



HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
A PATHWAY FOR EVERY STUDENT

HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Family Handbook 2020-2021

Policies and other information contained in this book are subject to change at the discretion of the superintendent/receiver. Parents and guardians are encouraged to consult with their students' school administration for more information.

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Vision Statement

Our students:

- ✓ Graduate with an additional credential that provides for college and career options.

And they are:

- ✓ Effective Communicators
- ✓ Critical Thinkers
- ✓ Engaged and Productive Community Members
- ✓ Mindful Individuals

Mission Statement

To be the 1st educational choice for Holyoke families by designing **multiple pathways** where all students graduate prepared to **excel** in college, career, and community leadership.

District Values

We...

- **Encourage** bold thinking
- **Explore** all possibilities for student success
- **Embrace** all students & families as our own
- **Empower** school teams to impact change
- **Engage** in meaningful feedback

Principles for a Safe School Year

SAFETY: Student and staff safety are critical.

LEARNING: Student academic learning and social, emotional, behavioral and mental health are imperative.

CARE: Our most vulnerable students and staff need to be at the center of our plan.

FLEXIBILITY: We will be nimble, flexible and emotionally balanced in our approach. We must rapidly respond to updated guidelines and feedback and have contingency plans.

EQUITY: We make decisions with equity as our guiding light.

Message from the Superintendent/Receiver

Dear Families, Students, and Community Members:

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year! While this school year may feel and look different from past years, I am confident that this year promises to be an engaging and a successful educational experience for all our students. As a district, we are committed to partnering with you to ensure that these practices are upheld and that our children receive the educational experience that they rightly deserve.

The content in this handbook is intended to be a resource for families, students, and community members. This handbook provides families and community members general information as well as policies, procedures, and expectations that guide our work in the Holyoke Public Schools. This handbook will most often be used as a reference for you as questions may come up during the year.

On behalf of the Holyoke Public Schools staff, we look forward to meeting and working with all of you. Our work together will ensure that each of your children, our students, fulfill our vision.

HPS Vision

The vision for the Holyoke Public School is to create a pathway for every student. In addition, Our students will graduate with an additional credential that provides for college and career options.

Our students are:

- Effective Communicators
- Critical Thinkers
- Engaged and Productive Community Members
- Mindful Individuals

It is my hope that the content of this handbook is informative and useful. If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this handbook, contact your child's school or submit your question or comment by clicking [here](#).

Sincerely,



Dr. Alberto Vázquez Matos, Superintendent /Receiver of Holyoke Public Schools

Holyoke Public School Directory

Holyoke High School Dean Campus
1045 Main Street
Phone: 413-534-2071/72

Holyoke High School North Campus
500 Beech Street
Phone: 413-534-2020/21

Holyoke STEM Academy
1045 Main Street
Phone: 413-535-0345

Veritas Prep Holyoke
1916 Northampton Street
Phone: 413-535-0181

Dr. William R. Peck School
1916 Northampton Street
Phone: 413-534-2040/41

Maurice A. Donahue School
210 Whiting Farms Road
Phone: 413-534-2069/70

Dr. Marcella R. Kelly School
216 West Street
Phone: 413-534-2078/79

Lawrence School
156 Cabot Street
Phone: 413-534-2075

Lt. Elmer McMahan School
75 Kane Road
Phone: 413-534-2062/63

Morgan School
596 S Bridge Street
Phone: 413-534-2083/84

Lt. Clayre P. Sullivan School
400 Jarvis Avenue
Phone: 413-534-2060/61

E.N. White School
1 Jefferson Street
Phone: 413-534-2058/59

Metcalf Dual Language Elementary School
2019 Northampton Street
Phone: 413-534-2104

Opportunity Academy
206 Maple Street
Phone: 413-552-2916

Metcalf Dual Language Middle School
1987 Northampton Street
Phone: 413-534-2104

Holyoke Transitions Academy
4 Open Square Way Mill 7
Phone: 413-512-5361

***Student Attendance and Enrollment**

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model, further information can be found in the [HPS Return to School plan](#).*

Attendance

Family Guide To The Hps Attendance Policy For Grades Prek-12 For Sy20-21

For all students to fully benefit from learning experiences, **students need to attend class on time every day when healthy**. Although we recognize that illness or an emergency may cause a student to be absent periodically or for an extended period of time, we hope these situations are limited. Absences and tardies negatively affect the students' academic progress. If families face specific attendance challenges, our staff is available to partner with families to find appropriate support. The key is to be in close communication and partner with each other to support our students' success.

What Does Massachusetts' State Law Say About School Attendance?

- All children 6-16 years old must attend class every day
- School districts are required to monitor class attendance

In Holyoke Public Schools, We Expect Families:

- To have children attend classes (in-person and virtually) on time every day when healthy. Notify the school about planned absences. In the case of routine medical appointments within the Pioneer Valley, we expect students to be in class before or after the appointment.
- Reserve excused absences for emergencies or extraordinary circumstances (such as illness, bereavement or religious holidays). Students are excused from in-person learning when they may have been in close contact with someone who could potentially have COVID-19, but then are expected to instead engage in remote learning. Principals have the discretion to excuse absences for other specific reasons. Please note that extended family vacations are not excused.
- Communicate regularly with teachers and plan to make-up missed time and school work.

What Happens When Students Are Absent?

Students and staff are expected to stay home when ill and when they have been in close contact with someone who could potentially have COVID-19. Students and families are expected to communicate with the school so that the reasons behind the absence are understood. When the reasons for the absence are not understood and absences continue to occur, we will be in contact with the family. We want to support your child and your family so that your child is successful in school.

What Happens When Students Are Absent Under All Learning Models?

Daily absences	Parent/Guardian should notify the school if the student is absent. If a parent/guardian does not notify the school, the school will call home about the student's absence.
3 unexcused absences	Email sent by school staff and personal call to the home to schedule a virtual meeting with family and school staff designee. Text may also be used if preferred by the family.
5 unexcused absences	Email sent by school staff, and virtual meeting, or in-person (if virtual isn't possible and in compliance with State and district guidelines and in adherence to social distancing and PPE requirements), with the principal or designee to address absenteeism. Potential referral to Enlace de Familias, and/or another appropriate organization, for additional support (case-by-base basis and mutually agreed upon by the school and parent/guardian).
9 unexcused absences	AGES 3-5 Email sent by school staff and the parent/guardian must meet with the principal virtually or in-person (if virtual isn't possible and in compliance with State and district guidelines and in adherence to social distancing and PPE requirements) to discuss a plan to increase attendance or risk not being enrolled. AGES 6-16 Email sent and a virtual meeting or in-person meeting (if virtual isn't possible and in compliance with State and district guidelines and in adherence to social distancing and PPE requirements) with the principal is scheduled to promote and support improved attendance. Discussion of potential referrals to other agencies for interventions and support (Family Resource Center, DCF).
14+ unexcused absences	AGES 3-5 Support will be put in place due to loss of learning time (response will be determined on a case-by-case basis following a meeting between the family and school). AGES 6-16 Support will be put in place due to loss of learning time including possible virtual academy time and credit recovery. Follow up information submitted to DCF or Juvenile Court on a case-by-case scenario and only when all school-based options have been exhausted.
<p>PLEASE NOTE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The State of Massachusetts's Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) guidance (https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-out-who-can-file-an-application-for-a-child-requiring-assistance) states that "a person who represents the school district the child attends can file an application stating that the child is habitually absent and doesn't attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter without a proper excuse." <p>School leadership and school-based attendance teams shall use discretion in the filing of a CRA and other interventions on a case-by-case basis and shall not use interventions that can adversely and disproportionately affect certain children and families.</p>	

Notification of Student Absences

If a student will be absent on a given day, parents/guardians must call the school to inform them of the student's absence and the reason for such absence. If the school does not receive a message from the parent/guardian, then the school shall call the contact telephone number or numbers provided at the beginning of the school year to notify the parents/guardians about the student's absence.

After three, five, and nine absences, parents will receive letters from the school in the language of the home with the student's attendance record and a request to partner with school staff to address attendance challenges, whether the absences are excused or unexcused. The school will continue to contact the family by phone, mail and home visits to address the student's absences if the parent(s) or guardian(s) does not contact the school. (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Sections 1A-1B)

Excused Absences

Students will be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons after presenting satisfactory official documentation:

1. Documented illness or quarantine;
2. Bereavement (a maximum of five days for services taking place out of state);
3. Observance of major religious holidays.

A student may also be excused for a limited number of days for other extraordinary reasons with approval of the Principal and after presenting official documentation, such as:

1. School sponsored activities or functions;
2. Out-of-school suspension;
3. Documented court appearances;
4. DYS confinement;
5. Displacement by natural disasters;
6. Challenges with transportation services offered by the district.

Only school principals, assistant principals or deans are able to excuse absences. The following reasons cannot be used to excuse frequent absences or tardiness from school:

1. Truancy;
2. Family vacations;
3. Non-emergency family situations.

Medically-Excused Absences

If the child is sick but the illness does not warrant taking him/her to a health care provider (see *Health Guidelines for School Attendance*), then the parent/guardian should send a note for the school nurse upon the child's return to school explaining the reasons for the absence. The nurse will then share with front office staff the names of students that should be excused for medical reasons on the form created for this purpose.

In the case of head lice, up to two (2) days can be excused if the condition is verified by the school nurse or a health care provider. After a third episode within a three (3)-month period, the student should be referred to the nurse so that a more aggressive course of action can be prescribed.

In cases of chronic asthma, after three asthma-related absences, the student should be referred to the school nurse who should follow up with family regarding compliance with the student's asthma action

Family Vacations

The Holyoke Public Schools strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session and such absences will not be excused. Please consult the district calendar in order to take vacation days during weeks that school is not in session. Vacations taken during school time interrupt the student's educational process which can't be reclaimed by make-up work.

Review or Appeals

A student, parent or guardian may appeal what is accounted for as an excused or unexcused absence by contacting a school administrator. The student, or parent(s)/legal guardian(s), may appeal the decision on the school-level review to the Superintendent. The appeal must be submitted in writing within ten (10) days of the receipt of the review decision.

Suspensions

Days out of school due to external suspensions are absences that do not count toward a lack of academic credit (see Code of Conduct). Students who are absent due to external suspensions will be expected to make up missed assignments, homework and tests.

General Information Regarding Attendance

The Attendance Officer (413-534-2000 x1130) will support schools in addressing attendance to prevent and intervene in chronic truancy cases.

Families that face demonstrable hardships or challenges to attend their assignment zone schools may submit a written Assignment Zone Appeal throughout the school year and the summer. These appeals are approved only in very special cases of extraordinary circumstances that may warrant a particular student attending a school outside the Attendance Zone (for example: need to keep siblings together in one school when one has been assigned to a school outside of the family's zone, etc.). Please consult the District website or contact the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center (413-534-2000) for more information on [filing an appeal](#).

Students Permanently Leaving School

No enrolled student shall be considered to have permanently left public school unless an administrator of the student's school has sent notice (within a period of five days from the student's tenth consecutive absence) to the student and the parent or guardian of that student in both the primary language of the parent or guardian, to the extent practicable, and English.

The notice shall initially offer at least two dates and times for an exit interview between the superintendent, or a designee, and the student and the parent or guardian of the student to occur prior to the student permanently leaving school and shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview. The notice shall indicate that the parties shall agree upon a date and time for the exit interview, and that the interview shall occur within 10 days after the sending of the notice. The time for the exit interview may be extended at the request of the parent or guardian, but no extension shall be for longer than 14 days. The superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with any such interview without a parent or guardian if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. The exit interview shall be for the purpose of discussing the reasons for the student permanently leaving school and to consider alternative education or other placements.

The superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school personnel, such as the principal, guidance counselor, teachers, attendance officer and other relevant school staff, to participate in an exit interview with the student and the parent or guardian of the student. During the exit interview, the student shall be given information about the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school, the benefits of earning a high school diploma and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

Student Enrollment

Our Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center is the main entry point for families to HPS and a key gateway for information about HPS programs and initiatives. The Center is located on the first floor at 57 Suffolk Street, Holyoke.

- Department Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
- Department Phone: (413) 534-2000

The Center provides support with the following:

- Enrollment for all grades

- School Attendance Zone assignments
- Transfers between School Attendance Zones due to change of address
- School Choice policy
- Support for families experiencing homelessness
- School attendance challenges
- Work permits for HPS students, and students attending charter and private schools
- Drop off site for children who couldn't be dropped off at home by school buses
- Parent concerns and complaints
- Information about specialized programs, new initiatives, family resources and family engagement opportunities

School Enrollment

All school-aged children who reside in the town will be entitled to attend the public schools, as will certain children who do not reside in the town but who are enrolled under School Committee policies relating to nonresident students through the School Choice program or by specific action of the School Committee.

Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age acceptable to the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center and proof of vaccinations and immunizations as required by the State and the School Committee. Proof of residency and legal guardianship will also be required by the school administration. However, students experiencing homelessness will be promptly enrolled even if they cannot present proper documentation or records, according to the McKinney Vento Act guidelines.

Families registering students in Holyoke Public Schools must submit proof of residency to demonstrate they reside in Holyoke (unless they are applying through the School Choice program) . "Residency" is defined as the place where a person has his/her permanent home. For minor children, this is presumed to be the legal residence of the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who has physical custody of the minor child. By providing residency information and the required documentation, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) certify this is the address where the child engages in most of his family and social life during the entire week. The district reserves the right to verify residency through the Attendance Officer or Holyoke Police Department.

For families who have submitted a Caregiver Authorization Affidavit (based on M.G.L. c.201F), the authorizing party understands that a caregiver affidavit cannot be used solely for the purpose of attendance at a particular school, to circumvent any state or federal law, or to re-confer rights to a caregiver from whom those rights have been removed by a court of law.

Advance enrollment for pre-k and kindergarten students will take place starting in March. Pre-K and other special programs have limited capacity as well as particular eligibility requirements and application procedures.

All public schools in the Commonwealth shall admit students without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. This includes, but is not limited to, regional vocational-technical schools, elementary, secondary, trade, and selective academic high schools.

1. No school shall discourage in any express or implied manner, applicants for admission because of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Written materials used by a school to recruit students shall not contain references suggesting the predominant sex of the students presently enrolled or the anticipated sex of the students to be recruited. Reference to only one sex in the name of schools, programs or activities shall not be retained.
2. The national citizenship of any applicant shall not be a criterion for admission to any public school nor shall national citizenship be a factor in the assignment or availability of courses of study or extracurricular activities.

3. Any standards used as part of the admissions process to any public school, including but not limited to testing, the use of recommendations, and interviewing shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Limited English-speaking ability shall not be used as a deterrent to or limitation on admissions.
4. If admission to any school, including but not limited to selective academic high schools, regional vocational-technical schools and trade schools, is dependent upon the participation or completion of courses or programs which were previously limited to students of one sex, or if close scrutiny reveals that access mechanisms or other administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any racial, ethnic or religious group of students to participate in such programs, then such criteria must be abolished.
5. Nothing in 603 CMR 26.00 shall be construed as to control the interpretation of or interfere with the implementation of St. 1965, c. 641, as amended by St, 1974, c. 636, providing for the elimination of racial imbalance in public schools, all rules and regulations promulgated in respect thereto and all court and administrative decisions construing or relating thereto.

Assignment of Students to Schools

1. Entrance Age:
 - a. A child must be at least three years old to enter a Pre-K program.
 - b. A child must be five years old by September 1st to enter Kindergarten.
2. New students entering HPS in grades PK-8 will be assigned to schools based on designated School Attendance Zones.
3. Students who leave and re-enter during the school year will be assigned to their Attendance Zone School upon re-entry.
4. The Pupil Services and Special Education Department will assign new or re-entering students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for special education services to schools.

Attendance Zones

Using the HPS [website](#), families can enter their address to determine their School Attendance Zone. Families without access to a computer can contact the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center or call any one of the school offices and request that information.

