

## WELCOME TO WATERTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Dear Watertown Middle School Community,*

*Welcome to Watertown Middle School! I am very excited to begin my second year as principal, and I am looking forward to continuing to work collaboratively with students, faculty, staff, parents/guardians, and the Watertown community throughout the school year on academics, social/emotional learning, extracurricular activities and community service. Together we will thrive in a rigorous, supportive, and positive environment where all students will have the opportunity to succeed and pursue their many interests.*

*We have been working hard over the summer to prepare for the upcoming year and ensure it is a successful one for all. We have continued to update this handbook to make it more comprehensive and clearer. Please take some time to read it over with your child(ren) as it contains a great deal of helpful information. Although much of it is filled with rules, procedures and policies, I hope you see that much of it revolves around the SOARS principles: Success, Ownership, Achievement, Respect and Service. SOARS is the Watertown Middle School recipe for success.*

*One other critical ingredient for success is communication between home and school. We must partner together to focus on the well-being and education of the children of Watertown Middle School. Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns, and we will do the same. If you are not sure who to call, please see the Communication chart on pp. 42-43. With consistent collaboration, we will be able to ensure that all students feel safe, supported, and prepared for learning.*

*The 2019-2020 school year at Watertown Middle School is sure to be a year of extraordinary and rewarding experiences for all. I am looking forward to seeing everyone again in September, and hearing about your summer adventures. This year we will share knowledge and learning opportunities and work together to carry on our commitment to excellence at WMS. Let's all have a wonderful year together!*

*All my best,*

*Donna Martin, C.A.G.S.  
Principal*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>THE SCHOOL DAY</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ACADEMICS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>HEALTH PROCEDURES</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>GETTING INVOLVED</b>	<b>44</b>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Watertown Public Schools Mission Statement

WPS prepares all students for life by engaging them in a challenging and meaningful education within an inclusive, diverse community.

### Watertown Public Schools Core Values

#### Core Values

- **Excellence**
  - We commit to high expectations for each student.
  - We invest in a culture of reflection, collaboration, and commitment to continuous improvement.
  - We provide a rigorous and nurturing academic environment.
  - We foster creativity, resiliency, and confidence.
  
- **Equity**
  - We provide *all* students with a high-quality education.
  - We create conditions necessary for all students to engage in powerful, deep learning.
  - We provide resources for academic and social/emotional success for all students.
  - We ensure access to a welcoming and safe environment for all students, parents, and families.
  
- **Community**
  - We share accountability for the success of all students.
  - We celebrate the contributions of each individual to our inclusive, diverse community.
  - We believe partnerships with families and the community are the cornerstone of student success.
  - We foster caring and collaborative relationships as the foundation for student engagement.

## EXCELLENCE \* EQUITY \* COMMUNITY

### Watertown Public Schools Theory of Action

#### *If we:*

- Focus on inclusively educating *all* students to their full academic, social, and emotional potential;
- Build an educational program aligned to standards and promote high expectations and authentic learning;
- Foster caring and collaborative relationships among and within schools, families and community members;
- Build educationally appropriate, joyful learning environments

*Then we will inspire and empower students to explore and shape the world around them.*

### Middle School Mission Statement

The Watertown Middle School, in partnership with families and the community, provides a supportive and challenging learning environment where every student feels safe, respected, and valued. As a place for transition, the Middle School nurtures the development of self-esteem and the unique emotional, social, ethical and academic growth of each student.

### School Committee

The Watertown School Committee establishes goals, policies, and the budget for the Watertown Public Schools. The School Committee hires the Superintendent and works closely with that individual in developing policies and practices to improve the school system. The School Committee also is responsible for conducting collective bargaining with all employee

organizations and has other responsibilities as outlined by Massachusetts General Laws. School Committee Policies, which guide the handbook, can be found at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us).

The School Committee consists of seven members. Six are elected on a town-wide basis for four-year terms. The Town Council President serves as the seventh member and is elected to a two-year term. In January of each year the School Committee elects a chair, vice-chair, and secretary from among its members. The School Committee also organizes itself into subcommittees to conduct its business. Currently, there are six School Committee Members due to a resignation. This position will be filled after the town elections being held in November.

School Committee Members (as of January 2018):

- John Portz, Chair
- Kendra Foley, Vice-Chair
- Amy Donohue, Secretary
- Eileen Hsü-Balzer
- Mark Sideris, Town Council President
- Lindsay Mosca
- Lily Rayman-Read

## **Nondiscrimination**

No student shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age or disability as required by state and federal law in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or athletic and other school administered programs.

### **Contact Information**

**Principal:** Ms. Donna Martin

**Assistant Principal:** Mr. Jason Del Porto

Address: 68 Waverley Avenue, Watertown, MA 02472

Main Office Telephone Number: 617-926-7783

Main Office Fax Number: 617-926-5407

Watertown Public Schools Website: [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us)

Hotline Telephone Number (for absentee notification): 617-926-7783

Call before 7:30 a.m. if your child will be absent that day.

School is in session 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Children must arrive by 8:20 to appropriately prepare for the day.

**School Nurse:** Michelle Laracy, RN

Direct Line: 617-926-7783, (Fax): 617-924-4125

### **Changes in Emergency Contact Information**

Please notify the main office immediately whenever there is any change in your child's emergency contact information. This includes:

- Change of address
- Change of home phone number/email
- Change in parent/guardian work or cell phone number
- Changes in emergency contact person and/or phone number
- Change in parent's email address
- Change in custody

The best way to accomplish this is to go into the Power School Parent Portal and make the edits there. If you need help with this process, please contact the main office. We use this information to release your child and in the event of an evacuation or crisis.

### **Emergency Situations**

In an emergency, we will attempt to contact parents/guardians and then people on a child's emergency contact list. It is very important that you fill out your child's emergency contact list as thoroughly as possible. It is also important to keep contact lists updated at all times. If you need to make a change, contact the main office or make the appropriate changes to your Power School Parent Portal account. We will not dismiss students to people not listed as an emergency contact.

Parents/guardians should develop a contingency plan in the event of an unscheduled early dismissal in which case no parent might be at home. An example might be having your child go to the home of a relative or neighbor.

### **Visitors**

To ensure the security of our students, staff and operations of Watertown Public Schools, the following visitation guidelines will be followed in all school buildings:

#### **All visitors are required to follow the below guidelines when entering a school building:**

1. Upon arrival, all visitors must:
  - a. Enter through the main entrance
  - b. State their purpose
  - c. Register in the main office or front desk
  - d. Sign in before proceeding to any other part of the building
2. All visitors must have a visible "Visitor" Identification Badge with them at all times during their stay.
3. All those coming to pick up students must present valid photo identification.
4. All visitors must comply with building based visitation hours.
5. All contractors who are working in the building must also meet with a building custodian and sign in before proceeding to destination.
6. All those wishing to observe or visit a classroom must make an appointment with building personnel at least two days prior.
7. At the end of the visitation, all visitors must report back to main office to sign out, return the badge and directly exit the building.

*The principal or his/her designee reserves the right to deny any visitors entry to the school buildings when there is reason to believe that such an individual's presence would be detrimental to the operation of the school and its learning environment.*

### **Bus Transportation**

Students may take the bus to school only if a parent/guardian has signed up and paid for a bus pass at the Central Office. Only those students who have a bus pass will be permitted to board the bus. For questions about the bus, contact the Central Office at 617-926-7716.

#### **Eligibility**

Students in grades K-5 who live in the Hosmer School district who live 1.5 miles or more from the Hosmer School will receive free transportation services. Students in grade 6 who attend the Middle and who live 2 .0 miles or more from the Middle School will receive free transportation services. All students residing in Watertown who are registered and attending Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School shall be entitled to transportation without cost in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws.

#### **Seating Capacity for Fee Based In-District Transportation**

In addition to students eligible for free transportation, the School Department administration will register students in grades K-8 for fee-based transportation services on the basis of greatest distance from the Hosmer Elementary School and the Watertown Middle School until such time as 90% of the capacity of the bus for each established route has been reached. The excess capacity will be reserved primarily for

the purpose of accommodating registrations of new students moving into the school district who are eligible for free transportation. This is to ensure there will be no standees, a practice prohibited by this policy. The 90% capacity may be exceeded only if an agreement is signed by the student's parent or guardian indicating the understanding that the student could be "bumped" if another student eligible for free transportation moves into the district. Any fee paid would be refunded on a pro-rated basis. The School Department administration will establish the bus routes, stops and schedules annually based on final student registrations.

**Bus Information:** Students will be informed of bus stop pick-up when the bus pass is issued. All disciplinary policies apply to the students riding the bus since the bus is an extension of school. If necessary, the administration may suspend a child from the bus either temporarily or permanently. For additional information regarding student conduct on school buses, please refer to School Committee Policy JICC which can be found in the Policy Manual at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us). [Policy Manual](#)

**Bus Safety and Discipline:** The safety of our students is the top priority. If students are misbehaving and compromising the safety of the bus, either on or off of the bus, all school disciplinary measures will apply, including potential removal from riding the bus.

