student feels they are being bullied, and it is safe to do so, the student may tell that person to stop. Victims and witnesses are asked to report bullying to their grade-level administrator or, if this proves very hard, any teacher or staff member. Without revealing their name, students may report acts of bullying to their teachers and school leaders, or can call the Safe Schools Hotline at 857-7977. Parents/guardians may file written reports of suspected bullying with the school. Any
student or parent/guardian of a student who believes they have been a victim of bullying should report the matter immediately to the principal. All EWSD workers must advance reports of bullying to their administrator or supervisor immediately.

**Consequences:** Bullying behavior will result in disciplinary action. The disciplinary results include the full range of restorative practices and/or disciplinary results organized and listed in EWSD discipline policies and the school discipline plan (e.g. taking a cell phone to stop illegal activity, denial of internet privileges, detention, loss of privileges, denial of participation in school activities and sports. Disciplinary results may also include a recommendation to the School Board for long-term suspension.

To the extent permitted by federal and state privacy laws, the school may tell the parent/guardian of the student who is a victim of bullying of the action taken to prevent further acts of bullying. The school will also provide notice to the parents/guardians of the student who commits a proven act of bullying of the school’s response and results of any further bullying by their child. Police may be contacted upon when checking for the truth of acts of bullying. It should be noted that bad behavior, while serious, may not meet all the standards of bullying. However, it may be behavior that is subject to the full range of disciplinary actions used by the school including, but not limited to, suspension and long-term suspension.

Bullying events are subject to report requirements of the Vermont Secretary of Education. All EWSD schools will collect data on the number of reported and proven events of bullying. For more information on bullying, please see policy C10 on the EWSD website.

**Harassment:** All EWSD schools should be educational settings where students are free from harassment. EWSD schools are committed to providing safe and respectful learning conditions for all students. We support and value tolerance and responsibility, and expect students to treat each other and with respect.

Harassment will not be tolerated in EWSD schools, and any student who participates in the harassment of another individual or group while at school or attending a school-sponsored activity will be subject to the full range of disciplinary actions used by the school. This includes, but is
not limited to: restorative practices, detention, loss of school sponsored privileges, suspension, and/or long-term suspension. Please note that harassment is behavior which can happen on and off school grounds. EWSD schools will take appropriate steps to respond to harassment that happens off school grounds, given it has a connection to the school surroundings, and where the bad behavior can be shown to present a clear and big interference with another student’s equal access to educational programs.

Definitions and Examples: As it relates to students and the schools, "harassment" means an event or events of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any event conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race, religious belief, color, national origin, whether someone is single, married, divorced, etc., sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability that has the purpose or effect of without emotion and in an important way interfering with and taking away from or interfering with a student’s educational performance or access to school supplies or creating a threatening, hateful, or offensive surrounding.

Harassment can also include conduct such as not wanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to that conduct is made either clearly and definitely or in a hinting way a term of condition of the student’s education, or submission or rejection of the conduct is used as a part for decisions affecting the student.

Harassment can also include conduct directed at the features/qualities/traits of the student’s or their family’s actual or perceived race or color, religious belief, national origin, whether someone is single, married, divorced, etc., sex, sexual orientation, or disability. It can include the use of prejudiced mental picture), racial slurs, comments, insults, insulting statements, actions, threats, graffiti, display or circulation of written or visual material and teases in a mean way on the manner of a student’s speech or negative references to racial customs.

Examples of harassment based or because of the features qualities/traits organized and listed above can include:

**Verbal**: Foul, racist, offensive, or insulting language; constant teasing, offensive or insulting jokes or comments; embarrassing some-
one with comments or cracks, making fun of the way someone talks or looks, using insulting words to describe someone; over and over again flirting with someone who’s not interested, participating in talk about other people’s personal business, passing stories that may or may not be true or threats, etc.

**Non-Verbal:** hand/arm movements/actions, graffiti or pictures on books, lockers, hats, clothing; suggestive, obscene, or insulting sounds, whistling, staring; sexually suggestive objects, notes, or other writings of a teasing, insulting, racist or otherwise offensive nature; displays of obscene or sexually explicit materials.

**Physical:** Unwanted contact which may include: touching, pinching, pushing, hitting or brushing up against someone’s body. Unwanted contact could also include an attack and involve the police and DCF.

**Electronic Means:** Includes harassing behavior which happens via the internet or cell phone, such as email communication(s), web postings, voice mail(s), and texting.

**Reporting Harassment:** If a student feels that they are being harassed, and it is safe to do so, the student may tell that person to stop. Victims and witnesses are asked to report harassment to their grade-level administrator, or if this proves very hard, any teacher or staff member. Any student or parent/guardian of a student who believes they have been the victim of harassment should report the matter immediately to the principal.

**Administrative Procedures:** EWSD schools getting information of possible behavior equal to harassment will quickly try to find the truth about the matter. After receiving an actual written statement (a written complaint or oral information that harassment may have happened), the school official will provide the possible victim and the person accused (or their parents/guardians if under the age of 18) with a copy of the EWSD policy and procedure. The school official will quickly start asking questions, trying to find the truth of the complaint no later than one school day from the filing of the complaint. The formal decision should be completed no later than five days from the filing of the complaint with the person (unless special facts or conditions exist).

If harassment is found to have happened, the school will act fast with appropriate actions that will educate and fix the issue to stop it. The EWSD has teamed with the Community Justice Center to help with re-
storative justice in parallel to legally needed actions, with permission from both parties in appropriate situations. The privacy of the complainant, accused individual(s), and witnesses will be maintained. If either the complainant or the accused individual(s) are under the age of 18, subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the very private nature of personal student information, the complainant and accused individual(s) will be informed in writing of the results.

EWSD schools also provide students with the opportunity to have an independent review of the final decision of the school or the school’s response to the recorded harassment.

**Consequences for Harassment:** Recorded acts of harassment will result in the accused facing disciplinary results and/or restorative practices. The results include the full range of disciplinary results organized and listed in the EWSD student discipline policies and school restorative justice and/or discipline plans. These include, but are not limited to: after-school detention, loss of privileges, loss of ability to participate in after-school and school sponsored activities, required remedial classes, parent/guardian meetings, and suspension. Disciplinary results may also include a recommendation to the School Board for long-term suspension. The school will provide a written statement to the parents/guardians and complainant of the results of the investigation. The school will also provide clear communication to the parents/guardians of the student who commits a proven act of harassment of the school’s response and what would happen if any further harassment took place by their child. Police may be contacted upon checking for the truth of acts of harassment.

At all stages of the act of asking questions and formal decision process, different argument settling methods such as mediation are available to the complainant to resolve the complaint.

It should be noted that some bad behavior, while serious, may not meet all the standards of harassment. However, the EWSD schools may respond to such behavior in the proper manner to prevent bad behavior from increasing to harassment. Therefore, it may be behavior that is subject to the full range of disciplinary actions used by the school, including, but not limited to suspension and long-term suspension.

Harassment incidents are subject to reporting the needed information
of the VT Secretary of Education. All EWSD schools will collect data on the number of reported and proven times this harassment happened. For more information on the harassment, please see policy C10 on the EWSD site.

**Hazing:** Hazing means any on purpose, knowing or careless and dangerous acts committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student:

In connection with promising, being given deep understanding of, and made a part of, associating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is connected to the educational institution; and

(1) Which is meant to have the effect of, or should be expected to have the effect of putting into danger/risking the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing will not include any activity or conduct that helps the advancement of real school related or military training program goals, given that:

- The goals are approved by the educational institution; and
- The activity or conduct helps the advancement of the goals in a manner that is appropriate, thought about by the educational institution, and commonly and usually done for almost the same programs at other educational institutions.

**Reporting Procedures:** Any person who believes they have been the victim of hazing, or any person with knowledge or proof of conduct which may be equal to hazing will report the possible acts immediately to a school administrator, coach, or the superintendent.

The building principal is the person responsible for receiving reports at the building level. Any person may report hazing directly to a school administrator or to the superintendent.

Teachers, administrators, volunteers, contractors, coaches, or other workers of the school District will be especially alert to possible situations, facts, conditions, or events which might include hazing. Any such person who receives knowledge or proof of conduct which may be equal
to hazing will inform the building principal.

The school District will take appropriate action against any student, volunteer, contractor, or employee of the school District who gets revenge against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged hazing. Revenge includes, but is not limited to: any form of threatening/making someone scared, payback, or harassment.

**Consequences:** The building administrator (or designee), obeying the established policy, procedures, and school rules, is responsible for managing student restorative justice and/or discipline in cases of hazing. Restorative justice and/or discipline and results will be based on the decision of the building administrator (or designee) after discussion with the superintendent. A range of disciplinary results including warning, suspension, holding out from co or extra-school related opportunities, cancellation of non-school related privileges (i.e. parking, attendance at events, etc.), or long-term suspension may be applied. Repeat cases by the same person should expect stronger actions and results.

In cases of student athletes, results for hazing violations may range from individual suspension from participation in athletic programs for a period of time to cancellation of an athletic schedule, depending on the scale of the event and the number of athletes involved. Results for athletic hazing violations brought to the attention of the administration after-the-season may include restriction on later athletic abilities to participate), cancellation, or denial of athletic letter awards, and/or athletic probation.

Students having knowledge of the planning or event of a specific hazing activity, and who do not report it to the needed administrator as noted before now may be subject to restorative justice and/or discipline involving loss of non-curricular privileges.

Possibly illegal acts will be brought to the attention of the police. For more information on hazing, please see policy C10 on the EWSD site.

**Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco; Weapons; Assault/Fighting:** EWSD is committed to maintaining safe, positive learning conditions free of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons and assault/fighting. Students and adults are expected to avoid any action that may endanger themselves or others. Students and adults are expected to attend school and school-
related events free of the influence of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. The use or possession of alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco products is prohibited on school grounds, or during school activities (refer to "Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco listed under A below). Students and adults must not carry or possess (openly or hid) any type of weapon on school grounds or at a school activity (refer to "Weapons" listed under 'B' below). Students and adults are expected to treat each other and staff with respect (refer to "Assault/fighting listed under C below).

A. Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco: EWSD supports a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free environment. The possession, use, or sale of tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs is prohibited. Please refer to EWSD Policy C2: Alcohol and Drugs

Definition: The term "drug" is defined as a mood-changing substance to include, but not be limited to, the following categories: tobacco and nicotine products (including electronic cigarettes and vaporizers), illegal drugs and substances, things you breathe in, controlled drugs, prescription medicine, and alcohol.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program: In keeping with Title 16, VSA sections 1165 and 909, and other state and federal rules, the School Board supports a complete and thorough program which includes at least the following parts: education/prevention programming and staff training; support and referral systems and cooperative agreements; immediate and emergency procedures; possession, use, and/or distribution actions that helps a bad situation; performance and behavior-related actions that help bad situations; and community awareness programming.

Education/Prevention Programming: EWSD has put into use well-developed tobacco, alcohol, and over-use of drug prevention educational learning for elementary and secondary schools.

Support and Referral Systems and Cooperative Agreements: Each school within the District has an in-school process for first evaluation, support, and, if necessary, referral to community resources for students affected by their own or another's drug use.

Immediate Procedures: Importance and focus will be placed on the welfare and rights of the individual to the extent such respect does not endanger the welfare and rights of others. For students, in-school pro-
cedures will provide for an immediate response to any drug-related event until the student has been discharged to the parent, guardian, social services, medical, or police. As part of school procedure, the administration will be immediately informed by school staff of any violation of the law and/or school policy. The administration will follow the appropriate legal procedures and due process for restorative justice and/or discipline.

Emergency Procedures: In the event of an emergency involving alcohol or overuse of drugs, every step taken to prevent trouble or injury must be taken to protect the person's health and well-being while protecting the health and well-being of the remaining school population.

Possession, Use, or Distribution Consequences/Interventions: Any student discovered in a school building, on school property, or at a school-sanctioned activity, having possession of drugs or things that drug users need, using or distributing drugs, or knowingly/intentionally helping another person in using or distributing drugs will be disciplined with established school policy and procedure. The matter will be referred to the police as necessary. Students found to be in violation of District policies, including drug, alcohol, and tobacco policies, will have their parking privileges taken back and will lose the opportunity to participate in campus-sponsored Drivers Education classes.

Performance and Behavior-Related Problems: According to school procedures, a minimum of two staff people will be selected for discussion with others related to a student whose behavior or performance may point to a problem with alcohol or other drug use. These staff members will help the strong desire for further screening, education, and counseling in referral to treatment.

Employees of the supervisory district (including contractors and drivers) will report events and/or behavior of students, other employees, or visitors who display proof of being impaired. Employees will report events to the principal (or designee) or the superintendent.

When a student is decided to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, they will be discharged to a parent, guardian, social service, medical, or police officer.

Following appropriate discussions and careful thinking, the parent or
guardian of any student suspected of being under the influence of drugs will be told by school administrators. A course of action leading toward the formal decision of the facts, and, if necessary, toward the treatment and healing of said student, will be thought about together by school administrators.

**Follow-Up Procedures:** It is recognized that keeping or returning people to the school setting is desirable whenever such action is agreeing with the person’s own healing and well-being, and whenever such action does not interfere with the learning process for students and the maintenance of discipline and safety. Students may be needed to look for professional guidance/rehabilitation as a condition of enrollment/re-enrollment in school or other different education programs offered by the District.

**Prescription Drugs and Other Medication:** Any student who must take medication during the regular school day will do so obeying the District procedure about the management of medicines. Also, see the health services section of this handbook.

**Discipline Procedures for Alcohol, Drug Use, and/or Possession:** Below is a small section from EWSD Policy C2: Alcohol and Drugs. Substance Abuse is the use of any drugs and/or alcohol in such a way that it interferes with a person’s ability to complete physically, related to the mind and thinking, emotionally, or socially. Drug means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other possibly dangerous drug as defined by state or federal regulation or law.

**First Offense**
- Parents/guardians will be told and the student sent home for the rest of the day. The student must be picked up by a parent/guardian, social services, medical, or police.
- Notice under Emergency Conditions: if, in the opinion of the principal (or designee), an emergency situation exists, an area rescue squad and/or the local police will be called. The parent/guardian will be told before such action when possible, and in all other events as soon as possible after that.
- Suspension for up to 10 days. Notice of Police: the principal or designee will tell the Essex Police Department in any event of suspected or actual alcohol or drug use, possession, or distribution that would
violate state laws.

• Upon re-entry to school, the student, parent/guardian must meet with an administrator, the school’s Substance Abuse Provider (if available), and show proof of an appointment with a substance abuse counseling program. The student must obey the counseling program’s treatment recommendations.

• Being kept out for 90 days from co- and extracurricular. This applies to events paid for and supported by the school having nothing to do with location. This can be changed to 30 days upon obeying recommendations from an outside counseling agency and along with the school SAP.

• While out of school, students are expected and responsible for all school related tasks. It is the student’s responsibility to contact their teachers and make appropriate plans for completion of assignments; students are encouraged to use the school website and/or email system.

Second Offense - all of the above and: 10 days out-of-school suspension

Third Offense - all of the above and: Minimum 10 days out-of-school suspension; Further disciplinary action, up to and including: long-term suspension will be recommended to the EWSD superintendent

CTE Program Specific Drug Testing Procedures: If there is reasonable feeling that something is wrong or bad, but without proof that a student is under the influence of, or in possession of things that drug users need or use, the student will immediately be sent to the administrative office (nurse’s office if it appears to be a medical issue). In addition to any disciplinary results, the following will be followed:

The day the student is referred to an administrator, they are needed to provide a urine sample for drug testing at a clinic used by the school for this purpose. Until results are received, the student may not use tools or equipment, or be placed in positions in which injury to self or others may happen. While some programs rely more on the use of possibly dangerous tools and equipment during instruction, the possibility exists in all programs and many courses. The decision to keep out students from possibly dangerous classroom/lab activities will be made by an administrator.
In all school programs, a student will not be placed on a paid or unpaid experience, and will not be recommended for employment until/unless drug testing results are negative.

If testing results are positive, contaminated, or watered down, the student must agree to stop use of drugs and submit to added drug testing to document the ending of drug use until a negative drug screen is received.

Drug testing results must be negative and remain negative for the student to continue in the program. Added random drug testing may be needed.

A second positive, contaminated, or watered down drug screen will result in a meeting with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to review program placement.

Refusal to agree to drug testing will result in removal from the program.

**Discipline Procedures for Alcohol, Drug Sale, and/or Distribution:**
The following procedures will apply when a student is found selling and/or distributing alcohol or other drugs on school property or at school-sponsored activities, and will build up during the whole school career of the student. School property includes all school buildings, athletic fields, and parking areas. School-sponsored activities include all athletic and co- and extracurricular activities (and events, without any concern about location.

**First Offense**
- 10 day suspension from school
- Parent/guardian/law enforcement notice. The principal may recommend long-term suspension to the School Board.
- If the student returns to school, all policies relating to drug use and/or possession First Offense also apply.

**Second Offense**
Suspension and recommendation for long-term suspension. The student will be suspended or placed in another choice educational setting until the School Board makes a decision on long-term suspension; Police notice; Parent/guardian meeting.
If the student returns to school, all drug use and/or possession Second Offense procedures apply.

Participants in athletics and co-curricular activities will face added consequences as organized and listed in the school’s athletic eligibility rules, and will be referred to the athletic director and/or activity advisor or coach.

**Discipline Procedures for Tobacco Use and/or Possession:** In addition to the EWSD policy on Possession and Use of Tobacco Products, the following apply when a student is found in violation of the policy:

- Time in planning room, time-out, or in-school suspension
- Notice of parents/guardians
- Notice of police (if appropriate)
- Referral to appropriate school personnel
- Repeat offenders will be subject to suspension

Participants in athletics and co-curricular activities will face added consequences as organized and listed in the school’s athletic eligibility rules, and will be referred to the athletic director and/or activity advisor or coach.

**B. Weapons:** EWSD will obey federal and state laws related to the prohibition of weapons on campus, needing school districts to provide for the possible long-term suspension of students who bring weapons to school.

**Definitions:** "To school" means any setting under control and supervision of the school District, including school grounds, facilities, and vehicles used to transport students to/from school or school activities. Students are not permitted to carry or possess (openly or hid) any type of weapon, or copy of a weapon, on school grounds.

"Weapons" may include: any type of firearm, knife, brass knuckles, rifle, and any object which could be used to cause serious injury. Mace, pepper spray, or other personal defense items are not permitted on school property. Weapons may not be left in any vehicle also.

No knives of any length are acceptable on school property. Technical program students will be given all appropriate tools. These tools will re-
main in the lab, shop, or work-site, and are not to be brought to school, in the possession of a student during breaks, or carried home.

**Consequences:** Any student who brings a weapon to school may be brought by the superintendent to the School Board for a hearing. Any student who brings a firearm to school will be brought by the superintendent to the School Board for a long term suspension hearing. The Board may change the long-term suspension on a case-by-case basis when it finds certain facts or conditions exist. Also, any student who brings a weapon to school will be referred to the police.

**C. Assault/Fighting:** Assaulting and threatening behavior, including fighting or physical behavior, of any type on school grounds or at any school function having nothing to do with location will not be tolerated.

**Consequences:** Any student found in a school building, on school property, or at a school-sanctioned activity engaging in assault, threatening behavior, or physical behavior of any type will start with restorative justice and/or discipline with established school policy and procedure. The matter will be referred to police as necessary.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to hand in their own work appropriately referring to the ideas of others. Students are also expected to take care that their behavior in testing situations is open and honest, and no help is given to other students in testing. Students must use only approved aids in classroom, lab, testing, and performance situations. Failure to maintain Academic Honesty includes actions such as cheating, violation of copyright protection, willful stealing work from someone else and telling people it’s their own, or misleading in any way of one’s work.

**Definitions:** "Cheating" is defined as using someone else’s work as your own, violating the conditions of the assignment, giving another student questions or answers from a test already taken, or speaking or using electronic messaging with someone during a test or quiz.

"Plagiarism" is defined as the presentation of another’s work – the ideas, arguments, facts, or language – as one’s own work. Not recognizing quotations of another’s sentences, phrases, or keywords is stealing work from someone else and telling people it’s your own. Not recognizing paraphrasing of someone else’s ideas or arguments is stealing work
from someone else and telling people it’s your own. Using papers (in whole or in part) from the internet as one’s own work is stealing work from someone else and telling people it’s your own.

