Pesticide Policy

It is the policy of the Brookline School Committee to promote the health and safety of our school communities by minimizing the use of toxic pesticides to the greatest extent practicable and to manage pests in and around schools in a manner that protects human health, maintains the integrity of school buildings and grounds, and preserves the environment. The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) are committed to the sustainable management of pests through the use of sound Integrated Pest Management (IPM), or its equivalent, that focuses on eliminating pest access to food, water and shelter in and around our schools. This is accomplished through the use of reduced risk pest control methods with a preference for non-chemical control measures, wherever practicable.

Integrated pest management is a comprehensive process that utilizes information about plants, pests and the environment to plan and implement management tactics in overall strategies to keep pests below levels that cause damage. Integrated pest management specifically involves regular monitoring of plant material and pest levels, and using toxic pesticides only when other means of control are ineffective, or economically unfeasible.

Proper grounds management techniques reduce stress and encourage good health in plants. These include proper planning and cultural practices, such as watering, fertilizing, mowing, core aeration, pruning and mulching. It is important that these practices be done at proper times and intervals.

A pesticide is a substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate pests or used as a plant growth regulator. This includes insecticides used against insects, herbicides used against weedy or other plants, fungicides used against fungi, and antibiotics or bactericides used against bacteria.

Pesticides may be used when:

1. Students or employees are experiencing significant discomfort or unsafe conditions; and the use of toxic pesticides is essential to mitigation.
2. Damage is occurring to a tree, shrub, plant, grounds or facilities; and cultural and biological methods have been used unsuccessfully, or to a great degree of certainty would likely be unsuccessful if deployed.
3. Population dynamics of pests indicate that significant increases in pest problems are inevitable and only toxic pesticide use presents as a viable option to decrease the pest population.

The district's grounds maintenance contractor/staff/partner(s) must:

1. Institute or maintain a grounds management program which encourages healthy plants. This will include proper timing and scheduling of watering, fertilizing, mowing, core aeration, pruning, and mulching (to minimize stress of plants thus reducing susceptibility to insects, disease and weeds).

2. Evaluate grounds management practices and pest control procedures on an ongoing basis. Revise practices as needed to gain from past experiences and new techniques.

When it is necessary that pesticides be applied, the contractor/staff/partner(s) must:

1. Keep records regarding the application, as required by Massachusetts law.
2. Use the "least toxic" and effective pest control measures when economically feasible.
3. Apply pesticides when the impacted wing of a school is not in session.
4. Post notification signs in accordance with Massachusetts law.
5. Notify building administrators at least 48 hours in advance, unless in an emergency situation, in which case the Superintendent or designee must provide prior authorization.