Transportation within Attendance Zones

The School Department will provide bus service under the current eligibility criteria for all students attending their Attendance Zone Schools. Students who are on waiting lists for their Attendance Zone schools because space is not yet available may receive transportation if they are forced to attend a non-Attendance Zone school that calls for bus transportation under the current eligibility criteria.

Transfers to Attendance Zone Schools

Under the Attendance Zone Plan, students who move to a residence outside their current Attendance Zone may request a transfer to their new Attendance Zone School. Transfer requests for the following school year may be filed at the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center. Depending on space availability and reasonable class size, transfers may be immediately approved, or in some cases, waiting lists must be established. Priority will be given to students who have siblings already attending the school.

Moving During the School Year

Students who move from one Attendance Zone to another before the start of school in January should transfer to their Attendance Zone School (pending space availability). With principal approval, those students who move from one Attendance Zone to another after January have the option of remaining at the school to

finish out the current school year. Families who remain at the school will need to provide transportation to and from school, on time, every day.

If a student moves out of Holyoke after April 1st, with principal approval he/she may remain enrolled at HPS for the remainder of the year. For the following school year, the student needs to enroll in the district where he/she resides or apply for a seat through the School Choice program to try to remain at HPS.

The Assignment Zone Appeals Process

An Appeals Committee is in charge of reviewing the Assignment Zone Appeal applications, once a month during the school year and at the end of August during the summer, to address special cases of extreme and/or extraordinary circumstances that may warrant a particular student attending a school outside his/her Attendance Zone. The Appeals Committee is composed of the Enrollment Center Manager and the School Supervisors. Call the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center at 413-534-2000 if you have questions or require additional information. Please note that Zone Appeals are not available for PK, and the parents of students with an approved zone appeal are responsible for transporting students to school every day and on time.

Assignment Zone Appeals should not be used to try to resolve issues pertaining to academic, discipline or bullying challenges a student may be facing at a particular school by trying to have them switch schools. We advise parents to establish regular communication with the school leaders and staff at your zone school to explore all alternatives to contribute to the student's success. If you have concerns related to your child's progress or safety at a particular school, you should contact teachers and school leaders first. If there are issues that remain unresolved at the school level, you may file a complaint at the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center (57 Suffolk Street, First Floor Right).

Chapter 74 Vocational Education

If your child is interested in enrolling in a career technical program that the Holyoke Public Schools does not currently offer, a Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education Non-Resident Tuition Form must be completed and the following steps taken:

- Part I and Part II of the form must be received by the Receiving District for completion by March 15th
- Part III of the form must be forwarded to the District of Residence for Completion by April 1st.

*NOTE: Approval of this application does not guarantee admission to the receiving school.

School Choice

All school-age children who live in Massachusetts are entitled to attend a public school free of charge. Most children attend school in their home district, which is the school district in which they reside. The School Choice Program at Holyoke Public Schools (HPS) allows parents an opportunity to have their children attend our schools while residing in a surrounding town. This program is made possible by the provisions of the M.G.L. Chapter 76: Section 12, otherwise known as the "School Choice Law," which allows HPS to claim a tuition reimbursement from the home district of every student enrolled in the program. As a result, HPS is able to have additional resources to better serve all students in our district.

It is the policy of this School District to admit non-resident students under these terms and conditions:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.

2. That by June 1 of every school year, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the choice law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision.
3. That the selection of non-resident students for admission be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the last week of the current school year but no later than July 1st. The second will be conducted during the week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of unexpected additional openings.
4. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the District until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
5. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

For more information about the School Choice policy, procedures and deadlines, visit our [website](#) or contact the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center at (413) 534-2000.

Student Records

In order to provide students with appropriate instruction and educational services, it is necessary for the school system to maintain extensive and sometimes personal information about them and their families. It is essential that pertinent information in these records be readily available to appropriate school personnel, be accessible to the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and/or the student in accordance with law, and yet be guarded as confidential information.

Below is a summary of parent and eligible student rights under state law and the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) regarding student records.

Definitions

Student Record: The **student record** consists of the transcript and the temporary record, including all information recording and computer tapes, microfilm, microfiche, or any other materials regardless of physical form or characteristics concerning a student that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that such student may be individually identified, and that is kept by the public schools of the Commonwealth as defined under state law.

Parent shall mean a student's father or mother, or guardian, or person or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the student in place of, or in conjunction, with the father, mother, or guardian. Any parent who by court order does not have physical custody of the student, is considered a non-custodial parent for purposes of M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H and 603 CMR 23.00. This includes parents who by court order do not reside with, or supervise, the student - even for short periods of time.

Eligible student: Under state student record regulations, an **eligible student** is any student who has reached 14 years of age or who has entered 9th grade.

Authorized school personnel shall consist of three groups:

- (a) School administrators, teachers, counselors, and other professionals who are employed by the School Committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the School Committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity. Any such personnel who are not employed directly by the School Committee shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (b) Administrative office staff and clerical personnel, including operators of data processing equipment or equipment that produces microfilm/microfiche, who are either employed by the School Committee or are employed under a School Committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record. Such personnel shall have access only to the student record information that is required for them to perform their duties.
- (c) The Evaluation Team which evaluates a student.

Confidentiality of Student Record

With few exceptions, no individuals or organizations other than the parent, eligible student, and school personnel working directly with the student may access information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent/eligible student.

Inspection of Student Record

A parent and an eligible student may inspect their own student record. The record must be made available to the parent/eligible student within 10 calendar days of the request, unless the parent/eligible student consents to an extension of this timeframe. If the parent/eligible student requests copies of the student records, the district may charge the parent/eligible student for said copies.

Third Party Access

Authorized school personnel, to include: (a) school administrators, teachers, counselors, and other professionals who are employed by the School Committee or who are providing services to the student under an agreement between the School Committee and a service provider, and who are working directly with the student in an administrative, teaching, counseling, and/or diagnostic capacity; (b) administrative office staff and clerical personnel, employed by the School Committee or under a School Committee service contract, and whose duties require them to have access to student records for purposes of processing information for the student record; and (c) the evaluation team which evaluates a student, shall have access to the student record of students to whom they are providing services, when such access is required in the performance of their official duties. The consent of the parent or eligible student shall not be necessary.

Amendment of Student Record

The parent and eligible student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. The parent and the eligible student also have the right to request in writing that information in the student record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. The principal must issue a written decision within one week of the conference. The regulations provide the parents/eligible student with a right of appeal if they are dissatisfied with the decision.

Transfer Students

A student transferring into the Holyoke Public Schools must provide the District with a complete copy of the student's student record from the student's previous school or school district. This record shall include, but not be limited to, all disciplinary records.

Transfer of Student Record

Holyoke Public Schools will forward the student record of any student who seeks or intends to transfer to another public school district, upon request of the receiving school. The written consent of the parent or eligible student shall not be required prior to the forwarding of the student's record to a receiving school or school district.

Release of Information to the Military

Under federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act provides all branches of the military the right to receive names, addresses and telephone numbers of all secondary school students. Parents must submit written notification to the school if they do not want their child's name provided to the military.

Directory Information

HPS designates the following information as directory information: student's name, date and place of birth, address, phone number, electronic mail address, grade level, (e.g. undergraduate or graduate, full-time, or part-time), dates of attendance, enrollment status, participation in officially-recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, degrees, honors and awards received, and major field of

study. Directory information may be disclosed at the discretion of the school system without the consent of a parent of a student or an eligible student.

Parents of students and eligible students have the right, however, to refuse the release of this information. Any parent or eligible student refusing to have any or all of the designated directory information disclosed must file written notification to this effect with the Principal on or before the 15th day of each September. In the event that a refusal is not filed, it is assumed that neither the parent nor eligible student objects to the release of the designated directory information.

Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions. A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

- The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
- The parent has been denied visitation, or
- The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
- There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal. Upon receipt of the request, the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access. The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

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

Destruction of Records

A student's temporary record (all information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript) will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from the school system. "Written notice to the eligible student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the record and their right to receive the information in whole or in part, shall be made at the time of such transfer, graduation, or withdrawal." 603 CMR 23.06(3).

The student's transcript will be maintained by the district and will only be destroyed 60 years following the student's graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from the school system.

Complaints

A parent or eligible student has a right to file a complaint regarding student records with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-5920, 800-8 72-5327; or with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148, 781-338-3300.

School Weather Closure and Delays

While we are hopeful that winter weather will not have a significant impact on our schedule, the following describes our communication efforts about delays and closings. We will do our best to make decisions by 5:30 am. We will use email and the phone message system to alert families and staff about delays or closings.

The announcement will also be posted in the following locations on the web and television:

- The HPS district website: <https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/>
- The HPS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/holyokepublicschools/>
- News Outlets: [WesternMass News](#), ABC 40, CBS 3, FOX 6, NBC WWLP [Channel 22](#), [NECN](#), and [Masslive](#)

If you do not receive an automated call or email from the District's messaging system (Connect-ED), it is because your updated phone number and/or email address are not in our system. In the event that this occurs, please contact the main office at your child's school and provide your updated contact information.

When weather conditions warrant, we may delay the start of school or release students early. If school is delayed, we ask that students report to school no sooner than 15 minutes before the adjusted start time in order to ensure safe and proper supervision.

Ultimately, decisions about school cancellations and/or delays are made in conjunction with the Holyoke Department of Public Works, neighboring communities, and our Chief of Finance and Operations. In assessing the forecast, student safety is always the most important consideration. At the same time, we believe that students should be in class whenever possible and hope to avoid as many interruptions as we can.

*Please note, as of 9/3/2020, due to many students learning remotely during the pandemic, we are awaiting more information from DESE about how cancellations work when the majority of students are remote and all students have access to technology to access learning from home.

For more information about weather cancellations, delays, and early releases, visit our district website:

<https://www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/families/weather-cancellations-delays-early-releases/>.

Parental Right Policies

Parental Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

1. **Consent** before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE): political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent; mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers; religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
2. **Receive notice** and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following: any other protected information survey, regardless of funding; any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
3. **Inspect** upon request and before administration or use: protected information surveys of students; instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum. **These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under state law.**

Specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement include: the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution; the administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by DOE; and any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above. Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901

Parents' Right to Know

The No Child Left Behind Act regards parents as consumers who play a vital role in the education of their children. As consumers, they are entitled to have information about their child's program and teachers. Parents should also know if their child is in a failing school and what they can do about it. This law contains many parent "right to know" provisions, and all communication with parents must be in an understandable format and, if practicable, in a language that the parents understand.

Right to Know Child's Achievement

At the beginning of every school year, the school district must notify each parent of a child attending a Title I school the achievement level of the child on the state's tests. This information must be an individual, descriptive and diagnostic report that allows parents (as well as teachers and the principal) to understand and address the specific needs of the student. This information must be understandable; that is, it can't be meaningless numbers or phrases. The information should describe – that is, diagnose and interpret – in words, using samples of student work if possible, what the achievement levels and numbers mean.

Right to Know Personnel Qualifications

At the beginning of every school year, the school district must notify all parents of children attending Title I schools that they may request information about their child's teachers. That information must be provided "in a timely manner." At a minimum, parents must be told:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications for the grade and subject she/he teaches;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional credentials because the state has waived normal qualifications;
- The teacher's college major and any graduate certification or degree and the discipline in which it was taken, and;
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to the child, and if so, their qualifications.

In addition, and without request, the Title I school must give parents "timely" notice when their child has been assigned to and has been taught by a teacher who has not met the state's highest qualifications for four or more consecutive weeks.

Right to Know for Parents of Limited – English Proficient Children

Parents of these children have an automatic right, without asking for information about their child's placement, or possible placement, in a language instruction program. And they have the right "to opt out" of any placement and to choose another method or program of instruction.

Within 30 days of the beginning of the school year (or within two weeks of the child's program placement), each local school system that uses Title 1 funds for language instruction must provide certain information to parents of limited-English proficient (LEP) children who are in a language instructional program or who have been identified for placement in such a program.

The notice must give:

- The reasons for identifying the child as LEP and in need of a language instruction program;
- The child's level of English proficiency, how it was determined, and the "status" of the child's achievement;
- The instructional methods of the program in which the child is participating or might be assigned to, and other available language programs that differ in content, use of English and a native language;
- How that program is meeting (or will meet) their child's educational strengths;
- How the program specifically will help the child learn English and meet standards for grade promotion and graduation, and;
- The specific exit requirements for the program and the expectation for transition into an all-English classroom. (Secondary schools using Title 1 funds for language instruction must also provide the expected rate of high school graduation).

If an LEP child has an IEP, the parental notification must include information on how the language instructional program meets the objectives of the child's individual education plan.

The notification must include written guidance explaining:

- The parent’s right to request that the child immediately be removed (“opt out”) of a language instructional program;
- The other possible programs or methods of instruction available;
- How parents will receive assistance in selecting another program, if offered by the school district.

In addition to these requirements, parents must be told if the child’s language instructional program (or the one proposed for enrollment) supported by Title I funds, is not meeting its annual goals for English proficiency.

Non-Discrimination Notice

The Holyoke Public Schools (“District”) does not discriminate against students, parents, Employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, or age. Additionally, the Holyoke Public Schools does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of homelessness, in a manner consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The District’s Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures are available here: [Title IX Grievance Procedures](#)

The District’s Civil Rights Grievance Procedures are available here: [Civil Rights Grievance Procedure](#)

The individuals identified below have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the District’s non-discrimination policies in education-related activities, including but not limited to inquiries related to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Act. Should you wish to request information or file a complaint alleging discrimination you may contact the following individuals:

Civil Rights Coordinator Sandra Donah, Ed.D. (413) 534-2000

Title IX Coordinator: Sandra Donah, Ed. D. (413) 534-2000

Section 504 Coordinator: Giselle Rojas. (413) 534-2000

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

The Holyoke Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The District is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The District’s policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of the District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the *District’s Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*, available at: [Sexual Harassment Procedures](#). Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972,

will be initially addressed through the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure* and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the *District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures*, available at: [Civil Rights Procedures](#) . Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school District does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX to the District may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

District's Title IX Coordinators:

Sandra Donah, Ed.D
Director Of Student Support
57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
sdonah@hps.holyoke.ma.us
413-534-2000

Beth Gage
Chief Talent Officer
57 Suffolk Street
Holyoke, Ma 01040
bgage@hps.holyoke.ma.us
413-534-2000

Student Discipline and Safety

Each school has its own set of rules - known as school-based rules - that its students are expected to follow. If a student breaks a school-based rule, he or she may be disciplined. School-based rules are written by a committee at each school and are reviewed annually. In addition to following its own school-based rules, every school also must follow the *HPS Student Code of Conduct* established by the school district. *HPS Student Code of Conduct* is based upon the laws, rules, regulations and policies that seek to allow access to education for all while protecting the due process rights of the individual. **For the full text of this document, please visit our website.** Both school-based rules and the *HPS Student Code of Conduct* apply to the behavior of students while they are in school, at a school-sponsored activity, and on their way to and from school.

Student Lockers

Many HPS schools have lockers for students. Lockers are a privilege. Students who are assigned lockers must abide by the following conditions: Every effort should be made to keep the lockers secure and allow for the privacy of its contents. Students should not share lockers unless authorized to do so by the person in charge. Writing graffiti or failure to keep lockers neat and clean will not be tolerated. Lockers are for the students' clothing and instructional materials such as books, notes, projects, supplies, lunches, etc. Students must comply with their school's locker regulations, including scheduled times for access, etc. Students should take what they need from their lockers at the end of the school day. Since lockers are the property of the school department, the schools maintain the right to search lockers. Students should not have an expectation of privacy in school lockers. The schools will conduct announced and unannounced locker inspections. HPS is not responsible for the loss of property during the school year. HPS is also not responsible for the loss of property left in a locker after the last school day. These rules and regulations, along with the school's procedures, also apply to students' desks.

Hazing

Hazing is defined as any conduct or method of initiation into a student class or group, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any other student. All high school students will be required to sign a statement from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding hazing. Hazing is a violation of school policy. Students involved in hazing may be suspended. A criminal complaint will be filed. Information regarding this subject is distributed to all students at the opening of school.