**Consequences:** Responses to cheating/plagiarism will be age appropriate and managed in the same way based on a student’s individual facts or conditions. A first offense may result in the student needing to redo the assignment or complete an equal assignment with notice to teachers and parents/guardians. A meeting (and/or a restorative meeting) may be held involving the student, parents/guardians, teacher, school counselor, and appropriate school administrator. Students may be needed to work with added support for academic completion.

Later offenses may result in a remedial option, a zero for the assignment or loss of credit for the class in which the offense(s) happens, and/or possible retention. If the student loses credit, the appropriate school administrator will meet with the student and parent/guardian to inform the parties of the loss of credit, to review its effect on the student’s school performance, and to uphold again the school’s academic honesty expectations.

**CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**
Please refer to the athletic eligibility rules at your student’s school for detailed information on rules having to do with co-curricular activity preparation, academic eligibility, attendance needed, and locker room rules.

**CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT**
Curriculum, instruction, and test/evaluation is extremely important to making sure of high quality learning for all as well as appropriate vertical and horizontal matching. Curricular matching up needs evaluation and instruction to be matched up to extremely important standards or course skills. It makes sure that students have a clear, well-organized experience from year to year and leads us to a promised and possible curriculum. This work is organized and completed through our professional learning community structure.

The Essex Westford School District supports student learning through high quality instruction, matched up evaluations and interventions or extensions as needed. Our system supports our students’ individual
learning towards meeting needed state standards in:

- reading and writing ability
- mathematical content and practices
- scientific question (or investigation) and content knowledge
- worldwide citizenship (including social studies and world languages)
- physical education
- health education
- artistic expression (including visual, media and performing arts)
- transferable and social/emotional skills

The schools of the Essex Westford School District use many measures to fairly evaluate student learning including tests that ask everyone the same questions and that are scored the same way, document collections, projects, performances and exhibitions. These measures also include giving feedback and evaluations. Tests that help guide teaching within an ongoing class are designed to provide an opportunity for students to practice learning and inform the teacher’s instruction. Tests given at the end of a course that show how effective the course was are designed to show that students can put all of the smaller learning targets together to be skilled on the standard.

The Essex Westford School District Comprehensive Assessment Plan includes those state and local evaluations that are needed at each grade level. The Comprehensive Assessment Plan may change over time to include changes in state and local evaluation.

The EWSD is dedicated to making sure of the equity of representation and access in all school courses across the District. Specifically, school courses are being developed with an equity lens to make sure we move toward teaching that is including anti-racist education and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual, +) promising education, and disability, cultural, related to a group of people with the same race, culture, religion, etc., religious, multi-language-based, and how money affects people’s lives, and representation for educators and their students beginning in pre-kindergarten.

For the latest updates on curriculum and evaluations please visit the EWSD website.
DUAL ENROLLMENT
Vermont’s Flexible Pathways Act (Act 77) provides high school students who are Vermont state residents the opportunity to use two college course vouchers during their junior or senior years in high school. Students may apply for a voucher for the semester they wish to enroll in a dual enrollment course. The voucher covers the cost of tuition for a course of up to four credits at any participating Vermont college. The voucher does NOT cover the cost of materials, textbooks, or transportation. Dual enrollment courses provide both high school and college credit when successfully completed. Interested students should meet with their school counselor. For more information, please go to www.vtdualenrollment.org

Early College: Early College is a full-year other choice to the senior year of high school. Students take courses in college, completing their senior year of high school and their freshman year of college at the same time, tuition-free. For more information please contact your EHS School Counselor and go to http://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/flexible-pathways/early-college. You can find information about one example of a science and technology-focused Early College program here: http://www.vtc.edu/vast-faqs

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES (EST/504/IDEA)
Educational support appropriate to the needs of individual students is available to support a variety of learning styles. It is EWSD policy to obey state and federal laws concerning Act 117, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Special Education. Act 117 demands all schools to maintain a complete and thorough system of educational support and services resulting, to the greatest possible extent possible, in all students succeeding in the general classroom.

Our schools will make sure a range of effective educational supports and services will be available to all students. This includes special education services to those children who meet the eligibility criteria established by the rules and regulations of Vermont. A parent/guardian with concerns about their child’s academic development should talk to the student’s teacher to gain access to educational supports and services.

For more information on related policies, please refer to www.ewsd.org or contact your building principal or Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Erin Maguire at 878-8168.
Educational Support Teams (EST): EST is in place to review concerns and needs of students in order to support their success. There are different levels of educational support and service available for students. Should a parent/guardian have a concern related to student academic performance or behavior, they should contact the student’s classroom teacher. Parent/guardian concerns may be referred to the EST. Teachers may refer students to the EST also. EST meetings allow teachers to work in a cooperative way to meet the needs of students and to establish follow-up procedures.

Locating, Identifying and Evaluation of Students: CHILD FIND
The Essex Westford School District follows the expectations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to locate, identify and evaluate children and students who have disabilities.

EWSD does this in many ways including making referrals for evaluation through testing, completing data analysis activities, and thinking about student performance across all schools.

We also accept referrals from many different community health partners, preschools, doctors for children, mental health providers, family members, and other people who may believe they are aware of a child with a disability who has yet to be identified.

Children Birth–3 Years Old: EWSD locates, identifies and evaluates young children through our partnership with Children’s Integrated Services. Chittenden County school districts and other providers and partners refer young children who are showing signs of concerns to Children’s Integrated Services. Children’s Integrated Services partners in Chittenden County include: Child Care Resource, Howard Center, Lund Family Center, School districts, Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Family Network, and Visiting Nurses.

For more information and referrals to any of the services above please contact the Chittenden County Children’s Integrated Services Coordinator at 860-4426.

Prekindergarten: EWSD provides free testing so decisions can be made and evaluations for children through our early childhood special educators where a referral is received and evaluation is decided to be needed.
We look for and receive referrals from some referral sources including families, doctors for children, private pre-kindergarten providers, our own pre-kindergarten classroom teachers, and others who come into contact with pre-kindergarten children. EWSD also reviews data submitted by PreK providers under act 166 as we think about children in need of evaluation.

**Kindergarten-Age 22:** All EST teams in our schools review data and think about the needs of students for purposes of referral for both 504 and Special Education evaluations. Principal discussions with teachers, parent teacher meetings, and teacher team meetings are other meeting structures where teachers and others find and identify students where there is a concern of disability. There is a clear process in place across our schools to think about referrals from parents and other outside sources to make sure each concern is appropriately thought about.

Resources: People who have further questions related to special education or 504 can find parental rights and other useful things here: [https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/special-education/special-education-resources](https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/special-education/special-education-resources)

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS**
We use an automated emergency notice system in the event of a school closing (due to weather or an emergency), which depends on the most up-to-date information you provide. Please tell each student’s school if any contact information changes (including home/cell work phone, email, addresses, etc.).

**School Closings:** In the event of school closings, parents/guardians, students and employees will be informed through an automated emergency notice system which will reach out via email, and first and secondary phone numbers listed with each school. The message will also be shared via the district’s Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts, mobile app, school websites, and will be shared with local TV and radio.

School closing notice is listed by schools and posted as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible. If school is closed, all daytime and evening school activities, programs (including evening adult classes/programs at CTE), and events are also subject to cancellation, and notice will be posted online and translated.
Closings after school has started: If school must be closed before dismissal time, due to weather or other factors, announcements of the changed closing time will be made using the automated notice system, local radio/television stations, and the EWSD/school websites. If students need to be dismissed before the end of the school day, parents/guardians need to have a different plan in place and should communicate that plan to both their student and the school, with respect to who is approved to pick up their child or who will be home to greet them. Generally, schools follow one of two other choices:

- Students are dismissed (and moved if needed), or
- Students are kept at school or at a different site (if the building is evacuated) until a parent/guardian arrives.

At the preK-3 level, schools will not send students home without first having confirmed this is the desire of the parents/guardians. At the grades 4-12 level, schools will follow the first other choice and dismiss the students, unless told to do otherwise by the parent/guardian. If the parents/guardians are bringing their student home, they should arrive in an appropriately-timed fashion.

In most emergencies, students will remain and be cared for at the school. In the rare event an emergency prohibits use of the buildings, or re-entry to the building (such as a broken gas or water main, a fire, or poisonous chemical spill), students will be moved via school transportation or walked to an evacuation site.

During a school emergency, we ask parents/guardians to:

- Monitor your telephone and email: We will use an automated notice system to inform you of the emergency and provide guidance.
- Go online and turn on your radio or television: Check our website (www.ewsds.org) often for updates. We will keep newspapers, web sites, and TV informed of any emergency also.
- Please do not call the school: We have limited phone lines and they must be used to respond to the emergency.
- Please do not come to the school unless requested to pick up your student: Any emergency may require emergency vehicles, workers, and/or police to have access to/from the building. During such a time, parents/guardians will be restricted from getting to school grounds. If the emergency requires relocation of staff and students, parents/guardians will be informed via a phone call, social media,
and the website. Parent/guardian identification may be needed to dismiss a student. To dismiss a student to any adult other than the parent/guardian will require written permission from the student’s parent/guardian.

School Safety Drills: School safety drills are managed and completed monthly during the school year. The different procedures for these drills will be reviewed by teachers and students. There are Crisis Response Plans posted in each of the schools. When a drill is announced, all students are needed to follow planned procedures in a well-organized fashion. Students must stay with their class (or assigned group) so teachers can check attendance.

FIELD TRIPS
School trips are an extension of educational programs, and all school rules and policies apply. Before a trip, parents/guardians will get a written notice containing all important details necessary for a successful experience. Parent/guardian permission is needed for a student to participate in a school trip. There will be no cost to students for field trips.

Walking trips and other nearby activities are carefully thought about and a regular part of the school program.

Field trips ordered by District curriculum and approved by the building principal will be completely paid for by the District.

GUARDIANSHIP AND PARENTAL RIGHTS
It is the parents’/guardians’ responsibility to provide paperwork that supports the legal decisions that affect custody or parental rights connected to a student. If there are any changes in family or custody status that affect access to a student, student records, or residency, please tell the school immediately.