## THE SCHOOL DAY

### Start of School

- The day begins at 7:45 a.m. for students who want to take advantage of the morning programs in the gym, library or cafeteria for breakfast. These students enter through the Waverly Street main door or the Bemis Street entrance and proceed to the cafeteria.
- Students are not permitted in the building prior to this time unless in one of the three program locations (gym, library or cafeteria), or if they have made a prior appointment with one of their teachers. If this is the case, they should still sign in by the front entrance.
- At 8:20 students enter from either the Waverly Avenue or Bemis Street entrances.
- If you are driving your child to school, **Please consider the safety of our children who are walking nearby. DROP STUDENTS OFF ON BEMIS ST. ONLY. Please do not block traffic, and pull your car clear of others before pulling away.** To avoid traffic tie-ups, consider dropping your child off a block away and letting him/her walk the rest of the way.
- Our School Resource Officer supervises drop off and pick up. Any traffic violations are subject to ticketing, etc.
- We expect all students to adhere to pedestrian laws and cross on the crosswalks.

### Homeroom/Advisory

- All students must be in their homeroom by 8:30 or they will be marked tardy. (see pg. 18)
- In homeroom, students will hear the day's announcements.
- Two days a week, homeroom is approximately 10 minutes in length.
- Two days a week, homeroom is 30 minutes to accommodate advisory.
- One day a week, homeroom is 30 minutes to accommodate whole-school activities.

### Class Schedules

- Each grade is split into two clusters, and students in each cluster attend classes together. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade has clusters 1 and 2, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade clusters 3 and 4, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade clusters 5 and 6.
- All students have classes in English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students also take classes in a foreign language (Spanish, Arabic, or Italian) or reading, and specials.
- The middle school has A day and B day schedules. A days are on the odd number days from Day 1 to Day 179. B days are on the even number days from Day 2 to Day 180.
- Specials consist of Music, Art, Technology Education, Physical Education, Health, Drama, and Information Technology. Specials and enrichment courses meet every other day and rotate by term.
- We have a support and enrichment block for one period a day. Students can either take academic support classes, enrichment classes or alternating support and enrichment classes that period.
- Sixth graders who have at least one enrichment block available must take concert choir, concert band, string ensemble, or percussion ensemble for a year OR take general music for a semester.
- All periods are approximately 45 minutes in length.

## Lunch

- The Middle School has three lunch periods each day, one per grade. Lunch is 30 minutes long.
- Students can bring lunch from home or purchase it at school. The cafeteria provides a nutritious menu that includes a variety of hot entrees prepared each day, sandwiches, salads, snacks, and drinks.
- Each student is given a lunch account and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to use when paying for lunch. Students deposit money in their accounts and withdraw funds to pay for food, to avoid money transactions and expedite the process of lunch service. Please make sure your child's account has funds available throughout the year. No student shall be denied lunch due to the inability to pay.
- Free and reduced priced meals are provided for those who qualify. Forms are available in the school office at any time. They are sent home at the beginning of each school year. Families must re-apply each year for eligibility.
- Lunch costs \$3.50. Reduced price lunch is \$.40.
- Breakfast costs \$1.25. Reduced price breakfast is \$.30.

## End of school

- School ends each day at 3:00. Students are dismissed and are required to leave the building unless they are involved in an after-school activity supervised by an adult. We encourage all students to take part in our after-school programs.
- Supervised activities include Library Learning Lab, extra work with a specific teacher, after school enrichment clubs, and Watertown Middle School athletic teams.
- Watertown Middle School offers a wide variety of seasonal sports. Please refer to the athletic section for more information.
- If you are picking up your child at the close of school, **please consider the safety of our children who are walking nearby. PICK UP STUDENTS ON BEMIS ST. ONLY. Please do not block traffic, and pull your car clear of others before stopping.** To avoid traffic tie-ups, consider picking up your child a block away from school at a pre-arranged spot.
- The late bus departs at 4:15 p.m. to allow students to take part in after-school activities. There is no late bus on Fridays.
- Students who take the late bus must have a bus pass.
- If you are picking up your child after 3:00 p.m., please use the Waverley Ave. entrance.
- Students are not permitted in the building after school without proper supervision.
- Please do not idle your car while waiting to pick up your child.

## ACADEMICS

### Grading and Report Cards

Grades are based on student performance in class as well as homework and project completion outside the classroom. Circumstances may require that a student be graded on an individual basis. This will be agreed upon ahead of time for students with Individualized Educational Plans or a 504 Plan.

**Report Cards:** Report cards are issued four times per year and will be posted at the Power School Parent Portal on our website. You can also obtain a paper copy by visiting the main office.

**Grades:** Grades can be issued by letter (A-F), by number on a 100 point scale, or on an O (outstanding), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory) scale. The following is a conversion table that equates letter grades with a 100 point scale:

A	100 - 93	C+	79 - 77
A-	92 - 90	C	76 - 73
B+	89 - 87	C-	72 - 70
B	86 - 83	D+	69 - 67
B-	82 - 80	D	66 - 63
		D-	62 - 60
		F	Below 60

**Incomplete (INC)** is given when requirements for the term have not been completed. Students may be given extra time to complete the missing work. A grade is issued at the end of the time period.

### Honor Roll

Watertown Middle School recognizes both student *achievement* and *effort* for honor roll.

**Honor Roll Achievement Recognition:** In order to be on the honor roll for achievement, a student will need to have a weighted average grade of an 87 on a 100-point scale (a low B+) in all of his or her classes. To be on the honor roll for high achievement, a student will need to have a weighted average grade of a 92 on a 100 point scale (a high A-) in all of his or her classes. Classes that meet every other day are calculated with a 0.5 weighting.

Any student receiving a 69 or below (a D or an F) in any of his or her classes will not be eligible for achievement recognition, even if the average grade exceeds an 87.

A few classes grade students on an O (outstanding), S (satisfactory), and U (unsatisfactory) basis. If a student receives an Outstanding in that particular class, it will be averaged in as a 95. If a student receives a Satisfactory, the S will not be averaged in the honor roll calculation, thus neither helping nor hurting a student in attaining achievement recognition. If a student receives an Unsatisfactory, he or she will not be eligible for honor roll achievement.

**Honor Roll Effort Recognition:** There are four factors that we will consider when determining whether to recognize a student's effort: homework completion rate; classwork completion rate; the student's contribution to the learning environment (attitude, attention, and participation); and

the student’s approach to schoolwork (ownership, initiative, and advocacy). Cluster teachers will use the following rubric to rate a student’s effort:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1: Usually does not meet expectations</b>	<b>2: Sometimes meets expectations; other times does not meet expectations</b>	<b>3: Usually meets expectations; sometimes exceeds expectations</b>	<b>4: Always meets expectations; often exceeds expectations</b>
<b>Homework completion rate</b>	Under 60% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	60% to 79% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	80 to 89% of all homework assignments fully completed on time	Over 90% of all homework assignments fully completed on time
<b>Classwork completion rate</b>	Under 80% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	80% to 89% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	90% to 94% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level	Over 95% of all in-class assignments completed at a satisfactory level
<b>Student’s contribution to the learning environment (attitude, attention and participation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Often projects an “I don’t care attitude</li> <li>-- Often inattentive, disengaged and distracted</li> <li>-- Often refuses to participate in class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Attitude varies from day to day</li> <li>-- Inconsistent engagement; sometimes distracted</li> <li>-- Will participate, but often needs support or intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Comes with a positive attitude and stays positive</li> <li>-- Focused, involved, asks relevant questions, makes relevant comments</li> <li>-- Ready to participate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Enthusiastic, supports others, and engages others</li> <li>-- Attentive, initiates discussion, encourages others, helps bring back focus</li> <li>-- Fully participating, takes a classroom leadership role</li> </ul>
<b>Student’s approach to schoolwork (initiative, advocacy, and ownership)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Does not ask for help</li> <li>-- Frequently needs cues to begin tasks</li> <li>-- Will frequently give up on challenging tasks</li> <li>-- Will not revisit nor revise work</li> <li>-- Has possibly been caught cheating or plagiarizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Sometimes asks for help when needed</li> <li>-- Sometimes requires cues to begin work</li> <li>-- Will revisit and revise work to meet minimum standards</li> <li>-- Infrequently challenges self beyond minimum expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- Regularly asks for help when needed</li> <li>-- Sometimes takes advantage of outside help opportunities</li> <li>-- Persists until schoolwork meets a moderately high standard</li> <li>-- Sometimes challenges self beyond expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-- After trying independently, always asks for help</li> <li>-- Frequently seeks outside help opportunities</li> <li>-- Continually persists as necessary to achieve top-quality work</li> <li>-- Consistently goes beyond expectations</li> </ul>

In each of the four criteria, teachers will rate students from 1 to 4 based on the above rubric. If a student averages a 3 on the rubric in *all* of his or her classes, he or she will receive honor roll recognition for effort. Sixth grade students will receive honor roll recognition for effort with an average of a 2.5 on the rubric for the first term only.

Two negative behavior comments on the report card from two different teachers may constitute ineligibility for any kind of honor roll recognition. Some examples of negative behavior include disrespect to teachers, keeping others from learning, and frequent disruption.

### **Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences**

We schedule two sets of student/parent/teacher conferences in the fall and the spring. These conferences, led in part by the students themselves, allow for them, to reflect on their strengths, progress, and areas that need improvement. Parent, guardians, and teachers discuss next steps and help plan for future goals. All students are expected to attend their conferences with their parents or guardians.

Parent-teacher conferences can be scheduled at any time during the school year when cluster teachers have common planning time. If you would like to meet with your child's teachers at any time, please set up a conference through the Guidance Department

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are issued by each of your child's teachers at least once every three weeks. These reports are useful tools that allow you to check your child's progress in each subject, and focus on specific areas that need improvement. These reports will also be posted and available through the Power School Parent Portal.

