

Rochester Memorial School
2018-2019
Student Handbook



Our Mission:

*To inspire all students
to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care.*

Our School Rules:

*Take CARE of Yourself
Take CARE of Others
Take CARE of Our School Environment*

ROCHESTER MEMORIAL SCHOOL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2015-2016

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Please sign this page as confirmation that you have reviewed the Student Handbook on the Rochester Memorial School Web Site (www.oldrochester.org/rms/handbook).

Sign
Date

GENERAL ROCHESTER MEMORIAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS: 8:40AM-3:00PM

- Buses disembark each morning at 8:40am. Parents who drive their children to school may drop them off at the “back loop” no earlier than 8:35am. Parents arriving with children before 8:35am should line up in the back-drop-off loop until direct supervision is provided. All students will then wait in the “C” wing lobby at the rear of the building until buses disembark.
- **If students arrive after 8:50am, they are considered tardy and must report to the office with an adult before proceeding to class.**
- Instruction ends at 2:55pm. Dismissal before that time is strongly discouraged.
- Afternoon dismissal begins at 3:00pm. Adults picking up students will meet them in their cars at the rear drop-off loop.

STUDENT EMERGENCY INFORMATION OR STATUS: PARENT NOTIFICATION TO RMS

To ensure student safety, changes in family situations, addresses, or cell and telephone numbers **must be** reported to the school office **immediately**. It is important that all our records are up to date.

Please return the Student Information Update Form, included in your opening day packet, to your child’s homeroom teacher, or the school office, immediately. This form serves as an annual ‘affidavit’, attesting to a student’s residency in our community.

Families moving from the community should notify the school office at least three days before their departure so transfer materials can be prepared. A *release of information* form must be received from the “new” school before any records will be forwarded.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is compulsory. Attendance law states that:

- *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts G.L. c. 76 sect. 1 requires that every child, with certain exceptions, between ages established by the state board of education, must attend a public day school or some other approved school, during the time when public schools are in session.*
- *Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, necessary absences by a student may not exceed 7 full-day or 14 half-day sessions in any 6-month period.*
- *Under G.L. c. 76, sect. 1, a pupil who is not present during at least half a session must be marked and counted as absent on the school register.*

All Massachusetts schools are accountable for student achievement. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandates particular indicators of success for all schools with one being “chronic absenteeism.” All students are considered “chronically absent” if they miss 10% of the school year.

Absentee Line: 508-763-2647

Full days of attendance are essential to the learning process. If a child is to be out of school, parents/guardians should call the nurse's office at 508-763-2647 before 9:00am on the morning of the absence. Please provide the following information in the message that you leave on the answering machine: **student's name, teacher, and reason for absence**. If a call is not received and a student is absent, the School Nurse uses the *Blackboard Connect* messaging system to contact parents/guardians at home or work. **After any absence, students should present a parent's note indicating the reason for the absence to the School Nurse.**

Absences are "excused" for only the following reasons:

- Bereavement
- Hospitalization
- School-sponsored trip
- Documented court or legal commitment
- Obligatory religious holidays
- Illness substantiated by a note (Five or more continuous absences for medical reasons must be substantiated by a physician's note).

Some excess absenteeism occurs because families take vacations during school time. This is strongly discouraged. Teachers will not provide assignments prior to vacations taken during school time. After students return to school they will be made aware of missed assignments, making them up as soon as possible. Missed assignments are factored into students' grades.

When Absences Exceed Five or More Days

On the fifth day of consecutive absence or tardiness, the school nurse or a designee of the principal will call the student's home. On the eighth day of an unexcused absence, the school attendance officer will be notified and a complaint for Failure to Cause School Attendance pursuant to *G.L. c. 76, sect. 2* **may** be filed in Wareham District Court.

If the students' absences or tardiness occur on a regular basis and impede their academic progress, the school, as a mandated reporter, must consider filing a Child Requiring Assistance (CRS) report. Depending on circumstances, the school district may choose to file a 51A with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

Tardiness

Tardiness negatively impacts the educational progress of all students. Therefore, the above policy will also be followed for excessive tardiness.

Dismissals

All dismissal policies are developed with students' learning and safety in mind. Policies are developed with input from the Rochester School Committee and town safety officials.

Dismissals During the School Day

No child will be dismissed from school during the day unless an authorized adult has come to the office to sign the child out. This applies to daily, or occasional, pickup arrangements. Students being dismissed before the

end of the school day must bring a note to the homeroom teacher that morning. Students will be called from class *when the parent/guardian arrives*.

End of Day Pick-Up

For student safety, the office prepares a daily pick-up list. Students are dismissed at 3:00pm at the rear entrance. Please be respectful of our daily safety procedures. Students who will be picked up at the end of the day must provide a note to the homeroom teacher. This is required **for all students**. For weekly or year-long pickup arrangements, a blanket note will suffice, but any changes to that blanket note, daily or otherwise, must also be in writing.

Any Change in Dismissal Routine

A note or alternative transportation forms from a child's parent/guardian must be provided before a child is allowed to leave school with any adult other than a parent or if he/she is normally transported by bus. There must be a note for each change to a child's routine. Bus changes are allowed for childcare purposes only, not for play or party dates. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must arrange with the office beforehand for a bus switch. This restriction is in place for each child's safety.

After School Activity Pick-up

There is no parking or waiting in the Fire Lanes in front of, or behind, the building. Such short-term parking creates two dangers: one, for students or parents exiting the building and crossing through traffic; and two, in the event of a fire or medical emergency, rescue teams need access to the building. Any vehicles parked in the Fire Lane are subject to *ticketing and/or towing by the Rochester police*.