HEALTH SERVICES
School nurses support student success by trying to remove health-related barriers to learning. Through health education and health care, the school nurse helps develop an environment that helps promote health, safety, and the well-being of every student and the school community. Nursing care is given based on the decision of each school nurse. All EWSD nurses follow District rules of conduct that can be found on each school website under the health office.
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a once-a-year well child exam, including a physical, with your health care provider for all children. EWSD supports this recommendation and supports all students seeing their health care provider every year for this purpose. A physical form must be on file every two years for students participating in school sports.

If a family needs support in finding a doctor for children, they can reach out to their school nurse for support.

**Acute Illness**: Students who are ill should not be in school. Illness includes, but is not limited to: vomiting, diarrhea, fever (100.4 degrees F or higher), sore throat with fever, itchy eyes with drainage, and unexplained rashes. Parents/guardians should contact the school in the morning if their student will not be attending school due to illness. Students who become ill during the school day should report to the Health Office for evaluation. The school nurse will evaluate the illness and contact parents/guardians as necessary. Students cannot leave without being released by either the health office or main office staff once the staff has contacted the parent/guardian or emergency designee. Parents/guardians/emergency designee are expected to make transportation arrangements for students released from the health office. Parents/guardians are asked to pick up their sick child as soon as possible. Special arrangements can be made for older students who walk to school.

**Chronic Illness or Life-Threatening Allergy**: Long-lasting illnesses such as epilepsy, asthma and diabetes, and life-threatening allergies, such as food allergies, are common yet serious conditions. EWSD schools are committed to the requirements of Vermont’s Act 158: An Act Relating to Life Threatening Chronic Allergies and Illnesses in Schools, and the related legal rules of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All EWSD schools are prepared to offer safe and supportive changes to help for such conditions in a nondiscriminatory manner, enabling each student to meaningfully participate in school activities, including curricular and co-curricular programs, meals, and recess. EWSD maintains school guidelines for managing students with life-threatening allergies and long-lasting illness, which include family, school, and student responsibilities.

If your student has a food allergy or other permanently, life-threatening (allergy or illness, it is your responsibility to inform the school of the
condition so we may develop a plan to make sure of your student’s safety in school activities. Whether or not it is serious that your student has a disabling condition and is able to participate for protection under Section 504, an individual healthcare plan may be developed. This will make sure that appropriate supports to address the student’s needs are given. Medical paperwork related to the long-lasting or life-threatening condition or allergy is necessary in order for the school to evaluate the condition and to develop a plan.

If your student needs an Epipen (or other epinephrine auto-injector) on the bus, please follow one of these options:

- Get a self-carry order from your healthcare provider and supply the Epipen to be carried every day in your child’s backpack. The order will need to be on file in the health office of your child’s school. The school nurse will tell the transportation manager.
- Provide an Epipen that will be kept at the bus garage and carried by the bus driver on the named route. A health care provider order will need to be on file in the health office of your child’s school.
- Each Epipen should have a student name on the outside of the package at a minimum, hopefully also with a picture of the student and indication of allergy type – bees, tree nuts, etc.
- A clear zip-loc bag containing Epipen and a picture of the student with info written on the back is a cheap and easy solution.
- Families who have a student riding multiple bus routes should provide a separate Epipen for each bus route.
- Transportation staff will take every action possible to monitor the Epipen. They will not be responsible for any Epipen that is accidentally damaged or lost.
- Families can provide Epipens (packaged as above) directly to bus drivers on the first day of transport, or they can contact their school nursing staff or transportation manager with questions.

**Immunizations:** Proof of immunizations or an updated, valid exemption form is needed by the State of Vermont and must be on file in the school health office before the student starts school. Failure to obey these state rules will result in keeping students from school until the needed things are met. Requests for medical exemption must be signed by the health care provider. For religious exemptions, educational materials must be reviewed and an exemption form must be signed yearly by a parent/guardian. The necessary form and educational materials are available
Injuries: Sudden unplanned bad events can happen in school buildings, on field studies, in school buses, and on school grounds. All serious injuries happening during regular school hours will be reported to the school nurse for evaluation and referral to outside medical providers as necessary. School personnel may need to arrange for immediate transport to a health care facility in serious cases of illness or injury. Parents/guardians, or emergency designee, will be contacted. In the case of an emergency, 9-1-1 will be called and the parent/guardian, or emergency designee, will be contacted as soon as possible.

For sudden unplanned bad events outside of the school day, or those seen by a health care provider, please provide information on any restrictions for school. This includes a copy of any discharge instructions.

Concussion information can be found on the health services websites for each school. This includes Return to Learn and Return to Play resources.

Nits and Head Lice: EWSD recognizes Pediculosis (head lice) is a common challenge for families. School nurses will use evidence based practices to support families experiencing a case of head lice. EWSD prefers keeping students in school rather than sending them home, minimizing unnecessary loss of school time. The EWSD practice is based on Vermont Department of Health recommendations, which states that children should be allowed to return to school after proper treatment, and should not be prevented from returning to school because of the presence of nits. Treatment and prevention information is available on each school’s health office website.

Non-Prescription Medication: School health office personnel control or manage non-prescription medicines. A parent/guardian must complete and sign a health information form yearly, and may show preference for their student to receive over-the-counter medicines for the school year. Over the counter medicines that are not given by the school, including homeopathic medicines, must be in the original container and brought by an adult to the health office.
**Prescription Medication:** Prescription medicines may be given by District health personnel only when the following state rules are obeyed:

Before the medicine can be given, school health office personnel must have written orders from a doctor detailing the name of the student, drug name, drug dosage, management route, and the time the medicine is to be given. What’s more, written permission from the student’s parent/guardian is needed. The parent/guardian must bring the medicine to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or health care provider. Medicine drop off must be coordinated with your school nurse. If the above needed things are not met, health personnel will immediately contact parents/guardians to inform them of the District’s needed things. Any change to the above must be discussed and approved by health office personnel. This includes the option for the student to self carry their medicines.

**IDENTIFICATION (ID) BADGES**

Student identification (ID) will be given to all EHS/CTE/EMS/ADL students. Badges are used for entry to school activities and events (such as dances, sporting competitions, etc.), for library use, or for security reasons. Students are required to identify themselves upon request, and not doing so will lead to an administrative response.

**LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS**

At any time during the day, leaving the school grounds without permission from the main office or nurse’s office is not allowed for students. Students who leave campus without permission will be listed as off school grounds with an unauthorized absence (commonly referred to as “skipping”). Parents/guardians will be told and an administrative response will happen.

For more information on Senior Privileges, please see the additional EHS Handbook.

**LOCKERS**

Label all personal belongings. Each year, many valuable items with no labels go unclaimed. If not claimed within a reasonable period of time, these items - without any concern about value - are donated to organizations that help those in need.
PARKING
To more effectively manage our District-wide parking, we are introducing a new permit system this year that matches up with industry standards. Starting on September 10, 2021, during regular school hours students will not be allowed to park on school grounds without a parking permit.

In the past for staff, parking permits were only needed on the EHS/CTE campus. It is important to expand the permitting District-wide due to such factors as safety in emergency situations, staff members working in many locations, and grade-level PLCs gathering at different schools. Given the historical challenges of parking on our campus and our surrounding community, the plans behind this are focused on the safety of our students, staff, and visitors. This permitting process will help the District develop a long-term strategic plan to address parking district-wide, create a computer file full of information that can be accessed in case of an emergency when cars may need to be moved, and also create a system that promises a parking spot for those with a permit.

If you have any questions, please contact the EWSD Safety Office at 857-7485.

PERSONAL PROPERTY
EWSD and its member schools are not responsible for lost/stolen property. Should an item be missing, students are encouraged to check the school’s Lost and Found. Each school has a container for Lost and Found items where students and parents/guardians can check for lost items. Items lost on school buses are sent to each school. Lost money and unique or expensive items such as jewelry, eyeglasses, and watches are held by office staff or safety officer.

POSTERS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND/OR DISPLAYS
Posters, announcements, and/or displays may be posted in the school for school-related events with school administrative permission. Distribution of non-school-related materials is prohibited.

At the principal’s decision, announcements for non-school events for students may be posted for a set amount of time in selected areas of the school. At the principal’s decision, books for non-school-related events may be kept at the school office (or selected area) for students/
parents/guardians to access.

PROGRESS REPORTS
The purpose of progress reports is to communicate a student's progress in meeting standards or proficiencies as well as how the student is showing the learning habits that support student accomplishments. Progress reports also identify areas of strength and areas where improvements may be needed. The schools of the Essex Westford District use a variety of different forms of standards-based or proficiency-based reporting tools. This type of progress report benefits students, teachers and parents/guardians by:

- Providing more honesty through increased information about how a student is moving along towards meeting standards;
- Allowing students to be more informed and actively engaged in their learning;
- Making sure of increased consistency across classrooms
- Providing parents/guardians with more described information about grade level proficiencies.

For the latest updates on progress reports please visit the EWSD website.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS
EWSD and its schools encourage open communications. Should a concern arise, students and parents/guardians are asked to first communicate directly with the staff member involved. Should a resolution not happen, or prove to be unsatisfactory, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the principal to discuss the concern. If the concern is unable to be settled at the school level, parents/guardians should contact the superintendent's Office.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES
The EWSD uses restorative practices to build community, strengthen social and emotional skills in students, address underlying causes of harmful behavior and support students in their development as empowered, collaborative and caring citizens.

Restorative practices (also known as Restorative Justice) promote equitable school communities and address student behaviors in a way that emphasizes accountability, healing and learning. There is signifi-
cant evidence that restorative practices prevent incidents that may lead to punitive discipline and suspensions.

**Tier I**
Tier I of a Restorative Practice school is Community. The purpose of Tier I work is to ensure there are plenty of programs and opportunities in place designed to build community, social and emotional skills, and a sense of belonging and inclusion within the school for everyone. As Tier I is strengthened, school staff and faculty work together to promote common principles of restorative practices.

**Tier II & III**
One core principle of restorative practices is personal accountability. When students are part of a supportive community and they respect others, they will be accountable to their community. When a person causes harm in that community, they are given an opportunity to repair the harm and re-enter the community. A “harm” can be anything from a mild misunderstanding to a physical altercation.