### **Back to School Night**

In September, the Watertown Middle School hosts Back to School Night for parents and guardians. The purpose of the open house is for you to meet each of your child's teachers, and have them provide a brief explanation about what will be taught during the year. Parents and guardians are strongly urged to attend this important event, as it will give you a first-hand opportunity to see what your child will be learning during the upcoming year. Back to School Night is not intended for specific conversations with teachers regarding your child. As always, if you have concerns or questions about your child in school, please contact your child's teacher or guidance counselor.

### **Clusters**

All students in a cluster are taught by the same team of teachers: English, social studies, math and science. These core subject teachers are supported by special education and English language education teachers and the grade level guidance counselor. Cluster students are assigned to small homerooms run by their cluster teachers and by other Watertown Middle School staff. Clusters allow Watertown Middle School students to be part of a small, more intimate group within the larger school. The teachers and homerooms within a cluster are all located near each other, reducing student travel time between classes. Cluster teachers, along with the guidance counselor for the grade, meet regularly to discuss the progress of their students.

Grade 6	Clusters 1 & 2
Grade 7	Clusters 3 & 4
Grade 8	Clusters 5 & 6

### **Specials**

While your child will have the core subjects every day, Specials follow an alternating day schedule. Specials include Art, Music, Drama, Technology Education, Health, and Information Technology.

## **Physical Education**

Every student at Watertown Middle School will have physical education every other day. You will need to purchase from the school a Watertown Middle School physical education T-shirt that students are required to wear. You will also need to provide your child with appropriate gym clothes such as gym shorts, sweatpants, and sneakers. Please ensure that your child brings clean gym clothes to school on the days he/she has physical education.

## **Content Support and Enrichment**

It is the philosophy of Watertown Middle School that all students need to be stretched to meet their potential. Whether that entails additional academic support or enrichment, we will raise the expectations so students will experience increased academic success and satisfaction.

**Academic Support:** Watertown Middle School has five kinds of support classes for students:

- Content support classes for those students who need pre-teaching and re-teaching in the content areas that particularly involve reading, writing, and critical thinking
- Math content support classes for those students who may need more instructional time to meet math benchmarks
- ESL content support classes to support English Language Learners in all content areas
- Special Education resource classes to support student attainment of IEP goals
- Tutorials in reading and math for those students who need to continue to develop their basic skills. Tutorials can happen during school or after school in the Library Learning Lab.

**Content Support and Math Content Support:** These courses take place during the academic support and enrichment block and meets every other day in the schedule. Content support classes offer students assistance with their literacy and numeracy skills within the academic content areas. Cluster humanities and science teachers teach content support classes; cluster math teachers teach math content support. Both classes are open to all students. Teachers look at summative and formative assessments, including homework and in-class performance, to determine content support eligibility. Typically, students have the opportunity to move in and out of content support at the beginning of each term. However, students can join content support at any point during the term. Although parents and guardians can request students to enter or exit content support classes, the student's cluster teachers and administrators make the final decision whether or not the student is eligible for content support.

**Enrichment:** Students who do not need content support classes will take enrichment classes designed to challenge them and enhance the core class curriculum. Sixth graders can take English, math, science, social studies, concert band, concert choir, string ensemble, percussion ensemble, general music, app creators, medical detectives, creative writing, energy and the environment, fabrics and crafts, law & leadership, and literature exploration as enrichment classes. Seventh and eighth grades have more options. Full-year enrichment classes include concert band, concert choir, string ensemble, and percussion ensemble. Semester long enrichment classes include, advanced art, business and finance, computer programming, debate, chance and probability, print making, digital imaging, engineering, design and modeling, film studies, fit for life, green architecture, Kingian non-violence training, leadership seminar (for eighth grade only), literature, newspaper, photography, show choir, structural design, the great

WMS baking show, makers and bakers, theater production, video production, writers workshop, and yearbook.

Academic support and enrichment classes meet every other day during the same teaching block. Some students have two enrichment classes, some have two support classes, and some have one enrichment and one support class.

### **Community Service**

The Watertown Middle School tries to foster in its students a commitment to service for others – the final “S” in our “SOARS” recipe for success. Students are encouraged to complete a suggested number of hours of community service according to grade level. Homeroom advisors will assist students in finding appropriate programs in which to complete the service. In addition, a staff member will serve as the Community Service Coordinator for the school. Outside agencies will request volunteers through the coordinator, who will inform students of these opportunities. In addition, the coordinator will organize school-based community service opportunities and will advertise these to the students.

The purpose of community service is to assist those in need in the community. Community service is not completing household chores or fulfilling responsibilities within one's immediate family. Students often volunteer in after-school programs, work with younger children through scouts or sports, assist the elderly with shopping, snow removal or yard work, or help at local food pantries, nursing homes or assisted living facilities. The list is endless. A ceremony is held each spring to recognize all students who have completed their recommended hours and submitted signed Community Service Logs, which are included in the agenda book provided at the beginning of the year.

Recommended Community Service hours are: Grade 6, 10 hours; Grade 7, 15 hours; Grade 8, 20 hours.

### **Homework**

Homework is given to reinforce skills taught in class and to encourage the development of good study habits. Your child can expect daily homework. If your child is doing more than 2-3 hours of homework and reading per night, please contact your child's teacher or guidance counselor for help.

#### **Why Do We Need Homework?**

- Homework provides extra practice on skills learned during class.
- Homework offers more in-depth learning which complements class work.
- Homework establishes good work habits that will make the transition to high school and beyond easier.
- Homework allows parents/guardians to see what their child is learning and the progress that he/she is making.

**Homework Hotline/Website:** Each teacher posts homework on the website. Go to

[https://wms.watertown.k12.ma.us/for\\_students](https://wms.watertown.k12.ma.us/for_students)

Click “For Students” to get to the Student Resources. On the right side of the Classroom Sites page are the homework pages by cluster.

**If Your Child is Absent:** Be sure your child sees each of her/his teachers when returning from an absence, in order to make up missed work and assignments. A reasonable amount of time will be given for returning students to complete the missed work. Please contact your child's guidance counselor if your child has missed multiple days of school. For planned extended absences, you will need to contact administration before asking teachers for work in advance.

### **Helping Your Child with Homework:**

- Encourage your child to clarify assignments with teachers whenever he/she is confused.
- Encourage your child to read and reread directions for written homework before starting.
- Remember: Studying is a real homework assignment. Encourage your child to spend time preparing for upcoming quizzes and tests.
- You or another family member should quiz your child on the subject matter to help him/her prepare for upcoming quizzes and tests.
- Consider having your child attend the Library Learning Lab, especially if he/she needs help becoming more organized or more consistent in completing homework successfully.
- If your child left his or her assignment(s) at home, please feel free to come to the office and place it in the grade level baskets. To avoid frequent class disruption, we will not call students from classes to pick up late work. Students are allowed to pick up the materials between classes, or it will be given to them at the grade level lunch session.

### **Effective Home Study Habits**

In an effort to assist students in transitioning to the rigors of middle school academics, the following are recommendations to help with homework assignments:

- Decide with your child on the best time for homework completion.
- Help your child choose a place where he/she can accomplish homework with no disruptions or distractions.
- Make sure your child writes down all assignments in the agenda book provided by the school.
- Encourage your child to check before leaving school if he/she has all the books/materials needed to do their assignments.
- Check the homework website if you or your child has any questions.
- Make sure your child has the phone number of a reliable classmate for the times he/she is absent or has a question regarding an assignment.
- Help your child focus solely on the task at hand. TV, email, and phones distract students and prolong the time needed to accomplish the assignments.
- Make sure your child has everything ready to go in the morning.

### **Healthy Technology Tips and Habits for Middle School Students**

- Children should be off screens by 9:00 p.m. to ensure good sleeping habits. Please do not let your child keep their cell phone, tablet or computer in their room at night. Instead, make a central spot where all phones and tablets get charged in the evening.
- Parents/guardians, please make sure you frequently supervise/review all social media and electronic footprint activity, including: Twitter, Snapchat, texting, photos, Facebook, Instagram, Kick, or any web site that allows anonymous postings. This is also important when friends are in your home.
- Model healthy habits for your children
- Make sure your children are not giving out personal information

- Refer to the student's Online Citizenship contract

Here are some helpful links:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

<http://thehealthteacher.com/tech-tips-for-parents/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/subtopic/matte/pdf/cdcelectronicregression.pdf>

### **Student Agendas/Organization**

Eighth grade students will not be receiving hard copies of Agendas this year. Students are expected to use their Google Calendars to organize their schoolwork. Sixth and seventh grade students will be receiving Agendas for the year. Clusters and classroom teachers will be populating shared calendars on a regular basis. Students should check and edit their calendars and Agendas daily.

### **Textbooks, Computers, and Other Borrowed Materials**

During the year, students will be given textbooks, Chromebooks, and other materials. Additionally, they will be able to check out books and other materials from the library. All items should be cared for and returned at the end of the school year in good condition. Students will need to pay for books, computers, and other materials that have been lost or damaged. The school may withhold report cards and/or new schedules if students have outstanding fees.

### **1:1 Chromebook Program**

In 2015, Watertown Public Schools began our rollout of the 1:1 Chromebook initiative. We started by equipping eighth grade students with Chromebooks throughout the school day. Now, in our third year, we have expanded the program to benefit all students sixth through twelfth grade. 1:1 computing gives students powerful tools for communication, organization, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, and is quickly integrating into the curriculum and instruction in all subject areas and grade levels.

