



STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022

Griswold Middle School
211 Slater Avenue
Griswold, CT 06351
(860) 376-7630



Griswold Middle School
Educating for Excellence

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<p>Louis Zubek Principal</p> <p>Jeffrey Parkinson Assistant Principal</p>	 <p>Griswold Middle School Educating for Excellence</p> <p>211 Slater Avenue Griswold, CT 06351 Phone 860 376-7630 / Fax 860 376-7631 www.griswoldpublicschools.org</p>	<p>Karen Scholl School Counselor</p> <p>John Howe Psychologist</p> <p>Rebecca Brigner Psychologist</p>
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WELCOME TO GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle school is a wonderful time for students to discover talents, expand academic knowledge and ultimately become equipped for the transition to high school. Although this is not a typical school year, GMS will continue to provide a secure, engaging and rigorous learning environment where all students can excel. We welcome you and hope your experience at GMS will be a good one.

The purpose of this handbook is to help familiarize students and parents with the policies, procedures and rules that will help all students to be successful at GMS. We expect our students to follow these rules. If you have any questions, please refer to this handbook. You will find it filled with useful information.

Although the handbook is very detailed, two words can be used to guide best behavior practices at our school...*respect and responsibility*. Be respectful of yourself and others. Accept responsibility to be the best person that you can possibly be. To ensure a good beginning to your school year, take time now to go over the handbook and learn about your school. We ask that you discuss the contents of this handbook with your parents. Let them read it too. Please complete the form, which verifies that you and your parent/guardian have received, read and understand *the 2021-22 Griswold Middle School Student/Parent Handbook* and return it to your homeroom teacher by Friday, September 3rd. Remember that this is your responsibility and I appreciate you bringing back your signed form by the deadline.

The Griswold community is very proud of our school. Our teachers are highly skilled professionals who are dedicated to making this school year a successful one for you. We value our students and families and look forward to working together this upcoming year.

I challenge each of you to work hard and get involved. If you have any questions about our school, please ask. You can ask me, your teachers and/or visit the GMS main office. If we don't know the answer, we will find it for you. We are looking forward to a great school year.

Sincerely,

Louis Zubek
Principal

PARENT INFORMATION

Following is important information and FAQ's about Griswold Middle School.

Please keep this available for quick reference.

What do I need to do if my child is absent?

- When a student is going to be absent: **Email** gmsattendance@griswoldpublicschools.org, or call 860-376-7630 x6 by 7:30 a.m. each day of the student's absence.
- Upon return to school a parent note must be submitted explaining the absence. Notes can be emailed to: gmsattendance@griswoldpublicschools.org, faxed to: 860-376-7631 or brought into the main office by the student.
- Illnesses and various emergency situations are the only legitimate excuses for being absent from school. Please reference the school's attendance policy (separate page).
- **Family vacations during the time that school is in session are strongly discouraged. Parents who choose to plan a trip while school is in session must understand that absences due to family vacations are considered part of the student's total record of attendance. Prior to taking any vacation, parents are asked to notify the school administration in writing a minimum of ten days in advance. Students should bring the parent note to the main office.**
- A student must be in school for four hours to attend after-school activities on that day.

Face Covering/Masks

Face-coverings are a requirement of the State of Connecticut, Department of Education. Griswold Public Schools will ensure that students and staff are educated and engaged in the expectations related to all public health policies and protocols. Students and staff will use face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth. As state/local requirements change we will be sure to update the handbook appropriately as well as contact/notify families.

OVERVIEW

- Until further notice, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to wear face masks, or a protective face covering.
- This facemask, a protective covering, must completely cover the nose and mouth when inside the building.
- If an individual is unable to wear a facemask because of a medical condition, we are politely requesting medical documentation for such cases.
- Students traveling to and from school on an STA-Griswold Bus must have a facemask on before entering the bus and keep the face covering on for the duration of the trip to and from school. Bus drivers will provide masks in the event that the student does not have one.
- Once arriving at school, students must wear a mask unless there is a medical exemption. Students who do not comply by wearing a mask will be asked to leave the school premises.
- Building level dress code applies to mandatory face masks. Any student wearing a mask deemed inappropriate based on dress code expectations or the requirements set forth by Griswold Public Schools will be required to wear a school-issued mask.
- A face shield, without a face mask or face covering underneath, is not acceptable.

How do I get make up work?

- Any absence, even one day, places a responsibility on the student to make up for missed work in addition to keeping up with their regular assignments.
- For a brief illness, it is best to check google classroom for missed work.
- If a student is out of school for three days or more, parents may request assignments from teachers. **GMS requests twenty-four hours' notice** so that teachers can gather books, materials and write instructions. Upon returning to school, it is the student's responsibility to contact each of their teachers regarding missed work and arrange to make it up within one week.
- **Extended Absences Due to Vacation:** Students who will be away on vacation should give teachers a minimum of one week notice prior to leaving. This is in addition to the parent note written to a GMS administrator ten days in advance. There is a possibility that students may be given work to complete beforehand. Every effort to complete required work should be done within *one week of returning to school*.

Important Phone Numbers

GMS	(860) 376-7630
Nurse's Office	(860) 376-7624
Bus Company	(860) 376-2860
Central Office	(860) 376-7600
Special Education	(860) 376-7650

Important Dates

Back to School Night

The format of back to school night is still being determined. Information and dates will be sent out ASAP.

Picture Day

Thursday, September 2nd

Picture Retake Day

Thursday, November 4th

Parent/Teacher Conferences

November 17, 12:30-2:00 & November 18, 12:30-2:00 & 5:00-7:00 pm

March 2, 12:30-2:00 & March 3, 12:30-2:00 & 5:00-7:00 pm

*The format and times of parent/teacher conferences may change.

PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may therefore be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal a communication as we would like, we address students not directly as “you” but rather as “the student,” “students,” or “children.” Likewise, the term “the student’s parent” may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct contained herein intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere conducive for learning.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletter, web pages, and other communications. Please refer to the district website, <https://www.griswold.k12.ct.us/> for all Board of Education policies.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law.