RIDING BICYCLES TO SCHOOL

Students may ride their bicycles to school provided that they wear a helmet (as required under state law) and obey all traffic regulations. **A blanket permission note is required before students begin riding to and from school.** Bikes should not be ridden on sidewalks just outside school where children and adults are walking. Students not following safety rules may have their riding privileges revoked. A bike rack is available in front of the cafeteria. Students are encouraged to lock their bicycles.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST & LUNCH

Full student breakfast and lunches are available for \$2.00 for each breakfast meal and \$2.75 for each lunch per day. Milk costs \$.65. A la Carte menu choices are available at a variety of prices. *Free and Reduced Lunch Assistance* forms are sent home at the start of the school year, but applications are available at the school office and accepted throughout the year. Review them carefully and refer to these forms that are part of the opening packet to see if they pertain to you.

Checks for this purpose should be made out to: **Rochester School Lunch Program**. Student menus will be sent home on a monthly basis and are also on the website (<http://www.oldrochester.org/rms>).

Bringing Lunch from Home

If you choose to have your child bring lunch from home each day, to keep it cold, we recommend (1) bringing food in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box; (2) freezing the sandwiches overnight (will thaw by lunchtime but keep cold until then); (3) packing the foods in a cooler with ice or another cold source.

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SCHOOL VISITS

Rochester Memorial School welcomes visits from parents, families, and members of its school community. Parents or families are welcome to visit on any day but you are asked to make prior arrangements for classroom visits. A security window is installed at the school office. **All visitors and volunteers are required to have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued identification card to be scanned in upon entering the building for any reason; office staff will provide badges to wear once the ID is scanned in to our system and each visitor is approved to enter. This includes stops at the Nurse's station. All visitors who do not have a valid driver's license or Massachusetts issued ID card will not be allowed to enter the school during operating hours.**

Parents or guests wishing to visit a particular class are asked to make arrangements with the teacher or the principal at least one day in advance. Teachers will always welcome an extra pair of hands; we encourage you to become an active part of our volunteer staff. Massachusetts State Law requires that all regular classroom volunteers, lunchroom visitors and field trip chaperones have a Criminal Record (CORI) check. These forms must be completed in the school office before your first volunteer visit.

Visitors are asked to park in the lot at the rear entrance of the school. Do not park in the driveway or on the road in front of the school. Cars parked on either side of Pine Street during school hours will be ticketed.

CLOTHING/ RECESS

School is a place where student learning is a priority. A student's attire may influence his/her attitude as well as how much he or she learns. Student dress, therefore, is expected to be in good taste, appropriate for the weather and for academic work. It is not our purpose to dictate specific dress, but rather to ensure that our students are dressed in such a way as to contribute to their success and help generate a positive learning environment throughout our school. Students are not to be attired in clothing, which compromises safety or modesty or is disruptive to the educational process.

In order to assist parents in planning for their student's school apparel, the following guidelines are presented. Students are not permitted to wear outdoor clothing to class. This includes, but is not limited to: hats, caps, coats and jackets. In addition, **the following will not be permitted to be worn in school:** Midriff shirts, halter tops, tube tops, backless dresses, spaghetti straps, tank tops with large scoop armholes, muscle shirts, short shorts or short (mini) skirts (guideline: mid-thigh length), any clothing that contains offensive or obscene symbols, slogans or words that degrade any gender, cultural, religious, or ethnic values, clothing that contains language or symbols oriented toward violence, drugs, or alcohol. Hats and hoods or pajama pants may not be worn in the school building unless otherwise specified (i.e.: crazy hat day, sports day).

The administration reserves the right to determine appropriateness of clothing consistent with these guidelines. A student whose clothing is determined inappropriate for school will be required to arrange for other, more appropriate clothing to be provided.

All students have outdoor recess. Only in very inclement weather is recess held indoors. **Please be sure that your child is properly dressed.** We try to ensure an educational climate conducive to learning. In warm weather, thin-strapped tank tops, midriff shirts and short shorts are disruptive in our intermediate classrooms. Decorative footwear and flip-flops can create a safety issue when students play at recess. Therefore, flip-flops or any other type of opened-toe shoes are not allowed to be worn to school. We strongly recommend sneakers for all students.

Recommendation to Label Clothes

All coats, boots, sweaters, sweatshirts, backpacks, lunchboxes and hats should be clearly marked with students' names. For those of you who have seen our Lost and Found bin, you know that far too many parents do not do this. Take the time to label! This will allow items to be returned easily if lost, or avoid confusion when two items are similar. Several cases of lost clothing were donated to charity during the last school year.

STUDENT VALUABLES

Students are not to bring large sums of money, cameras, skateboards, iPods, MP3 players, hand-held video games, trading cards, and/or collectable items. Too many students have lost or broken the valuable personal property that they bring to share. Teachers and staff cannot take the time needed to investigate missing or damaged items

INCLEMENT WEATHER: CANCELLATIONS AND DELAYS

Please be attentive to our telephone messaging system for news of school cancellations or delays. During stormy weather the District may call school for an entire day, or for a one to two hour delayed opening. If bad weather develops during the school day, afternoon classes or special programs and after-school activities may be cancelled. It is important that families have plans in place for dealing with these possibilities.

We utilize the "Alert Solutions" communication program that is capable of contacting all RMS families within a five to ten-minute window. As soon as the Superintendent has determined a delay, closing, or early dismissal, we will send out a "Connect ED" call.