All students will be receiving personal Chromebooks for use in school. Most students will keep their Chromebooks in school; however, those students who do not have access to a computer at home will be able to check out a Chromebook for home use. Please contact the main office if you do not have access to a computer ~~at home~~ and would like to take the computer home. Although the Chromebooks are durable, students should do their best to take care of these devices. Students should carry Chromebooks carefully to each class and store and charge them carefully at the end of the school day. Students should lock their Chromebooks in their lockers when they are not in use. Additionally, students should keep the Chromebooks away from food and drink, care for cords, cables, and removable storage devices, and immediately report if their Chromebook is missing. Finally, they should not expose Chromebooks to extreme temperatures, deface their Chromebooks, or place heavy objects on top of them. We strongly encourage parents/guardians and guardians to purchase a Chromebook case to protect the computer against accidental damage. If students are held responsible for damage, parents/guardians will be charged for repairs/replacement, per the contract.

Students and parents/guardians will need to understand and agree to an Acceptable Use Agreement for using technology in school. The agreement includes not giving out personal information online, using the devices for educational purposes only, following copyright rules for the distribution and use of software and information, and not participating in the transfer of

illegal or inappropriate material online. For disciplinary reasons, students may lose technology privileges if determined necessary by administration. If this is the case, students will be given alternative means to access the curriculum.

For more detailed information about the district's 1:1 Chromebook initiative, please consult the middle school web site.

### **Extra Help**

Teachers are available after school to help students. Students should check with teachers to see which days they are available. The Library Learning Lab is available for students who need structured help after school Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

### **Access to Library**

Library Hours are: 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays and 7:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. Students must have a pass from a teacher to work in the library during classes.

Students may check out books for a period of three weeks. If a book is not returned or renewed, it is considered overdue. Notices are given out in homeroom. Students are required to replace lost books. The Librarian will determine replacement cost. Students will not receive report cards or completion certificates if books have not been returned or replaced at the end of the school year.

The middle school library contains a Maker Space designed for students to develop ideas and create objects that represent their ideas. The maker space includes building materials, computers and software, sound and video equipment, and a number of tools including a 3D printer. Students will be able to access the maker space during classes, at lunch, and after school on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.

### **Guidance and Student Support**

Each student is assigned to a guidance counselor whose role is to provide overall support. The counselor is available to meet with students individually, as needed, to help with issues and concerns that may arise in the course of the year. The counselors meet regularly with teachers to exchange information and discuss student progress. Counselors are also available to meet with parents/guardians. If desired, appointments may be made by calling the school and asking to be connected to the counselor's office. Students may make appointments with their counselors by requesting a pass from the teacher. Guidance counselors are a wonderful resource when a student or parent needs advice.

For the 2019-20 school year, the guidance counselors are:

Grade 6	Ms. Cohen
Grade 7	Ms. Skypeck
Grade 8	Ms. Mahoney

### **Standardized Testing**

Watertown Middle School uses standardized testing to assess the performance of each student compared to the overall performance of students in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the United

States. Standardized testing is required by state law, (1993 Education Reform Act) and federal law (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)). This year, all students are expected to take the revised Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). It is a new online assessment that combines elements of previous versions of the MCAS and PARCC tests. All students will take the MCAS in English Language Arts and mathematics this spring. Eighth grade students will take the Science & Technology/Engineering MCAS test as well.

Additionally, ESL students are tested annually for both written and oral English proficiency. We also utilize nationally recognized and approved assessment tools when needed in other subjects. For all standardized tests, accommodations are made as required by a student's IEP. Your child's MCAS results from last year will be mailed home in the fall along with explanatory material.

### **Vocational and Private School Applications**

After eighth grade, students and families may be interested in attending a vocational high school, such as Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School. If you are interested in learning more about this process, please contact your student's guidance counselor. You must submit your Chapter 74 Vocational Technical Education Nonresident Tuition application to the vocational technical school by March 15<sup>th</sup> and the application must be received by the Superintendent for W.P.S. approval by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

Additionally, students and families may be interested in attending a private school. Often, private school applications require recommendations from teachers, counselors, and administrators. School personnel are often happy to write a recommendation on behalf of a student; however, the recommendation season is very busy. Please give staff members at least three weeks notice before a recommendation is due.

## SPECIALIZED SERVICES & PROGRAMMING

### 504 Accommodation Plans

A 504 Accommodation Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the American Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is a civil rights law to protect people with disabilities by eliminating barriers and allowing full participation in education. A 504 Accommodation Plan is designed to articulate and implement a program of instructional services, including general classroom modifications, to assist students with significant disabilities. A 504 plan is not an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and is a regular education entitlement. In order for a student to qualify for a 504 Accommodation Plan he or she must meet certain federal requirements. They include the following: Referral, Non-discriminatory Evaluation, Eligibility, Placement Procedures, Procedural Safeguards (Due Process), and the writing of the Individual Accommodation Plan.

The Watertown Public School District acknowledges its responsibility under Section 504 to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability shall knowingly be permitted in any program or practices in the school district.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who (1) have a *physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities*; or (2) have a record of such impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such impairment.

A *physical or mental impairment* is defined as any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. This list is not exhaustive.

*Major life activities* include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. This list is not exhaustive. In the ADA Amendments Act 2008 Congress provided additional examples of general activities that are major life activities, including eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating. Congress also provided a non-exhaustive list of examples of "major bodily functions" that are major life activities, such as the functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions. An impairment that is episodic or in remission, is also considered a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active.

Under Section 504, the school district has the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has the right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. Any questions concerning the implementation of policy and procedures may be directed to the Principal.

For further information, contact your child's guidance counselor or the Special Education Coordinator.

### **Special Education Services**

The Watertown Public Schools provides special education and related services for eligible students in accordance with state and federal law. Under Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972, the Massachusetts Special Education Law (603 CMR 28.00), if a student has one or more of the disabilities specified in the statute and, of, as a result of the disability(ies) is unable to progress effectively in the general education program without the provision of one or more related services, then the IEP Team shall determine that the student is eligible and develop an individualized education program (IEP).

Students who are found, after evaluation, to be eligible for special education services will receive and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed by the Special Education Team, which includes parents/guardians, teachers and specialists, involved with the child. If you believe your child may be in need of special education services please contact the Principal, Special Education Coordinator or counselor to assist you with the process. State regulations governing the Chapter 766 process and the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" brochure are available in all schools for review. For more information about special education please feel free to contact the Director of Student Services at Central Office.

### **Inclusion/Academic Resource Classes**

Those students who have been identified within their IEP as needing additional academic support will meet with a special education teacher and possibly additional support staff such as a speech/language therapist. There they will receive specialized instruction to support the regular education instruction given to them in inclusion classes. The programming within these classes is regulated and prescribed by the IEP team to meet the individual needs of the student.

### **Language-Based Instruction**

We can provide language-based instruction and services to those students who have been identified as having a language based learning disability or whose IEP specifies alternative instruction. In English, math, and reading, students sometimes will be in small structured classes that deliver modified instruction using a variety of teaching strategies designed to meet the student where they are and create successful academic experiences. At other times, students may be included in co-taught classes and receive instruction in a whole-class setting. In addition to the classes, students may participate in group counseling to work on communication and social skills. For each eligible student, all necessary services are determined by the IEP Team.

### **Learning Support Classroom**

The Learning Support classroom is designated for those students who have been identified through the IEP process as needing a small, highly structured and individualized learning environment. With a special education teacher and instructional assistants, students will receive specialized instruction prescribed by the IEP team to meet the educational needs of the student.

The curriculum content and pace is individualized so that the student will have access to the curriculum in the most appropriate setting. Instruction in content areas such as Math, History, English, etc. will be modified to meet the student's needs. Other services such as physical, occupational and speech therapy may be delivered within these classes as determined by the IEP team. For each eligible student, all necessary services are determined by the IEP Team.

### **Integrated Emotional Support Services**

As students and families navigate through middle school life and adolescent development, emotional challenges may arise preventing students from meeting academic expectations. In addition, our Watertown families may also be going through turbulence on occasion, affecting the stability of their child's academic success. We recognize the need to provide a range of supportive services to help struggling students recapture academic engagement and motivation for learning. In response, we have developed the Watertown Middle School Integrated Emotional Support Services. Here students can receive a spectrum of services depending on need. Services may include:

- Short-term respite programming
- Counseling services
- Evaluation services
- Case management for families
- Classroom integration consultation
- Behavior modification
- Small therapeutic class instruction
- Emergency consultation services

### **Connections Program**

The Connections Program is a structured, behavior-based, self-contained/sub-separate program. Using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and sensory integration strategies, students are taught independent life skills, social pragmatic skills and academic skills. Students may also receive related services through counseling, speech and language, occupational therapy and/or physical therapy.

Students' programs are individually designed around each student's needs. As students develop skills, opportunities for inclusion in the general education classes are available. Typically, students in the Connections Program participate in the MCAS Alternative Assessment or participate in the MCAS assessment with accommodations.

The Connections Leadership Council is made up of Watertown faculty and administrators who meet on a monthly basis to ensure that services for students with autism and related disorders are consistent, using an evidence-based teaching approach, throughout grades K-12.

### **Alternative Education: Home and Hospital Instruction**

The Watertown Public Schools provides home and hospital tutoring to students who "in the judgment of their physician, should remain at home or in the hospital on day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for a period of at least fourteen school days in any school year." Before a student can receive these services, a licensed physician must complete a state-required form for review and approval by the District. Forms are available at your child's school or through the Office of Student Services.

Students who have chronic illnesses or diseases may be eligible for Section 504 Plans, and in those instances, the 14-day requirement will be waived. With the exception of those students who have chronic, debilitating diseases or conditions, home or hospital tutoring is considered short-term (no longer than 60 days) and is not a replacement for regular attendance at school. Home and hospital instruction is not considered a special education service.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL)**

It is the Watertown Public Schools' policy to provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades Kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes and Massachusetts Department of Education regulations and guidance.