The Director of Curriculum is the designated district compliance officer who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Griswold Middle School Pillars of Character



Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

Griswold Middle School Personnel

Administration

Louis Zubek...Principal
Jeff Parkinson...Assistant Principal

Grade 5

*Denica Burnell...Social Studies
Marina Skevofilax...Language Arts
Erin Shea...Math
Lars Weldy...Math
Ray Knolhoff...Science
Shea Crosby...Language Arts

Grade 6

Alex Smola...Math
*Jen Larkin...Math
Lisa Lear...Language Arts
Heather Flemming...Language Arts
Matt Dyer...Science
Ty Roby...Social Studies

Education

Grade 7

James Young...Math
Gillian Toth...Math
Amy Corey...Language Arts
*Alexa Ondreicka...Language Arts

Interventionist

Chad Galipeau...Science
Philip Miner...Social Studies

Grade 8

*John Felty...Social Studies
Krista Garvin...Science
Doug Scholl...Language Arts
Jessica Martins...Language Arts
Brenna Carter...Math
Cara Brouillard...Math

Special Education

Robert Hess - Grade 5
Haley Smith - Grade 6
Jennifer Dickens - Grade 7
*Janet Keffer - Grade 8
David Amaral - Grades 5-8
Ryan Edgar - Grades 5-8
Kathleen Reagan - *Speech/Language*
Kristin Fleming - *Occupational Therapist*

Exploratory Teachers

*Charles Butremovic - Technology
Kristen Butremovic - Health
Erin Wraichette - Art
Joy Smith - Spanish
Rebecca Santana - Spanish
Kathy Bocciarelli - *5/6 Music, 5/6 Chorus, Jazz Band*
Michael Albaine - 5-8 Orchestra
Amanda Richmond - 5-8 Band
Kostas Efthimiou - Physical

Caitlin Valentine - Physical Education
Laurie LaBossiere - Library Media Specialist

Literacy

Stephanie Rourke - Reading
Jennifer Socha - Reading Interventionist

Support Staff

Karen Scholl - School Counselor
John Howe - School Psychologist
Rebecca Brigner - School Psychologist
Renee Normandie - School Nurse
Terry Cholewa - SEL Coordinator

Main Office Staff

Carolyn Bissonnette - Administrative Asst.
Vicki Donahue - Administrative Asst
Diane Fasula - Administrative Asst.

GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Griswold Public Schools is to educate for excellence in a safe and accepting atmosphere, thus inspiring students to maximize their potential and develop into confident and contributing members of society.

The Griswold Public Schools will attain its mission by:

- Nurturing a culture and climate where safety, order, communication and accomplishment are fundamental and where integrity, respect, compassion, trust, diversity, and healthy choices are expected and valued.
- Inspiring teachers and learners to develop knowledge, skills and individual talents.
- Providing hands-on opportunities that expose students to a variety of community and real-world experiences.
- Promoting high standards and excellence in academic, social, civic, physical, artistic, and technological endeavors.
- Improving achievement and programs by analyzing, reporting and using student performance data.
- Selecting and retaining high quality staff, investing in their ongoing growth, and involving them in collaboration, reflection and problem solving.
- Inviting families to serve as partners in their children's education through opportunities that support learning, volunteering, decision making, and educational advocacy.
- Engaging the community as learners and as proud caretakers of strong educational values for future generations.
- Preserving the campus environment and other features that contribute to the uniqueness of the Griswold district.
- Utilizing all resources (people, time, materials, and facilities) to further expand the vision and horizons of the Griswold Public Schools.

Please note: Parents can email GMS personnel by using the recipient's first initial and last name followed by @griswoldpublicschools.org.

For example, Louis Zubek would be reached at: lzubek@griswoldpublicschools.org

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Main Office: 860-376-7630
Fax: 860-376-7631
School Nurse: 860-376-7624
Special Education: 860-376-7650
Cafeteria: 860-376-7672
Transportation: 860-376-2860
Superintendent's Office: 860-376-7600
GES: 860-376-7610
GHS: 860-376-7640

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Teacher Teams

The organization of professional staff at Griswold Middle School is the instructional team of teachers. Currently, Grades 5 – 8 work together as grade level teams. Our exploratory teachers form their own team and provide instruction for all grade levels. The teacher teams, in cooperation with the school’s administration and counselors, coordinate, plan and discuss student academic progress, behavior, instructional needs, home/school information and school activities. Teams make adjustments, provide support, develop academic and behavioral improvement plans based on student data such as standardized tests, progress reports and report cards, failing student lists, reading assessments, and behavioral referrals.

Attendance Policy

Griswold Middle School feels strongly that positive school attendance is the foundation for student success. For several years, we have focused on improving our students’ attendance and punctuality rates. Research supports the link between positive student attendance and punctuality with increased levels of student success in school.

Students arrive at GMS at approximately 7:20 a.m. and are to be in their homerooms by 7:30 a.m. Attendance is taken every morning and students who are not in their homeroom are marked tardy. Please make every effort to ensure your student arrives at school on time. We are focused on helping students to learn this important habit while they are in our building because we know that it holds significant value throughout their lives.

The GMS guidelines align with the state of Connecticut’s definition of *truancy*. Connecticut created the guidelines while working closely with the national organization, Attendance Works (www.attendanceworks.org), whose primary focus is to reduce chronic absenteeism and tardiness to improve student success. A complete copy of these guidelines can be found on the Griswold Middle School website under *Parent Resources* and *Student Resources*, titled *CT State Department of Education Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences*. The guidelines contain several components, including the definition of an *absence*, the two-tier approach to *excused absences* and documentation and absenteeism prevention and intervention strategies. The table below clearly breaks down the policy regarding excused versus unexcused absences.