Crime of Hazing; Definition; Penalty

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than 3,000 dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term hazing, as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Duty to Report Hazing

Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen, and is at the scene of such crime, shall to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine or not more than 1,000 dollars.

Statutes to be Provided to Student Groups; Compliance Statement and Discipline Policy

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgement stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

Vandalism

No one is to injure, destroy, deface or trespass on school property. All students and staff are urged to treat school buildings with care and respect. The school department will take the parents/guardians to court. People with any information about the damage done to the building or its contents shall report it to the school's principal. Writing or spraying inappropriately on or around the school - graffiti, carving on a desk, mishandling a book, breaking a window, destroying equipment, or damaging materials are all infringements on the right of the school community to have a clean environment. Students who have vandalized, and the parent(s)/guardian(s), will be held responsible.

Bullying

The Holyoke Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying.

Definitions

Bullying may take a variety of forms. It is unacceptable in a school or work environment. As a result, no student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying in the Holyoke Public Schools:

- **“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of an unwelcome written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage the target's property;

student or employee, (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyberbullying.

- **“Cyberbullying”** means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo-electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communication. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creator or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons. Cyberbullying may occur through the use of data, telephone or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network or any public education institute. As used in this Section, “electronic communication” also means any communication through an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.
- **“Aggressor”** is a student or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.
- **“Target”** is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.
- **“Retaliation”** means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Prohibition Against Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation

Bullying and retaliation are strictly prohibited in the following ways:

- on school grounds
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds
- at school-sponsored or school-related activities
- at functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- at school bus stops
- on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the school district
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by the Holyoke Public Schools

Bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Holyoke school district if the act or acts in question include any or all of the following criteria:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target
- infringe on the rights of the target at school
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school

Reporting Bullying or Retaliation

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by, or to, a staff member will be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The Holyoke School District

makes a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, a **Bullying Reporting Form**, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of a Bullying Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district:

- includes a copy of the Bullying Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians
- makes it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and posts it on the district's website.

The Bullying Reporting Form is made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians. At the beginning of each school year, the school or district provides the school community, including administrators, staff, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, is incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the *Bullying and Intervention Implementation Plan* that is made available to parents or guardians.

Reporting by Staff

A staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report to the principal or designee does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others

The Holyoke Public Schools expect students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students are provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee.

Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan (see attached sample plan); pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a "safe person" for the target; and altering the aggressor's schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

In determining the steps necessary to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents, the principal or designee shall consider that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The principal or designee is responsible for implementing appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or

retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation

Each school building administrator establishes a safety plan for target(s) of bullying and retaliation/harassment. This includes strategies to protect students who report bullying and retaliation, provide information during an investigation, and/or who witness or provide reliable information about an act of bullying and retaliation.

The safety plan may also be used for an aggressor, or even a bystander, in order for them to more effectively manage troublesome times/areas of the school, such as unstructured play and less supervised places.

The safety plan includes the following elements:

- Selection of a “safe zone” - an area identified by the target where he or she can go to get help from a trusted adult
- A mechanism for informing all relevant adults (teachers, coaches, bus drivers, counselors and other support staff) of the situation between the aggressor(s) and target(s)
- A plan for monitoring of less structured areas of the school environment, such as buses, lunchroom and playground
- Follow-up with parents/guardians of all involved to inform them of actions being taken
- Protection of the confidentiality of the reporter and witnesses wherever possible
- Assessment of effectiveness of the above interventions on a regular basis making necessary adjustments and revisions in order to meet the safety needs of the target

Obligations to Notify Others

- **Preliminary Notice to Parents or Guardians.** There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to investigation or an investigative determination. Any such notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00. Parents are provided information about action steps that will be put in place during the investigation process.
- **Notice to another School or District.** If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, nonpublic school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.
- **Notice to Law Enforcement.** At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the Holyoke Police Department. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the Holyoke Police Department if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan* and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer (if any) and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

Investigation

Upon receipt of a report or complaint that would, if true, constitute bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, the principal or principal’s designee promptly commences an investigation. In investigating any such complaint, the principal or designee interviews students, staff, and any witnesses to the alleged conduct. To the extent practicable and consistent with the principal’s obligation to act promptly and to thoroughly investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee maintains confidentiality during the investigative process and does not disclose unnecessary or confidential information to interview subjects. During any such interviews, the

principal informs the target, aggressor, and all witnesses that retaliatory treatment of any individual for reporting or lack of cooperation with an investigation of bullying will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion from the school.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee is required to maintain confidentiality during the investigative process.

The principal or designee will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the following: the importance of the investigation; their obligation to be truthful; and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation are consistent with school or district policies and procedures for bullying investigations. If necessary, the principal or designee consults with legal counsel about the investigation.

At any point after receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, the principal notifies the Holyoke Police Department and School Resource Officer if the principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. Notice shall be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. The principal documents the reasons for his or her decision to notify law enforcement. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to require reporting to a law enforcement agency in situations in which bullying and retaliation can be handled appropriately within the school district or school.

Determinations

Within 14 school days of the principal's receipt of the complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, the principal makes a determination based upon all the facts and circumstances. If, after the investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal determines what remedial action may be required and determines what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal's findings and determinations are documented in writing on the Bullying Reporting Form.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the student's teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

Notice of Investigative Findings

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee promptly notifies parents or guardians of the target and aggressor of this, and of the procedures for responding to it. While prior notice of an investigation shall not be required, the principal shall not be precluded from notifying the parents of a target or aggressor prior to completion of the principal's investigation. This communication will be done in the primary language of the home.

If the alleged target and alleged aggressor attend different schools, the principal receiving the report will inform the principal of the other student's school, who shall notify the student's parent of the report and procedures.

In notifying the parent(s) of a target or aggressor of an investigation or the principal's findings thereon, the principal maintains the privacy and confidentiality of any individual or child who is not the child of the parents to

whom the notice is provided. The principal ensures that any notice to the parent(s) complies with applicable state regulations including, but not limited to, 603 CMR 49.00, and shall not report specific information to the target's parent(s) about the disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The notice to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the target must include information about the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's ("DESE") problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system.

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa>, emails can be sent to compliance@doe.mass.edu or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Hard copies of this information are also available at the Superintendent's office.

Domestic Violence

HPS is committed to providing a learning environment in which dating violence is not tolerated. Consistent with this philosophy, we are committed to promoting an environment free from dating violence. Accordingly, we seek to increase awareness of teen dating violence and help in responding to the needs of victims and children who are witnesses to such violence. Teen dating violence occurring in any setting is unlawful and teen dating violence occurring in any school setting will not be tolerated. Further, retaliation against an individual who has complained about teen dating violence or cooperated in an investigation of teen dating violence will not be tolerated. HPS will respond promptly to complaints and reports of teen dating violence or retaliation and corrective action will be taken where necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate. The definitions used in this policy are as follows:

Domestic Violence/Interpersonal Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behavior in which one partner attempts to control another through threats or actual use of tactics which may include any or all of the following: physical, sexual, verbal, financial, psychological abuse and/or through the use of technology (i.e. cyberbullying). Domestic violence affects every community across the country, regardless of ethnic group, culture, or background. People of all ages, income levels, faiths, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and education levels experience domestic violence.

Teen Dating Violence

Dating violence (or relationship abuse) is a pattern of over-controlling behavior that someone uses against their girlfriend or boyfriend. Dating violence can take many forms, including mental/emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or through the use of technology (i.e. cyberbullying). Someone may experience dating violence even if there is no physical abuse. It can occur in both casual dating situations and serious, long-term relationships.

Child Witness/Exposure to Domestic Violence

Witnessing violence can affect every aspect of a child's life, growth, and development. Exposure can include seeing or hearing the abuse, discovering the effects of abuse (their parent/guardian's injuries or broken furniture, etc.) and/or being injured/hurt defending a parent/guardian against the abusive behavior.

Family Violence

Family Violence is a broader definition, including child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent acts between family members.

Victim/Survivor/Battered

Interchangeable terms to refer to the person who has been hurt, abused or threatened with harm, whether or not there has been actual physical abuse.

Abuser/Perpetrator/Batterer

Interchangeable terms to refer to the person inflicting the abuse and causing harm, whether or not there has been actual physical abuse. Additionally, such conduct may also constitute harassment, a form of discrimination that is prohibited by federal and state law; and/or such conduct may constitute bullying, including cyberbullying which is prohibited by state law. Such conduct also is prohibited by HPS' Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure for Discrimination and Harassment Complaints, Anti-Violence Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Recognizing Warning Signs

Signs of abusive behavior include: acting really jealous if his/her girlfriend/boyfriend talks to others, trying to decide what the other should do, blowing disagreements out of proportion, constantly threatening to break up, losing his/her temper verbally, blaming the other for their own problems, physically and emotionally hurting their partner, or acts of cyberbullying.

Signs of victimization

Signs include constantly cancelling plans for reasons that do not sound right, always worrying about making their boyfriend/girlfriend angry, giving up things that are important to them, showing signs of physical abuse, such as bruises or cuts, getting pressured into having sex or feeling like a sex object, having a boyfriend/girlfriend that wants them to be available all the time, and becoming isolated from family or friends, or been cyberbullied.

Procedure for Reporting Teen Dating Violence

A student who believes that he/she has been a victim of teen dating violence, believes that he/she is in danger of teen dating violence, or has a restraining order against an individual, may report the matter to any of the following individuals: principal, assistant principal, dean, teacher, or school nurse. The person who receives the report must immediately notify the principal of the school. Additionally, any employee who observes an incident of teen dating violence on school property or at a school related event must immediately notify the principal. The principal must immediately notify the parents/guardians of the victim, and notify the police. The principal must also refer the student and/or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to HPS Non-Discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedure for Discrimination/Harassment Complaints, which addresses procedures for informal resolution and filing of formal complaints and HPS Anti-Bullying Policy and provide copies of the same upon request.

When a report of teen dating violence is received, whether it occurred on or off school property, on the way to or from school, or at a school-related event, HPS will act promptly to notify the appropriate authorities of the alleged incident. Additionally, when a violation of a restraining order on school property, on the way to or from school, or at a school-related event is received, HPS will also act promptly to notify the appropriate authorities of the alleged incident. Reporting of any such incident will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. It is important to take third-party information seriously where teen dating violence is concerned. It is recommended that an appropriately trained member of the school staff approach the student to discuss what has been heard and potential concerns. If abuse is acknowledged, a "safety plan" should be worked on, in addition to recommending and sharing referrals for counseling, support groups, and police/court assistance. Additionally, school staff must remember to comply with all statutory reporting obligations for suspected abuse and neglect (51A reporting). Filing of 51A complaints should be done by following HPS Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Guidelines, including notifying the principal of the suspected abuse and neglect. Furthermore, school staff also must remember to report all crimes to the police. Reporting of any such incident will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

Searches

The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted to school committees and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children, their own and school property. Nevertheless, the exercise of that authority by school officials places unusual demands upon their judgment so as to protect each child's constitutional rights to personal privacy and protection from coercion and to act in the best interest of all students and the schools. Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

Search of School Lockers, Desks and Computers

Students may be issued lockers, with or without private combinations, desks, computers, etc. at the opening of school or thereafter. Students should have no expectation of privacy in their school-issued lockers, desks, computers, etc. Lockers, desks and computers are for the use of students, but remain the property of HPS. Students are advised that their lockers, desks, computers, etc. may be inspected without notice by school administrators to ensure cleanliness, safety, and adherence to federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Search of Student, Clothing, Personal Possessions, Automobile

The legality of a search of a student, his/her clothing, possessions, and/or automobile depends simply on the reasonableness, under all circumstances, of the search. The search by a school official is “justified at its inception” when there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that a student or students have violated either the law or the rules of the school. Such a search is permissible in its scope when the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student(s) and the nature of the infraction.

Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities

HPS Administration reserves the right to deny admission to extracurricular activities to anyone who poses a potential threat to the safety and security of spectators and participants. Students who fall under the conditions listed below will be excluded from athletic, drama, music, dances, prom, field trip, and other extracurricular activities that have spectators: Students serving a suspension

- Former students who have been expelled

Any student who falls within the above categories who feels that his/her behavior warrants consideration for admittance must submit a request to his/her principal. HPS also reserve the right to exclude from any athletic, drama, music, dances, proms, field trips, and other extracurricular activities that have spectators, members of the community who:

- Have been involved in a serious incident in the community
- Have a history of violence
- Have been disruptive and/or disrespectful to staff

Gang Activity/Secret Societies

The goal of the School Committee is to keep District schools and students free from the threats or harmful influence of any gang. For purposes of this policy, gang is defined as any group, secret society, organization or association that advocates drug use, violence, ethnic intimidation, or disruptive or illegal behavior. The principal, or his/her designee, shall maintain supervision of school premises to deter intimidation of students and confrontations between members of different gangs.

The superintendent shall establish open lines of communication with local law enforcement agencies so as to share information and provide mutual support in this effort within appropriate legal guidelines.

The superintendent shall provide in-service training to help staff members identify gangs and gang symbols, recognize early manifestations of disruptive activities, and respond appropriately. Staff members shall be informed about conflict management techniques and alerted to intervention measures and community resources that may help students.

Symbols

The Holyoke Public Schools finds that gang symbols are inherently disruptive to the educational process, and therefore prohibits the presence of any insignia, apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or other school supply, or manner of grooming which by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute denotes membership in gangs. The school committee further prohibits any demonstration of gang membership through the use of hand gestures, graffiti, or printed materials. This policy shall be applied by the principal or his/her designee as the need for it arises at individual school sites. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Prevention Education

The Holyoke Public Schools recognizes that students may become involved in gangs without understanding the consequences of such membership. Early intervention is a key component of efforts to break the cycle of such memberships. Therefore, gang violence prevention information shall be made available in the elementary, middle, and high schools as appropriate.

Secret Societies

Fraternities, sororities and/or secret societies shall not receive District or building recognition in any manner. A student may be suspended or expelled for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

Gun-Free School Act

Any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school or to a school-related function shall be excluded from the HPS for a period of not less than one year, except as determined by the superintendent on a case-by-case basis. The definition of "firearm" for purposes of this section includes, but is not limited to, guns (including a starter gun), bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines, and similar devices.

Laws regarding Drugs and Alcohol

In addition to school disciplinary measures regarding drugs, alcohol and gang-related activities, the following state laws are currently in effect:

- **Use of Fake I.D. to Purchase Alcohol:** Use of a fake I.D. to purchase alcohol or providing false information to obtain a liquor I.D. or duplicate license from the Registry of Motor Vehicles will result in the loss of driver's license for six months to a year. Also, fines and a jail sentence may be imposed by the courts.
- **Any Drug Conviction, Including Possession:** Conviction for a drug offense, including possession of even a small amount of an illegal drug, will result in the loss of driver's license for up to five years in addition to court ordered penalties. If younger than 18, the issuance of a driver's license may be delayed until age 21.
- **Dealing Drugs Near Schools:** A conviction for selling drugs within 1,000 feet of school property in Massachusetts will result in a minimum mandatory two-year jail sentence plus a fine of up to \$10,000.

Police Department/School District Memorandum of Agreement (MOU)

A Memorandum of Agreement is signed annually between the Holyoke Public Schools and the Holyoke Police Department. The purpose of this agreement is to formalize and clarify the partnership between the District and the police department to implement a School Resource Officer (SRO) program in order to promote school safety; help maintain a positive school climate for all students, families, and staff; enhance cultural understanding between students and law enforcement; promote school participation and completion by

students; facilitate appropriate information-sharing; and inform the parties' collaborative relationship to best serve the school community.

Student Dress Code

By law, the rights of students as far as personal dress and appearance may not be abridged except if school officials determine that such personal dress and appearance violate reasonable standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and propriety.