Because all district schools utilize the Alert Solutions system, storm delays and closings may not be broadcast on local television stations. We ask that you not call the school office or the police station. The dispatcher reports they receive many calls that interfere with their ability to handle true emergencies.

Should the decision be made to close school early or cancel after-school activities, due to inclement weather, an attempt will be made to contact parents, using all emergency contact numbers within the "Connect-Ed" system. In the event of a non-weather emergency, we will contact all parents using the same system.

Telephone Calls

Responsibility is an important attribute for all students. No school telephone in any office may be used by students. If students have forgotten books, classwork, or musical instruments, classroom teacher discretion will determine whether a call can be made via the classroom telephone. Teachers' classroom phones are capable of local calling only. In cases of illness or emergency, calls will be made by the school nurse, an administrator, guidance counselor or personnel in the main office. Students will not be called to the phone for any reason. Messages will be taken in cases of illness and emergency.

CELL PHONES

A student may carry or keep a cell phone in his/her backpack **if authorized by the school office**. The phone must be shut off and kept in the child's locker/backpack and may be used only for emergency or unusual circumstances as agreed by parents and administration. The phone may not be used to receive or send messages anytime during school hours **or on school buses**. Student phones used to make, or receive, unauthorized calls during school hours, or on a bus, will be confiscated by the school administration or the bus driver.

HOMEWORK AND INDEPENDENT READING

The School Committee has established homework guidelines that all teachers follow. Your child's teacher will establish homework routines appropriate to his grade level. The School Committee policy will be distributed at Open House or it can be acquired through the school office. We ask all family members to become "Reading Partners" with our students. Research shows the more children read, the better readers they become. We encourage all students to read independently each night for 20 – 30 minutes before bed. In some classrooms, Student Reading Logs are sent home for students and/or parents to initial.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES FOR LOCAL PAPERS:

Opt-Out Procedure for Parents Who Do NOT Want Their Child's Picture to Appear

As part of our public relations efforts, local newspapers are invited to photograph many school programs and events. Students are often included in these photos. As a parent, you have the right to request that no picture of your child is used in this way. **You must make this request in writing by completing a FERPA Privacy Form, included in this packet, and returning it to the Principal before September 3rd.** If no letter is on file, we assume parental permission is granted for photographs to appear in local newspapers or on our school website www.oldrochester.org/rms.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/PARENT CONCERNS

1. Being actively involved in your child's school is one way to alleviate concerns about his or her education. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets for an hour once a month in the PTO Office at RMS.
2. Parent volunteers are needed to be a part of our School Council. Representation from primary and intermediate grade students' families, as well as special education parents (if available), staff members and the community sit on this advisory team. Meetings are typically one afternoon per month from 3:30-5:00pm.

3. The Rochester School Committee sets its meeting schedule at the start of the school year, but these meetings are typically on the first Thursday evening of the month. Meetings are held at the Rochester Town Hall and are televised.

Constructive criticism of our school is welcomed on the assumption that it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational program and to equip the school to perform its tasks more effectively. Complaints are resolved most expeditiously if they are first taken to the staff member or administrator immediately in charge of the area in which a problem arises, then through successive administrative levels to the Principal, Superintendent, and subsequently to the School Committee, if necessary. Anonymous letters serve no positive purpose when trying to resolve problems and will not be given the same weight as an identified correspondence. The School Committee has adopted a policy to be followed when a parent/guardian has a concern that has not been satisfactorily addressed. A copy of that policy is available at the school office.

Our principal, Mr. Derek J. Medeiros, is available to all parents each month before PTO or School Committee meetings and at other times during the school day by appointment. Please call the school office or contact the principal directly via e-mail: derekmedeiros@oldrochester.org. All teachers are accessible via the school's e-mail carrier as well. Go to our school website, www.oldrochester.org/rms, to access a list of those emails.

FIRST AID/EMERGENCIES

If a sudden illness or an accident occurs at school, the school nurse will administer first aid and immediately notify parents. Parents are responsible for transporting the student home in the event of illness or injury. If a serious illness or accident (life-threatening accident) occurs at school, the Rochester EMS will be called for transport to the hospital.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Student health records are kept in a locked file in the nurse's office. It is the parents' responsibility to keep the nurse informed of new medical information. Students are required to have physical examinations in grades 3 and 6.

Vision/hearing screenings and height/weight measurements are done yearly. Parents are notified only if the results are not within normal limits. Postural screening is done only for students in grade 5. Screening for head lice is done as needed.

DISPENSING MEDICATIONS

Children are not permitted to carry medications on the bus or in the school building. A signed order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant is required to administer any prescription medications in school, as required by Massachusetts General Law. Parental permission is also required. A Medication Protocol form that covers non-prescription medications is included in this packet. Special arrangements for medication administration during field trips must be made with the school nurse. Medications will be given by a parent or by a school representative who has permission from the parent. Children will be allowed to self-administer inhalers on field trips only, with permission of the school nurse and when parental permission is on file at the nurse's office.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES AVAILABLE

Rochester Memorial School offers all students General Education support and accommodations including:

- Title I Services
- Adjustment/Guidance Counseling
- Availability of the School Psychologist
- Reading Recovery and Reading Specialist Support
- STEM Specialist
- Others outlined the Rochester Memorial School Curriculum Accommodation Plan.