Level	Total # of days absent	Acceptable Reasons for a Student Absence to be Considered Excused	Documentation Required Within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student’s parent or guardian approves	Parent or Guardian note only
2	10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student illness (to be deemed excused by a licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence’s length• Student’s observance of a religious holiday	Parent or Guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (Doctor’s note, court documentation etc.)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death in the student’s family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family (continued pg. 2) • Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required) • Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators 	
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The State of Connecticut considers a student chronically absent if they have 18 absences (excused and/or unexcused) in a school year. If a student has 4 unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in a school year, that student will be considered truant. Extreme cases may be referred to the Juvenile Review Board and/or the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. The school will contact parents of students who are approaching these numbers to discuss concerns and determine ways to avoid further absences.

In addition, family trips and vacations scheduled while school is in session will not be considered excused absences. As outlined in our *Student/Parent Handbook*, the Parent/Guardian is asked to notify the administration in writing **10 school days** prior to the vacation/trip so that we may review the impact on the student’s attendance and academic performance. If there is a concern, we will contact you directly.

GPS ATTENDANCE CODES/GUIDELINES

- A student will be marked as “excused absence” with an absence code of COVID-quarantine if he/she is experiencing COVID systems, has traveled to [a quarantine restricted state](#), has been in contact with a person experiencing COVID symptoms, or has been in contact with a person who is diagnosed with COVID.
- Griswold Public Schools have made adjustments in its Student Information System, Infinite Campus, to properly code any and all related COVID-19 absences.
- Our School Nurses, Administrators, and Liaisons will closely monitor student and staff absences and will enlist both the Uncas Health District and UCFS Medical Advisor to make timely, critical decisions.
- Truancy: A truant is defined as a student who has 4 unexcused absences from school in one month (30 consecutive calendar days) or 10 unexcused absences in one school year. To read more about truancy please review CSDE [Truancy](#).
- Chronic Absenteeism: Chronic absence is defined as missing 10 percent or more of school for any reason including excused, unexcused and disciplinary absences. To read more about chronic absenteeism please review CSDE [Chronic Absenteeism](#).

GPS ATTENDANCE MODEL

- Parents/guardians must contact the school on the day of the student’s absence and provide a reason for the absence.
- [Students and parents should monitor their health daily and be alert for COVID-19 symptoms](#), including but not limited to fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell and/or taste.

GPS DISTANCE LEARNING ATTENDANCE MODEL (ONLY IF NEEDED FOR SCHOOL-WIDE REMOTE LEARNING)

- Students are expected to attend daily virtual class unless instructed otherwise by the teacher. If the student is unable to attend the scheduled virtual class, then s/he is considered absent from the class.
- District and building attendance policies outline expectations and include information regarding chronic absenteeism and truancy as it is defined by the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- Parent communication regarding student absences is mandatory in order for the student's absence to be excused.
- Building attendance teams will continuously monitor student attendance and identify at-risk, chronically absent, and truant students.
- Support staff, teachers, and administration will notify parents regarding at-risk students and offer tiered-supports to improve attendance.

We look forward to teaming with you this year to provide a wonderful middle school experience for all of our students. Thank you for understanding the importance of school attendance and punctuality and for talking to your student about this valuable life skill.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via email, jparkinson@griswoldpublicschools.org, or call GMS at (860) 376-7630.

Sincerely,

Mr. Parkinson
Assistant Principal

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS

A student should report to his/her teacher if he/she becomes ill during the day, or if he/she has an accident while in the building or on school grounds. The teacher will then refer the student to the nurse and school office. It is imperative that anyone who displays symptoms of Covid-19 please contact the nurse immediately. **Students must see the nurse for assistance in health**

matters prior to contacting home and leaving school. Parents should only be contacted after seeing the nurse.

The Health Office and Health Assessments

State law and Board of Education policy require an up-to-date physical examination for students in grade six. Students will have from the last day of grade five until the day prior to entering grade seven to obtain the required physical examination. Board of Education policy also requires that students participating in interscholastic and intramural sports have an annual physical on file with the nurse before they try out.

Medications: All medications needed by students during school hours must be given to the nurse by the parent, with the authorization form signed by the attending physician. Connecticut state law requires a statement on file in the health office signed by physician and parent describing medication, dosage and possible side effects. **All medications (including aspirin) must be kept by the nurse and distributed by the nurse at the appropriate times.** All medication needing to be administered during school hours are given by the school nurse. **Self-carry medications (inhalers, EpiPens and diabetic needs) must be brought to the nurse's office with the *Medication Authorization* form signed by the physician and parent. Self-carry medication will be given to the student upon review of medication policy and self-carry status.**

If your child must receive medication during school hours, you must abide by the following:

1. An order from the doctor must be completed and signed by the physician and the parent.
2. This must include the name of the medication, the dosage, and the length of time it is to be given. No medication will be given without a doctor's order and written permission by the parent.
3. Medications must be in a pharmacy bottle labeled with:
 - a. The student's name
 - b. The name of the medication
 - c. The time it is to be given

As of August 2011, the State of Connecticut has new immunization requirements for entry into seventh grade. Students are required to have:

1. A health assessment (physical exam)
2. Tdap/Td
3. Polio
4. MMR
5. Meningococcal
6. Hep B
7. Varicella

ASSEMBLIES

Each year a variety of assemblies are held. Students are to sit with their class and conduct themselves in a polite and courteous manner. Recent assemblies have included a variety of topics that are related to our curriculum and school safety.

Evening Programs

Students must be accompanied by a parent or designee in order to attend evening programs as audience members.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH/CAFETERIA

You have the right to eat in a clean, safe, and civil environment. Students will have assigned seating by cohorts. **The staff members on duty have helped to establish the rules and the procedures for the lunch period, as rules must be followed.**

Rules:

1. Social distancing rules will be enforced.
2. It is expected that students abide by the common rules of manners and courtesy. You are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times to those who work in the cafeteria and to those teachers on duty. Cutting into line is not allowed.
3. Talking must be kept at a conversational level. Screaming at or to one another is unacceptable.
4. When you have finished eating lunch, you will dispose of your trash and tray, and then return to the seat where you were sitting. You are not to wander around the cafeteria.
5. You **MUST** leave your table and area clean. The next group coming in to eat deserves a clean place to eat just as you did.
6. Dismissal will be by table. The table and area needs to be clean and the group at the table must be settled down and ready to go. Teachers on duty will check your table for cleanliness before dismissing you.
7. Food is not to be thrown under any circumstance. This means food is not to be thrown on the table, the floor, or at someone else.
8. Anything that adds noise and confusion to the setting is not allowed.
9. You may not take food or drinks from the cafeteria without permission.