Restorative Practices offer an opportunity to repair harm to those who may not have received that opportunity in the past. When a person is supported in repairing harm they have caused, and the source of the behavior has been addressed, they are less likely to cause harm again.

Tier II is about how we respond when there is harmful behavior. Tier II responses for students include responses such as a conversation with a teacher, a parent conference or a conflict resolution conference led by a trained facilitator. The goal of a Tier II response is to understand underlying causes of harmful behavior, repair harm caused to the community by the behavior and establish next steps for both parties involved. Restorative Practices can only be used with consent from the person who caused harm and the person who was harmed.

Restorative practices are used alongside other school responses if those responses are needed in order to keep students safe. With restorative practices, suspension is not used to punish students for misbehavior. An in-school or out of school suspension is used as a last resort for when a student’s behavior causes a safety issue for others.

Tier III of Restorative Practices is the process by which we help a community member re-enter the community after they have worked to re-
pair the harm they caused. For example, if a student has been suspend-
ed, a Tier III re-entry conference should be held to ensure the student is fully prepared to re-enter the classroom.

**Student Leadership & Empowerment:** Restorative practices also make space for student leadership and voice. Youth involved in Restorative Practice work may participate in internships, help adults lead conversations to build community and resolve conflict and conduct youth participatory action research.

Restorative interventions are thoughtful, humane and have been an important approach to building community and resolving conflict for many cultures over hundreds of years. Our goal is to increase student learning for all; academically, socially and emotionally. Students who feel safe and cared for are more likely to learn. Students involved in action research with the goal of making change will become empowered leaders in their community. Restorative practices fit with our district’s mission of “Growing hearts and minds, for a better today and tomorrow: every day, every way, every one.”

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS**
All people are welcome to attend School Board meetings. A schedule of meetings can be found at www.ewsd.org/board. School Board agendas are posted in: schools, libraries, city-based offices, and the EWSD District Offices. Minutes, agendas, and much more can be found on the School Boards’ website. Regular meetings are also filmed (and posted online) by the Media Factory.

**SCHOOL CHOICE**
High School: School choice refers to the educational choices available under Vermont’s Public High School Choice program (16 V.S.A. Section 822a) to parents/guardians who do not wish to send their children to the local District public schools to which they are assigned. All children are different with different needs and different talents. School choice programs allow parents or guardians to search for the best and most appropriate educational opportunities for their children without financial penalty.

Students from Essex Town, Essex Junction, or Westford interested in attending other public high schools need to complete and submit a School
Choice Application form before March 1 to be considered for the following school year. Completed applications should be submitted to the EHS School Counseling Office. Each year limited spots are available for each grade level. A lottery is held if more applications are received than there are slots available.

Students are told by April 1 of school choice decisions. Students selected for school choice need to inform the residence school, in writing, of their decision by April 15. Decisions will be communicated to receiving schools right away.

The EWSD Board each year must establish the number of students allowed to enter through the school choice program and the number allowed to transfer out.

Transportation for school choice students is the responsibility of the students’ families. Students must maintain expected academic and behavioral standards to keep their School Choice slot. For more information on Public High School Choice, contact the EHS School Counseling Department.

**K-8 Voluntary School Reassignment Policy:** It is the policy of the EWSD to offer parents and guardians school voluntary reassignment within the District. The reassignment of the school will be guided by the needs of the student and other factors. The District will stick to the EWSD process and guidelines which will be limited to space availability. Transportation will not be given, although special reasons may be taken into account to support the need for transportation if possible. Such decisions will be made by the superintendent and the superintendent’s decision will be final.

Children entering grades K-8 who live in the communities of Essex Town, the Village of Essex Junction, and Westford may exercise school voluntary reassignment. Our goal is to allow options for families, while also securing balanced class sizes, and providing positive learning conditions for all of our children. Parents may apply for voluntary reassignment in any of the schools in these communities. Given space availability, we will work to meet as many families’ needs as possible. For more information, please visit the policy online: https://www.ewsd.org/Page/5698
SCHOOL DRESS
The dress code reflects our promise to help show positive, comfortable learning conditions for all, as well as our continued effort to help prepare students for the workforce beyond school. Students are to arrive at school, school events, and/or functions dressed appropriately. Please make sure your child(ren) is dressed appropriately for school activities and weather conditions. Parents/guardians are responsible for making sure their student(s) meet these expectations.

Appropriate clothing meets acceptable judging requirements for hygiene and safety, and does not distract from the learning process. Items with obscene or offensive terms; messages of hatred, violence, unfair treatment based on skin color, age, etc., sexual suggestions, or that which shows the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco are not permitted.

Any item of clothing considered by school personnel to be distracting, disruptive, or provocative is also inappropriate as school clothing.

CTE School Dress Standard: CTE students are expected to dress appropriately for professional work conditions. Many programs require professional clothing or uniforms.

If you have any questions related to this issue, please talk with the building principal.
SCHOOL TEXTS AND PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT
Students are responsible for items assigned to them (including "minis," laptops, and other electronic devices) and are responsible for those items. Damage or destruction of school property will result in an administrative response and repayment to the District.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE
School authorities may search a student, student lockers, or bookbags. Also, all cars parked in school lots may be subject to search by school officials. They may take control of any illegal, unauthorized, or crime-related materials discovered in the search. Police may be told based on the decision of the administration. This applies to any school-related or school-sponsored event, such as school dances and field trips. Examples of unauthorized materials include, but are not limited to: lighters, matches, tobacco products, drugs (illegal and prescription), alcohol, and any type of weapon. For more information concerning Search and Seizure, refer to EWSD Policy C21.

SKATEBOARDS
Students may not use skateboards, roller blades, scooters, or Heelies on school property.

SOCIAL MEDIA
Online behavior is to reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration used face-to-face. Any speech that is believed inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate online. This includes, but is not limited to: cursing; racist, sexist or (discriminatory statements; and personal attacks. For example, using individual Facebook accounts to post personal complaints or sharing individual judgments about people or schools can be disruptive to the educational process and the partnership we are trying to create between schools and families.

Social media posts that happen outside the school building or the school day and become an issue in school, may be looked at by administration and/or the police. These guidelines are pursuant with the prevention of harassment, hazing, and bullying policy and those of the responsible computer, network and internet use policy.
TECHNOLOGY USAGE
The use of District Technology by students is a privilege, not a right. However, with the privilege of access comes the responsibility to exercise responsible and honest use of these supplies. The same rules and expectations govern student use of Technology as apply to other student behavior and communications, including but not limited to the District’s harassment and bullying policies.

The District’s computer and network are the property of the District. Users will have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, receive or display on or over the District’s equipment or network resources, including personal files and electronic communications, whether using school issued equipment or personal devices.

The District reserves the right to examine any computer, imaging or recording device, including but not limited to laptops, desktops, netbooks, tablets, cell phones, cameras, and any other electronic devices with built-in computing, imaging or recording devices or network if there is reasonable feelings that something is wrong that any of the above guidelines are being violated. This includes any device onsite including both personal and school owned devices.

Violations of these guidelines will result in loss of network privileges and/or disciplinary review. In the event there is a legal accusation that a user has violated this policy, the school district will handle the legal accusation consistent with the student disciplinary policy. See the full policy in our Board Policy pages.

TELEPHONES
If you wish to send a message to a student or teacher during the school day, please call the school’s main number. Voice mail messages may be left for individual teachers. There are phones available for student use. Students need permission from their teacher to access these phones. The office and CTE program phones are for business use.

TITLE I PROGRAMS
Title I is a federally funded program designed to make sure that all children have an opportunity to access a high quality education. The goal of this federal program is to close the achievement gap for all students.

Once-a-year Title I school eligibility is figured out by the school’s aver-
age poverty rate as figured out by student eligibility for Free/Reduced Lunch. Eligibility for Title I services in a school is not dependent on the student’s poverty rate but is decided based on academic performance and the eligibility for intervention services.

For more information about Title I programs and related Title I policies please visit the EWSD website.

TRANSLATION SERVICES
All parents and guardians, including non-native speakers, are entitled to meaningful communication in a language they can understand. The Essex Westford School District provides translation services for families in order to support access to their child’s educational program, including parent meetings, special education meetings, hearings for children not attending school, open house events, field trip permission forms, report cards/progress reports and other critical school events and documents. Translation services done by the school District are limited only to school-related events and materials.

Translators can provide both oral and written translations depending on the job and the needs of the family so that our EL students and families have fair access to their child’s education. We have several on-call translators as well as a full time Nepali-speaking representative Prem Bhattarai. All translators sign a Translator Confidentiality Agreement which makes sure that student and family information is kept in strict confidence.

For more information about the EWSD ELL Program or Translation Services please see the EWSD website.

TRANSPORTATION
Eligible Riders Are: Resident students in grades K-12 enrolled in Essex Westford School District schools or enrolled by EWSD in other selected area schools.

A. People approved by the administration for clearly stated reasons (e.g., chaperons, coaches, aides, monitors, etc.).

B. Students who live within the area known as "Essex Town" will be eligible for transport to the following schools: Essex Elementary, Founders Memorial, Essex Middle, Essex High School, Center for Technology.
Students who live within the area known as "Village of Essex Junction" will be eligible for transport to the following schools: Hiawatha, Summit Street, Thomas Fleming, Albert D. Lawton.

Students who live within the area of Westford Town will be eligible for transport to the following schools: Westford School, Essex High School, Center for Technology, Essex.

Families may request transportation to an EWSD school outside of their area from the superintendent. Approval of requests will be based on the independent and final decision of the superintendent, and may be based on factors such as closeness to an existing route serving the school and available seating. If transportation is granted to an EWSD School outside of their area, it will be only for one year. Families must request this exception each year.

**Green Mountain Transit:** EWSD students may ride Green Mountain Transit (Public Transportation) to and from school or school functions. Because GMT is fare-free through June 30, 2022, students are not needed to show ID or identify themselves as district students.

This transportation is available on the #2 Essex Junction and #10 Williston / Essex bus routes. Before, these routes were known as Blue Line, Orange Line, and Silver Loop, as well as the #2 Essex, #4 Essex Center, and #10 or 1E Williston/Essex.

See ridegmt.com or use the bus/train icon in Google Maps for route and schedule information. Please be aware GMT operates new service schedules in early August, and publishes this information a few weeks ahead of time.