Since we are all different with varying needs, Rochester Memorial School provides many Special Education services to students (who are eligible) including:

- Inclusive support in regular classrooms
- Pull-out instruction when warranted
- The availability of the school psychologist
- Speech and Language therapies
- Occupational and physical therapies

HEALTH AND GUIDANCE CURRICULA

ORR District Health and Guidance Curricula have been implemented across all grade levels at RMS. There are nine general topics covered with the specific content tailored to the developmental needs of our differing age groups. The topics are as follows:

Growth & Development

Students will learn the basic characteristics of physical growth and development, including body functions and systems throughout the life cycle, and will acquire skills to promote and maintain positive growth and development (At the fifth-grade level, students will have an introduction to the human reproductive system. A parent letter will be sent out prior to the presentation).

Nutrition

Students will gain the knowledge and skills to select a diet that supports health and reduces the risk of illness and future chronic diseases.

Mental Health

Students will acquire knowledge about emotions and physical health, the management of emotions, personality and character development, and social awareness; and will learn skills to promote self-acceptance, make decisions, and cope with stress, including suicide prevention.

Family Life

Students will gain knowledge about the significance of the family on individuals and society, and will learn skills to support the family, balance work and family life, be an effective parent, and nurture the development of children.

Interpersonal Relationships

Students will learn that relationships with others are an integral part of the human life experience and the factors that contribute to healthy interpersonal relationships, and will acquire skills to enhance and make many of these relationships more fulfilling through commitment and communication.

Disease Prevention & Controls

Students will learn the signs, symptoms, and treatment of chronic and communicable diseases, and will gain skills related to health promotion, disease prevention, and health maintenance.

Safety & Injury Prevention

Students will gain the knowledge and skills to administer first aid and carry out emergency procedures, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation, will avoid, recognize, and report verbal, physical, and emotional abuse situations, and will assess the factors that contribute to intentional and unintentional injury, including motor vehicle accidents, fire safety, and weapons safety.

Violence Prevention

Students will learn how their actions affect others, will understand the power that positive character traits can have in violence prevention, will gain skills to report incidents of violence and hurtful behavior to adults in the school and community, will avoid engaging in violence, and identify constructive alternatives to violence, including how to discourage others from engaging in violence.

If parents/guardians wish their children to be exempt from any portion of the Health Curriculum, a written request should be addressed to the school principal.

THE MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS) TESTING

Once during the school year, students in grade 5 participate in the Science Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test. Also, once a year students in grades 3-6 will participate in the English Language Arts & Mathematics Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests. Testing during the 2017-2018 school year will take place at the following times:

Grade	Assessment	Type of Test	Dates of Administration
5	MCAS	Science	Apr. 3-May24, 2019
3-6	MCAS 2.0	ELA/Math	Apr.1-May 24, 2019
K-6	ACCESS ELL	Reading, Writing Speaking And Listening	Jan. 3-Feb.7, 2019

All students must be present during MCAS testing.

STUDENT RECORDS

The privacy of student records is guaranteed. Only parents/guardians and appropriate school personnel are allowed access to the information in a student's record. Specific written consent provided by the parent or legal guardian is necessary for any other examination. A student transcript, which includes name, address, and grades, is kept for at least sixty years. However, the student's temporary record, containing standardized test scores, evaluations by teachers, Special Education records, and the like, is given to the student upon graduation or destroyed within five years after the student leaves the school system.

In accordance with the student record regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Education, parents have the right to inspect a student's record. Records are made available within two (2) working days of a request being made. Copies of any part of the record may be requested and a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating these materials. It has been our practice to make any student records easily accessible to parents and you will find the office staff most cooperative in this matter.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has adopted procedures for non-custodial parents who wish to receive separate copies of student records or school notices. Information is available in the school office.

REPORT CARDS AND PARENT CONFERENCES

It shall be the duty of each teacher at the end of each term or at the end of any period of time designated by the Superintendent, to estimate and to record the progress of pupils. The report card is an effective means of communicating an individual student's progress in relation to the curriculum and his/her own mastery of skills and social development. In the elementary grades, the written record is a standards-based report that indicates a student's progress.

During the school year, teachers shall notify parents of children doing unsatisfactory work.

Rochester Memorial School operates on a three-term grading cycle.

Marking Periods	Report Cards go home
Term 1: Marks Close 11/21/18	12/05/18
Term 2: Marks Close 3/08/19	3/20/19
Term 3: Marks Close 6/07/19	6/13/19

Regular communication between school and home is important if we are to be successful. Conferences between parents and teachers are scheduled once during the school year, but if questions about your child's progress should arise in any curricular area, do not hesitate to initiate a conversation with teachers at any time.

PROMOTION/RETENTION OF STUDENTS

It is expected that students progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions are made only when it is in the best educational interest of the student.

A pupil may be retained should he/she not have reached a standard of achievement necessary for satisfactory progress in the next grade. Because educational research on the subject of retention questions its overall effectiveness, each case is looked at very carefully.

STUDENT ENRICHMENT

RMS offers various ways for students to enrich their academic learning. Here are some examples:

- Student Council with 4th, 5th, 6th grade representatives and officers

- Annual Talent Show
- Student vs. Staff Basketball Game
- Winter Gathering
- 4th Grade Chorus: Students participate in a music-based production that is presented in January.
- 5th and 6th Grade Chorus: Groups meet once a week during school, several performances each year including the *FORM* concert which showcases all choruses in the district.
- 4th Grade Band: Students select an instrument for in-school instrumental instruction. In January, students come together as a beginner band.
- 5th and 6th Grade Band: Weekly instrumental instruction continues and the students meet as a band once a week.
- Jazz Band: Auditions are held in the fall and the band meets before school once a week.
- Drama Club: Auditions are held in late fall for 5th and 6th grade students who are interested in participating as either cast and/or crew for the annual Shakespearian production.
- After School Activities: There are three enrichment/athletic sessions each year: one in the fall; two sessions in the spring. Each session lasts 8 weeks and offers a variety of elective programs. Brochures are sent home with students.
- Destination Imagination: Teams form in the fall for this out-of-school activity. Teams work together to develop a solution to an assortment of challenges using a variety of skills, including: creative problem solving, critical thinking, research, communication, and teamwork. Teams present their solutions at a regional tournament in March.