Personal dress and appearance which is vulgar or plainly offensive or which disrupts or substantially interferes with the educational process or with another student's ability to receive an education is prohibited.

Hats, bandanas and sweatbands in school are inherently disruptive and are not allowed, with an exception for religious headwear. Students should remove these items when entering the school building and place them in their lockers or book bags for the remainder of the day.

Footwear, full shirts/tops, and pants, shorts, dresses, or skirts must be worn while a student is attending school.

In addition, a student's personal dress and appearance must comply with all OSHA and safety regulations while attending a lab or shop.

Security Cameras

The Holyoke Public Schools reserves the right to utilize security cameras in common areas across its schools in order to maintain safety and security.

Emergency Plans

Each school in HPS is required to maintain an Emergency Response Plan and annually train its staff on these plans. These plans are intended to be shared exclusively with staff in order for them to keep themselves and their students safe in the event of an emergency.

Transportation

Transportation Eligibility

Students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. State law requires that Districts provide transportation for students living at least two miles from school, K -6 students who live more than one mile from the nearest bus stop, and students with transportation provided per an Individualized Education Program.

Additionally, the District will provide transportation for students as follows:

- GRADES K - 5: Students living more than one mile from school
- GRADES 6-8: Students living more than one and one-half miles from school
- GRADES 9 -12: Students living more than two miles from school

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made at the discretion of the superintendent or his/her designee.

This will apply particularly to any student who must travel in a hazardous area to and from school.

School Bus information

Students should arrive at the bus stop at least 10 minutes prior to the time listed at the location closest to the home. Bus arrival times may change due to traffic and weather conditions.

***Students in Pre-K through 1st grade must be met by a parent or authorized adult. Bus drivers will not drop off these students without an authorized adult present. Please visit the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center to add authorized adults for your child.**

If your child rides a bus and you are unsure of when he/she will arrive because the bus is delayed, you should call Durham Transportation at **(413) 315-4119 with your route # information handy to assist with them getting you answers.**

Students that receive transportation through VanPool and you are unsure of when your child will be arriving because of a bus delayed, you should call VanPool at (413) 599-1616.

If you cannot reach the bus companies, you can call the Transportation Department at 413-534-2000 x 1640.

If you suspect your child was not dropped off as expected, he or she might have been dropped off at the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center located at [57 Suffolk Street](#) on the first floor (Latchkey Program).

Please note that temporarily during remote learning we are relocating our Latchkey program to the Lawrence school cafeteria located at 156 Cabot Street. You should call Durham first to determine if the bus routes have been completed. If they have, we ask that you call **(413) 534- 2000 ext. 1130, 1103 or 1640** to verify if your child has been dropped off at our Latchkey Program (see below). For all other questions that aren't answered by Durham or by our Latchkey staff, please contact Denise Rodriguez, Transportation Specialist for the Holyoke Public Schools at (413) 534-2000 x1640.

Latchkey Program

Students are brought to the Latchkey Program located at the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center (57 Suffolk Street - **Please note that temporarily during remote learning we are relocating our Latchkey program to the Lawrence school cafeteria located at 156 Cabot Street**) for the following reasons:

- Parent is not present at drop off for a Pre-k or Grade 1 student;
- A driver feels uncomfortable leaving students off at a stop when no familiar adult is present;
- Poor weather conditions and/or road closures may prevent a bus from getting to the regular bus stop;
- Other special circumstances that require a parent to be present.

Once delivered to the Latchkey Program, trained staff members are there to supervise the students. Staff record the students' names, school, time of drop off, and the reasons why they could not be released from the bus that day in the daily sign-out log. Staff will attempt to make immediate contact with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and notify them to come to the Latch Key Program and pick up their child. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be reached, staff will then try to notify one of the student's emergency contact persons.

Transportation Safety & Discipline

School Leader Responsibilities

The school bus is considered to be an "extension of the classroom" in terms of expected student behavior and appropriate follow-up by school administrators. This policy reinforces behavior standards for Holyoke Public School students (District Code of Conduct). The principal is responsible for addressing incidents that occur on school busses as they would be addressed had they occurred at the school. The principal will also communicate student/parent obligations at the start of the school year via student presentations and notification to parents. The principal will apply all approved Holyoke Public Schools policies and procedures to matters of regular transportation service as well as field trips, athletic bus runs, and late bus runs.

Incident Reporting and Response

The principal will report all incidents, maintain all records, and take appropriate action. If an incident is to occur that reaches the principal and requires an incident report be filed, they should fill out the incident report and get a copy to the bus company and transportation specialist. Whenever the bus driver or bus company writes an incident report or complaint, they send a copy to the principal of the building and a separate copy to the transportation specialist. The expectation is that the building principal is dealing with whatever incident has been filed that suggests students or school staff were causing the complaint or incident. In the event of a school transportation incident resulting in student injury, the school principal or designee will contact the parent(s) and will inform them of the incident. The principal will maintain copies of all incident reports filed by drivers and utilize reports for remedial purposes.

The principal or his/her designee is responsible for monitoring transportation service and the performance of school bus drivers and monitors. This includes daily one-on-one contact by school staff with a driver upon his/her arrival and departure from school. Principals are advised and encouraged to make all efforts to maintain a positive relationship with all drivers and bus monitors, and to also endeavor to work constructively with all HPS and transportation vendor staff with whom they come in contact throughout the school year.

Principals are encouraged to make time available to meet with drivers who wish to confer with them on a voluntary basis throughout the school year for the purpose of maintaining their transportation safety/discipline program. Principals may provide drivers with a seating plan for each bus if it helps with safety and behavior, and they should work constructively with drivers and monitors to implement such a plan. If a seating plan is put in place, students should be instructed to remain in their assigned seats throughout the trip.

The principal or his/her designee should regularly interview students in order to make assessments of the quality of transportation service, and are also asked to monitor ridership and notify the HPS Transportation Department if any bus assignments are not being utilized or buses are overly crowded.

If the transportation company is having issues with behavior that is impacting the safety of our students or is impacting the ability to get students home timely, here are a few recommendations that HPS encourages principals to take:

1. The principal or his/her designee may occasionally ride school buses for first-hand observation of operations; but a request to do so should be made in advance to the Transportation Specialist.
2. The principal should try to isolate the incident if it is one student, and take necessary steps to address the behavior with that one student.
3. The principal can create a seating arrangement if it helps.
4. The principal should contact parents to see if they can help.

The following guidelines can be used in reporting such events:

1. 1st write up: warning
2. 2nd write up: parent called
3. 3rd write up: one-day bus suspension
4. 4th write up: two-day bus suspension
5. 5th write up: possible removal from the bus

Safety Education and Evacuation Drills

The principal will support all safety education efforts relative to transportation and initiate programs within the first month of the school year. The majority of the work is done by the bus company but some coordination and cooperation from principals is required.

School bus evacuation drills are to be conducted in accordance with M.G.L., Chapter 90, Section 9B, which mandates school bus evacuation instruction and drills. Evidence of completed instruction and drills must be kept on file by the principal. HPS Transportation and Durham School Services will assist school administrators conducting bus evacuation drills as required by M.G.L. Chapter 90, section 9B.

Video Camera Procedures

The use of video technology on Holyoke Public Schools buses is intended to enhance a safe and orderly environment while transporting students to and from school, and school-related activities, by encouraging appropriate student behavior.

Students shall be informed of the use of video technology on school buses via school announcement at the beginning of the school year and it should be reinforced with proper signage on the bus.

1. Buses equipped with video technology shall display a notice indicating students may be videotaped.
2. The removal or alteration of the digital data from the video recording unit is the responsibility of the supervisor of a contracted vehicle. The school bus driver is prohibited from installing or removing video files, as well as operating the video camera.
3. The safekeeping of all video data is the responsibility of the transportation company.
4. Each video data file removed for viewing shall remain in the possession of the Transportation Specialist, Chief Finance and Operations Officer or other authorized school-based personnel.

5. The Transportation Specialist or Chief Finance and Operations Officer shall determine when a video data file shall be viewed or deleted. Video data files will be viewed by authorized school-based personnel only. The confidentiality of all persons on videotape or data file shall be protected.
6. Video data will be kept in a physically and electronically secured location within the transportation department for the duration of any investigation.
7. Video data files can be viewed and used by appropriate central office administrators or school staff as part of student and/or employee investigation.

Personal Property Loss or Theft

School personnel should strongly encourage families to be sure that children do not bring valuable items to school. If the presence of such items at school causes a disruption, school-based rules may allow school personnel to take a student's personal property away from that student while at school. The school-based rules may also state that certain items should not be brought to school in the first place. School personnel should make every reasonable effort to return all personal property to the student or parent that was taken away from the student by administration. However, school personnel are not responsible for replacing a student's lost or stolen personal property or compensating the family for the value of that property.

Student Services and Special Education

Child Requiring Assistance

The focus of the courts and school department with these offenders, regardless of age, is on early intervention. Massachusetts General Laws defines a habitual truant and a repeated school offender as a child that “persistently and willfully fails to attend school, is truant, or persistently violates the lawful and reasonable regulations of his or her school.” Under M.G.L. c.76, §2, parents/guardians are required to cause a child to attend school, and, if he/she fails to do so for more than seven day sessions or 14 half-day sessions within any period of six months, the parent(s)/guardian(s) shall on a complaint by the supervisor of attendance be punished by a fine. Additionally, schools may seek a CRA application for any child between the ages of six and up to 18 who is habitually truant because she/he has eight or more unexcused absences in a school quarter, or because the child has repeatedly failed to obey school rules. When internal school intervention efforts fail to resolve a chronic absence or tardiness, habitual truancy or repeated violations of school rules, the school department may initiate a CRA action with the court. Under the law, the Juvenile Court has access to all school information relative to these cases.

Child Abuse

Section 51A of Chapter 119 of the Massachusetts General Laws requires that certain persons who in their professional capacity have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, or neglect, including malnutrition, inflicted upon him or her shall immediately, via telephone, report this abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Professionals who must report cases of child abuse or neglect to the DCF include: physicians, medical interns, nurses, teachers, educational administrators, guidance counselors, family counselors, probation officers, school attendance officers, social workers, psychologists, and policemen. The telephone report should be made either to the appropriate area office or via the 24-hour reporting hotline: 1-800-792-5200. Within 48 hours, these professionals are required under Massachusetts law to notify DCF in writing using a standard DCF report form. A new report form must be completed for each new injury or re-injury. Staff who have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering from serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, or neglect, including malnutrition, should notify their school principal/head of upper school immediately in order for a 51A report to be filed. Child abuse and neglect is any incident in which there is reasonable cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare is harmed or is threatened with substantial risk of harm through abuse or neglect by a person (or persons) responsible for the child’s health or welfare, including personnel in the public school system. Truancy, by itself, is not a reportable matter.

Abuse includes:

- Physical, mental, or emotional injury by other than accidental means, i.e., beatings, cuttings, burns, broken bones, multiple bruises.
- Physical dependency on an addictive drug at birth.
- Any sexual act against another person either by force, or by threat of force or bodily injury, or against the person’s will. This includes a sexual act against another person who is incapable of giving consent because of her/his temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity or because s/he is a minor. Such crimes as indecent assault and battery, rape, rape with force, rape and abuse, assault with intent to rape and unnatural and lascivious acts constitute a sexual assault. Indecent assault and battery includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate and unwanted touching of private body parts. A person under the age of 14 is legally unable to consent to this type of sexual activity.

- Neglect is deemed to exist when the person or persons responsible for a child's care, although financially able to do so, fail to provide the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, and/or proper supervision and/or guardianship.

Restraint Prevention and Behavior Supports

Overview

The Holyoke Public Schools seeks to ensure that every student is free from the use of physical restraint that is inconsistent with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.00. Physical restraint is an emergency measure of last resort; it may be administered only when necessary to protect a student and/or school community member from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. When, based on this standard, physical restraint is necessary, staff will strive to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. The District will annually review its Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures, provide it to all District staff, and make it available to parents of enrolled students.

Definitions

Mechanical Restraint: the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that has been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically-prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

Medication Restraint: the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

Physical Escort: a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

Physical Restraint: direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Principal: instructional leader of a public school education program or his or her designee.

Prone Restraint: a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face-down position.

Seclusion: involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined below.

Time-Out: a behavioral support strategy, developed pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(1), in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for

time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed. DESE's *Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1*, issued on July 31, 2015, provides the following additional definitions pertaining to time-out:

Inclusionary time-out: when the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom.

Exclusionary time-out: the separation of the student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation or from actual physical separation.

Prohibitions

Chemical restraint, mechanical restraint, and seclusion are prohibited in all public school education programs.

Specific Rights

Neither 603 C.M.R. 46.00 nor this policy prohibits: any teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, others or themselves from imminent, serious, physical harm; any individual from reporting to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or an individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 § 51A.

DESE Technical Assistance on the use of Time-out

DESE's Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-1, issued on July 31, 2015, explains the differences between "inclusionary time-out" and "exclusionary time-out" as follows:

- "Inclusionary time-out" is when the student is removed from positive reinforcement or full participation in classroom activities while remaining in the classroom. The use of "inclusionary time-out" functions well as a behavior support strategy while allowing the student to remain fully aware of the learning activities of the classroom. "Inclusionary time-out" includes practices used by teachers as part of their classroom behavior support tools, such as "planned ignoring," asking students to put their heads down, or placing a student in a different location within the classroom. These strategies, used to reduce external stimuli in the student's environment while keeping the student physically present and involved in learning, have proven to be useful tools for classroom management. If the student is not "separated from the learning activity" or the classroom, the student will be in "inclusionary time-out" and the requirements that accompany the use of "exclusionary time-out," listed below, do not apply. A student is not "separated from the learning activity" if the student is physically present in the classroom and remains fully aware of the learning activities. "Inclusionary time-out" does not include walled off "time-out" rooms located within the classroom; use of those is considered to be "exclusionary time-out."
- "Exclusionary time-out" is the separation of the student from the rest of the class either through complete visual separation or from actual physical separation. The following requirements apply to the use of "exclusionary time-out:"
 - "Exclusionary time-out" may be used only for the purpose of calming;
 - During "exclusionary time-out," the student must be continuously observed by a staff member;
 - The staff member will either be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times;
 - The space used for "exclusionary time-out" must be clean, safe, sanitary and appropriate for calming;

- o Unless it poses a safety risk, a staff member must be physically present with the student who is in an exclusionary time-out setting;
- o If it is not safe for the staff member to be present with the student, the student may be left in the time-out setting with the door closed. However, in order to ensure that the student is receiving appropriate support, a school counselor or other behavioral support professional must be immediately available outside of the time-out setting where the individual can continuously observe and communicate with the student as appropriate to determine when the student has calmed;
- o Students must never be locked in a room;
- o For students displaying self-injurious behavior, a staff member must be physically present in the same setting with the student;
- o An “exclusionary time-out” must be terminated as soon as the student has calmed; and
- o An “exclusionary time-out” may not extend beyond 30 minutes without the approval of the principal. A principal may grant an extension beyond 30 minutes based only on the individual student’s continuing agitation.

Requirement for Use of Physical Restraint

Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort. This means that it may be used only when the student’s behavior poses a threat of assault or imminent, serious physical harm to self and/or others; *and* the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

Physical restraint may never be used for punishment. Physical restraint may not be used as a response to a student’s property damage, disruption of school order, refusal to comply with rules/directions, or verbal threats, unless the above harm standard is also met.

Brief physical contact to promote safety is not considered a restraint. DESE’s *Question and Answer Guide to Implementation of 603 CMR 46.00, The Regulations for the Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements if Used*, issued on July 31, 2015, states that “brief physical contact to promote safety refers to measures taken by school personnel consisting of physical contact with a student for a short period of time solely to prevent imminent harm to a student, for example, physically redirecting a student about to wander on to a busy road, grabbing a student who is about to fall, or breaking up a fight between students.”

Physical restraint may not be used as a standard response for any student. No IEP or written behavioral plan may include physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior.