The Watertown Public Schools district provides student who are English learners with sheltered English immersion instruction in English language classrooms, unless a waiver has been granted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71A, § 5, in which case the English learner will be placed in a bilingual education program.

Student needs will be assessed and determined according to the student's English ability. ESL support provides instruction in speaking, reading, and writing as well as course content support. The six largest ESL groups at Watertown Middle School are Armenian, Portuguese, Spanish (from Central and South America), Haitian Creole, Russian, and Urdu (from Pakistan).

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

**Attendance is the most important aspect of educating our students. When students are not here, they do not have access to instruction.** To focus attention on the importance of attendance the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or No Child Left Behind, specifically mentions attendance, reflecting the increasing awareness that attendance is a key indicator for assessing school and student success.

Massachusetts state law (M.G.L 76 Sections 2 and 4: School Attendance) requires parents/guardians to have their children attend school.

At Watertown Middle School, we pride ourselves in maintaining a very high attendance rate throughout the year. Understandably, there will be times when our students will need to take time away from school for a variety of excused reasons. The following procedure is in place to ensure good attendance, support our families, and follow state and federal laws.

If a student has missed five (5) or more school days unexcused in a school year (absence is defined as two or more periods in one day), the school principal or his/her designee shall make reasonable effort to meet with the parent or guardian of the student to develop action steps for the student's attendance. These action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the school principal or his/her designee, the student and the student's parent or guardian and with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies.

Students are expected to be present and punctual for all classes. All students must be in homeroom by 8:30 a.m. The school doors open at 7:45 a.m. for students participating in the morning programs, and at 8:20 a.m. for all others. Students are expected to arrive at school at 8:20 a.m. to be ready for the school day.

### **Tardiness**

A student is considered tardy if he or she is not in homeroom by 8:30 a.m. Students who are tardy must report to the office window to sign in and get a pass before going to class or homeroom. Students arriving at school after 11:00 a.m. are considered "absent by tardy," as they have missed a significant amount of the school day, and will be marked absent for the day.

Students who are frequently late to school will meet with a guidance counselor to problem solve and work with parents/guardians. Students will also be issued a detention for every five times they are late to school and may receive more consequences if the pattern continues. Additionally, if the pattern continues an administrative meeting will be held with parents/guardians, student, guidance and administration.

### **Absences**

In the event that a student is absent, a parent or guardian must call the absence hotline at 617-926-7783 before 8:30 a.m. Please state the name, grade and homeroom of the student. In the event that the absence is not reported, the school will call the student's home or the place of employment of the parent or guardian to verify the absence.

**Excused Absences may include:**

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school (The illness or injury must be verified by a health care provider, school nurse, or parent)
- A death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal or family crisis
- Court appearances
- Medical or psychological appointments during the school day (The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health center) that the tests could not be scheduled after school)
- Religious holidays
- The Principal may decide to excuse an absence that does not fit within the above categories

A parent's note must accompany the student upon return to school, to be collected by the homeroom teacher. The note must include the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number for the parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian's signature. Students must make up missed work during excused absences. Students who are absent for unexcused reasons may not participate in any extra-curricular school activities or events on the day of the absence, including games and dances, unless excused by the administration.

**Unexcused Absences:** In some cases, a parent note is not sufficient to excuse an absence. Here are a few examples of unexcused absences—even if the parent sends a note:

- Repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury (In these cases, for the absence to be excused, the parent must submit a letter from a physician verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school.)
- Student needed to baby-sit
- Cutting class
- Family vacation

**Resulting Actions:**

- After 3 days of unexcused absences with no contact to the school from the parent, the Assistant Principal will be notified.
- After 5 days of absences (both excused & unexcused) per quarter, a letter of concern will be sent to parents/guardians. At ten absences, a support meeting will be scheduled with parents/guardians, guidance and administration to create an Attendance Plan, which clearly outlines the school, parent and student obligations to improve the problem. If absenteeism continues, further action will be taken, up to and including petitioning the Juvenile Courts with a Child Requiring Assistance, (C.R.A.).
- Truancy first offense/one day = in-school suspension.
- Truancy second and third offense = Further disciplinary action to be discussed in a meeting with family, Assistant Principal, and Guidance.
- Students may also be kept from school-sponsored activities if they have unexcused tardies and absences.

For additional information regarding school absences, please refer to School Committee Policy JH Policy Manual.

## **Dismissal**

Please excuse our formality and strict guidelines regarding dismissal. It is solely intended to protect your children and the privacy of your family. If you would like your child to be excused from school, please provide your son/daughter with a note including the reason, date, time of dismissal and parent signature. Students will be dismissed to the office when presenting the note to their teacher. Students dismissed prior to 11:00 a.m. will be considered, “absent by dismissal,” and marked absent for the day, unless they return to school.

- All students will be dismissed from the main office.
- Unless approved by administration, no child will be dismissed to people not on the official contact list.
- All people picking up children **must** show legal identification and sign-out before leaving.
- Student will not be dismissed unless accompanied by an adult.
- At the beginning of the school year, parents and guardians will receive a student information form that they need to fill out. Please fill out the emergency contact list carefully. Unless approved by administration no child will be dismissed to people not on the official contact list. This includes times when we may have to dismiss students in an emergency.
- No child will be dismissed to any non-school contracted driver, i.e. Uber, Lyft, a taxi.

## **Snow Days and Delayed Openings**

State law requires 180 days of instruction, and also requires that any snow days be made up before June 30<sup>th</sup>. Snow days and delayed openings are listed on the website [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us), and also broadcast on the following radio and television stations:

WCVB Television (Channel 5)

WHDH Television (Channel 7)

WBZ Television (Channel 4) and Radio (AM 1030)

Cable Television Service - If available, check the local community channel.

WBUR web site - part of National Public Broadcasting (Radio - FM 90.9).

All parents/guardians and students are urged to depend on the above communication services. PLEASE DO NOT CALL the School, School Department, Police Department, or Fire Department for school cancellation information, as these lines must remain open for emergency situations

On days of delayed opening, school will open up to two hours after the regularly scheduled time. All students should report to homeroom for attendance and announcements. Lunch will be served at the regular time, and school will close at the regular time.

## **Professional Development Days**

The Watertown Middle School has certain times set aside for teacher professional development and curriculum planning. With the continuous changes to improve curricula, it is important for teachers to have dedicated time set aside to learn the new topics they are required to teach. These days are shown on the school calendar.

Half Days: Students are dismissed right after lunch at 12:30 pm.

Full Days: There is no school on these days. Usually there are three full professional days per year.

### **Field Trips**

Students are invited on field trips throughout the year. In order to participate on a field trip, students are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior and citizenship during school and at school-sponsored events. Students not meeting these expectations may be excluded at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee. The school will provide an alternate learning experience at school on the day of the field trip.

Fees may be charged for participation in field trips. Should a field trip fee pose a financial challenge to the family, parents/ guardians are encouraged to connect with building administration.

All field trips will be staffed by school personnel and by invited parent chaperones who have satisfied school volunteer requirements, including CORI and fingerprint-based CHRI checks as appropriate. Classroom teachers will notify those parents/guardians who will be accompanying the trip as chaperones. For safety reasons, as well as space needs on some trips, we will not be able to accommodate additional adults on field trips.

## **BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES**

### **Watertown Middle School Recipe for Success**

A Watertown Middle School Eagle **SOARS!**

**Success:** Support the **SUCCESS** of others and the school community!

**Ownership:** Take responsibility and **OWN** your actions!

**Achievement:** Set challenging goals and strive to **ACHIEVE** them!

**Respect:** **RESPECT** yourself and the differences around you!

**Service:** **SERVE** your school, community, and country!

*Until you spread your wings, you have no idea how far you can fly!*

### **Code of Conduct**

At Watertown Middle School, we respect the need for a balanced approach towards discipline and character development. It is critical that students are both celebrated when following our high standards and also given natural consequences when they make mistakes. In addition, we appreciate that in order for our students to be successful, they need to feel safe to take risks. At Watertown Middle School, creating a safe and nurturing environment to accomplish this is our top priority. The SOARS tenets listed above are the pillars of the Watertown Middle School community.

The following sections describe our policies and protocols around student conduct.

### **Prevention**

Here at Watertown Middle School, we pride ourselves in creating a secure and caring learning community that fosters success. Providing opportunities for students to create meaningful and supportive relationships with their teachers is an essential part of establishing a safe environment that prevents students from making poor choices. We offer a wide spectrum of services that support these endeavors. The following is a partial list of some of the supportive programming that takes place here:

- Guidance
- Counseling Services
- Advisory Program
- Small Advisory groups

### **Restorative Justice**

Restorative justice is a practice that empowers students to repair relationships by resolving conflict with those affected. Whether that is with peers or teachers, with restorative justice, the question shifts from what rule has been broken and what will the punishment be, to who did you hurt and how are you going to make it better? Some restorative justice practices include adult guided mediations and community service to restore relationships and make reparations. These practices create more action, meaning and context when students make mistakes, which as a result, will have a greater impact on personal growth. We attempt to use these techniques whenever we feel it is appropriate.

### **Celebrating Success**

In order for students to recognize their achievement and good behavior, it is critical that we celebrate those moments when students are successful. The way we recognize successful students ranges from grade to grade, ranging from a tokens of success program for sixth graders to awards assemblies for seventh and eighth graders.