BRENDAN M. MCGEE MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In the fall of 2003, Bob and Maggie McGee established the **Brendan M. McGee Music Scholarship Fund** at Rochester Memorial School. Its purpose is to allow any interested fourth, fifth, or sixth grade student with a passion for music to have the opportunity to obtain a musical instrument or private instruction. It was their son Brendan's love for music and children that led the McGees to create this memorial to him. The McGee family and their friends have been very generous in supporting musicianship at RMS.

Donations to the fund should be mailed to the principal of the Rochester Memorial School, payable to the Town of Rochester, with a memo indicating the money be directed to the **Brendan M. McGee Fund**. The school notifies the McGees of donations made, and shares copies of acknowledgments that are sent to contributors. At our musical events during the school year, we will accept donations in a jug set aside for that purpose.

If a fourth, fifth or sixth grade (aspiring) musician would like to request use of scholarship monies for acquisition of a musical instrument or a bank of private lessons, parents should contact the principal's office. We encourage students to benefit from this generous fund.

GENERAL STATEMENT AND SCHOOL RULES

Rochester Memorial School emphasizes a positive, community-based sense of responsibility and respect throughout the school day. Students learn what is expected of them through the consistent modeling of the adults around them. Students, teachers, administrators and parents all work together to maintain a safe, orderly school environment where everyone can learn and grow.

Students are expected to follow the school-wide rules that follow. These rules apply at all times, in all areas of the school.

- **Take CARE of Yourself**
- **Take CARE of Others**
- **Take CARE of Our School Environment**
- **Everyone C...A...R...E... S!**

COOPERATION:	We work, learn and solve problems together, with our friends and teachers.
ASSERTION:	We assert ourselves appropriately and respectfully.
RESPONSIBILITY/ RESPECT:	We make good choices about our behavior and our learning. We respect one another and ourselves throughout the day.
EMPATHY:	We think of our friends and their feelings; we care about how others will react to us.
SELF CONTROL	We stop to think about what it is we'll say or do—in class, on the bus, on the playground...everywhere.

PARTY INVITATIONS

In keeping with RMS's C.A.R.E.S. philosophy, and not wanting any child to feel hurt or excluded, we remind parents of the insensitive practice of students bringing party invitations to school. It puts students who are not invited (and many times the student doing the inviting) into unnecessarily uncomfortable situations. Please take the time to mail party invitations, or see that they are delivered outside of the school community and school day. The Rochester Blue Book is a great reference for parents to find addresses. We ask that you not call the office for this information.

School buses are not available to transport students to after-school parties.

SCHOOL STAFF ROLE IN ESTABLISHING HIGH BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Teachers and support staff model and reinforce positive behavior and compliance with school-wide rules and values. In addition, teachers implement classroom rules and policies. Generally, these rules are developed with student involvement appropriate to age and social development.

These classroom policies are submitted to the Principal for review. After administrative review, teachers will send home written classroom rules and consequences for family discussion. Students and parents/guardians and teachers will sign the Student Conduct Agreement that will be kept on file in the classroom.

Teachers follow all disciplinary steps outlined in their program on a consistent basis. This may include notes or phone calls home, after school time, individual contracts as deemed appropriate, or other strategies. Teacher and parents who have ongoing concerns about a student's behavior have several sources of support - the School Adjustment counselor, Administration, and the Staff Assistance Team.

BULLYING

In the spring of 2010 the legislature and governor enacted an anti-bullying law that impacts all schools in Massachusetts. Bullying is defined as a type of violence that occurs when someone uses his or her power unfairly and repeatedly to hurt someone else. The law recognizes bullying as any repeated word, look, sign, or

act that hurts a person's body, feelings, or things. All staff members will receive training during this year that will better equip them to deal with students' needs in this area. We recognize each student for his or her unique qualities, attributes, and characteristics. We embrace the differences among all students and will continue to foster an environment of acceptance with an appreciation for those differences.

DISCRIMINATION

Treating people differently, or interfering with or preventing a person from enjoying the advantages, privileges or courses of study in a public school because of an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status). A person may not be subjected to discipline or more severe punishment for wrongdoing, nor denied the same rights as other students, because of his/her membership in a protected class.

The Rochester School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, homelessness or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs and activities.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is oral, written, graphic, electronic or physical conduct on school property or at a school-related event, function or activity relating to an individual's action or perceived race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability (i.e., protected status), that is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the district's programs or activities, by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational environment. For purposes of this policy, harassment shall also mean conduct, if it persists, that will likely create such a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment.

RETALIATION

Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment by a student directed against any student, staff or other individual for reporting or filing a complaint, for aiding or encouraging the filing of a report or complaint, for cooperating in an investigation under the district's Comprehensive Civil Rights Policy, or for taking action consistent with the policy.

HATE CRIME

A hate crime is a crime motivated by hatred, bias, or prejudice, or where the victim is targeted or selected for the crime at least in part because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age disability or sex. A hate crime may involve a physical attack, threat of bodily harm, physical intimidation, or damage to another's property.

Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policies

- Everyone has the right to feel safe in and out of school. Any form of bullying or cyber bullying is forbidden in any location. *Bullying* refers to repeated, intentional acts of physical or mental cruelty or intimidation between two people who are unequal in real or perceived social power. Targets of school bullies may be perceived as "different" in either subtle or noticeable ways. Bullying is *not* simply "conflict". The most

common type of bullying is verbal or psychological but technological advances in our society mean that the next most common type of bullying is, or soon will be, written in the form of cyber bullying.

- Every reported act of bullying will be investigated, action will be taken where necessary, and parents will be notified. The school can investigate any bullying or cyber bullying that occurs on or off school grounds if it is having an apparent impact on the student's education.
- School disciplinary actions will be taken if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school, disrupts the education of the victim or disrupts the orderly operation of the school.
- Disciplinary actions range from a warning to after school detention, an in or out of school suspension, and may include notifying police.
- Targets must seek help from an adult. Reports of bullying can be made to parents, guardians, principals, teachers, counselors, or any trusted adult. The adult will immediately inform the principal and an investigation will begin. It is important to note that a member of the school staff may be named as the "aggressor" or "perpetrator" in a bullying report. For example, the following staff members (but not limited to) could be named: educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, and advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.
- Retaliation is prohibited against a person who witnesses and reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or has reliable information about bullying.

School Contacts

- Derek J. Medeiros, Principal (508) 763-2049 ext. 2010 derekmedeiros@oldrochester.org
- Charles West, Assistant Principal ext. 2224 charleswest@oldrochester.org
- Sharon Cruz, School Social Worker ext. 2015 sharoncruz@oldrochester.org
- Jamie Pacheco, School Social Worker ext. 1116 jamiepacheco@oldrochester.org

SCHOOL BUSES

Notice to Parents

Bus routes for the Old Rochester Regional School District and Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55 for the Towns of Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester are established yearly. Eight buses transport our students. Routes are modified slightly each fall to accommodate new membership. Any questions regarding bus routes and/or stops that affect your child should be addressed to the District's transportation provider, **Braga Transportation at 508-758-6316. For any other questions or concerns, parents should call the school office at 508-763-2049 to speak to a school administrator.**

Changes in Routine require permission notes: Student safety is a daily concern. A parental note is needed before a child is allowed to leave school on a different bus. There must be a note for each change in a child's routine. Bus changing is allowed for childcare purposes only, not for play dates. **This is for your child's safety. Also, students in grades K-3 may not be dropped off without a trusted adult present at the time of drop off, only students in grades 4-6 may be dropped off at home without a trusted adult present.**

Video Cameras

The School Committee, after carefully considering the privacy rights of students and drivers and the District's duty to ensure discipline and protect the health, welfare, and safety of staff and students on school transportation vehicles, has authorized the use of video cameras on its transportation vehicles when deemed necessary by school administration.

School Bus Conduct Rules

1. Treat your bus driver and other passengers with respect and courtesy.
2. Get on and off the bus by moving slowly and safely.
3. Passengers must be seated at all times with their feet on the floor, and facing forward.
4. Conversations should be carried on in a normal tone of voice. Shouting is inappropriate and unsafe.
5. Arms and heads must be kept inside the bus.
6. Windows may be open only by the bus driver or with his/her permission
7. Aisles must be kept clear at all times.
8. Profane and bullying language is forbidden.
9. Horseplay is unsafe and forbidden.
10. Throwing objects is unsafe and forbidden.

BUS DISCIPLINE POLICY

The driver to the offending student, school principal and the student's parents in writing will report violations of bus rules promptly. Violations may result in the loss of bus privileges or application of discipline sanction up to and including suspension.

1st Offense – Warning

2nd Offense – **Detention or Assigned Seat at Front of Bus**– *This will be strictly enforced in conjunction with changes to our bullying policy*

3rd Offense - **10-day bus suspension**

Repeated Offenses* - Consideration of permanent exclusion

*Including exclusion from the bus for the balance of the school year.

Complete copies of the Transportation Policy are available upon request and for all new incoming students.

The Old Rochester Regional School District has established rules and policies regarding bus discipline. Bus drivers report violations of rules to administration. Parents receive a written notice of the incident and its consequences. are advised that school buses are equipped with videotape equipment. Taped incidents may be used in the process of dealing with infractions of school bus rules.

Copies of the Old Rochester Regional School District Bus Policy are available at the RMS office or by visiting the link below.

<http://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/Z2Browser2.html?showset=oldrochesterset>

OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL DISTRICT-WIDE BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for behavior are necessary in order to guarantee that those who do not respect these rights do not interrupt the educational rights and privileges of well-behaved students. Rules are needed to ensure students' cooperation and responsible behavior. Self-control and consideration of others are the key components.

Pupils must behave appropriately and accept the leadership of teachers, school officials and others who have been assigned such responsibilities. Pupils must also adhere to school regulations on the way to and from school, on school grounds, on school buses, during extracurricular activities, or any time while under the school's supervision. Students may be disciplined for other behavior, which directly or indirectly impairs the educational process or good order of the school.

DUE PROCESS/SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Teachers, administrators, and other authorized staff ordinarily will discipline students for inappropriate behavior. Consequences may include verbal warning, "time out", and notification to parents, referral to the principal, and/or detention. More serious cases, such as disrespectful language, stealing, destruction of property, fighting, drug possession and/or abuse, and possession of dangerous objects, will be referred to the administration, who may impose discipline, including suspension and/or expulsion, as provided by law.