Prices

During the summer, a form is mailed to parents regarding the price for breakfast and lunch which are served each day at GMS. Applications for free and reduced lunches are sent home on the first day of school. Parents can pre-pay for lunches by making a check out to **Griswold School Lunch** in whatever amount desired and send it in to either the GMS main office or to the cafeteria office. Once all lunches have been served, the line will re-open for the sale of snacks. **For 5th graders:** a parent note needs to be filed with the cafeteria office for students who wish to purchase snacks from their pre-paid account.

All students who have been identified to receive reduced price or free hot lunch during the previous school year may remain as such until October 1st of the following year. Forms need to be resubmitted for each new school year. The same password from the previous year will be used by the student.

Griswold Public Schools Food Service Department has moved over to a new Point of Sale product that has a new convenient way to pay for school meals, school fees and services. Presently, all school lunches are free for all students but any other ala carte items are not. Any meal balances that a student had on our old system will still be there and you can now add additional money. When in your portal account just go to the Food Service area and you will have the ability to choose the student and the account. If you have not set up your portal account for your student/s you can do so by going to the district's homepage and clicking on "Portal Link For Students and Parents". Soon you will be able to pay for many school fees and other services.

BUS SAFETY AND SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Appropriate student behavior on a bus is a matter of safety. **Masks must be worn on busses at all times.** The bus driver is in charge of the bus and its occupants from the time the students get on the bus until they are safely discharged. Students are expected to respect the rights of others at all times and follow all school rules while on a bus. **Please remember that riding a bus is a privilege.** Repeated misbehavior or a single serious offense will result in losing bus privileges. If a student is on bus suspension, a parent is required to provide transportation to and from school. In an emergency situation only, students may take another bus with a written note from home and a pass from the GMS office.

Transportation discipline can include:

- **Letter of warning and/or phone call to Parents**
- **3 day suspension from transportation plus designated seating**
- **5 day suspension from transportation plus possible additional Administrative action**

Students who are eligible to be transported to school by bus may not ride any bus except the one normally used. In special situations, where a bus change is required, parents must provide a note of permission for such change. If a student misses his/her bus ride home, he or she should report directly to the GMS office in order to inform his/her parents/guardians and determine an alternative transport home.

No bus student may walk home without written parental permission and without there being a parent note/letter for such permission on file with the Griswold Middle School office. Middle school students are NOT allowed to ride the late bus home from the elementary school.

In the event that a student is taking a different bus home or getting off at a different bus stop written permission is required in advance. Permission must be submitted to the main office via email: gmsattendance@griswoldpublicschools.org, fax: 860-376-7631, or delivered to the main office by the student. The main office cannot process written permission via a student after 12:00 on the day of the transportation request. Transportation changes cannot be made over the phone. Written permission must include the date, student's name, the bus number that they will be traveling on, the address they will be going to and the name of the student they are traveling with.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for all school property in their possession. When students are issued a book they will sign a receipt and put their name in the book. All textbooks shall be covered and protected at all times. Students are responsible for any damage or wear beyond the normal amount. Books which are lost or stolen must be paid for. Students who carelessly or maliciously destroy or damage school property will be held financially responsible and will face disciplinary action.

Most textbooks, reference materials, library books, and other equipment in Griswold Middle School are of excellent quality. Griswold Middle School is well maintained because we take pride in our school. It is a priority that we keep our school and its equipment in as good condition as possible. Any destruction or defacement will be dealt with severely. Each student is asked to be responsible for making his/her teacher aware of any problems or changes in the condition of school materials.

CELL PHONE/CAMERA/VIDEO POLICY

Cell phones are to be off and out of sight at all times during the school day. Students are not allowed to send or receive calls or text messages during school hours. We ask for your assistance in enforcing this rule. If you need to contact your child during the school day, please call the main office at 860-376-7630 x6 and we will arrange for your student to contact you. Students are not allowed to take photographs or videos in school or on the bus. Any student caught using a cell phone during the school day will be asked to deliver their cell phone down to the main office. Students are expected to respectfully comply with this request. Cell phones may be confiscated by administration. All confiscated cell phones are turned into the office with the student's name attached.

1st Offense: Students may pick up their phone in the office at the end of the day.

2nd Offense: Student's parent/guardian must come and pick up the phone.

3rd Offense: Student's parent/guardian must come and pick up the phone. Three or more offenses will result in additional disciplinary action.

COMPUTER NETWORK AND ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Griswold Public School district believes in the educational value of communications, the Internet, and electronic information services, and recognizes their potential to support educational programs, the curriculum and student learning. Resource sharing, communications, and innovation capabilities for both students and teachers have been increased with access to telecommunications and to the Internet. The district will make every effort to protect students and teachers from any misuses of abuses as a result of experience with electronic information service. It is therefore imperative that members of the school community conduct themselves in a responsible, decent, ethical, and polite manner while using any network. Further, they must abide by all local, state, and federal laws.

Internet access is available to students and teachers in the Griswold School District. The Board of Education is pleased to bring this access to Griswold and believes the Internet offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to both students and teachers. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. With access to computers and people all

over the world also comes the availability of material that may not be considered to be of educational value in the context of the school setting. The Griswold School District has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial materials. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials and an industrious user may discover controversial information. We firmly believe that the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the district.

The Griswold School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. This district will not be responsible for any damages such as loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors, or omissions. The district specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained from the Internet.