**Tuition Student Transportation:** To make as big as possible the available resources by increasing local (tuition) revenue and help maintain enrollment to make sure the width and depth of curricular and extra-curricular offerings, the EWSD may provide transportation to/from the towns of sending Districts.

A. Transportation may only be given if the following conditions exist: The bus route must service at least 25 non-resident students and average a minimum of 20% number of riders (using previous three measurement periods).
B. If, based on paragraph A, transportation must be discontinued, it will not take effect until the following school year.

**Extra Co-Curricular Transportation:** Schools must provide an approved coach, chaperone, or staff to ride on all trips to help in controlling student behavior, including keeping the bus free of trash. Exceptions may only be made by back and forth agreements, in advance, of the coach / activity advisor and contractor for intra-district trips.

Students are needed to ride the bus to/from all events for which the school provides transportation. Exceptions for different transportation must be requested in writing by the student’s parent/guardian, and must be approved by the athletics/activities director or coach/advisor in advance. Only a responsible adult may provide transportation. At no time will a student be permitted to ride with another student, or drive him/herself to an event. While on the bus, students are expected to stick to the rules of the bus driver and bus company, and to pick up all trash before exiting the bus. School rules are in effect during all transportation times.

**Specialized Transportation:** The Transportation Department will provide service in a manner that helps increase wasting very little and effectiveness while making sure services are agreeing with/matching up with/working regularly with the least restrictive environment considerations for students who have transportation listed as a related service in their IEP or 504 Plan.

**Pickup and Dropoff locations:**
- Generally, special needs students riding regular route buses will not have transportation listed as a related service and, therefore, will be given stop to school and school to stop service.
- Drivers and aides will not escort students between their front door, bus, and classroom unless specifically organized and listed in the IEP.
- District buses and contractors will not travel into private driveways.
- In conditions where the nature or condition of a street make it unable to be used to a bus, arranging an alternate pick up / drop off point may be necessary, and will be coordinated with the family by the dispatcher or Transportation Manager.
Pickup and Dropoff Times:

- The District will create bus schedules and communicate with families related to pickup and dropoff times before the start of the school year.
- If changes are necessary throughout the year, the dispatcher will tell the family via the most important phone number and up to one alternate number no later than 2:30 pm the school day before the change.
- Students should be ready to board the bus within a "window" 10 minutes before their scheduled pickup time, and be prepared to wait as much as 15 minutes after the scheduled time.
- When it appears that the bus will be delayed by more than 15 minutes, the District will send an automated call to the selected parent and emergency phone numbers for students by bus route telling them of the delay, and a reason if it's known.
- If a bus arrives within the "window" of 10 minutes before or fifteen minutes after the scheduled time and the student does not board immediately, the driver will contact dispatch via radio. The Dispatcher will call the first contact number listed for the student and leave a message if possible stating the date and time. The vehicle may leave for it's next stop after waiting a minimum of three minutes.
- For students who require a family member to be home at drop-off, these same procedures will be followed. If an approved caregiver is not home to receive the student, they will remain on the bus, and be returned to EWSD staff at the school to be picked up by parents. Drivers will not leave the student at the school unattended. The dispatcher will contact school staff and family to tell them.

Securements:
The safest place for any student on a bus is in the seat. If it is possible for a student to move to another seat, it is recommended they do so. Seatbelts, five-point harnesses, and other safety restraint systems can be used here.

WC-19 is a voluntary industry standard for designing, testing, and labeling a wheelchair used as a seat in a motor vehicle certified as "transit-ready". It is highly recommended that if it is necessary for a student to ride in a mobility device on the bus, that device be WC19 cooperative.

EWSD aides will perform all wheelchair securements using a minimum
of four points secured to the floor of the vehicle, and the lap belt and shoulder restraint securing to the vehicle.

The lap belt or harness of a mobility device will not be considered to be good enough unless specified in the student’s IEP.

Bus Aides will be assigned to bus routes as defined by IEPS as follows:

- When specifically needed by the student’s IEP.
- As a guideline, when five students needing equipment are riding the bus at one time. This may be changed to make better at the supervisor’s decision based on safety and student needs.
- It is preferred that bus aides be assigned to all buses moving students in wheelchairs. However, this is not needed and assignments may or may not be made at the supervisor’s decision based on safety, student need, and budget limits.

**Student Information:** The Transportation Department will develop an information sheet to collect critical information from Case Managers to support administrators, bus drivers, and bus aides in the put into operation of services to special needs students. This information will be kept private.

**Cameras and Video Recordings:** Buses prepared with video cameras are to make sure that EWSD has access to objective and real-time evidence related to student behavior and/or car/truck drivers violating the school bus red light system. Parents will not be allowed to view video recordings based on federal student privacy laws. EWSD will not share video recordings with any outside parties not directly involved in the transport or care of students, excepting police. EWSD reserves the right to request parent permission in order to use clearly stated videos for training purposes.

**Student Conduct:** The goal of the Transportation Department is to create a behavior management system that combines with and supports behavior management and socio-emotional learning in the classrooms, while providing students with a consistent set of normal behaviors on the bus throughout their whole EWSD career.

For student behavior, the bus is an extension of the classroom. Drivers and bus helpers are the leaders on the bus, and play an important role modeling and strengthening or adding support to behavior norms.
EWSD provides behavior management training to all transportation contractors and employees who work on buses.

Bus rules (or community behavior norms) will be posted by the driver before the first student transport of the year. Drivers will take time during the first week of school to explain bus rules to all students, and remind them occasionally throughout the year. This is especially helpful when approaching vacations and seasonal changes. Recognizing and praising good behavior is always a good plan, and the District will provide a rewards-based system to help drivers.

The Transportation Department will also make available to each Principal activities which teach and strengthen or add support to bus behavior norms at different grade levels.

Disciplinary Procedure: The District is responsible for supervising student behavior while students are on the bus. Students are expected to keep themselves and others safe, to respect other students and to respect the transportation equipment. Students who do not follow the rules on the bus will be subject to disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to: striking another student; throwing objects; damaging bus seats, putting arms or heads out of bus windows, inappropriate/disrespectful language, standing in or blocking the walkways between seats), or failure to obey the bus driver’s directions. Parents and/or students will be responsible for costs resulting from actions that cause damage.

A Prevention-Intervention-Consequences model is used for behavior management. Prevention is the driver making students aware of the rules. Intervention is used by the driver or bus aides to strengthen or add support to rules and normal behaviors when they are broken. Examples of this could be stopping the bus, or having a student change seats. If students continue to break the rules, or if behavior is extreme enough, drivers or bus aides will complete a Bus Conduct Report and submit it to school administrators, who will work with the student and may assign the student results. School administrators may contact families to support this process. Depending on the seriousness or number of rule violations, transportation privileges may be suspended for a short period of time or for the rest of the year. Parents are responsible for arranging alternate transportation for their child if this happens. We ask parents/guardians to cooperate with the school when informed of
a problem.

The Transportation Department will help the appropriately-timed exchange of bus conduct reports and follow-up communication between drivers, contractors, and school behavior management staff. The Transportation Department will maintain records of bus conduct reports.

**Student Seating Assignments:** All students Kindergarten-grade 5 will be assigned a seat by the bus driver. These assignments will be posted by the driver. Students, families, and school staff may provide input on seating assignments for drivers to think about.

Seat assignments for grades 6-12 are used on an as-needed basis decided by school administrators and drivers.

School administrators may request clearly stated seating arrangements in response to disciplinary issues. Drivers will work within these requests to figure out seating plans, keeping in mind there may be requests from many schools to manage.

**Ridership Guidelines:**

- Students should be at their bus stop five minutes before the scheduled arrival time. The bus is not required to wait for students.
- Please understand the first days of school, traffic, weather, or other conditions could cause delays.
- When it appears that the bus will be delayed by more than 15 minutes, the District will send an automated call to the parents and emergency phone numbers for students by bus route telling them of the delay, and a reason if it’s known.
- Students should dress for the weather.
- Select a spot to wait for the bus where your child can see the bus coming and be seen by the Driver.
- In low light it’s helpful for students to have reflective clothing or signal the driver with a lighted device like a flashlight, blinker, or lit up handheld electronic device.
- Students are responsible for their behavior while going to and from bus stops and while they are waiting for the bus. Parents are expected to handle any behavior issues which may be met at bus stops. Thank you to the parents, neighbors and older brothers and sisters who wait at bus stops and help keep students safe at bus stops.
Alternate Stops: Permission slips from parents and approval from the school are needed for any single-day changes to the usual drop-off/pick-up points. Please send written notice to the front office staff (Office Assistant, Office Manager, Admin Assistant, or Registrar) at your school, with as much advance notice as possible.

Students are allowed only 1 regularly scheduled alternate pickup/dropoff address. Alternate addresses must be within the service area for your student’s school of attendance. Please note automated call notices are not now available for alternate address stops.

Permanent address changes should be coordinated through front office staff (Office Assistant, Office Manager, Admin Assistant, or Registrar) at your school. These staff will update the student information system, and coordinate with the Transportation Department on any busing needs.

Pickup and Dropoff for Kindergarten and First Grade: Kindergartners and first graders must have someone with them to and picked up from the bus stop by a parent or guardian, or another individual approved in writing. If an approved person is NOT present for a drop-off, kindergartners and first graders will remain on the bus, and be returned to EWSD staff at the school to be picked up by parents. Families will be told via phone call. Drivers will not leave the student at the school unattended. Older brothers and sisters will remain with the kindergartner or first grader.

Safety tips for parents from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

Safety Starts at the Bus Stop. Visit the bus stop and show your child where to wait for the bus: at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb. Remind your child that the bus stop is not a place to run or play.

Get On and Off Safely. When the school bus arrives, your child should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, the door opens, and the driver says it’s okay before approaching the bus door. Your child should use the handrails to avoid falling.

Use Caution Around the Bus. Your child should never walk behind a school bus. If your child must cross the street in front of the bus, tell him/her to walk on a sidewalk or along the side of the street to a place at least five giant steps (10 feet) in front of the bus before crossing. Your child should also make eye contact with the bus driv-
er before crossing to make sure the driver can see him/her. If your child drops something near the school bus, like a ball or book, the safest thing is for your child to tell the bus driver right away. Your child should not try to pick up the item, because the driver might not be able to see him/her.