Before a student is removed from the school for disciplinary reasons, the student will be provided with notice and a hearing, except that a student may be immediately removed from school if the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disrupting the academic process. In such circumstances, the notice and hearing will follow the initial removal from school.

Notice and hearing will consist of the following: the designated disciplinarian will give the student and/or parent/guardian oral notice of the charges against him/her, and an opportunity to present his/her version of the facts. If the designated disciplinarian thereafter decides to suspend or expel the student, the student will be informed of the length of the suspension or expulsion.

The parent will be notified of the hearing and will be permitted to attend.

Sexual Harassment

We are committed to providing an educational environment that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form at any level of the school system. Any student or employee found to have condoned or engaged in sexual harassment may, depending upon the extent of his/her participation, be subject to disciplinary sanctions, up to and including suspension, in or out of school, or permanent exclusion from school in the case of a student, and up to and including termination of employment, in the case of an employee.

If a student or employee believes that s/he has been subjected to sexual harassment, whether by a student, a school employee, or any other person who comes on school property with permission, or that s/he has witnessed the sexual harassment of another, the student or employee should report the incident promptly to the Principal, the Assistant Principal, the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent, or any other administrator with whom the student or employee feels comfortable. A complaint of sexual harassment by a student, or by a parent on the student's behalf, may also be made to any counselor or teacher. A counselor or teacher who receives such a complaint will notify the appropriate administrator to initiate an investigation.

It is the policy of the school committee to have all complaints of sexual harassment promptly and fully investigated and to take any steps necessary to remedy the situation. Normally, the Principal/Assistant Principal will conduct the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment or a designee selected by the Principal and will include separate private interviews with the complainant, each person accused of harassment and each of the witnesses, if any. The administrator conducting the investigation will ordinarily document the interview, but those interviewed may also be asked to provide a written statement. All students and employees are expected to cooperate fully with any investigation of sexual harassment. Information provided during an investigation of sexual harassment will be disclosed to the accused may be informed of the identity of the complainant or witnesses, but, in those circumstances, the accused will be cautioned against reprisals or recriminations or any attempted intimidation or coercion of the complainant or witnesses. At the conclusion of the investigation, the administrator will prepare a report, which will be shared with both the complainant and the person or persons accused of harassment. If the complainant or the accused is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, either may discuss the issue directly with the superintendent.

SPECIAL OFFENSES

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37H

G.L. Chapter 71, §37H	G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ½	G.L. Chapter 71, §37H ¾
<p>Offenses:</p> <p>On school premises or at school-sponsored events or activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of a dangerous weapon • Possession of a controlled substance • Assault on a member of the educational staff 	<p>Offenses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A felony charge or felony delinquency complaint against a student. 2. Conviction, adjudication, or admission of guilt with respect to such felony. 	<p>Offenses:</p> <p>Any offense that is not addressed in 37H or 37H ½.</p>

<p>Consequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion for amount of time up to expulsion; • Principal may suspend and not expel as he or she deems appropriate 	<p>Consequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Felony charge or felony delinquency complaint: suspension for a period of time deemed appropriate by principal <i>if</i> the principal determines the student’s continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school. 2. Felony or felony delinquency conviction or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony: removal for a period of time up to expulsion (i.e. permanent exclusion) <i>if</i> the principal determines that the student’s continued presence would have a substantial detriment on the general welfare of the school. 	<p>Consequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not suspend a student from school long-term (i.e. more than 10 days) until other remedies and consequences have been considered; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning. • Consequences other than suspension may draw from evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and behavioral interventions and supports. • No student may be suspended for more than 90 school days in a school year.
<p>Due Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional due process; • Prior notice to student of charge and written notice of right to hearing; • Right to representation at hearing; and to present evidence and witnesses at hearing. 	<p>Due Process (for either suspension or expulsion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional due process; • Written notice of the charges and of the reasons before the suspension takes effect; • Principal may determine the appropriate amount of time for suspension; • Written notice of the right to appeal to the superintendent; • Suspension remains in effect pending appeal to 	<p>Due Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Except for in-school suspension and emergency removals, prior oral and written notice of the charge to the student, and to the student’s parent, and the opportunity for a meeting/hearing with the principal before suspension takes effect. Consult 603 CMR 53:08 for details on notices. • Consult 603 CMR 53:07 for emergency removal process and 603 CMR

	<p>the superintendent.</p>	<p>53:10 for in-school suspension process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit requirement to translate notice of the charges and the reasons in primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. • Principal must make and document reasonable efforts to include the parent in meeting/hearing with the student. • Principal must audiotape the hearing if requested by the parent and all those attending the hearing must be informed of the taping. • Following hearing, principal must provide a written decision; and if a long-term suspension imposed, must inform student and parent in writing of the right to appeal to the superintendent and the process to be followed; translate notice of appeal rights in primary language of the home, or other means of communication where appropriate. • Before any out-of-school suspension of a student in preschool or grades K – 3, principal
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		<p>must notify superintendent in writing of the alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school.</p>
<p>Appeal from Principal’s Decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to appeal expulsion decision to superintendent • Timeline for requesting appeal: ten days from date of expulsion • Right to counsel at hearing • Superintendent can make factual determinations as well as determine consequence. 	<p>Appeal from Principal’s Decision to Suspend or to Expel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for requesting appeal: no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion • Superintendent must hold hearing within 3 calendar days of receipt of request and issue a decision within 5 calendar days. • Superintendent may overturn or alter the decision. <p>A student may appeal a suspension decision and the subsequent expulsion decision (following the conviction, adjudication or admission of guilt) regarding the same offense.</p>	<p>Appeal from Principal’s Decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeline for requesting appeal: written request not later than 5 calendar days following effective date of suspension; parent can request extension for up to 7 calendar days, which must be granted. • The superintendent must hold hearing within 3 calendar days of the parent’s request for a hearing. The student or parent may request up to 7 additional calendar days. If so, the superintendent must allow the extension. The superintendent may have the hearing without the parent if the superintendent has made a good faith effort to include the parent. • The student has the right to present oral and written testimony, to cross examine witnesses, and to counsel at his or her expense at the hearing. • The superintendent