CHILD ABUSE

Teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including; school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if the child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Family Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases. Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

CLASS CHANGE POLICY

Class changes will not be made except in the rare occurrence of an inappropriate academic placement. Not liking a particular subject or staff member is insufficient grounds for a class change. Consideration for any other changes requires a meeting process where the teacher, student, parent(s) and counselor will review the circumstances. Any recommendation for a change must have administrative approval.

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/ATHLETICS

Co-curricular activities are those school programs that extend beyond the school day and meet on a regular basis. We at the Middle School encourage all students to participate in these activities. They are fun and add another dimension to school. They also afford an opportunity to establish new friendships and skills. The following are some activities offered at Griswold Middle School:

Boys' and Girls' Cross Country
Boys' and Girls' Track and Field
Dinner Theater Production
Student Council
Chess Club
Yearbook
Honor Society

Boys' and Girls' Basketball (6-8)
Boys' and Girls' Soccer (6-8)
Drama Club
Makerspace
Lego Club
Volleyball
Ski Club

Griswold Middle School offers opportunities to participate in co-curricular programs. **Students must be in good academic standing to take part. That is, a student must be passing most of his/her subjects and maintain those passing grades.** Students must also adhere to the **Griswold Public Schools Code of Conduct for Participation in Co-curricular Activities.** Any deviation from this policy will require administrative approval.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All students in the Griswold Public Schools who participate on an athletic team or a co-curricular activity shall:

1. Demonstrate good attendance in school and good attendance as part of the team or activity;
2. Demonstrate good behavior and abide by all school rules and District policies;
3. Demonstrate good citizenship/sportsmanship in both school and the community at large.

All students in the Griswold Public Schools who participate on an athletic team or a co-curricular activity shall refrain from the following:

1. The possession or use of tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, or other illegal substances;
2. The willful destruction or vandalism of personal or school property or any criminal activity;
3. The hazing or harassing of any student, teammate, staff member, or community member.

All students who are a member Griswold Public Schools teams/clubs that include but are not limited to, athletic teams, student council, student support clubs, honor societies, performing groups are expected to abide by this Code of Conduct and are subject to disciplinary action for violation of any of the above **on or off school grounds**.

In addition, the highest expectations are in place for team captains, student officers in any club or activity, any student in a leadership position, any student in a featured performance, or any student that represents the Griswold Public Schools in any school related or conference activity.

Consequences for violations of the Griswold Public Schools Code of Conduct on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, off school grounds, **or references on social media** include probation, suspension, or dismissal from teams, honor societies, clubs, or activities and/or the removal from all student leadership positions for a time to be determined by the coach, advisor, Athletic Director, and/or Principal.

COUNSELORS/SUPPORT STAFF

School counselors are available to help students better understand themselves, their abilities, talents and career options in order to make mature, responsible decisions affecting their lives and the lives of others. Students may see their counselor by making an appointment before or after class or immediately with teacher permission in an emergency. The School Psychologist and School Counselor may offer focus groups in response to student needs, for example: divorce groups, peer acceptance groups, and study skills programs. Parents are encouraged to contact support staff with any concerns they might have.

Support staff also recommends students who may be in need of academic intervention. Students who have failed several classes each quarter may be provided with small group instruction in their areas of need. These academic intervention classes may be scheduled during their academic day (i.e. WEB, in the tutorial center).

GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The discipline guidelines at Griswold Middle School are based on the values represented by our core words; Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. The purposes of these guidelines are to establish a safe learning environment through the development of mutual respect for and between the students, staff and school. Griswold Middle School will provide a quality education in a structured program in which positive reinforcement is coupled with the consistency of consequences. Our underlying premise is that school needs to be orderly to maintain a safe, nurturing environment for students. Therefore, all students are expected to follow the six fundamental rules listed below. These rules apply to any school activity.

GMS School Rules framed by the Six Pillars of Character

Trustworthiness- Be honest- don't lie, steal or cheat. Do what is right even when it is difficult.

Respect – Be courteous and polite- don't insult people, call them names or make fun of them.

Responsibility –Be dependable- Think before you act and understand the consequences of your actions.

Fairness – Think how your actions will affect others. Play by the rules and be a good sport.

Caring- Be kind- treat people the way you wish to be treated. Never be mean or hurtful.

Citizenship- Be an active member of your school! Do your share to make GMS a better place.

Respect your community and be a kind GMS student.

Every student helps to build our school community. Students who consistently comply with the six fundamental rules receive positive reinforcement through our *High Five, Student of the Month and Kids of Character* programs.

The table reflects consequences issued for violation of school rules:

VIOLATION	POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES *May include 1 or more listed consequences
Failure to wear mask	Warning/parent notification, Removal from school
Failure to maintain social distancing	Warning/parent notification, Removal from school
Abusive Language/Profanity	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS
Racial/Ethnic Slur	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS
Use/Possession of Alcohol	Parent Notification, OSS, Police Notification, Expulsion Proceeding
Arson	Parent Notification, OSS, Police Notification, Expulsion Proceeding
Bomb Threat/False Alarm	Parent Notification, OSS, Police Notification, Expulsion Proceeding
Disruption of School Environment (including but not limited to defiance, disrespect, noncompliance)	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS
Missed Detention	Parent Notification, Double the time served, ISS
Dress Code Violation	Warning, Parent Notification
Harassment	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Threatening/Intimidating Behavior	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Sexual Harassment	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Leaving Class or School Grounds Without Permission	Parent Notification, Detention, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Dishonesty/Cheating/Forgery/Plagiarism	Parent Notification, Staff Intervention, ISS, OSS
Use/Possession of a Weapon, Dangerous Instrument, or Anything That Creates a Safety Concern	Parent Notification, ISS, OSS, Expulsion Proceeding, Police Notification
Use/Possession Drugs or Drug Paraphernalia	Parent Notification, OSS, Expulsion Proceeding, Police Notification
Use/Possession of Tobacco or Vaping Products	Parent Notification, ISS, OSS
Fighting	Parent Notification, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Property Damage/Vandalism	Parent Notification, Restitution, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Technology Misuse/Violation (Including but not limited to cell phones, tablets, iPods, computers, video cameras)	Parent Notification, Loss of Technology Privilege, ISS, OSS, Police Notification
Theft	Parent Notification, Restitution, ISS, OSS, Police Notification

It is the policy of Griswold Board of Education to prevent and prohibit the possession, use and distribution of any drug or drug paraphernalia, alcohol or tobacco products on school property, at school sponsored events, on school buses and on route to and from school by any mode of travel provided by the school system. Violations of this policy will result in a suspension from school, and may result in an expulsion hearing before the Board of Education and legal action. Activities of a questionable nature that mimic or simulate drug use, possession, or distribution are similarly of serious concern and will be treated in the same manner as any substance abuse issue. Smoking is prohibited on all Griswold school properties.