### **Redirection**

During class time, teachers practice a variety of redirection techniques before students are referred out of the class. The following are some of the strategies teachers may use to redirect students within the class if they are disrupting the success of others:

- Non-verbal redirection
- Verbal redirection
- Providing options/choices
- Formal warning
- Changing seating
- Time-out

If a student has not redirected him/herself after the teacher has attempted a number of strategies, the student will be formally asked to leave the class and walk to the Respite Room in hopes of refocusing and returning as soon as possible to his/her schedule. There the student will meet with a teacher, who will help to process the incident, determine administrative involvement, and strategize reintegration back to class.

The following is an outline of the protocol for referring a student to the Respite Room:

- Teacher sends student (with hall pass) to the Respite Room with academic work.
- Parent/Guardian is notified that day.
- Teacher calls down to report incident to the Respite Room Teacher.
- Teacher will deliver written referral to the Assistant Principal.
- The Respite Room Teacher will process incident, and determine administrative involvement.
- If able, student will return to classes the following period.
- Teachers will be responsible to check PowerSchool to review disciplinary records.

For additional information regarding student conduct, student conduct on school buses, gang activity/secret societies, prohibition of hazing, hazing, drug/alcohol use by students, and possession of illegal weapons, please refer to School Committee Policies JIC, JICC, JICF, JICFA, JICFA-E, JICH, and JICI, respectively which can be found at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us). [Policy Manual](#)

### **Bullying Prevention and Response**

The Watertown School Committee policy and procedures are compliant with MGL c 71, Section 370, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, which was enacted May 3, 2010.

#### **Definition and Prohibition of Bullying**

**Definition of Bullying:** Bullying is defined as “the repeated use by one or more students, or by a member of a school staff, of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture

or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to oneself or of damage to one's property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim 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 cyber-bullying."

***Definition of Cyber-bullying:*** Cyber-bullying is defined as "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 communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying 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, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying."

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of electronic resources provided by the Watertown Public Schools by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated staff to ensure appropriate use for instructional and administrative purposes at any time throughout the calendar year.

Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and (ii) 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 a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

In other words, all forms of bullying and cyber bullying by Watertown Public Schools students or staff members are prohibited. Anyone who engages in bullying or cyber-bullying in violation of this policy shall be subject to appropriate discipline. This policy is in effect while students are on property within the jurisdiction of the school district, while on school-owned and/or school-operated vehicles, while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities, and while away from school grounds if the misconduct creates a hostile environment or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of the school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited. Students

who wish to report bullying or other activities that concern them to school administrators and School Police may do so using the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form which may be found at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us).

An anonymous bullying report may also be submitted on the website at, <https://docs.google.com/a/watertown.k12.ma.us/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvJjmkPYJ5EeSzkmkQLsFoebju1qD7yNzuRkbc2KnZTgDH0w/viewform>

Making false allegations, providing discriminatory statements, and making defamatory statements is prohibited and engaging in such activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

***The law specifically prohibits retaliation for reporting an incident of bullying.***

**Procedures for reporting and investigation:** Teachers and staff are now **required** by law to report incidences of bullying to the principal in their building. The principal will establish a procedure, which will include the following steps:

- Notify school personnel or administration
- Parents/guardians of aggressor and target are notified of investigation
- Investigation conducted by administration
- Determination is created whether it is an act of bullying
- Parents/guardians of target and aggressor are notified of conclusion and next steps
- Intervention(s) are conducted

A Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting Form is available on the website at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us) and may be used by students, parents/guardians or others to report bullying. An anonymous bullying report may be submitted on the website at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us).

Once a report is submitted, school administrators will respond quickly and begin an investigation. Steps include determining whether the incident is an act of bullying, notifying parents and guardians of all students involved, developing safety plans for targets and aggressors, taking steps to prevent any further acts of bullying and/or retaliation, and administering consequences and other necessary interventions depending on the exact nature of the situation. It is important that our children and staff work to create a school where all children are respected, cared for and encouraged, and capable of achieving their fullest potential.

**Safety Intervention Plan:** A Safety Intervention Plan will be developed to help both the target and aggressor. These will be individualized to the students with the goal of preventing further bullying.

**Communication with Parents/guardians:** Educational programs will be offered to parents/guardians about MGL c. 71, Section 370, “An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools” during the school year. Information on these programs will be posted on the district’s website and in school newsletters.

**Bullying Prevention Curriculum and Programming:** At WMS we use the Advisory model as a means of prevention and character development. Within small Advisory groups, students meet with an advisor a couple times a week to connect, build character, and learn resilience and communication skills. We believe that students must have at least one trusted adult they can go to and have a group that is connected to one another to prevent bullying and be a successful in school.

**Professional Development:** All schools, under the direction of the principal and the guidance department, provide ongoing professional development and training to the staff throughout the school year. Additionally, faculty meetings and other professional time will be devoted to ensure that our schools are bully free zones and that they optimize learning in a safe and caring environment.

The complete text of the Watertown Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan may be found on the District's website at [www.watertown.k12.ma.us](http://www.watertown.k12.ma.us).

### **Substance Abuse**

Watertown Middle School prohibits the use of any illegal substances by students or adults in the school community. Strict disciplinary measures will occur if a student is found to be in possession of an illegal or controlled substance, or distributes intoxicated by a controlled substance, or distributes an illegal substance to others. In such cases, the Watertown Police will be notified.

Additionally, the school will work collaboratively with the student's parents/guardians to point the student toward appropriate therapeutic services that will help the child with his or her substance abuse issue.

Please refer to WPS Handbook Part II in this Handbook for further information on the procedure governing suspension and expulsion of students who are found to violate the District's policy governing possession, sale, transfer, and/or use of alcohol or illegal substances in school or at school-sponsored activities, including athletic and social events that occur outside the school day.

**Smoking on School Premises:** Use of any tobacco products, including vapor-E cigarettes, marijuana, or any controlled substance within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

For additional information on the District's drug/alcohol use by students and smoking in school premises, please see School Committee policies JICH and ADC, respectively [Policy Manual](#).

### **Consequences for Disciplinary Infractions**

**Cluster Sessions:** A cluster session is an after-school detention that may occur when a student has broken a rule within the cluster, and the teacher feels it necessary for the student to stay after. Parents/guardians will always be contacted to schedule this time.

**Lunch Sessions:** Teachers may issue lunch sessions to student for minor infractions. This time will be served during lunch and is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their mistake. After three lunch sessions for the same kind of infraction, students will be referred to the Assistant Principal.

**Administrative After-School Sessions:** We hold after-school sessions/detention for those students who are required to attend by an administrator. This is a supervised 50-minute period of time where students should take the opportunity to reflect, complete academic work complete assigned community service. Parents/guardians will always be notified when a student has been given an after-school session. If a student receives numerous after-school sessions, further disciplinary action may result.

**Academic Probation:** When a student has shown consistent loss in motivation (grades dropping), has regular behavioral issues interfering with success, or has not passed summer school, the team may place the student on academic probation, which includes contracting with the student and family about interventions necessary to further support the student. Students on academic probation may:

- have a mandatory after-school schedule to meet with teachers
- be taken off athletic teams until they meet the school's athletic requirements
- have additional study hours during and after school

**Loss of Privileges:** Administration may also keep students from attending other school related functions as a means of intervention and consequence. Some of these may include field trips, assemblies, athletics and school dances.

### **Denial of Transportation**

The Watertown Middle School considers the school bus to be an *extension of the classroom*. We have the same standards of behavior on the school bus as we do in school. For example, students should remain in their seats; they should not hang out of windows, harass, push, or fight with other students, throw things, or try to distract the driver.

Students who violate the Code of Conduct while on the bus may be disciplined and may be denied transportation. Some school buses are equipped with video cameras. The video may be used as evidence in disciplining students who misbehave on the bus.

For additional information regarding student conduct on school buses, please refer to School Committee Policy JICC [Policy Manual](#)

### **Hall Passes**

Students are only permitted in the halls during class periods when accompanied by a staff member or if they are carrying a pass issued by a faculty member. Students must sign out from teacher supervision. Students who violate this expectation repeatedly will be referred to the Assistant Principal.

## **Lockers**

Each student is assigned a locker and a lock at the beginning of the school year. He or she is responsible for keeping the locker in good condition. The school is not responsible for articles lost or stolen. Students should not give out their locker combinations. Lockers are the property of Watertown Public Schools and are provided as a privilege for convenience only. The locker, in its entirety, including the space within the locker, shall be the property of the school. Students are cautioned that they may use the locker subject to the right of the school to open the locker at any time for inspection, and there should be no expectation of privacy in the student locker.

Homeroom teachers will issue lockers to students. Each student will be loaned a locker for his/her personal use. Students are to use only the locker to which they have been assigned. Students are to keep lockers secured at all times to protect their property. The school reserves the right to check lockers as determined by the Administration. If you cannot open or secure your locker, report this difficulty to the first floor administrative office. Locker privileges may be revoked if students abuse the locker or have more than one person using a locker. In addition, students may face disciplinary action if they do not lock their locker. Phys. Ed. lockers are not to be considered "secure" storage. Students should not keep valuable items in these lockers.

***Watertown Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen items.***

## **Personal Electronic Devices and Cell Phones**

To better protect students from misuse of handheld devices the following guidelines have been established:

In the school building, personal electronic devices (PED) and cell phones should be off and in your locker, or secured by a teacher. PEDs or cell phones may be used during school hours under the supervision of a teacher only. Students are permitted to use their phones upon dismissal at the end of the day. Some other examples of PEDs include, iPods, iPads, tablets and laptops.