To ensure student safety, staff will review and consider a student’s medical and psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans. Physical restraint will not be used when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, communication-related disorders, asthma, seizures, cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, or risk of vomiting.

Safety: During a physical restraint, staff will continuously monitor the student’s physical status, including skin temperature, color and respiration, and make certain that the student is able to breathe and speak. Staff will use the safest physical restraint method available and appropriate for the situation, and will use only the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm. Whenever possible, another adult who is not a participant in the restraint will witness the administration of the restraint.

Duration: A physical restraint must be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress (e.g., difficulty breathing, sustained or prolonged crying, sustained or prolonged coughing). If a student demonstrates or expresses significant physical distress, staff will release the restraint and seek medical assistance immediately. **For any student to be restrained for more than 20 minutes, staff must obtain the principal’s approval.** This approval must be based on the student’s continued agitation justifying the need for continued restraint.

Follow-up: Follow-up procedures will be implemented after the release of the student from physical restraint. These will include reviewing the incident with the student to address the precipitating behavior, reviewing the incident with staff who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed, and considering whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

Prone and Floor Restraints: Prone restraints are prohibited, except on an individual basis and when all of the following conditions, which require specific documentation, are met:

- the student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
- all other forms of physical restraint have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or others;
- there are no medical contraindications, as documented by a licensed physician;
- there is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
- the program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and the use of prone restraint is approved in writing by the principal; and
- the program has documented all of the above before using prone restraint and maintains the documentation. The only staff authorized to administer a prone restraint are staff who have received in-depth restraint training in accordance with 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3).

Floor restraints are prohibited unless the staff administering the restraint have received in-depth training in accordance with 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3), and these trained staff members determine that such method of restraint is required to provide safety for the student or others.

Reporting Physical Restraint Use

- All physical restraints, regardless of duration, will be reported.
- The reporting process within the school and to the student's parents is as follows: The staff will immediately verbally inform the principal, and the principal will make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parents within 24 hours of the restraint. The staff will file a detailed written report no later than the next school day, and the principal will email or mail the written report to the parents within three school days of the restraint. There are no individual waivers permitted for these reporting requirements.
- The report will include: names and job titles of those involved, including observers; date and time the restraint began and ended; the name of the administrator who was verbally informed; the name of the principal or designee who approved extending the restraint beyond 20 minutes, when such approval was obtained; what was happening before the restraint; the efforts staff used to prevent escalation of the student's behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies that the staff used; the alternatives to restraint that staff attempted; the justification for initiating the restraint; a description of the holds used and why they were necessary; a description of the student's behavior and reaction during the restraint, and any medical care given; information regarding any further actions the school has taken or may take; and information regarding opportunities for the student's parents to discuss the restraint with the school.
- The reporting process to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is as follows: The District will report to DESE all restraints that result in an injury to either a student or a staff member within three working days of the restraint. The District will also send DESE a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal pursuant to 603 CMR 46.06(2) for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. Additionally, the District will provide DESE with an annual report of its physical restraint use.

Administrative Reviews of Physical Restraint Use

Two types of administrative reviews will be conducted in regards to the use of physical restraint. The principal will conduct a Weekly Individual Student Review and a Monthly School-Wide Review.

Weekly Individual Student Review: A Weekly Individual Student Review will be conducted in regards to any student who has been restrained multiple times during the week. The principal will convene a review team to assess the progress and needs of any such student, with the goal of reducing or eliminating future restraint. This team will review and discuss the written restraint reports, analyze the factors that led to the restraint, consider the factors that may have contributed to the escalation of the student's behavior, and develop a written action plan.

Monthly School-Wide Review: A Monthly School-Wide Review will also be conducted by the principal. In this review, the principal will consider patterns of restraints, number of restraints, duration of restraints and any injuries caused by restraints. The principal will assess whether the restraint prevention and management policy needs to be modified and/or whether there is a need for additional staff training on restraint reduction and restraint prevention strategies.

Training Requirements

General Training: The principal will ensure that all staff receive training on the District's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures and the requirements for the use of restraint. This training will comply with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(2).

In-Depth Training: The principal will identify and authorize certain staff to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring the proper administration of physical restraint. These identified staff will participate in an in-depth training that complies with the requirements of 603 C.M.R. 46.04(3) and 603 C.M.R. 46.04(4).

Specific Procedures

The Holyoke Public Schools has developed and implemented specific procedures regarding appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. The Holyoke Public Schools' restraint prevention and behavior support position is driven by the statement below:

*The Holyoke Public School Department is fully committed to eliminate all physical restraints in school settings. Physical restraint of a student is only used to ensure the immediate safety of the student and/or the school community. Restraint is only used when a student presents serious, imminent harm to self or others, and will be done so using extreme caution and only by trained personnel. No type of restraint is used as a punishment or **to control a student's behavior**. All incidents where physical restraint and other interventions such as holds or escorts are used, staff will follow district procedures and reporting mandates.*

Methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide

The District utilizes a range of techniques in an effort to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide, including, but not limited to: individual crisis planning and de-escalation techniques.

Alternatives to physical restraint

Alternatives to physical restraint that may be used in the District include, but are not limited to: verbal prompting, redirecting students, physical escort, time outs, de-escalation techniques, positive behavior support plans, etc.

Description of physical restraints used in emergency situations

The following are the types of restraints that are allowed in an emergency:

- Only use the amount of force necessary to protect the student or others from physical injury or harm;
- Use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation;
- Floor restraints, including prone restraints, are prohibited unless an in-depth trained staff member judges that such a method is required to provide safety for the student or others present AND prior consent is obtained for this type of floor restraint procedure.

Restraint information and complaint procedure

Parents are welcome to contact Student Support Director, Dr. Sandra Donah, at any time to discuss the District's Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures. Additionally, any individual with a concern or complaint regarding the use of a physical restraint should report it to the attention of Dr Donah. An investigation of the incident leading up to the physical restraint, including a full review of the physical techniques utilized and of the space in which the physical restraint occurred, will follow. The Complainant will be notified of the results of the investigation.

Child Study Team (CST)

The Child Study Team (SST) process emphasizes that early intervention for struggling students is a function of the general education program and not of special education. The CST is a school-based problem solving team composed primarily of general educators who provide support to teachers to improve the quality of the general education program and reduce the underachievement of students. The team uses a common sense approach that offers a systematic process to successfully close the gap through which students have traditionally fallen. The team is not so much a new service, but rather it builds on existing services and efforts in order to upgrade the school's ability to respond effectively to student needs. The CST has a vital role in creating a high achieving school as expressed in the following goals: enable teachers to teach students more effectively, enable students to acquire academic and social competencies, achieve standards, become independent learners for life, and to create a collaborative culture among all staff. The CST should not be viewed as a gatekeeper to the special education process.

Special Education Referral/Evaluation (603 CMR 28.00)

Students suspected of having an educational disability that may impact their ability to make "effective progress" in general education may be referred for a special education evaluation by a school professional or parent. If someone other than a parent refers the child for evaluation, the parent will be notified of the referral and asked for consent to evaluate. Upon request, a Pre-school Team provides screening and/or evaluation for children ages 3-5 years old. Contact the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center at (413) 534-2000 Ext. 1100, 1102, or 1103 to make a screening appointment for your child.

Evaluation Team Leaders (ETLs) are responsible for the facilitation of the special education referral and evaluation process and serve as a liaison between the parents and the school for special education issues. Students are evaluated in all areas of the "suspected disability" by a team of qualified professionals including the student's teachers. Parents are important members of the team because they know their children best and can provide important information. The team consists of the ETL, the student's teacher(s), evaluators, an administrator or someone who can authorize the allocation of services, the parents, a parent advocate at the parent's discretion and the student (if 14 years of age or older). The team reviews all assessments to determine a student's eligibility for special education services. An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is developed for those students who are found eligible detailing the student's needs and the services he or she will be provided, with parental consent, through the special education process. Parents may obtain copies of all evaluation reports by requesting them from the ETL. Parents will be given a copy of Notice of Procedural Safeguards by the ETL of their child's school, advising them of their rights under state and federal law.

Special Education Services

Districts must provide special education services to *eligible* students ages 3-21.

Eligible students are students age three through age 21 who, because of a disability, are unable to progress effectively in regular education programs even with accommodations and require specialized instruction. A disability shall mean one or more of the following impairments:

- Autism
- Developmental Delay (applies to ages three through nine)
- Intellectual Impairment
- Sensory Impairment
 - Hearing
 - Vision
 - Deaf Blind
- Neurological Impairment
- Emotional Impairment
- Communication Impairment
- Physical Impairment
- Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability

Discipline-Related Information for Students with Disabilities

Information regarding discipline of students with disabilities can be found in the *HPS Student Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy* established by the school district. For the full text of this document, please visit our website.

Section 504 Accommodation Plan

The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a “free appropriate public education” (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district’s jurisdiction. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student’s individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. A variety of accommodations and services may be offered in accordance with 504 Accommodation Plans. The 504 Coordinator for the District is Dr. Sandra Donah, Director of Student Services.

Homeless Students

The goal of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is:

- To ensure that each child or youth experiencing homelessness has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.
- In any State that has a compulsory residency requirement as a component of the State's compulsory school attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

- Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.
- Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act regarding the definition of homeless children and youth.

Homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youth living in the following situations:

- (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans;
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).[CR2]

Homeless Education Liaison

The HPS provides various types of support for students experiencing homelessness in order to help them attend school consistently. Eligible families may be living in shelters or may not have their own lease because they are temporarily staying with family members or acquaintances due to economic hardship or similar reason. Contact the district's Homeless Education Coordinator at 413-534-2000 ext. 1140 for more details.

Enrollment and Dispute Resolution

The HPS will immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment such as school records, medical records or proof of residency. The Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center staff will assist students who arrive without records by contacting the previously-attended school system to obtain the required records.

Students identified as experiencing homelessness have a right to remain in their school of origin or to attend the school where they are temporarily residing. Students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they become permanently housed. However, once permanently housed, transportation becomes the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) for the following school year. Should a parent/guardian disagree with the school placement decision of the Homeless Education Coordinator or other District staff, the parent/guardian has the right to appeal. The parent/guardian will be provided with written notification in the language of the home of the placement decision and the paperwork to complete the appeal process. While the placement decision is under appeal, the student will be allowed to attend the school of the parent/guardian's choice and receive transportation (according to the District Transportation Policy) while the dispute is under review by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Access to Comparable Services

The HPS will provide students experiencing homelessness with services and education programs comparable to those received by other students and for which they meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs; programs for students with disabilities; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs. The Homeless Education Liaison will expedite the delivery of nutritional benefits by working directly with the food services department.

Student Marriage, Pregnancy and Parenthood

Students who are pregnant, parents or married shall be encouraged to continue in school. Such students are permitted to remain in their regular academic classes and to participate in extracurricular activities with other students. Additionally, pregnant students, after giving birth, are permitted to return to their same academic classes and extracurricular activities as before giving birth. No student who is pregnant, a parent or married shall be denied access to classroom instruction or extracurricular activities, nor be suspended, expelled, excluded or otherwise disciplined because of marriage, pregnancy or parenthood.

Restraining Orders

It is the responsibility of the student/parent(s) to inform the principal if he/she has obtained a restraining order against an individual. Once the principal is notified of the restraining order, he/she, or his/her designee, may meet with the student and his/her parents to review the order and its implications. An appropriate safety plan will be developed in collaboration with the school psychologist, guidance counselor, and faculty. The principal, or his/her designee, may also meet with the defendant to review the terms of the order, the expectations concerning appropriate behavior and the consequences for violation of the order. Violation of a restraining order is a criminal offense, and must be reported to the police.

When complaints of teen dating violence that are not related to school or school -sponsored activities are made known to school officials, students will be informed of available services. If the student agrees, a referral(s) to appropriate resources may be made. Parental involvement shall be encouraged.

Homebound Schooling

The schools shall furnish homebound instruction to those students who are unable to attend classes for a period of not less than 14 days in any school year due to a physical injury, medical situation, chronic illness, or a severe emotional problem. The instruction is designed to provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school he/she will not be at a disadvantage because of the illness or the hospitalization.

To qualify for the program the student needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to the Director of Student Services. Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. Teachers are assigned to homebound instruction by the Director of Student Services with the approval of the superintendent.

Guidance and Counseling

(See your principal for specific school procedures)

The Counselor's Role

Licensed school adjustment and guidance counselors provide comprehensive school counseling programs that incorporate prevention and intervention activities through school-wide assemblies and activities, classroom student development (guidance) lessons, intentional guidance groups, individual counseling, and collaboration with outside community resources. Counselors also assist students in ensuring they meet high school graduation requirements. Counselors also work in collaboration with teachers in administering career development curriculum, study skills curriculum, violence prevention curriculum, anti-bullying curriculum, and character development programs.

Elementary School Counselor

The elementary school counselor provides academic and social counseling while promoting healthy relationships with peers. The counselor at this level is instrumental in assisting students with identifying their own feelings as well as help students adjust to school. School counselors also work with students in all grade levels to ensure a smooth transition from one grade level to the next. In the elementary school environment, students are taught study and organizational skills that will prepare them for future schooling. As students approach the fifth grade, they are exposed to the prerequisites for middle school success. Students learn about the scheduling differences, the importance of organization, class structuring, and the peer dynamics that they will encounter upon entering middle school. Counselors work in collaboration with teachers, parents, and middle school counselors to make the transition from elementary school to middle school a pleasant experience.

Middle School Counselor

Upon entering middle school, students begin a major transition from the elementary environment to the middle school. From the changing of classes, increase in homework, extracurricular activities, and the physical changes of adolescence and puberty, parents are highly encouraged to become involved.

Academically, students operate within teams. School counselors work collaboratively with parents, teachers and students to develop schedules and prepare students for high school. It is during the middle school years that students will meet with their school counselor to review their options for high school and plan for their high school experience. We believe that close monitoring of grades and exploring career interests is essential for student success.

High School Counselor

The high school counselor is instrumental in preparing students for post high school graduation, as well as college and career awareness. The high school experience is the final level towards graduation. The school counselor will serve as a critical person in establishing a successful high school experience. Academic advising occurs annually at each level in high school with freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior students. Education plans facilitate the success of students during their high school years.

What if more intensive services are needed?

The school counselor(s) will collaborate with parents and school personnel to make referrals to an outside agency if needed.

Work Permits

Employment of students under 18 is restricted to before and after school, and days when school is not in session. Students between the ages of 12 and 16 may sell or distribute newspapers. Students ages 14 and 15 with working permits may engage in certain non-hazardous work, but may not work before 6:30 AM or after 6 PM. Students aged 16 and 17 may engage in certain specified non-hazardous work, but may not work before 6

AM or after 10 PM, except if employed in restaurants where they can work until, but not after, 12 midnight on Fridays, Saturdays, or during school vacation periods.

Holyoke youth in HPS middle schools and in private, charter, alternative or out-of-district schools who are seeking employment may pick up and submit Youth Work Permit Applications for approval at the Student Enrollment & Family Empowerment Center (57 Suffolk Street, First Floor). Students at Holyoke High School should pick up and submit applications in their respective school's front office.

Work permit applications may also be downloaded at www.mass.gov.

Work permits are issued only after a student has proof of an offer for employment. Applications must be filled out entirely before a permit is issued. For 14 and 15 year olds, this includes physician, employer, and parent/guardian signature. A physician's signature is not required for work permit applicants who are 16 and 17.

In addition, a proof of age (birth certificate, Passport, Immigration Record, Massachusetts Identification) is also required.