		<p>must audiotape the hearing and notify hearing participants that the hearing will be taped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent determines the facts and consequences, if any, but cannot impose a consequence greater than the principal decided. A written decision is due within 5 calendar days of the hearing.
<p>Provision of Education Services:</p> <p>Provide every student an opportunity to make <i>academic progress</i> during the period of suspension (whether in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion, to make up assignments, and earn credits missed. A district that suspends or expels a student for <i>more than 10 consecutive days</i> must provide the student and the parent with <i>a list</i> of alternative educational services.</p> <p>See G.L. c. 76, §21 and 603 CMR 53.13 for details, including required notice.</p>	<p>Provision of Education Services:</p> <p>Same</p>	<p>Provision of Education Services:</p> <p>Same</p>
<p>Discipline Collection and Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect and report to the Department data concerning the types and lengths of removals, suspensions, and expulsions, and access 	<p>Discipline Collection and Reporting:</p> <p>Same</p>	<p>Discipline Collection and Reporting:</p> <p>Same</p>

<p>to education services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodically review discipline data by selected student populations; determine extent of disciplinary removals and the impact on such populations; adjust practice as appropriate • Department will provide assistance to school(s) if Commissioner identifies school(s) in district that have the highest percentage of suspensions or expulsions in Massachusetts for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year. • Create a plan to address disparities if Commissioner determines that school or district discipline data reflect significant disparities by race and ethnicity, or disabilities. <p>See 603 CMR 53.14 for details.</p>		
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PROCEDURE FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If a suspension of more than ten days is proposed, or if a shorter series of suspensions would result in more than ten cumulative days of out of class, for any student who has an IEP or 504 Plan, the school must convene a TEAM meeting before the expiration of the ten-day period.

At that meeting, the TEAM must first develop or review a behavioral intervention plan, consistent with the functional behavioral assessment of the student, then review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that is the subject of the discipline action. If the TEAM determines that the student's misconduct is a manifestation of the student's special needs, or results from an inappropriate special education program/program placement, or from an IEP that was not fully implemented, the long-term suspension or expulsion may not be imposed.

If the TEAM concludes that the misconduct is not related to the student's special needs, and it does not result from an inappropriate special education program/placement, or an IEP that was not fully implemented, then the long-term suspension or expulsion may be imposed, following the procedures listed in the law. Among other things the TEAM must offer placement in an interim alternative setting that will (1) enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum, (2) enable the student to receive services listed in the last agreed upon IEP, and (3) include any services and modifications designed to address the student's behavior. The parents have the right to request an expedited hearing before the Bureau of Special Appeals (BSEA) to challenge the manifestation determination or the alternative program. If the parents request a hearing, the "stay put" provision of the IDEA entitles the student to remain in the last agreed upon educational placement while the procedures are pending before the BSEA. The right does not apply if the student is charged with possession of a dangerous weapon or drugs. In those circumstances, the school personnel may remove the student to an interim alternative setting without parental consent for up to 45 calendar days. Similarly, if the school convinces the BSEA hearing officer that the student's continued presence in the current placement poses a danger to that student or to others, the student may be ordered into an interim alternative setting for up to 45 calendar days without parental consent.

Procedural Requirements Applied to Students not yet determined to be Eligible for Special Education:

1. If, prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:
 - a. The parent had expressed concern in writing; or
 - b. The parent had requested an evaluation; or
 - c. District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.
2. If the district had no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.
3. If the student is found eligible, then he/she receives all procedural protections subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAW AND GIFTS FOR TEACHERS

The Commonwealth's conflict of interest law, G.L. c. 268A, and the financial disclosure law, G.L.c.268B, restrict gifts and gratuities that school staff may receive. All teachers and school volunteers must be made aware of the content of these laws, specifically sections 3 and 23 of 268A, and section 6 of 268B. Section 3(b) prohibits a public employee from requesting or receiving anything of 'substantial value'* which is given for or because of an

official act or act within the public employee's official responsibility. Similarly, under section 3(a), no one may give or offer such gifts to public employees.

In addition, G.L.c. 268B, section 6, specifically prohibits public employees or members of their immediate families from soliciting or accepting gifts with an aggregate value of \$100.00 or more in a calendar year. Next, under G.L.c. 268A, section 23(b)(2), public (school) employees are prohibited from using or attempting to use their position to obtain for themselves or others unwarranted privileges of substantial value that are not properly available to similarly situated individuals. Finally, even if a gift or gratuity is not of substantial value or does not fall within the prohibitions discussed above, G.L.c. 268A, section 23(b)(3) will, in many situations, require public (school) employees to disclose to their appointing authority, the gift and their relationship with the giver.

All school volunteers are required to be aware of the state's general laws and language surrounding gifts.

****Anything worth \$50.00 or more is considered to be "of substantial value" for the purposes of the conflict of interest law.***

The full content of the State Ethics Commission law is available from the school office or online at <http://www.mass.gov>.