Any use of these PEDs or cell phone outside of teacher supervision is strictly **prohibited**. Faculty or staff has the right to confiscate a PED or cell phone and turn it into the principal's office. The device can be picked up at the office by the student at the end of the school day. Repeated offenses may require the parent to pick up the device and/or require the student to drop it off daily at the office.

Urgent messages between parents/guardians and students must be communicated via the main office.

The school is not responsible for the maintenance, loss, theft or damage of any personal electronic device.

Students should have no expectation of privacy in school-issued or school-owned computers. Similarly, students should have no expectation of privacy when using school email and networks, whether on or off school grounds. The district/school uses web/content security software to monitor all student online activity.

All use of personal electronic devices is commensurate with the District's Acceptable Use Policy.

### **Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters, etc.**

Racks are available outside to secure bicycles. Skateboards and scooters may not be used on school grounds and must be secured inside the locker. **We strongly encourage students to lock their bicycles.**

### **Cafeteria**

In order to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone, students are expected to follow the rules posted in the cafeteria. They are expected to:

- Use a moderate tone of voice, no yelling or loud noise;
- Remain in the cafeteria unless permitted to leave by a cafeteria supervisor;
- Refrain from running, pushing, or cutting in the lunch line;
- Refrain from throwing food or containers;
- Clean up after themselves;
- Stop talking immediately when asked, or when lights are turned off;
- Remain at their table unless buying lunch or snacks, throwing out trash, or using the restroom
- Ask a faculty member for permission to leave and sign out.

Disciplinary action will occur for students not following expectations.

### **Conduct on Buses, Field Trips, and Events**

Your child represents the Watertown Middle School during school-related activities outside the school building, whether on the school bus, a field trip, or attending a school sporting event as a participant or spectator. Misbehavior on a bus may result in suspension from the bus, suspension from field trip activities, and/or any other disciplinary actions.

### **Student Dress Code**

Students' clothing/dress should reflect their readiness to focus on learning, education and hard work. We recognize that students express themselves in many ways as young adults, but at the same time, school attire should support the scholarly culture that leads to academic success.

Student clothing should be neat, clean, and worn in the manner for which it was designed. If a student is out of dress code, he/she will first get a verbal warning and be asked to change. If the student can't find appropriate clothing, he/she can use our stock of Watertown athletic clothing as an alternative. If it is a second or repeat offense, the student will be referred to administration for disciplinary action.

Students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines while in school, or while attending a school-sponsored event or field trip:

1. No clothing or accessories with inappropriate or offensive symbols or statements shall be worn. Some examples include but are not limited to:
  - a. References to drugs, tobacco or alcohol
  - b. References to discriminatory slurs
  - c. References to violence

- d. Sexual connotations
2. Head coverings shall be worn in the case of religious or health reasons.
3. Chests, stomachs, buttocks, and all undergarments should be covered at all times. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
4. All clothing, including shirts, tops, dresses, pants, shorts and leggings, must be completely opaque (not see-through).
5. Clothing must be free of holes, rips and tears that are inappropriately located.
6. Night clothing, including but not limited to pajamas, slippers, etc. may not be worn.

Administration reserves the right to evaluate the appropriateness of student dress when needed.

We will evaluate the dress code on an annual basis to adjust for cultural trends

### **Non-Violent Physical Crisis Intervention / Physical Restraint**

All schools and programs within the Watertown Public Schools strive to maintain safe learning environments for all students and staff. As part of a comprehensive approach to safety, all schools have a physical restraint policy in place with procedures, which follow the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations (766 Reg. 603 CMR 46.00 et seq.). If a student's behavior poses a threat of imminent harm, he/she may be restrained until calm in accordance with these regulations. Qualified, trained staff carries out specific procedures and parents/guardians are notified. For further information, contact your child's school.

## **HEALTH PROCEDURES**

### **School Health Services**

The school nurse is a vital part of the school community and is available during school hours to provide care to students and staff as needed. Student health services are designed to protect and support all students in the maintenance of good health and to enable each student to reach and maintain the highest possible state of well-being for effective learning. The telephone number to the nurse's office is 617-926-7783. The school nurse maintains all student health records in accordance with Massachusetts state laws. These laws require the following:

1. All students must have a physical exam by a primary care provider including evidence of the Massachusetts required immunizations before entering kindergarten, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 7th grade and 10<sup>th</sup> grade: Also new students must have a physical. These physicals must be within a year of entering the grade or school. Your nurse will inform you of immunization requirements
2. Up-to-date health records including immunizations must be presented for anyone registering as a new student.
3. A current physical exam, within 13 months of the start of the season is required of all students participating in team sports

In accordance with Massachusetts state law, students must be properly immunized before entering school to protect the school community from disease. If parents/guardian do not submit up-to-date immunization records, students will not be permitted to attend school.

Postural, vision and hearing screenings will be administered with recommendations to parents/guardians for follow-up when necessary

### **Illness or Injury**

Students may request or be sent to see the nurse with a pass issued by a staff member. The nurse will make the determination about what treatment, if any, is needed. Parents/guardians are notified when necessary.

For your child's protection, it is essential for the school to maintain accurate emergency contact information. Please notify the office immediately when emergency contact information has changed.

In case of illness or injury, a student will be dismissed to a parent or guardian, or to a responsible adult designated by the parent or guardian.

For information regarding procedures for emergency illness or injury at school, please refer to School Committee Policy JLC [Policy Manual](#).

### **Medications**

Written authorization from the primary care physician is required for all medications given out during the school day. Medications must be brought to the school by the parent or guardian in the original container with the label intact. The parent or legal guardian must give written permission in order for the nurse to give medication to a student. Parents/guardians are asked to call and make an appointment to meet with the school nurse to discuss any medication issues or medical concerns.

### **Emergency Illness or Injury protocol**

In case of an accident or illness during school hours, a parent or guardian will be notified. When indicated, the student will be dismissed to the parents/guardians or another adult designated by the parent. The school is responsible for providing appropriate care to the student until the parent arrives.

If emergency medical attention is needed, the school will contact you and an emergency response team.

If your child is ill or injured and must be excused from gym a doctor's note is required. Another doctor's note is needed to return to gym

### **Watertown Concussion Procedures**

Watertown Concussion Procedures have been developed in accordance with Watertown Policy and Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulation 105 CMR 201.000 Head Injuries and Concussions in Extra-curricular Athletic Activities, mandated by Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to the Safety Regulations for School Athletes.

The complete Procedures can be found on the Watertown High School Athletics Website.

### **These procedures provide:**

- 1) Parameters for staff training

- 2) Forms to be used at various stages in the head injury and concussion process
- 3) Steps to be taken if an injury occurs at a sports event
- 4) Steps to be taken to ensure a safe and healthy re-entry into school.

**At the beginning of each sports season, students must turn in:**

- 1) Proof of a physical examination by a medical doctor in the last 13 months
- 2) A completed Pre-Participation Form
- 3) Athletics Fee
- 4) Please refer to the WHS Athletics website for information on registration through FamilyID.com

Students will not be allowed to play if these forms are not successfully completed and turned in.

If parents/guardians or students require more information, they should visit the WHS Athletics site to read the complete text of the Procedures.

### **When to Keep Your Child Home**

Please keep your child at home if he or she has:

**Cold with cough and fever:** If your child has a cold and cough symptoms with a fever or he/she does not seem to be getting better, call your doctor. Your child may not attend school with a fever over 100°. The temperature must be normal for 24 hours without the use of medication before the child may return to school

**Sore throat with fever and swollen glands:** These may be signs of strep throat. Call your doctor to have your child evaluated. Children are still contagious the first 24 hours on antibiotics and must remain home.

**Red eyes:** When the white part of the eye looks red and there is a yellow or green crusty discharge, call your doctor. Your child may have conjunctivitis, a common but troublesome condition that may be a contagious infection. Your child may need an eye ointment, and may attend school after 24 hours of treatment.

**Rash:** A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It also may be a reaction to a medication or chemical (plants, detergents). If your child has an unusual rash or it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor. Keep your child home from school until you have discussed the rash with your doctor.

**Stomachache, vomiting, diarrhea:** A child with vomiting and/or diarrhea should be kept home until symptoms have resolved for approximately 24 hours and the child is able to keep down food and liquid. Consult your doctor if fever and stomach pains do not go away or your child is not eating well and appears dehydrated (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, urinates less than 4 times in 24 hours).

**Head Lice/Nits:** Children may not return to school until all hair has been treated and all live lice have been removed. If your child has lice, please contact the school nurse so she may check siblings and classmates. This is kept confidential.

**Chicken Pox:** Students must remain out of school for at least 1 week from the appearance of eruptions. All lesions must be scabbed over with no new eruptions, to return to school.

Since school health rooms are not equipped to accommodate sick children, and since crowded health rooms lead to further spread of disease, it is imperative that sick children be kept at home. It is also crucial that parents/guardians make every effort to pick up children as soon as possible when notified by the school of a child's illness.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **Participation and Access to Extracurricular Activities**

No student shall be denied the opportunity in any implied or explicit manner to participate in an extra-curricular activity because of the race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness of the student except as provided by state law.

### **Student Council**

The Student Council is made up of one representative from each homeroom, plus four officers: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Homeroom representatives are elected in September for the current school year.