Academic Department

Admission to Course of Study

- Each and every course of study offered by a public school shall be open and available to students regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation or national origin. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the use of prerequisite requirements that have been demonstrated to be essential to success in a given program. However, if participation in a course or program is dependent upon completion of a prerequisite which was previously limited to students of one sex, or if close scrutiny reveals that access mechanisms or other administrative arrangements have limited the opportunities of any class of students to participate in such prerequisites, then all members of the previously excluded group shall be given the opportunity to acquire the prerequisites or be allowed to enter the program without such prerequisites. If it cannot be shown that a prerequisite is essential for success in a given program, the prerequisite shall be abolished.
- The determination of what courses or units of study are to be required of any student shall also be made without regard to the race, color, sex, gender identity, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or religion of that student.
- The scheduling of students into courses or units of study shall not be done on the basis of sex, gender identity, color, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or national origin.
- Each student, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or limited English-speaking ability, shall have equal rights of access to courses of study and other opportunities available through the school system of the city or town in which he/she resides, along with appropriate second language instruction and programs or other curriculum offerings of a supportive nature such as appropriate remedial programs.
- Nothing in 603 CMR 26.03 shall be construed to prevent particular segments of a program of instruction from being offered separately to each sex when necessary in order to respect personal privacy.

MCAS

Next-Generation MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is a set of state assessments administered to students to gauge progress towards mastery of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. All public school students across the Commonwealth, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency, participate in MCAS testing. English Learners will also be administered ACCESS for EL (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Learners) to gauge the process and next steps in acquiring English in all domains: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

All graduating seniors must score at the Meeting Expectations level on the ELA and MATH MCAS to receive a state -endorsed diploma. Students must also pass the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS in one course (Introductory Physics, Biology, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering).

MCAS Appeals

Students must take and meet the competency determination for the 10th grade English Language Arts, Math and Science MCAS to receive a high school diploma.

If a student has not met the competency determination for MCAS by the time he/she is otherwise eligible to graduate, he/she must file an appeal in order to receive a diploma.

To be eligible to file an MCAS appeal:

1. A student must have a 95% attendance rate for both 11th and 12th grade years.
2. The student must satisfactorily attend and participate in MCAS prep classes (students must have 66% participation rate in the prep classes or in tutoring).
3. The student must take the MCAS three times.
4. To receive a State Endorsed Certificate of Attainment, students must meet the state attendance requirements (#1 above).
5. Student/school may submit evidence of extenuating circumstances.

Report Cards and Progress Reports

Report cards are prepared for all students and distributed to parents at regular times during the academic year. Report cards are a vehicle for monitoring the progress, activities, and conduct of students. Parents should study the report card carefully, sign it, and return it promptly to the school. Parents are invited to discuss report cards with teachers at parent/teacher conferences; if a parent has a question of immediate concern, he/she should make an appointment to meet with the teacher or counselor at the school.

Dates For Report Cards And Progress Reports (Academic Year 2020-2021)

The dates for grades K-5 are as follow:

Trimester #	Dates	Grades Close	Report Cards Distribution	# of Days
1	September 14 – Dec 8	December 8	December 15	56
2	December 9 – March 19	March 19	March 26	57
3	March 22 – June 21	June 21*	Last Day of School	58

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model. For further information can be found in the [HPS Return to School plan](#).*

The dates for grades 6-12 are as follow:

Quarter #	Dates	Grades Close	Report Cards Distribution	# of Days
1	Sept 14– November 16	November 16	November 23	42
2	November 17 – Feb 2	February 2	February 9	42
3	Feb 3 – April 9	April 9	April 16	42
4	April 12 – June 21*	June 21*	Last day of school	45

**June 21 could be the last day of school. Additional days may be required due to inclement weather. Senior report card dates should be adjusted at the high schools to reflect graduation dates.*

The dates for grades for progress reports for grades 6-12 will be as follows:

Quarter	Closing date for Progress Report	Progress Report Distribution	# of Days
1	October 13	October 19	21
2	December 21	December 23	21
3	March 11	March 18	21
4	May 18	May 21	22

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model. For further information can be found in the [HPS Return to School plan](#).*

Alternative Schools/Programs

It is the philosophy of the District to provide programs and pathways for all of its students. Where additional programs and/or environments could facilitate meeting the needs of students and the philosophy and objectives of the District, alternative programs may be established. Any project shall have been discussed with the administration and must receive its endorsement prior to development. Alternative programs shall observe all policies and regulations that govern all of the schools and programs of the district unless specifically waived by the board. Proposals for alternative programs must include a design for evaluating the effectiveness in achieving the purposes of the program and determining the extent to which it is successful in achieving the philosophy and objectives of the district.

Homework Policy

During the remote learning model, the following homework policy will not be in effect. Asynchronous learning assignments and projects will take the place of homework during remote learning. As we progress through the school year and move from fully remote to hybrid and full in-person learning the homework procedures will adjust accordingly.*

HPS recognizes that a reasonable amount of study and preparation is necessary for the scholastic growth of all students. They are also aware that the amount of preparation should increase as the child progresses through the grades. Teachers will ensure that homework supports the district's curriculum. Meaningful homework is connected to district expectations for accelerating academic performance, college readiness, and career readiness. Parents/guardians are important partners. They can support student success when they:

- ensure that students complete homework;
- check work to assure quality;
- stress importance of systematic study;
- supervise and assist when necessary; and,
- provide a suitable place to study.

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model. For further information can be found in the [HPS Return to School plan](#).*

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism and forgery are considered to be academic dishonesty. For any work containing any information improperly submitted as one's own, or completed by means of academic dishonesty or deception including information obtained from the Internet and not properly cited, students will receive appropriate consequences which may include suspension and require that the student redo the assignment for credit. Violation of this policy may result in discipline ranging from a student receiving a failing grade for the assignment to suspension from school.

Summer Programs

The school system will conduct summer sessions as a supplement to the instruction offered during the school year when funding for such programs is available. Students at all instructional levels may attend approved summer schools for remedial, enrichment, or make-up purposes. Credit towards graduation requirements for high school students, as well as grade-to-grade promotion, may be granted in line with regulations of the School District.

Promotion and Retention Policy

Grade Level Placement/Retention

Consistent with laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion or handicap, the principal, acting reasonably and in good faith, has the final decision in accordance with school committee policy regarding: the promotion or retention of a student; the placement of a student with a particular teacher; the placement of a student in a designated course at a specific level of academic sophistication and/or one that has specific prerequisite requirements.

While principals are encouraged to involve parents whenever feasible in significant decisions that affect their children, the ultimate authority concerning promotion, retention, and placement of students rests with the school officials.

Prior to a student being considered for retention, the HPS Student Retention Procedure must be followed. During SY2020-2021 Student Retention Procedures may adjust to support student engagement and increased support in remote and hybrid learning models.*

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model. For further information can be found in the [HPS Return to School plan](#).*

English Language Learning Program

Mission Statement

English learners in Holyoke attend schools in which all educators share responsibility for their success, engage effectively with their families, and value and nurture their linguistic and cultural assets. English learners are taught by effective, well-prepared, and culturally responsive educators who hold them to high standards and have the resources and professional learning they need to advance students' academic and linguistic development simultaneously. English learners have equitable access to meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities that build on their cultural and linguistic assets and the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional supports they need to excel. English learners thrive in high school and graduate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to be successful in college and/or a career of their choice, and to contribute to civic life in a global community.

Educational Philosophy

1. The ability to speak more than one language is a valuable asset, and one that should be recognized as such.
2. Linguistically-diverse students require ample opportunities to understand, speak, read, and write English to realize their full potential within the context of schooling and the greater dominant English-speaking society.
3. The most successful programs are those that develop a positive self-concept in each student, while they continue to develop their English proficiency.
4. Teachers have high expectations of all students, regardless of the student's background or academic preparation.
5. Teachers value students' linguistic and cultural background and assist them in their transition to school and district norms.
6. Students in heterogeneous groupings learn from each other as well as from the teacher.

7. Students must have access to multiple pathways through which they can experience success, and teachers have the responsibility of ensuring they are awarded those opportunities.

Identification and Definition of English Learners

An English Learner (EL) is defined as a linguistically- and culturally-diverse student whose native language is other than English and who has an overall English Language Proficiency (ELP) level of 1-4 on the [WIDA Screener](#) or the [ACCESS for ELLs™ 2.0](#), English language proficiency tests for students in grades 1–12. EL students receive services that help them develop their English language proficiency while developing content knowledge in order to be academically successful. Students who reach an ELP Level 5 or above may be considered English Proficient students and may no longer be identified as EL students. EL students may also be referred to as “limited English proficient” (LEP) in legal documents.

To be eligible for EL status, a student must score the following on the WIDA Screener:

- an Overall Score of **Level 4.0**; and
- A Composite Literacy Score of **Level 4.0**

Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)

A SLIFE student is one who is an English language learner, is between the ages eight to 21 years, has entered a United States school after grade 2 or exited the United States for six months or more. The student’s prior exposure to formal schooling is characterized by no formal schooling or interruptions in formal schooling, at least two or fewer years of schooling than their typical peers, or consistent but limited formal schooling. The student is functioning two or more years below expected grade level in native language literacy relative to typical peers and two or more years below expected grade level in numeracy relative to typical peers.

State and National Terms Used for English Learner Programs

- English Language Education (ELE)- department name
- English Learner (EL)/English Language Learner (ELL)- student in English Language Education program
- English as a Second Language (ESL)- teacher licensure and name of program service provided to EL students
- Limited English Proficient (LEP)- state student classification
- Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP)- student who received ELE services and has exited the program; student will be monitored for two years after exiting the program
- Rethinking Equity in Teaching English Language Learners (RETELL)- a DESE initiative to improve and support the academic achievement of English Language Learners
- World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)- ELE state standards
- ACCESS for ELLs - annual state English language proficiency assessment administered to English Learners in K-12 to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English. Testing window typically is January-February.

Proficiency Levels

Level	Name	Description
1	Entering	Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support.
2	Beginning	Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support.
3	Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support.
4	Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language.
5	Bridging	Knows and uses social English and academic language working with modified grade level material.
6	Reaching	Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by ACCESS test.

Initial Identification and Program Placement

HPS assesses the English proficiency of all students who have languages other than English spoken in the home to determine proper placement and services within our ELE program.

- Upon registration, all families complete a home language survey for students entering the school district. [Home Language Survey/English](#). [Home Language Survey/Spanish](#)
- A trained educator assesses all students whose home language surveys indicate use of a language other than English in the home using the W-APT assessment.
- Parents/Guardians are notified of their child’s test results, program recommendation, and placement options via the [Initial Notification Letter](#). [Initial Notification Letter/Spanish](#)
- Parent notifications are filed in the student’s cumulative folder (inside an ELL insert) as well as attached to their SchoolBrains account.
- Students who are identified as English Learners are placed in one of the ELL programs (either SEI or Dual Language) where they will also receive English as a Second Language instruction from a licensed ESL teacher.
- Parents are informed of their right to “opt out” of services. Parent notifications are filed in the student’s ELL folder as well as the ELE office.

SLIFE Criteria

Once a new student is determined to be an English Learner, HPS will determine if the student is a SLIFE student (definition above) which includes:

- Administering a SLIFE Pre-Screener
- Administering a Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
- Establishing a School-Based SLIFE placement team
- Develop SLIFE program placement and an EL Individualized Learning Plan

- Record SLIFE designation on SIMS data collection and cumulative folder
- Parents/Guardians are notified of their child's test results, program recommendation, and placement options [Initial Notification Letter](#), [Initial Notification Letter/Spanish](#)

Opt-Out

If a family believes that their child should be placed in a program other than one of Holyoke Public Schools' English Language Learner programs, the family has the right to decline ELE services (opt out of the program) for their child.

- If parent decides to opt their child out:
 1. The Parent/Guardian is to contact their child's school to inform them of their decision to opt their child out of ESL services. Parents are invited to request a conference where program objectives will be explained. They are also welcome to observe the classroom to better understand their child's instruction.
 2. Once the parent/guardian has provided indication they would like to opt their child out of ESL services, an "Opt-Out Letter" is sent to them to sign which details the entirety of their decision and the fact that their child will still need to be tested with the *ACCESS for ELLs* assessment per State and Federal laws. [Opt- Out Letter English](#) [Opt- Out Letter Spanish](#)
 3. Once the parent has signed the letter, they are to return it to the school. The school will file the original signed form in the student's cumulative folder at the school.
 4. The school is then to indicate in the student information system (SchoolBrains) that the student has opted out of ESL services.

Although a family has the right to opt out of services, the student will continue to be assessed annually (ACCESS for ELLs) in accordance with state law until proficiency is demonstrated.

English Language Education Program Options

The English Language Education programs in Holyoke are dedicated to providing equitable access to all aspects of our school district to students whose dominant language is something other than English. All programs include English Language Development (ELD) and teaching strategies differentiated for each student's level of English language proficiency. These strategies are used to help each student reach proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English, and succeed academically in all core subjects. The program options consist of:

Sheltered English Immersion (SEI)

SEI Programs in grades K-12 consist of two components, Sheltered Content Instruction (SCI) and English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction.

- **SCI** includes approaches, strategies, and methodology to make the content of lessons more comprehensible and to promote the development of academic language needed to successfully master content (science, math, social studies) standards. It must be based on district-level content area curriculum that is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Frameworks) and that integrates components of the WIDA ELD Standards. Sheltered content instruction must be taught by qualified (SEI Endorsed) content area teachers.
- **ESL** instruction provides systematic, explicit, and sustained language instruction, and prepares students for general education by focusing on academic language. The goal of ESL instruction is to advance English language development and to promote academic achievement. Effective ESL instruction supports student success in school, including long term goals such as college and career readiness. ESL instruction, with its own dedicated time and curriculum, is a necessary component of any program serving ELs.

Dual Language Education

Students in this bilingual instructional program develop literacy skills in their native language while simultaneously learning a second language. Instruction occurs in both of the languages (English/Spanish) supported by the program. Students enter the program in the early years and develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in a second language over the course of a number of years. The long-term goals of Dual Language education programs are: bilingualism, biliteracy, high academic achievement, and cultural competency.

Recommended Periods of Instruction (full-day Kindergarten through grade 12)

ACCESS for ELLs Overall (Composite) Score	Recommended Periods of ESL Instruction
Foundational (Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3)	At least two to three periods (a period is not less than 45 minutes) per day of direct ESL instruction, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher
Transitional (Level 3, Level 4 & Level 5)	At least 1 period (a period is not less than 45 minutes) per day of direct ESL instruction, delivered by a licensed ESL teacher
Reaching (Level 6)	Students at level 6 should no longer be classified as ELLs and should participate in the general education program alongside fluent or native English speaking peers. Their progress must be monitored for two years after their ELL classification is removed. Such students should also receive additional supports and services if needed.

Reclassification (Exit) of ELLs

The goal of the English learner program is for students to become fully proficient in English and to master state standards for academic achievement as rapidly as possible. To those ends, districts must annually assess English Learners' language proficiency and academic achievement to determine whether such students are able to do regular school work in English, and to *remove* the English learner classification once ELs demonstrate the ability to do regular school work in English (G.L. c.71A § 4, 7). The process of removing a student's EL classification is also known as "**reclassification.**"

After evaluating the available student data (including ACCESS for ELLs results), school-based teams should determine whether there is sufficient evidence of the student's English language proficiency and if the student is able to perform ordinary classroom work in English without additional support.

The district's **reclassification criteria** are listed below:

- ACCESS for ELLs Results (required)
- Scores on locally-administered diagnostic reading, language, and other academic assessments
- Performance on MCAS content-area tests
- Classroom performance and grades
- Written observations and recommendations documented by the student's classroom teachers
- Parental opinion and consultation

If there is such evidence that the student is ready to exit the EL program, the school must:

- Notify parents/guardians of the student’s reclassification: [Reclassification Letter English/Spanish](#).
- A copy of the letter signed by the principal of the school is placed in the pink insert of the student’s cumulative folder:
- Update all school/district records (SchoolBrains):
- Reclassify the student as non-LEP (i.e., proficient in English) and remove the student’s coding as LEP on the SIMS data collection (SIMS: DOE 25 – record 00 under “LEP”); Typically, this decision will be made in time for the October SIMS data collection; and,
- Implement routine monitoring of the student’s academic progress for four years
- Students designated as ELL in Pre -K and Kindergarten will continue to be designated as ELL until they complete grade 1 (at a minimum), in order to gather more substantial data on their literacy skills and other data needed to support a reclassification decision.