TRUANCY
Staying in school is the first step to a good education. A student will be declared truant if that student was not present at school for more than 20 days during the course of the year.

Per state law, school interventions will happen after a student misses 10, 15, 20 days. Continued truancy will result in statements sworn in court to be true being filed with appropriate State agencies and the State Attorney General’s office.

VANDALISM
Students who intentionally damage or destroy school District property and property of its agents will be held responsible for payment of damages. Also, criminal charges may apply.

Guidelines and Procedures:
- Any teacher, employee, student, or public member in a school who witnesses damage done on purpose will attempt to identify those responsible for the damage and will report to the principal immediately.
- In case of damage considered significant by the principal, the principal will advise the superintendent.
- The principal will get an estimate of the damage and report it in writing to the superintendent.
- Upon receiving a report of the damage, the school District will do any or all of the following:
  - Recover damages from parents/guardians or from the student (in the case of an independent student);
  - File charges if considered necessary by administration

In the case of damage considered significant by the principal, the student may work on restorative justice practices, be suspended, and/or be recommended for long-term suspension.
VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS ON CAMPUS
No volunteers, visitors, or non-employees should access the building during the school day during at least to start off the 2021-2022 school year. Drop-off spaces will be set up outside of the main doors for parents to place items to be delivered to students. Systems for checking students in and out of school during the day may need to be changed to meet public health guidelines.
LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

ANIMAL DISSECTION
In compliance with 16 VSA, §912 “Pupil Right to Refusal: Animal Dissection Law,” any EWSD student has the right to be excused from participating in any lesson, exercise, or assessment requiring the student to dissect, vivisect, or otherwise harm or destroy an animal or any part of an animal to observe any of these activities, as part of a course or instruction. Any EWSD student and parent/guardian may exercise this right by completing the Opt-Out Form at the school’s main office. EWSD schools will provide alternative education methods for those students who choose to opt out of these activities so they may learn and be assessed upon the curriculum material. The Opt-Out Form must be completed within two weeks from the first day of school (or within the first two weeks of enrollment), or the student will be deemed to have opted-in to participation in course requirements.

Alternative Education Method: A student who is excused under this policy shall be provided with alternative methods through which they can learn and be assessed on material required by the course. The alternative methods shall be developed by the teacher of the course, in consultation with the principal if necessary.

Discrimination: No student shall be discriminated against based on their decision to exercise the right to be excused afforded by this policy.

ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT (AHERA)
The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) requires written notice be given to workers and building occupants, or their legal guardians, that all schools have Management Plans for the safe control and maintenance of asbestos-containing materials found in their buildings. These Management Plans are available and accessible to the public at the main office of each school facility. The Property Services Director is the EWSD designated person for AHERA requirements. This notification is required per 40 CFR §763.93(g)(4).

EQUAL ACCESS AND PUBLIC ACCESS
EWSD and its member Districts will not discriminate against any person or group on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, gender identity, marital status, or any other legally protected status under fed-
eral or state law. Appropriate measures will be taken within the context of per Vermont’s Public Accommodation Act, 9 V.S.A. 4500 et seq., Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 guidelines and regulations to insure such compliance.

The Board, in compliance with Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, affirms:

- The right of all students to equal treatment (including aid, benefits, services, and application of rules and regulations) without regard to gender.
- The right of every student to access all courses with regard to gender.
- That no student will be excluded on the basis of gender from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in Health and Physical Education programs.
- That no student will be excluded on the basis of gender from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in athletics, intramural, or co-curricular activities.
- That no student shall be excluded on the basis of gender from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in vocational programs and activities.
- The rights of all students to equal treatment without regard to marital or parental status.
- The right of every student to counseling without regard to gender, and with non-discriminatory counseling instruments/materials.

**Grievance Procedure:** In the event a student, parent/guardian, or employee believes there is a basis for a grievance regarding equal educational opportunities, that person shall follow the procedures outlined below:

**Step 1:** The person who believes there is a basis for a grievance regarding equal educational opportunities will present the alleged grievance in writing on a standard form supplied by the EWSD office to the building principal or immediate supervisor within ten (10) workdays following the time when the aggrieved reasonably should have gained knowledge of its occurrence. The principal or immediate supervisor will attempt to resolve the grievance, and will respond within five (5) work days following receipt of the completed form.
Step 2: If the action of Step 1 fails to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the affected party, the aggrieved will, within five (5) workdays, submit such grievance in writing to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee will reply in writing within five (5) workdays after the initial presentation of the grievance.

Step 3: If the action of Step 2 fails to resolve the grievance to the satisfaction of the aggrieved party, the aggrieved party will, within five (5) workdays after receiving the written reply from the Superintendent or designee, submit such grievance to the member District School Board for resolution. The member District School Board will review the grievance and hold a hearing, if necessary, within twenty (20) workdays after receipt of the Step 2 response. The member District School Board will reply to the grievance in writing within five (5) workdays thereafter, and the decision of the School Board will be final. Reprisals taken by the member District School Board or any of its members as a result of a grievance decision will be grievable.

Step 4: The aggrieved party has the right to bypass the grievance procedure and make the complaint directly with federal officials. However, it is suggested the aggrieved parties follow the procedure as outlined above. If the aggrieved party follows the grievance procedure and the grievance is not resolved, the party may then direct their complaint to the Office of Civil Rights or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) PROGRAM
The Essex Westford School District is committed to supporting the academic and social needs of all English Language Learners (ELL) attending our schools and ensuring that ELL students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs. An ELL student is a student with a home language other than English and who is limited English language proficient based on results from an English language proficiency assessment approved by the state of Vermont. Historically terms have been used to describe the ELL students, including English as a Second Language (ESL), Limited English Proficiency (LEP), English Learner (EL) and English Language Program (ELP). The Essex Westford School District ELL Program is inclusive of students who fall into all of these categories.

Students are determined to be eligible for ELL Services through a screening and identification process and outlined by specific exit and entry re-
quirements established by the Vermont Agency of Education.

At the time of registration, parents/guardians of each new student will complete the state required VT Primary/ Home Language Survey. If any other language is indicated on the Survey, the ELL teacher assigned to that school is notified and provided with a copy of the survey.

The ELL teacher assigned to the student’s school will review the survey, conduct any necessary interview and/or testing, and complete the EWSD Screening Form for English Language Learner (ELL) Student Identification.

If it is determined that this student is an ELL student, the ELL teacher will develop an ELL Student Service Plan which outlines the nature and frequency of ELL services provided to the student that year. The service plan will be revisited throughout the year and may be revised to meet the changing needs of the student. Parents/guardians will receive notification of assessment results and ELL status determination, as well as a copy of the ELL Student Service Plan (if applicable). Parents will be given an opportunity to ask questions or share their concerns.

Based on the screening and identification process, ELL students fall into one of three categories:

Current ELL – An ELL student who qualified and is receiving services
Monitoring – An ELL student who has passed the ACCESS test must be, per VT regulations, monitored by a qualified ELL teacher for two years prior to fully exiting the program. Students are listed as Monitoring Year 1 (MY1) or Monitoring Year 2 (MY2). During this time, ELL teachers will review student academic records, assessment results and consult with teachers to ensure that the student’s academic progress is not being hindered by language proficiency.
Exited – Following two years of monitoring, an ELL students will exit the ELL program.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) NOTICE
Policy C1 Student Records - FERPA affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records:

• The right to inspect and review the student’s education records
within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. EWSD will assume that either parent has the right to inspect, review, and release the student’s records unless evidence is provided demonstrating there is a legally binding instrument or court order providing the basis for specifically excluding a parent from such areas.

- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading.
- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception permitting disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their tasks. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school District in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. The school will also release student records without prior consent or authorization under certain other exceptions, including: government officials and authorities as required by law, in health and safety emergencies, in connection with the application and receipt of financial aid, and (if required by state law) to accrediting organizations carrying out their official functions and to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena after having made a reasonable effort to notify the parent or eligible student of the order or subpoena. Student information is provided to the State of Vermont concerning certain incidences of discipline and student behavior, including: bullying, harassment, physical restraint, suspension, and long-term suspension.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office administering FERPA is Family Policy Compliance Office Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C., 20202-4605.
The District has determined that student directory information is not harmful or an invasion of privacy, and therefore will release this information without first obtaining parent consent or prior authorization. The purpose of releasing such information is to enable the District to publish newsletters, yearbooks, directories, and similar publications, and to release information to media outlets concerning student academic and athletic achievements. The following directory information may be released or posted online (via the District website or EWSD social media accounts), or used in District publications, as stated above, without obtaining parental/guardian consent: student’s name, parent’s/guardian’s names, address, telephone number, email address, date and place of birth, grade level, field of study, enrollment status (e.g. full-time or part-time), participation in officially recognized activities and sports including audiovisual or photographic records of the openly visibly activities thereof (e.g. artistic performances, sporting contests, assemblies, service projects, awards ceremonies, etc.), weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees, honors and awards received, most recent previous school attended and photographs (including video) of regular school activities that do not disclose specific academic information about the student and/or would not be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy.

If a parent/guardian, person acting as a student’s parent/guardian, or the student (if 18 or older) does not want the District to release the directory information listed below, they must notify the District in writing within 10 days of receiving this document that they don’t want directory information released. A non-disclosure form is part of each student’s Biographical Verification Form (BVD) at the beginning of the school year. If no written request is received in a timely manner, the school will disclose directory information without prior consent. Military recruiters and institutions of higher education are entitled under federal law to a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of high school students unless parents/guardians object to such release. If you parents/guardians notify the school principal in writing of their wish to not release their student’s name, address and telephone number to recruiters and institutions of higher education, the school will honor the request at that time.

Lists of student names and other directory information will not be made available except to school-related organizations, such as the PTO, at the discretion of the principal. Lists of such directory information are also provided to military recruiters and institutions of
higher education.

HOMELESSNESS
Students and families can become homeless for a number of reasons. The U.S. Department of Education defines homeless youth as youth who “lack a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence” or an “individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a) a supervised or publicly operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; b) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill; or c) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.”

Students and families experiencing homelessness can find support and have their questions answered by calling Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Erin Maguire at 802-857-2018 or contacting the principal of the school.