DUE PROCESS

All students have the right to a hearing with their assigned administrator where reasons for suspensions will be presented and where the student may explain his/her actions. However, school administration may immediately remove the student from school when, in their judgment, the student's behavior presents a real and present danger to the health and safety of the student, others, or the fundamental good order of the school. In the case of removal from school for more than ten days, there will be a hearing before the Board of Education.

BULLYING BEHAVIOR

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Griswold Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

“Bullying” shall mean a pattern of any overt acts by a student or group of students committed during the school year that is directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, a school-sponsored activity, or on the bus.

Bullying behavior, in violation of Board policy, must occur on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity. School officials are authorized to impose discipline for such conduct (off campus) only if such conduct markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day to day operations of the school.

Types of Conduct

1. Physical intimidation and/or attacks.
2. Verbal taunts, teasing, cruel rumors, false accusations, name-calling and put-downs, including taunts based on ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or other protected and/or individual characteristics and social isolation.
3. Oral or written threats and intimidation **(including use of electronic devices and social media including off campus actions if they negatively affect school performance.)**
4. Threatening looks, gestures or actions.

Investigation

The Assistant Principal or their designee is responsible for investigation of all bullying reports. Formal reports may be made in writing or orally by students, parents or guardians. Such reports should be reasonably specific as to action, time and place, number of incidents, the target of alleged acts, suspected bully and names of potential witnesses.

Anonymous reports may be made whereby students request their name be withheld. Should anonymity be requested, the Assistant Principal will meet with students but no disciplinary action may be taken solely on an anonymous report. Bullying can take many forms and can vary dramatically in how serious it is and what impact it has on the victim and students. Accordingly, there is no one prescribed response to verified acts of bullying. Interventions assigned by the administration may be disciplinary or non-disciplinary such as counseling, mediation, education and/or social skills training. Bullying behavior by any student in Griswold Public Schools is strictly

prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Bullying outside of the school setting may also be addressed if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Board policy and regulations set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians on the Griswold website.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Early dismissals are processed in the main office. If a parent needs to change transportation arrangements or pick up a student before the GMS regular dismissal at 2:19 pm, your student must bring a parent note to the main office when they arrive at school. Parents are asked to include the date, time and details regarding the dismissal. Early dismissal notes can be emailed to gmsattendance@griswoldpublicschools.org. Notes must be emailed prior to 12:00 in order to be processed.

GMS understands that occasionally circumstances arise and changes in transportation or dismissal may be sudden. If a student is going to have any last minute changes to their typical routine, parents are to email the school secretaries by noon at gmsattendance@griswoldpublicschools.org. Please follow up with a phone call if there is not a reply to your email. The office can get extremely busy in the afternoon and we want to ensure that your request is met. A parent follow up phone call will confirm receipt of the dismissal or transportation email.

DRESS CODE

Students' dress may be regulated and students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive or contrary to law.

GMS dress code applies to mandatory face masks. Any student wearing a mask deemed inappropriate based on dress code expectations or the requirements set forth by Griswold Public Schools will be required to wear a school-issued mask. Refusal to wear a mask will result in the student's removal from the school bus or building.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (uncleanliness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited. Students should be clean and neatly dressed in order to maintain a safe and proper educational environment. The dress code is designed to provide appropriate levels of decorum and decency, while allowing students to express their individuality. This dress code will be enforced by all Griswold faculty.

1. The following is a list of items not permissible to wear to school: bathing suits, lingerie type and camisole type clothing, see-through clothing, strapless tops, backless shirts, bare shoulder tops, white undershirts and soft-soled slippers

2. Clothing which is immodest because of its tight fit, revealing nature, has holes revealing, or apparel which jeopardizes safety is prohibited.
3. Clothing and accessories shall not display letters, words, or pictures which reference any of the behavior; drugs or alcohol, sex or sexual behavior, profane language or gestures, weapons or facsimile, gang related colors (bandanas/accessories) or any clothing disruptive of the educational environment.
4. No hats, scarves, bandanas, sweatbands, sunglasses, hoods, or costumes shall be worn in the school building.
5. Length of skirts or shorts must be at least fingertip length.
6. Shirts with thin straps, short shirts which expose the midriff and see-through or mesh-style shirts or blouses are not to be worn. Muscle tops, spaghetti strap tops, tube tops, and beachwear are not acceptable. No visible skin should show between the midriff and low rise pants, shorts or skirts.
7. Underwear, boxers, or pajamas exposed or worn as outerwear is not permitted.

EXTRA-HELP

Students experiencing any type of academic difficulty are strongly advised to seek extra help. All teachers make arrangements to see students requiring support. WEB is a time, built into the school day, which allows students to receive extra help from teachers. If a student is staying after school for assistance, they must bring in a note signed by a parent/guardian. Either time can be spent reviewing:

1. Material not clear to the student.
2. Material missed due to absences.
3. How to study more effectively.
4. Preparation for a test.
5. Planning and working on a major project/paper.

FIELD TRIPS

Each year Griswold students take a variety of educational field trips. Students are expected to represent their school for the fine institution it is. Good conduct while at Griswold Middle School is necessary for field trip participation. **Any student whose behavior is considered detrimental to the well-being of other students may be barred from participation by school administration.** While on a trip, all students are considered to be “in” school. This means that conduct and dress standards will be appropriate for the field trip activity. In addition, behavioral expectations found in school are always expected on field trips.