The election of officers takes place in May or June for the next school year. Students seeking nomination for officer positions must be in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, planning to serve in their 8th grade school year. All candidates must attend an election workshop. Candidates must adhere to all election regulations, which are explained at the workshop, especially the deadline for submitting nomination papers. Candidates must get signatures from 20 seventh grade students. In addition, they must have signatures from one sixth grade cluster teacher, three seventh grade cluster teachers and a seventh grade specialist. An administrator must also sign the nomination papers. Candidates for office must have a C or better average in all subjects and they must have no major discipline infractions. No candidate may have any suspensions during the present school year and they may not have more than five administrative after-school sessions. Additionally, more than 5 unexcused absences a year and more than 5 tardy days per term will also disqualify candidates. A 7<sup>th</sup> grade assembly will be held and all candidates will give a speech. Candidates will be required to have their speeches reviewed by their English teachers and/or a school administrator at least three school days before the assembly. After speeches have been reviewed and approved, candidates cannot substantively add to or change their speeches.

Elections will be held soon after the assemblies. If six or more candidates are running for a single position, there will be a run-off election among the top three vote-getters. The principal or his designee oversees the election,

The Student Council meets on a regular basis and plans activities such as the school dances, student/staff basketball games, community service fundraisers, and projects. The Executive Board of the Student Council consists of the four officers and a male and female student chosen by the homeroom representatives to represent each grade level. These students meet at least two Thursdays every month. The Student Council affords students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, and they are often called upon to represent the school. The principal may suspend temporarily or permanently a student council officer or member if the student fails to maintain a C or better average in all subjects, is suspended during the school year, has more than five administrative after school sessions, or has more than five unexcused absences for the year or tardy days per term.

### **School Dances**

The Student Council sponsors several dances throughout the year. Dances take place on Friday evenings from 7-9:30 p.m., with admission by prior ticket sale only. Only sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who attend Watertown Middle School may attend. Students will not be allowed into the dance after 7:20 p.m. unless by prior arrangement with the administration.

Students are expected to dress and behave in a manner consistent with school procedure. Students who have disciplinary issues or excessive absenteeism may be kept from attending the school dances. If a student is absent or dismissed from school for illness the day of the dance, they may not attend the dance unless cleared by a doctor.

Students should be picked up promptly at 9:30 PM at the Waverley Avenue door. A parent/guardian or designated adult must pick up their child. Students will not be allowed to walk home. If a parent or guardian fails to pick a student up from the dance within a reasonable amount of time, a student may not be eligible to attend the next dance. In order to alleviate traffic concerns during pickup, the pickup routine has changed. 6<sup>th</sup> graders will still be dismissed from the dance through the front door on Waverly, but 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be dismissed out the Bemis Street door and can be picked up on Bemis Street.

### **Sports**

<b><u>Fall</u></b>	<b><u>Winter</u></b>	<b><u>Spring</u></b>
Field Hockey	Boys Basketball	Baseball
Boys Soccer	Girls Basketball	Softball
Girls Soccer	Boys Hockey*	Boys Track
Boys X-Country	Girls Hockey*	Girls Track
Girls X-Country		

At the Watertown Middle School, we take pride in having developed over the years a rich and successful Athletic Program. We understand that athletics is an integral part of the school culture, providing our students with invaluable experiences throughout the year. Some sports, denoted with an asterisk (\*), are offered in conjunction with Watertown High School.

While providing our students with these opportunities, we adhere to strict guidelines to keep our students focused on their academics and to provide accountability when they make mistakes. The following guidelines will apply to all students who are involved in the Watertown Middle School Athletics' Program.

1. Students are required to maintain a C- (70%) average to participate. If students are not academically eligible to start or continue a season, students will be placed on academic probation for a period of three weeks to bring their grades up. The Watertown Middle School guidance team will manage the eligibility issues throughout the school year.
2. If a student has received an office referral for misbehavior, they may be placed on athletic restrictions. If disciplinary events continue, the Principal/Assistant Principal may take further restrictive actions.
3. If a student is absent from school, she/he will be ineligible to play that day.
4. If a student has an unexcused tardy, she/he will be ineligible to play that day.

The Athletic Fee to play sports at Watertown Middle School is \$160 per athlete per year. Families of students who receive free or reduced price lunches may apply to the Principal for a reduced athletic fee.

Students will be notified when team try-outs or sign-ups take place, or information may be obtained from the Watertown Middle School website.

### **After School Program**

Watertown Middle School offers a number of after-school activities located within the building and outside in the community. Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for students to sign up for after school activities. On the days when the student is scheduled to participate in a club, team, or activity, he or she should check in at the cafeteria, have a snack, and go directly to the room or area where the activity will take place. A full schedule of after school activities will be sent home in the summer mailing and will be posted again in the fall on the school's website and in the newsletter.

### **Working Papers**

We recommend that middle school students not work at a job during the school week (i.e., Sunday evening through Thursday evening). If a student needs to work, we recommend that he/she does not work for more than ten hours per week.

Students who have reached the eligible age of 14 for working papers should first be hired and then procure a yellow card from the main office at the High School for the employer and doctor to sign. Students must present a birth certificate and student identification. Upon completion of this card, students should return the yellow card in order to get the official working papers. Students are reminded that working papers are available Monday – Friday in the Main Office at the High School from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

The communication guidelines delineated below are designed to provide an efficient and effective process for parents/guardians to access information about all aspects of their child’s school experience. We define a “chain of communication” because we feel that the most effective way to obtain accurate responses to inquiries or lasting solutions to concerns is at the level closest to the issue or concern.

The following chart identifies the individual who should be contacted initially, depending upon the nature of the question or concern. The Personnel Directory lists positions and phone extensions. If parents/guardians remain uncertain about where to make a call, they should feel free to contact any member of the school community who will refer the inquiry to the appropriate person. We understand that there are times when a parent feels the need to start with a specific individual. We defer to parents/guardians’ judgment in this matter.

### Classroom Concerns

Any questions related to classroom issues should be referred to the teacher. Most concerns are resolved when parents/guardians take this initial step. Teachers are interested in the concerns of parents/guardians and want to address those concerns in an open and professional manner. Parent/teacher conferences make a positive contribution to student achievement.

We strongly encourage parents/guardians and staff members who have concerns to open up a two-way dialogue, whether it is by phone or a face-to-face meeting. Email is very useful for information dissemination and appointment scheduling, but it is usually not a sufficient mode of communication for collaborative problem solving.

Supervisors and administrators are willing to listen to questions and concerns related to classroom issues and will provide procedure-related information, but they may ask the parent to contact the teacher if a parent/teacher dialogue has not already begun.

Parents/guardians who feel that an issue is unresolved after having consulted with the teacher should contact the individual listed in the “referral” column.

### Anonymous Calls or Complaints

There will be no response from the School Department to anonymous calls, letters, or complaints.

### Questions and Concerns Chart

NATURE OF CONCERN	INITIAL CONTACT	REFERRAL
Academic Progress	Teacher	Curriculum Coordinator or Principal 617-926-7783
Discipline	Teacher	Assistant Principal 617-926-7783
Teaching Methods & Curriculum	Teacher	Curriculum Coordinator or Principal
Counseling/Student Adjustment	Counselor	Principal or Assistant Principal

Health / Medication	Nurse	Principal or Assistant Principal
Special Needs Referral	Teacher or Counselor	Special Education Coordinator or Principal
School Traffic Guards	Principal	Watertown Police Department 617-972-6500
Transportation	Principal	Director of Business Services 617-926-7716
Special Needs Transportation	Director of Student Services 617-926-7766	Director of Business Services 617-926-7716
Title I Program	Title I Tutor/Teacher	Principal
Policy - District	Superintendent 617-926-7700	School Committee 617-926-7700
School Lunch Program	Principal	Director of Food Services 617-926-7756
Community Education Programs (Adult Ed/Summer School/Before and After School Programs)	Director of Community Education 617-923-7653	Assistant Superintendent 617-926-7700

## GETTING INVOLVED

### Parent-Teacher Organization

The Watertown Middle School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a voluntary group of parents/guardians, teachers and administrators, who meet to discuss and organize activities and events. The PTO supports the school in many ways. Dues for the year are \$10.00 per family, which go right back to the classroom and support your child in many ways.

Fundraising efforts include:

- Magazine Drive
- Coupon Drive
- Restaurant Nights
- Community Events
- Bake Sales

PTO fundraisers finance activities and programs essential to our school's academic, social, and cultural life:

- Student and Teacher Agenda Books
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Family Pasta and Bingo Night
- Scholarships
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Washington D.C. Trip
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation
- Principal's Fund
- Money for each Cluster
- Field Trips such as the Science Museum and Museum of Fine Arts
- In house performances such as Shakespeare and Greek Mythology
- Ice Cream Social
- Scavenger Hunt for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders
- Scholastic Book Fair
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Pizza Parties

The PTO meets once a month. A schedule of meetings will be posted in the community announcements in September. The PTO welcomes anyone who would like to be a part of this terrific organization.

### School Site Council

The Watertown Middle School Site Council consists of parents/guardians, teachers, the principal, and community members. School Site Councils were created in every district by the 1993 Education Reform Act (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 59C). They provide input to the principal regarding student, parent, and community needs. Parent and teacher representatives are elected by parents/guardians and teachers respectively to serve staggered three-year terms. The School Council meets monthly. Duties and responsibilities include:

- adopting educational goals for the school.
- identifying the educational needs of students attending the school.
- reviewing the school building's annual budget.
- formulating a school improvement plan.

### **Parent Volunteers**

Parent volunteers are encouraged to help in school. The assistance of parents/guardians is greatly valued. We believe that children who see their parents/guardians working in school will better recognize the importance of school in their lives. Volunteer positions will be announced at the beginning of school.