Students experiencing homelessness are eligible for free and reduced lunch, academic intervention (if needed) and support with school supplies or other needs associated with school participation.

Students have the ability to maintain enrollment in the school of attendance during their period of homelessness as outlined in federal law. Students can also enroll in the school District where they are staying during their period of homelessness. The homeless liaison will review each case, consider the student’s needs, discuss the need for transportation to and from school in order to maintain attendance and school participation.

Homelessness is not a barrier to school attendance and we have support in place to help students and families who are experiencing this circumstance. We are here to help!

LOCATING, IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATION OF STUDENTS: CHILD FIND
Formal Child Find Notice: Any individuals from birth through age 21 with disabilities currently residing within Essex Junction, Essex Town, or Westford, and who are in need of special education and related services need to be identified, located, and evaluated by the Essex Westford School District (EWSD). This includes children: not enrolled in school, at-
tending private or independent schools located within the aforementioned towns, enrolled in home study programs, suspected of having a disability despite advancing from grade to grade, who are highly mobile (such as migrant children), and who are homeless or in the custody of the state. Any person with information about any disabled person fitting these descriptions should contact EWSD.

In accordance with EWSD’s policies and with 34 CFR Part 99 (the Family Education Rights Privacy Act of 1974), this public notice informs all parents within their jurisdictions about how information is maintained when it is collected during identification, location, and evaluation of all people with disabilities.

- Personally identifiable information will be protected by each school
- Personally identifiable information about people eligible, referred, or considered for special education services is maintained
- Parents have the right to know what types of information have been designated as directory information (i.e. contained in a student’s education record and is not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed). This information includes the student’s name (unless otherwise requested), address, phone number, date/place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially-recognized activities/sports, weight/height, membership in athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees/awards received, and previous school attended
- Parents have the right to know the types and locations of educational records kept by the school and the titles and addresses of officials responsible for the records
- A list of the names and positions of employees within EWSD who have access to personally identifiable information shall be available for public inspection
- If anyone other than an authorized EWSD employee looks at the educational record of a child, that person shall so indicate by signing her/his name, date, and purpose for reviewing the record on a form to become part of the education record
- Parental permission will be obtained prior to disclosing confidential information to anyone who is not an authorized employee of EWSD
- Information relevant to a child’s specific disability (such as: medical information, intelligence test results, social/developmental history, comprehensive evaluation report, and the individualized education program) will be part of the education record
• Personally identifiable information will be gathered from screenings, qualified diagnostic centers, and other sources, as deemed necessary, to complete a comprehensive evaluation

• Parents, or eligible students, will be able to access personally identifiable information and inspect and review their education records no later than 45 days after the request is made

• Parents have the right to a response to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the education records

• Parents may obtain a copy of the education record without a fee for copying, if a fee will be a financial burden and/or will prevent them from obtaining the record

• Parents have the right to request the education record be amended. The school district will decide whether to amend the record within a reasonable time of the request. If the district refuses to amend the record, it shall inform the parent and advise the parent of the right to a hearing. If, as a result of the hearing, it is found that the education record must be amended, the school district will amend the record and inform the parent in writing. If, as a result of the hearing, it is found the disputed information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy right of the child, the school will inform the parent of her/his right to place in the education record a written statement commenting on the information or stating any reasons for disagreeing with the results of the hearing. This written statement will become part of the education record and will always be included whenever the contents of the education record is properly viewed or requested

• Parents have the right to a hearing to challenge the education records of their child

• Parents will be notified prior to the school district’s destruction of personally identifiable information about their child

• The parent has the authority to inspect and review records relating to her/his child unless EWSD has been advised that the parent does not have the authority under applicable state law governing matters such as guardianship, separation, and divorce

• Parents have the right to file a complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by EWSD to comply with this policy NOTE: If there are parents within the above-mentioned towns who need this information interpreted, please notify EWSD.
MANDATORY REPORTING
We are committed to the safety and welfare of each student under our care. Under State law and EWSD policy, school personnel are mandatory reporters and are required to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) within 24 hours. School personnel are mandated to report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect to DCF.

Schools work with Child Protection Teams (which include the school nurse, principal, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, and other designated school personnel). These teams meet routinely to review the safety and well-being of students.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT
The EWSD is committed to providing all of its students, employees, families and visitors with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect and are free from discrimination of any kind. EWSD prohibits the unlawful discrimination of students, employees, families and visitors based on their actual or perceived race, age, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability and any other protected class under federal or Vermont law. EWSD shall uphold the requirements of Vermont’s Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

Applicants for admission, employment, services and facilities are hereby notified that EWSD does not discriminate on the basis of any person’s actual or perceived race, age, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability and any other protected category under federal or Vermont law in admission or access to, or treatment of, or employment in, its programs and activities.
The following person has been designated by EWSD to coordinate efforts to comply with the regulations implementing Title VI, Title IX, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:

Beth Cobb
58 Founders Road
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Phone: (802) 857-2002/Fax: (802) 878-5190

PRIVACY RIGHTS AND STUDENT SURVEYS
Surveys and evaluations can be a valuable resource for schools and communities in determining student needs for educational services. Surveys and evaluations are often essential to help schools determine where to focus instruction and resources to better help our students. EWSD schools will notify parents/guardians when a planned survey, analysis or evaluation will be conducted. Parents/guardians have the right to opt their student out of participating in certain surveys, as listed below.

Right to Opt-Out: Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt-out of participation in the administration of any survey which reveals information concerning on or more of the following topics. Additionally, no student shall be required, without parental/guardian consent, to take part in a survey, analysis, or evaluation funded by the U.S. Department of Education that reveals:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of a student or student’s parents/guardians
- Mental or psychological problems of a student or student’s family
- Sexual behavior or attitudes
- Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom student respondents have close family relationships
- Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, or members of the clergy
- Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program for receiving assistance under such program)
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student’s parents/guardians
Parents/guardians, or students 18 years or age or older, have the right to “opt-out” of the following activities:

- The collection, disclosure and use of personal information gathered from students for the purpose of marketing or selling that information. This does not apply to the collection, disclosure or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational services for, or to students, such as: college or other postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low cost literary products; curriculum and instructional materials used in schools; tests and assessments; student recognition programs; and the sale by students of products or services to raise funds for school-related activities.
- The administration of surveys that include the subject areas listed above.
- The administration of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school that is not necessary to protect the immediate health or safety of a student or other students, and otherwise not permitted or required by state law.

Right to Inspection: Parents/guardians shall have the right to inspect any survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student. Requests for inspection shall be in writing, and shall be made in sufficient time to allow a response at least two weeks in advance of any survey given. Parents/guardians shall have the right to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. Tests or academic assessments or evaluations are not instructional materials.

RESIDENCY
Under Vermont law, the school a student attends is determined by where parents/guardians reside. At least one parent/guardian must reside in the District in order for their student(s) to attend school in that District. Verification of residency is required. Misrepresentation of residency is a violation of state law.

Notification is required if residency changes during the school year. Any non-residents are required to pay tuition.
Students and parents who are, or may be experiencing, homelessness should refer to the section on Homelessness in this handbook for assistance and guidance.

**RESTRAINT/SECLUSION**

It is the practice in EWSD that students not be subjected to inappropriate restraint or seclusion as defined by Vermont State Board of Education Rule 4500. It is the intent of the District to create a positive and safe learning environment, and promote positive behavioral interventions and supports in our schools.
EWSD Policy Manual

The EWSD Board develops and maintains policies followed in all of our schools. This handbook contains information regarding frequently referred to policies. Students and parents/guardians are expected to consult the District’s Policy Manual for a comprehensive listing of all District policies, many of which are not included in this handbook. The Policy Manual can be accessed at: www.ewsd.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim Gleason</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kim.gleason@board.ewsd.org">kim.gleason@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin Kennedy Knox</td>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ekenndyknox@board.ewsd.org">ekenndyknox@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brendan Kinney</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:brendan.kinney@board.ewsd.org">brendan.kinney@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Behlendorf</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jbehlendorf@board.ewsd.org">jbehlendorf@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Cady</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ecady@board.ewsd.org">ecady@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Brown</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbrown@board.ewsd.org">sbrown@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Cooledge</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scooledge@board.ewsd.org">scooledge@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al Bombardier</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:al.bombardier@board.ewsd.org">al.bombardier@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Clemens</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:diane.clemens@board.ewsd.org">diane.clemens@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre Roy</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td><a href="mailto:andre.roy@board.ewsd.org">andre.roy@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iris Hsiang</td>
<td>Student Rep</td>
<td><a href="mailto:iris.hsiang@board.ewsd.org">iris.hsiang@board.ewsd.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit your School Board online!
Access board meeting minutes, agendas, budgets, annual reports, and even watch board meetings!
www.ewsd.org/board
2021-2022 CALENDAR DATES

EWSD (K-12)

Aug. 25 - First Day of School
Sept. 6 - No School, Labor Day
Oct. 8 - No School, Parent/Guardian/Teacher Conferences
Oct. 11 - No School (Indigenous Day)
Nov. 22 - 26 - No School (Thanksgiving Break)
Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 - No School (Early Winter Break)
Jan. 17 - No School (Martin Luther King Jr. Observance)
Feb. 21 - March 1 - No School (Winter Break)
March 18 - No School, Parent/Guardian/Teacher Conferences
March 21 - No School, Teacher In-Service
April 18 - 22 - No School (Spring Break)
May 30 - No School (Memorial Day)
June 13 - Last Day of School for Students (Tentative)

Center for Technology

Aug. 25 - First Day of School
Sept. 6 - No School, Labor Day
Oct. 8 - No School, Teacher In-Service
Oct. 11 - No School (Indigenous Day)
Nov. 22 - 26 - No School (Thanksgiving Break)
Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 - No School (Winter Break)
Jan. 17 - No School (Martin Luther King Jr. Observance)
Feb. 5 - Open House
Feb. 21 - March 1 - No School (Winter Break)
March 16 - National Technical Honor Society Induction
March 18 - No School, Teacher In-Service
March 21 - No School, Teacher In-Service
April 18 - 22 - No School (Spring Vacation)
May 30 - No School (Memorial Day)
June 9 - Recognition Night
June 10 - Last Day of School for Students (Tentative)
Growing hearts and minds, for a better today and tomorrow: every day, every way, every one