HALL PASSES

Students must have a signed pass to be out of their classrooms during instructional time.

HARASSMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued and comfortable in school. No one else’s behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or disability. The District will have no tolerance for harassment of any kind. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Parents are urged to reinforce with their child(ren) if he/she is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else that he/she should report the behavior to a teacher or administration. To maintain a productive and positive learning environment, the Board of Education will make every attempt to halt any harassment of which they become aware by calling attention to this policy or by direct disciplinary action, if necessary.

A student who believes he/she has been harassed is encouraged to report the incident to the principal or the assistant principal. The allegations will be investigated and addressed and appropriate disciplinary actions taken, where necessary.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Griswold Board of Education will not tolerate sexual harassment of the employees or students of the Griswold Public Schools. Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or fulfillment of school responsibilities; (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or school related decisions interfering with an individual's work or school performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. Sexual harassment includes the display or circulation of written materials or pictures degrading to either gender.

To avoid even the unintentional creation of an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment, contact such as hugging or touching, sexually explicit or suggestive language, other than that which is part of the curriculum or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature is to be avoided. When such conduct comes to the attention of any supervisor or administrator, appropriate inquiry and action will be taken.

The following behaviors are grounds for disciplinary actions:

1. Abusing the dignity of a student or employee through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct;
2. Threats, demands or suggestions that a student or employee's status is contingent upon her/his tolerance or acquiescence to sexual advances;
3. Retaliation against a student or employee for complaining about the behaviors stated above.

Grievance Procedure: Any complaint related to sexual harassment should be initiated immediately. It should be referred to the Title IX Coordinator. The complaint procedure is available at all school offices and at the office of the Title IX Coordinator. Investigation should be undertaken by the smallest possible groups to protect the confidentiality of the information. For students, it is important to have a same sex support representative present during the investigation.

HOME PARTNERSHIP AND GRISWOLD MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Griswold Middle School community aspires to have each child investigate, master, and apply the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviors essential for productive lifelong learning and meaningful participation in society. While learning becomes the child's responsibility, it is the role of the teachers and parents to support, nurture, and guide the child's education. Students flourish in an atmosphere where learning is a collaborative home and school effort. Therefore, the home and school relationship is essential in that:

- In a spirit of cooperation, parents, and teachers will establish communication which is direct, constructive, and ongoing. Communication from school to home or home to school should be prompt, courteous, and focused on the child's well-being. Teacher suggestions for scholastic improvement and follow-up, particularly in consistent daily monitoring of homework completion and overall achievement, should be adhered to. It is essential that communication and remediation of classroom problems occur at the parent-teacher level as most appropriate and direct to attaining a solution.
- Parents and teachers recognize the academic, physical, social, and emotional development of the child is a shared and overlapping responsibility of the school, family, and community at large. At home and at school, a high priority is given to learning and the positive development of each child.
- Parents and teachers contribute to an atmosphere of respect among students themselves, and between students and adults. High standards are established for each child's responsibilities in the learning process, for his/her behavior, and for his/her respect for other people and for property.
- The intention of Griswold Middle School is to ensure the home and school relationship be positive, productive, and, most importantly, established in the best interest of each student.

As stated earlier, school personnel may be reached via email by using the person's first initial and last name followed by @griswoldpublicschools.org. Parents may also access student information using our online parent portal to access student grades and homework at any time called **Infinite Campus**. More detailed information can be found on our website.

HOMEWORK AND STUDY

Homework at Griswold Middle School is considered a key ingredient in the overall learning process. It is designed as an extension of classroom work to help students become more adept with material presently being studied. Homework also promotes a greater degree of self-directed and independent learning.

All students at Griswold Middle School should be spending between one and two hours nightly on teacher-directed assignments. If no formal assignments are given, the same amount of time should be spent reviewing previously presented work in each of the student's academic areas or reading.

Students at Griswold Middle School will have experience working on long term projects, preparing for tests, and reading assignments. These tasks should be considered as homework and may entail completing assignments over a weekend or holiday period. Students, therefore, must learn to budget their time and establish priorities. All students should keep a daily assignment log identifying their exact assignments. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or team leader if they have any questions regarding their child.

Homework requests will be processed for students who have been absent from school due to illness for a period of three days or more. When a student returns to school, the students should consult with each teacher regarding make-up work, deadlines, and times of after school extra help.

The Learning Commons

The Learning Commons houses a collection of materials designed to meet a variety of needs and abilities. The center provides students and staff with an impressive collection of current sources ranging in variety from books, magazines, videos, on-line databases and computer software. A makerspace has been established in The Learning Commons. Students can use the makerspace to explore their creativity and imagination. Students receive an orientation early in the school year that helps provide them with the resources to use the commons most effectively.

The commons can be used during class **with a pass from the teacher**. If a student wants to go to The Learning Commons during WEB, they need to get a library WEB pass in the morning. Students will not be allowed to go to the library during WEB without this pass.

Most books may be borrowed for two weeks and may usually be renewed. It is the student's responsibility to return all borrowed books to the book drop located in the library. Students who damage or fail to return a book will be required to pay for it or lose the privilege of borrowing books.

LOCKERS

Each student will be provided a locker. Personal combination locks are strongly encouraged as the school is not responsible for any missing or stolen possessions. Homeroom teachers must be made aware of the combination. Classes will stagger the times at which students can access their lockers. The amount of time students are allowed to spend at their locker will be limited due to health and safety protocols.

Students are not to share lockers nor are they to distribute combinations to other students. Any student who tampers with, or enters, or attempts to enter another person's locker will be subject to disciplinary action. The Griswold School follows Connecticut State Law and Board of Education policy regarding search and seizure of property or person. Lockers are school property and may be accessed by authorized school personnel.

LOST AND FOUND

Students who find lost articles are asked to take them to the office. Valuables will be kept in the office. Other articles will be placed in the Lost and Found Cubicles in the cafeteria where they can be claimed by the owner.