Language Classification Recommendations (based on ACCESS for ELLs results)

ACCESS for ELLs Overall (or Composite) Score	Language Classification Recommendations
Level 1 - Entering Level 2 - Emerging Level 3 - Developing	Students performing at Levels 1–3 require significant support to access content area instruction delivered in English. Such students should remain classified as ELLs.
Level 4 - Expanding	Students performing at Level 4 typically require continued language and instructional support to access content area instruction delivered in English. Students at this proficiency level must still remain in the program and be provided services to reach higher levels of English proficiency.
Level 5 - Bridging	<p>Students performing at Level 5 may have acquired enough English language skills to be considered English proficient. Level 5 students who demonstrate the ability to perform ordinary class work in English, as indicated by one or more of the measures should no longer be classified as ELLs.</p> <p>However, increasingly complex and varied language demands on ELLs in late elementary, middle, and high school may support the decision by school-based teams to maintain the ELL classification of a Level 5 student. Should the student remain in the program s/he must still be provided services as designated as appropriate for any ELL student.</p>
Level 6 - Reaching	<p>By the time a student reaches Level 6, he or she should no longer be classified as an ELL. Students in Level 6 have achieved English language proficiency comparable to that of their English- proficient peers functioning at the “proficient” level in state assessments and can be expected to perform ordinary class work in English.</p>

Monitoring

English Language Education staff at each school, in collaboration with the district ELE Office, will monitor

Formerly English Language Proficient students for two years as follows:

- 1) Collaborating with current classroom teachers routinely at progress report and report card time, documenting student grades and anecdotal notes; student work samples may be collected and filed for evidence of growth;
- 2) Filing monitoring reports in the student's cumulative ESL folder as well as in the ELE office [FLEP Monitoring Form](#);
- 3) Conducting informal oral interviews using WIDA rubrics;
- 4) Reviewing progress reports; and,
- 5) Reviewing report cards.

If a formerly LEP (FLEP) student fails to make academic progress after reclassification, as measured by grades and assessments, and if a school-based team familiar with the student determines that this failure is due to lack of English proficiency, the student must be re-classified as LEP and the instructional programming redesigned consistent with this guidance.

Home Schooling

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a homeschooling program meets the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program. When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a homeschooling for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law.

Prior to removing the child from public school the parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of homeschooling to the Office of Teaching and Learning 14 days before the program is established, and re-submit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being homeschooled. The parent/guardian must certify in writing, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

Factors to be considered in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

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

A student being homeschooled within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the superintendent.

A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he/she has satisfied the Department of Education's competency requirements and has met the District's educational standards for graduation.

Field Trips

Learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire to encourage field trips as part of, and directly related to, the total school program and curriculum. Due to our current reopening model of remote learning physical field trips will not be allowed. However, students may engage in virtual field trips as designed by their school and teacher. The following information will not apply during the remote or hybrid model of reopening during the 2020-2021 school year.*

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures have been developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. These guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall ensure that all field trips have the approval of the principal and the list of participating students is reviewed by the school nurse **four weeks** prior to the trip, and that all overnight trips have the prior approval of appropriate personnel.

Field Trip Procedures

The superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

- All students have parental permission for trips;
- All students' names are provided to the school nurse **four weeks** in advance;
- All trips are properly supervised;
- All safety precautions are observed; and,
- All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.
- All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the superintendent. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate administrator.

*Parent and Community Involvement

**This section has been temporarily amended due to COVID-19 and our fall reopening model, further information can be found on the [HPS Return to School web page](#).*

We believe that Holyoke Public Schools and Holyoke families are partners in our children's success, while we recognize and support that families are their children's first teachers.

We encourage families to establish regular communication with teachers and school leaders and together explore all possibilities to contribute to student success. Families are encouraged to become aware of what their child is learning, ask questions about their child's education and support their child's learning. In addition, HPS encourages and embraces the active participation and contributions of parents to improve and support our schools and the district.

The Family & Community Engagement (**FACE**) team has a point person at each school who works to support families in different ways, from building and strengthening their relationship with our schools, and helping them access information and resources, to develop their leadership and voice in our schools. Contact the FACE staff at your school to learn how to get involved.

HPS supports different vehicles for parents to support their students, schools and the district:

- The FACE department delivers educational and informational workshops for families to acquire new tools and skills. These workshops are also vehicles for parents to make connections with other families as well as with community organizations and service providers. School-based or district-wide events are offered year round on the following topics:
 - Parents as first teachers (includes partnering with teachers, early literacy practices, and supporting your child at home)
 - Family health and nutrition
 - Financial education, career advancement and Social and emotional learning
 - School leadership and voice
- **Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs)** at each of our schools are independent, critical vehicles for parents to exercise leadership and voice in support of their children's education. Participation in the PTO should be open to all parents and guardians of children in a school. School PTO's are encouraged to work with school leaders and the Family Engagement staff at the schools to identify key needs in the turnaround plan or in the schools where they can focus part of their efforts during each year.
- **Parent Leader Groups or Parent Volunteer Teams** – Parent leaders in some schools have formed volunteer teams or groups of parents to support the school or particular grades or classrooms. Contact the Family Engagement staff in your school to learn how you can join or contribute as a parent volunteer. Volunteers are required to have a criminal background check, and in some cases, fingerprinting.
- **School Site Councils** are organized by the principals at each school as an advisory group pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws. The councils assist principals with identifying student needs, establishing educational goals for the school, developing improvement plans, and reviewing the school budget. School site councils include teachers elected by their peers, parents selected by a recognized parent organization or elected by school families, as well as students at the high school level. The meetings are open and its minutes are available to the entire school community. Contact your school principal to get information on your school council's meeting calendar.
- **Districtwide Parent Advisory Group** consists of parent leaders representing each school that meets with the receiver/superintendent every month to provide input and receive updates on the district's

turnaround process. Information obtained at these meetings is shared with parents at their schools. Contact your school to learn who your parent representative is at these meetings.

- The **Special Education Parent Advisory Council** and the **English Language Learner Parent Advisory Councils** provide input to the school district and engage parents of students in these programs to identify needs, review policies or programs, and address concerns. These councils are usually constituted at the beginning of the school year. Contact the Special Education Department or the English Learning Program Director for more details on how to get involved.
- The **Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI)** is a citywide effort founded in 2013 that brings schools, families, and community partners together to dramatically improve the reading proficiency of our youngest children. Everyone is being asked to do something and we all have something to do to reach our goal. Our goal is rapid and sustained improvement in reading proficiency by the 3rd grade. As a coalition, we have deployed multiple strategies that are proving successful, from engaging families with children from 0-8 years old in early literacy practices, to strengthening the program design of literacy programs across the city, and developing citywide collaborative workgroups. We want more families to join the Holyoke Early Literacy Initiative (HELI) and increase the frequency of what they do at home to support their child's literacy. Contact Family Engagement staff at your school to learn how to access HELI tools to use at home with your child as well as how to get involved.
- **ELPAC** consists of parent leaders representing each school that meets to provide input and receive updates for English learner and Spanish speaking families. Information obtained at these meetings is shared with parents at their respective schools. Contact your school to learn how to become involved in these meetings.

Community Outreach

We welcome opportunities to engage with Holyoke residents and community partners and participate in community events or neighborhood meetings across the city where we can meet and talk to families about our programs and initiatives. The Family & Community Engagement Department is available to join community events or make a presentation on a particular topic.

HPS also welcomes partnership opportunities in support of student learning and our families. Please contact our Family & Community Engagement Department to learn about opportunities for collaboration.

School Volunteers

It is the policy of the School Committee to encourage volunteer efforts in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. The volunteer program will be coordinated in cooperation with building administrators. All volunteers are subject to a criminal background check (CORI). In addition, any parent volunteer who works directly with students and is unsupervised requires fingerprinting

School Visitors

To maintain safety and security, all visitors are expected to report to the main office of the school before going elsewhere in the school building. If a visitor disrupts or interferes with the work of students, teachers or other employees by behaving inappropriately or insisting on visiting at inappropriate times, the principal may place limitations on the individual's ability to visit the school, including but not limited to, requiring appointments to be made before visiting, being accompanied by school staff when in the building, or being barred from entering the building. If you have questions about the school's policy on visitors, speak to the principal.

Access to Students during School Hours

The following persons may be granted access to students during school hours:

- The custodial parent (the parent with physical custody more than 50% of the time) or guardian or personnel or agency legally authorized to act on behalf of the child in place of or in conjunction with the father, mother, or guardian. According to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, §34H, the noncustodial parent must submit a written request to the school principal for such access. For further information, contact your child's principal.
- A student, age 14, or upon entering ninth grade, may consent to meet with an individual.

The following personnel may be granted access to students in the performance of their official duties:

- School administrators, teachers and counselors who work directly with the students.
- Administrative office staff and clerical personnel who process information for the students' records.
- The Evaluation Team which evaluates the students.
- School health personnel when such access is required in the performance of official duties.
- Appropriate parties including the local police department, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in connection with a health or safety emergency, including weapons reports, if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.
- Employees of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) who are investigating child abuse cases may be allowed to interview a child without parental consent if it appears that the child may be placed at risk of further abuse by parental notification. This interview may take place in the presence of a teacher or other school professional to provide help and reassurance to the child.
- Probation Department employees, Department of Youth Services employees, or an employee from the Bureau of Special Investigation on welfare fraud. If you have any Court restrictions regarding your child, it is imperative that the Holyoke Public Schools have a copy on record so that we can implement the wishes of the court.

Translation and Interpretation Services

Holyoke Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all parents and guardians are able to meaningfully participate in their child's education through effective communication with school staff. When parents first enroll their child in the HPS, we will provide the parents with the [Family Language Preference Survey](#). This Survey will provide us the opportunity to learn what the parents' preferred language is for communications regarding their student's education. In addition, HPS will conduct a survey of all parents at the beginning of each school year using the survey to learn about the parents' needs for interpretation or translation services. Parents may complete the survey at any time to request interpretation or translation services.

Documents posted on the HPS website relating to education programs, opportunities, and services will be posted in English and Spanish. Documents that will be translated for parents include:

- Language assistance programs and notices of nondiscrimination
- Registration and enrollment in school and school programs
- Student discipline policies and procedures
- Parent handbooks
- School and program choice options, including gifted and talented programs
- Turnaround Plan

- Information regarding other education opportunities and/or HPS sponsored or produced school activities
- Notices of education-related meetings
- Consent forms
- Disciplinary notices
- Parent permission forms
- Special education related documents

HPS will provide interpretation services for scheduled parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, and other scheduled meetings or events. HPS will use its best efforts to provide interpretation services for unscheduled communications. Feel free to reach out to your child's school with any question or concern that you have about any communication that you receive.

Title I School – Home/School Compact

The Holyoke Public Schools makes every effort to comply with the regulations and requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a federal law enacted in 2015. This legislation requires school district personnel to notify parents/guardians of a variety of issues regarding their children's education. Among them is a requirement to notify parents/guardians of students attending Title I schools of their right to know about the qualifications of the teachers and instructional assistants who work with their children. In a Title I school, parents/guardians have the right to know the professional qualifications of classroom teachers who instruct their children. ESSA allows parents/guardians to ask for certain information about a student's classroom teacher and requires that the district provide parents/guardians with the requested information in a timely manner if a parent/guardian asks for it. Specifically, parents/guardians have the right to ask for the following information about each of their children's classroom teachers in a Title I school:

- Whether the teacher has met the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which DESE qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
- Whether any instructional assistants or other paraprofessionals provide services to their child, and, if they do, their qualifications.

*If parents/guardians would like to receive any of this information, they must contact the principal of their child(ren)'s Title I school. In addition, districts are required to provide to each individual parent/guardian information on the child's level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the state academic assessments required under Title I and to notify parents/guardians in a timely manner when their child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable DESE certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

Media Information

The HPS will use media outlets to film, interview and/or photograph students for television, newspaper, photo, web, Internet and/or movie use. The purpose of interviewing, photographing, and/or filming students is to represent and promote the good qualities of the HPS.

If a parent/guardian does not wish his/her child to be interviewed, photographed or filmed, the parent/guardian may notify the child's principal anytime during the school year.

Parent Guide to Address Concerns

Holyoke Public Schools is committed to responding to parent concerns and complaints in a timely manner in order to strengthen the school-family partnership and keep students engaged in school. When a parent determines that there is a school-related concern that needs to be addressed with school officials, the sequential steps outlined below should be followed. The Holyoke Public Schools seeks to work collaboratively with families to ensure student success. If a parent has an issue or concern that they would like to address, please follow the guidelines below, which are aimed at improving communication and responsiveness:

1. **Level I-** Parent should address the concern (academic, behavior, etc.) with the staff member most directly involved.
2. **Level II-** If the matter is not resolved at the first level, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the appropriate building administrator - principal, assistant principal, or dean.
3. **Level III-** If the matter continues to remain unresolved, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the Family Empowerment Center who will refer the matter to the School Supervisor responsible for overseeing the school (only after steps one and two have been exhausted). The school supervisor will consult and collaborate with the appropriate school administrator.
4. **Level IV-** If the matter still remains unresolved, the parent may bring the concern to the attention of the superintendent/receiver.

***Suspension** dispute issues require parents/guardians to follow the Appeals Process. School supervisors will function as Appeals Officers for these issues.

Technology

Internet and Computer Acceptable Use and Safety

Internet and computer access through the HPS is a privilege offered to enhance your learning. It is not a right. Therefore, student access may be limited or revoked by school officials if this privilege is abused or violates acceptable use. Students engaged in unacceptable use of the Internet and computers will also be subject to disciplinary action in conformity with the HPS Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy. All student use of computers and the Internet is to be conducted under faculty supervision. Nevertheless, students are responsible for acceptable use of a computer network. The computer network is provided for students to conduct educational research and support educational endeavors. HPS believes that the benefits to students from access to information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed any potential for abuse. HPS maintains tools that blocks access to inappropriate sites. Ultimately, however, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using computers and the Internet.

Student Access

All students in Pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 will take part in an annual grade-level appropriate discussion of the HPS Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy with their teachers before being authorized to use the computer and the Internet.

Access to Student Files

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the use of computers and the Internet. Pursuant to local, state, and federal laws, administrators and staff may provide access to student files and records to law enforcement authorities. All files will be subject to the HPS Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy and local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

Personal Safety

The HPS, in its commitment to promote a safe and secure learning environment, has high-end filtering software to filter inappropriate sites. However, the filtering software cannot ensure that all inappropriate sites are blocked. Students are expected to adhere to the HPS Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy. Any deliberate destruction, modification, and tampering of technology equipment will be subject to disciplinary action and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. Any activity which inhibits or interferes with the normal operation of the hardware and software which comprise the HPS computer network system is also subject to disciplinary action.

Acceptable Uses

1. Using e-mail for educational purposes is only allowed using the Gmail account provided by HPS
2. Abiding by generally-accepted rules of network etiquette including, but not limited to, being polite, using appropriate language, respecting the privacy of others' work, and demonstrating courtesy toward others
3. Documenting and obeying copyright laws
4. Reporting misuse of technology to appropriate school authorities
5. Using technology resources to ensure fair access to all students

6. Using computing and communications facilities in a manner consistent with local, state, and federal laws and policies
7. Notifying your teacher immediately if there is a problem with your computer

Unacceptable Uses

1. Providing private or personal information about yourself or others
2. Viewing or sending obscene or patently offensive material
3. Accessing another person's file or account
4. Giving out your password to other students
5. Moving or unplugging other devices
6. Eating or drinking near or around the technology equipment
7. Violating the *HPS Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy*, engaging in racial or other forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment, hazing, plagiarism, cheating, or interfering with the rights of reproduction or transmission of material that is protected.
8. Connecting to any HPS computer any device that will circumvent the District firewall or filtering is strictly prohibited.
9. The only allowable Internet access on school property is through the HPS network system.
10. Downloading copyrighted material such as songs, movies, or other types of files.
11. Any conduct that can be considered cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior, in which case proper authorities will be notified.

Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be expected to familiarize themselves with this policy, and to sign the Acceptable Computer and Internet Use Policy Agreement Form, which will be provided to them by school staff on an annual basis.

Connecting Personal Devices to HPS-Wifi

The steps listed below will allow HPS Staff and Students to access our wireless network using personal devices for up to 120 days at a time. After 120 days, you will be prompted to login again using the same steps. Each user is allowed to have up to three devices on our network.

1. Navigate to your wireless network connections and select HPS-WiFi.
2. Open a new web browser page (Chrome, Safari, Explorer, etc.) and the guest registration page will automatically open if it has not already opened automatically.
 - a. If you are not redirected, type <http://hps-technology> into your browser's address bar and click enter. You should be redirected to the registration page.
3. Enter your HPS username and password (used to login to HPS computers) in the "Network Login" fields, then click "Login." *Never share your username and password with anyone else.
4. Check the box to accept the acceptable use agreement and then click "Complete Registration."

All of the acceptable use guidelines listed above apply while connected to the HPS network system regardless of whether the device is personally owned or the property of HPS.

Health Services for Students

Immunizations

State regulations require each child to meet grade-entry immunization requirements, as per Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 17, Section 15. School immunization requirements exist to protect students and members of the community from serious vaccine-preventable diseases by ensuring high vaccination rates. According to the Department of Public Health, vaccines are one of the great public health advances of the 20th century, and prevent hundreds of thousands of illnesses in the U.S. every year. Vaccines protect both the person vaccinated and those around them from serious diseases, a concept known as herd immunity. Herd immunity protects other members of the community, such as babies too young to be vaccinated or those who cannot receive immunizations because of a medical condition. Starting with the 2020-2021 school year, flu vaccination is required for all K-12 students and should be received by 12/31/20. Students in kindergarten through 12th grade are required to be immunized with DTaP/Tdap, polio, MMR, Hepatitis B, and Varicella vaccines. Students must receive the immunizations in the correct number and following an acceptable schedule, and other diseases deemed necessary by the Department of Health. School nurses review immunizations, inform parents and refer to a primary care physician if students are not in compliance with state requirements. Documentation of immunization status should be submitted to schools upon enrollment. Families should update their child's status at the beginning of the school year and within 60 days of school start.

In order to attend school, students must provide documentation of immunization according to school requirements, or show a medical or religious exemption. Medical exemptions come from the student's doctor and document a contraindication, which is a reason why an individual cannot medically receive the vaccine. Religious exemptions come from the parent/guardian and state in writing that a vaccine conflicts with his/her sincerely held religious belief. Exemptions must be updated in writing by the physician (medical exemption) or parent/guardian (religious exemption) annually prior to the start of each new school year. Students who are homeless have a reasonable amount of time to bring their immunizations up-to-date, as per the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Administration of Prescription Medication

In order to keep children's established medication routines in place during the coronavirus pandemic, we ask that families administer their child's medications, treatments, and procedures at home whenever possible. Further, we want you to know that state guidelines prohibit nebulizer treatments at school during the COVID-19 pandemic since nebulizer treatments can increase the risk of the virus being aerosolized. Regularly scheduled medications that can be given at home should be provided to your child at home. Emergency medication such as (but not limited to) an epinephrine auto injector (EpiPen), asthma inhaler, seizure medication, diabetic supplies, or other medication, treatment, or items needed for a procedure that your child must have available during school hours must be available at school when your child is attending school in-person.

The pharmacy labelled container must be in English. Medications, Procedures, and Treatments at School Require Current Written Orders signed by the prescriber and Parent/Guardian Signature. If your child needs medication, procedure or treatment during the school day, a current and proper order from a licensed prescriber must be given to the nurse at your child's school before the student enters or re-enters school. Orders will be renewed as needed, including at the beginning of each academic year. The parent/guardian must deliver the medication directly to the school nurse. Students are not permitted to transport the medication to school, this must be done by a responsible adult. Only students who have been approved for self-administration may carry medication with them. Contact your child's school nurse for more information or if you have questions. The Medication forms are located on the far right side towards the bottom, on the Health, Wellness, and Nursing page and you will also find your child's school nurse contact information on this page located on the HPS website.

Management of Life Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting

The goal of the Holyoke Public Schools regarding LTAs is to engage in a system-wide effort to:

- 1) Prevent any occurrence of life threatening allergic reactions;
- 2) Prepare for any allergic reactions; and
- 3) Respond appropriately to any allergy emergencies that arise.

Health and Wellness/Health Education

Our comprehensive health education curriculum, PK-8, *The Great Body Shop*, is sequential, developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive and medically accurate. It is aligned to the National Health Education Standards, the National Sexuality Education Standards, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricular and the core concepts recommended by CDC's HECAT. The curriculum has a unique approach to delivering health education and is designed for children and their families. The student issue looks like a health magazine and is used as a periodical or informational text. Teachers and students work with the instructional materials, typically once a week, to provide a solid understanding of the health issues found in the magazine. At the end of the month, students take the Student Issue home and use them for family activities, discussions, and homework. When schools and families work as a team to reinforce health knowledge and skills, it can go a long way toward helping children make the kind of decisions about his or her body that will keep him or her healthy, safe, drug free, and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

At the middle school level, our comprehensive health education curriculum remains current and up-to-date using research-based educational pedagogy that has been shown to impact student behavior and achievement during the middle school years. Developmental research on young people ages 11-14 reveals that students in this period of development have unique social, emotional, and cognitive needs. In order to meet those needs, *The Great Body Shop* authors have drawn upon the fields of educational psychology, neuroscience, cognitive and developmental psychology, linguistics and neurobiology to develop the instructional strategies found in the middle school curriculum. Brain-based learning strategies are deeply embedded in the implementation and design of every lesson and support activity. These activities provide the teacher with an array of learning strategies that meet the diverse learning styles of students.

At the high school level, comprehensive health education is offered at the 9th-grade. Parents will have the right to examine the curriculum that is available at the school by contacting the Director of Health, Wellness, and Nursing. Upon written request to the principal, students will be exempt from any portion of said curriculum. No student shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. Any dispute between the parent and school in regard to this policy will be resolved through the mechanism instituted by the Massachusetts Department of Health.

The School Committee's Family Life and Sex Education policy is based on helping students acquire knowledge and encourages the acquisition of skills and attitudes which will result in behavior that contributes to the well-being of the student, family, and society, and will allow students to manage their lives in a responsible and healthy way. Lack of information or misinformation about these issues may contribute to an increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases, unintended pregnancy, or sterility. The School Committee supports providing health education in the schools. HPS will notify parents in writing of curriculum materials dealing primarily with puberty and human sexuality matters. A family may opt-out their student if they wish. This policy enhances the already existing School Committee policies, including its Health Education Policy and its Wellness Policy. For more information, please contact the Director of Health, Wellness, and Nursing.

School-Based Health Services

School nursing is a specialized practice of nursing that protects and promotes student health, facilitates optimal development, and advances academic success. School nurses, grounded in ethical- and evidence-based practice, are the leaders who bridge health care and education, provide care coordination, advocate for quality student-centered care, and collaborate to design systems that allow individuals and communities to develop their full potential (NASN 2017). Holyoke School Department nurses provide school nursing services to all students to optimize health and facilitate learning. School nurses provide first aid and emergency care to students, and administer and monitor medication and treatments as prescribed by licensed providers. In addition, they monitor immunization status, implement mandated health screenings as per Department of Public Health guidelines and provide comprehensive and appropriate health education as needed for students, parents and staff.

Physical Examinations

All students must have a comprehensive physical examination within one year prior to entrance to school or within 30 days after school entry and at intervals of either three or four years thereafter; our District requires current physical examinations for entry into grades K, 4, 7 and 10. A student transferred from another school system shall be examined as an entering student. Health records transferred from the student's previous school may be used to determine compliance with this requirement. Students under 16 and over 14 years of age requesting employment certificates need a current physical examination. All students participating in competitive, Interscholastic Athletics, or Intramural Sports are required to have a current physical examination (valid for 13 months from the date of exam), which specifies medical clearance for activity. Students with special medical problems are required to have an updated physical examination yearly.

Student Health Records

According to 603 CMR 23.07(4)(h) of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, school health personnel and local and state health department personnel shall have access to student health records, including but not limited to immunization records, when such access is required in the performance of official duties, without the consent of the eligible student (a student who is 14 years or older or who has entered the 9th grade) or parent.

Student health records are part of a student's temporary record and as such are protected from disclosure to third parties without the written consent of the eligible student or parent. These records are accessible to the eligible student, the student's parents or guardians and authorized school personnel.

Massachusetts public health laws provide special confidentiality protections for certain health records. For example, under G. L. c.111, s.70F, a health care provider cannot disclose information about an individual's AIDS/HIV status without specific, informed, written consent of the individual.

Regarding transfer of the student health record, it is considered part of the student's temporary record and must accompany the student record when transferred to the student's new school in accordance with G.L.c.71 Section 37L. Parents are hereby informed that the Student Records Regulations authorize a public school or school district to send student records directly to a school to which a student seeks or intends to transfer, without the written consent of the eligible student or parent (603 CMR 23.07(4)(g)). If a parent requests that the health record not be sent, the school should advise the parent that the student may be refused entry into the new school unless the immunization portion of the health record is provided. To prevent delay in enrolling a student in a new school, the sending school must expedite the transfer of the student's record.

The school nurse is responsible for ensuring that all pertinent information is recorded in the SNAP electronic health record, including immunizations, physical examinations, and screenings, as well as maintaining the student's paper record.

Lead Testing

Students may not be enrolled in Preschool or Kindergartens until they have proof of lead testing.

Illness at School

If a student becomes ill or injured at school and the school nursing personnel deem the illness or injury serious enough to send the child home, the parent will be notified and asked to arrange for transportation. In the event that the parent cannot make arrangements for the child to be transported home, alternative methods will be explored. No sick or injured child will be sent home without the knowledge that a responsible person will be at home to receive the child. In the event of an emergency serious enough to warrant immediate medical attention when the parents cannot be reached, the school nurse, in collaboration with the principal, will arrange for transfer of the child to the nearest hospital or emergency care. Students 18 years of age or older may be dismissed from school on their own recognizance.

Guidelines for School Attendance - School Year 2020-2021

Although we want our students to be in attendance at school as much as possible, there are times that students should not be present at school. A student should be kept at home/sent home if any of the following symptoms occur within the previous 24 hours. Please do not medicate your child with ibuprofen or acetaminophen and attempt to send them to school. If in doubt, keep your child home and follow the guidelines below. Below is the full list of symptoms for which parents and caregivers should monitor their children. If a student has any of these symptoms, the child must remain out of school. Current Massachusetts DPH guidance is that all symptomatic individuals in Massachusetts, even those with mild symptoms, should be tested. Massachusetts Test Sites can be found by going to Mass.gov or contact your child's school nurse. An individual who does not wish to be tested should instead isolate for 14 days and until asymptomatic. Symptoms include:

- Fever (100° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

Management of Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Pediculosis (head lice) affects approximately 6 -12 million people each year. It affects all races and socioeconomic groups and is not an indication of personal hygiene. The school nurse will determine if a student is in need of treatment and following district guidelines, will provide education on eradication of lice. Any identified student must be assessed by the nurse prior to being allowed to return to school. Up to two excused absences are allowed for the treatment of head lice.

School Lunch Program

All students in the Holyoke Public Schools are eligible to receive a free nutritious breakfast and lunch.

Sports-Related Head Injury and Concussions

Please notify your health care provider and the school nurse if your child experiences a concussion. HPS has a comprehensive protocol which outlines procedures for staff to follow in managing head injuries, and outlines school policy as it pertains to return to play issues after concussion. School nurses will attempt to reach the family or emergency contact for any injury to a student's head. Each nurse will send home written notification if a student sustained an injury to the head while at school and is otherwise showing no symptoms, so that family will be informed of warning signs to watch for. The Athletic Trainer will contact the parents of any athlete who has sustained a head injury/concussion during interscholastic athletics and will coordinate the student's return to participation following our comprehensive athletic concussion protocol. Parents will be given a concussion information sheet, including symptoms and warning signs, as well as the return to participation requirements.

HIV/AIDS

Students with AIDS/HIV infection have the same right to attend classes or participate in school programs and activities as any other student. The student's parent(s) or guardian(s) are the gatekeepers of information relating to the student's AIDS/HIV status. They are not obliged to disclose this information to school personnel. A student who is diagnosed with AIDS or presents evidence of being immuno-compromised is at a greater risk of contracting infections. This means there may be good reasons to inform the school nurse or school physician of a student's AIDS diagnosis or HIV infection status. This student's parent(s) or guardian(s) would benefit from information from the school nurse or school physician about the occurrence of threatening contagious diseases (such as chicken pox or influenza) when making a decision regarding school attendance. The school nurse or school physician may also need to attend to the particular needs of HIV-infected students regarding immunization schedules and medications. In consultation with the student's primary care physician, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may decide to inform certain school personnel about the student's AIDS/HIV status, particularly the school nurse or school physician. If they so choose, the following guidelines are recommended:

- The student's parent(s) or guardian(s)' may inform the school nurse or school physician directly. Alternatively, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) may request that their primary care physician make the disclosure. In this case, specific, informed, written consent of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) is required.
- Further disclosure of a student's HIV status by the school nurse or school physician to other school personnel requires the specific, informed, written consent of the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- As a general rule, a student's health records related to AIDS/HIV should be regarded as confidential. The Massachusetts General Laws, c.111, s.70F, prohibit health care providers, physicians and health care facilities (including school-based clinics) from disclosing HIV test results, or even the fact that a test has been performed, without the specific, informed, written consent of the person who has been tested. This statute prohibits testing persons for HIV antibodies without their permission, and protects against the nonconsensual release of medical records (including school health records) which contain such information.

Teaching and Intervention about Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco and Substance Abuse Prevention

The Holyoke Public Schools is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. The District views families as essential partners in its effort to prevent substance abuse. In accordance with state and federal law, the Holyoke Public Schools shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-competent, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

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

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

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

In addition, the Holyoke Public Schools will implement intervention strategies, which may include staff training and/or parent/guardian education, with a goal of identifying and meeting the needs of students most at risk, while maintaining their confidentiality. The Holyoke Public Schools will establish and make available to students, families, and staff, a resource list of drug/alcohol prevention and treatment services available through community agencies and organizations. Also, as part of this intervention program, the District will implement reintegration procedures to assist students who have been absent and/or in recovery. This policy shall be posted on the District's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents in accordance with state law. Additionally, the District shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE. This policy will be subject to periodic review every three years, or earlier, when appropriate.

General Policies

Prohibition on Smoking and Tobacco Products

Smoking and/or the use of tobacco products including chewing tobacco and/or the use of vapor/electronic cigarette devices at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity is strictly prohibited.

No Idling of Motor Vehicles

Under state law, unnecessary motor vehicle idling is prohibited on or within 100 feet from school property.

Pledge of Allegiance

It is the policy of the Holyoke Public Schools that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited and be observed at all levels on a daily basis.

Student Publications

Students will enjoy the constitutional rights of freedom of expression. They will have the right to express their views in speech, writing, or through any other medium or form of expression within limitations comparable to those imposed on all citizens but specifically designed for children and youth in a school setting. All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. This means that libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws and school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted.

Review of content prior to publication is not censorship but part of the educational process as this concerns student publications. It can be pointed out to students, as it frequently is to journalists, that a publisher (in this case, the school system) enjoys freedom to determine what it will and will not publish.

Distribution of Literature

Students have a right to distribute literature on school grounds and in school buildings, except when the principal prohibits the distribution in school buildings of a specific issue or publication that does not comply with rules for responsible journalism. The principal shall require that no literature be distributed unless a copy is submitted to him/her in advance. The principal will reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of distribution of literature.