The school is not responsible for any personal property which is lost or stolen. Students are encouraged to leave valuables at home. Electronics should never be left unattended. Locker rooms are not monitored during classes and as such valuables need to be locked in a locker. If possible, the school will make every reasonable effort to recover the property and, when necessary, discipline those involved.

GRADING

The grading policy for Griswold Middle School is as follows:

97-98-99-100 = A+ 87-88-89 = B+ 77-78-79 = C+ 65-66-67-68-69 = D
 94-95-96 = A 84-85-86 = B 74-75-76 = C 64 and below = F
 90-91-92-93 = A- 80-81-82-83 = B- 70-71-72-73 = C- I = incomplete
 An "I" grade will revert to an F if the missing work is not made up within a reasonable time during the quarter following the one in which the incomplete was given.

GRADE LEVEL INFORMATION

	<u>Grade 5</u>	<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>
Homework	20%	15%	15%	15%
Classwork	15%	20%	20%	20%
Quizzes	25%	25%	25%	25%
Tests*	40%	40%	40%	40%

*Tests may also include projects, labs or any other major assignments. In the *test* description, the teacher will denote the assigned project, lab or major assignment.

HONOR ROLL

The honor roll is one of the means to implement the philosophy of the Griswold Board of Education. Its purpose is to provide an incentive for striving to reach the limit of their potential both in the academic and exploratory areas of the curriculum. The honor roll publicly recognizes above average achievements by all students regardless of their intellectual capacity.

The HONOR ROLL includes ALL grades:

- High Honors 93 – 99.99
- Honors 87 – 92.99
- Gen Honors 80 – 86.99

PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents can access student grades at any time through the Infinite Campus portal. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher regarding concerns.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued four times a year and are available on the Infinite Campus portal. Please refer to the calendar posted on our website for report card dates. Parents need to have

portal rights and an Infinite Campus user account in order to access report cards. Please contact the main office if there is a need for a physical copy of a report card.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY

It is the policy of Griswold Middle School to promote those students whom the school feels have made satisfactory progress both academically and developmentally. Parents of any student receiving a failing grade in any subject at any time during the school year should contact the teacher of that subject to determine solutions to the academic deficiency. A student may be considered a candidate for retention alternatives only after a referral to the Student Success Team (SST) for intervention strategies. Final decisions regarding retention will be made by the school principal.

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS STUDENT RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the district receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s educational records the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school district to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the school principal, clearly stating the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the district decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the district will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff and law enforcement personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the district has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review and education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy and Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
600 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

SCHOOL INSURANCE

Early in the school year students will receive an application blank and a pamphlet describing the accident insurance policy available to children at this school. Parents are urged to read the policy carefully with their child and to purchase the plan best suited to their needs. This is the only way to insure financial coverage for routine accidents when non-school negligence exists.

The school carries a policy concerning only approved sports and related activities. Students participating in approved activities are covered by this policy only while they are actually taking part in the activity. A physical examination and/or doctor's permission is required before a student may participate in a sport or related activities. Parents must submit to the school nurse a written report of the findings of their physician. The policy does not cover students while traveling to and from school.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Visitors must show a valid government issued ID when they enter the main office. Office staff will print an ID that visitors must wear when they enter the building. If you want to meet with school administration and/or staff, please contact the office to make an appointment. Student visitors from other schools are not permitted. In accordance with safety laws and school policy, Fire/Lock-Down Drills are practiced periodically.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The right to inspect desks, lockers, backpacks, cell phones, and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. An authorized administrator may search a student's locker or desk under the following conditions:

1. There is reason to believe that the student's desk or locker contains contraband material.
2. The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety, and health in school.

This document serves as advanced notice that school board policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs. Students must be aware that such items are forbidden both on school property and at school-related activities and events.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Griswold Middle School offers a number of programs that come under the heading of Special Education Services. These include specialized classes, psychological testing and counseling, speech and language therapy, and educational programs to meet special needs. In all situations, inclusionary practices are emphasized.

In order for a child not previously placed in a special education program to be placed, a pupil planning and placement team (PPT) meeting must occur. This team approach is used only after other modifications to the existing program have been attempted and have failed. This process is sequenced in the following manner: (1) teacher intervention, (2) pull out interventions (SRBI), (3) Student Success Team (SST), and, lastly, (4) PPT. During the PPT meeting, there is a review of the child's academic performance, behavior, and test data for the purpose of determining whether or not a child is in need of special services and, if needed, what those services will include.

The PPT is composed of an administrator or designee, a classroom teacher, counselor, a member of the Special Services Staff, the child's parent or legal guardian, and any other individuals deemed appropriate. Recommendations for special services placement will not take place without written parental permission.

STUDENT RECORDS AND ACCESS

All pupil records are considered confidential property of the school. Information in a student's file is collected only for legitimate educational purposes. This includes academic progress, test data, grades, behavioral information, and correspondences of a relevant educational nature.

TELEPHONES/CELL PHONES

Students are reminded that they must have a classroom pass to use the telephone and that telephone use is restricted to reasons of necessity and emergency. Parents may leave emergency messages for students and they will be delivered. **All cell phones are to be off during the day** (See: Technology Misuse/Violation in Discipline Table). If you need to reach your child, please call the office at 860-376-7630 x6 and not your child's cell phone.

WEBSITE

Important dates, events and daily announcements are listed on the Griswold Public Schools website <http://www.griswoldpublicschools.org>

In the past, one of our main avenues for communication has been our *Wednesday Folder*. This year, we are excited to introduce a new platform for communication on our online site, **GMS Now!** *GMS Now!* will include our school calendar, live updates from GMS classrooms and events, important information for students and families, and all other documents that would normally be included in the Wednesday Folder. Therefore, we will not be sending out *Wednesday Folders* during this school year. Look for *GMS Now!* on our website starting the first week of school. In addition, we will email out a link when the site is live.

Please note: refer to the district website for **Board of Education policies** that govern the Griswold Public Schools and for **State Statutes** that apply to the public schools.

