

PARENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017



PLYMOUTH RIVER SCHOOL

200 High Street
Hingham, MA 02043
Ph. 781-741-1530
Fax 781-741-1533
www.hinghamschools.org

Hingham Public Schools adheres to all Massachusetts Department of Education requirements for English Learner Education programs. Upon student enrollment, a home language survey is completed for every student. If a child does not speak English or comes from a home in which English is a second language, the student is referred to the English Learner Education teacher who accepts referrals for evaluation from the principal and/or the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services oversees the determination of eligibility, eligibility is established and sheltered English Immersion Services and English Language Development instruction is offered to the student as necessary.

If you need this booklet translated, please contact the main office of your child's school.

Portuguese: Se voce necessitar este livreto traduzido, contate por favor o escritorio principal da escola da sua crianca.

Espanol: Si usted necesita este librete traducido, entre en contacto con por favor la oficina principal de la escuela de su nino.

Chinese: 如果你需要被翻译的这本小册子, 请联系你的孩子的学校的主要办公室。

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FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

P.OLITE R.ESPONSIBLE S.AFE

It is important that families and schools work together to help students achieve high academic standards. Through a process that included teachers, families, students, and community representatives, the following are agreed upon roles and responsibilities that we as partners will carry out to support student success in school and in life.

STAFF PLEDGE:

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Communicate effectively and regularly with families about student progress.
- Establish high expectations where each child can maximize his or her potential.
- Treat colleagues with tolerance, openness, and respect allowing for active participation in collaborative decision-making.
- Plan and develop differentiated instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students.
- Provide a supportive, safe, nurturing, and non-threatening environment where students are encouraged to take risks and each is recognized as unique and talented.

STUDENT PLEDGE:

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Limit my television and non-academic computer time (games) by reading and developing new interests.
- Read and/or be read to daily.
- Respect all members of the PRS Community.
- Come to school rested and ready to learn with a positive attitude and curious mind.
- Share school experiences with my family.
- Make every effort to actively participate in required school activities.
- Come to school prepared with school supplies and completed assignments.
- Take responsibility for my own behavior by following school and classroom rules.
- Exercise my body as well as preparing my mind for school.

FAMILY/PARENT PLEDGE:

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Encourage respect for staff and classmates.
- Ensure that my child will arrive at school on time and ready to learn.
- Attend parent teacher conferences as needed to stay informed of my child's progress.
- Support teachers in their efforts to assist in my child's academic, social and emotional development.
- Involve myself in the homework process by understanding assignments, expectations, providing a quiet time and place, and assisting my child in planning for successful completion.
- Set aside a minimum of 20 minutes a day for reading.
- Communicate the importance of education and learning to my child.
- Model the importance of reading by limiting television and computer time and increasing the time I read to my children or myself.

FACULTY

The Plymouth River School faculty is a community of learners who strive for educational excellence using the most up-to-date teaching methods. The faculty is organized around semi-autonomous cross grade level teaching teams who meet weekly on issues of curriculum, instruction, and school governance. Team leaders represent each team and meet monthly with the principal to make decisions and solve problems related to all aspects of school life. Collaboration among professionals is valued as a means to promote learning.

FACILITY

The Plymouth River School educates grades K-5. The school was built in 1969 and services approximately a 500 student population. The school includes a gymnasium, cafeteria with stage, library media center, health office, art room, and a computer lab.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Hingham, MA 02043

Ph. 781-741-1530
Fax 781-741-1533

[www..hinghamschools.org](http://www.hinghamschools.org)

DIRECTORY OF PERSONNEL

OFFICE	SPECIALISTS
Cormier, Charles - Principal	
Smith, Melissa - Assistant Principal	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
Smith, D. Robin – Administrative Assistant	Ouellette, Erica
Parker, Elizabeth – Office para	
Colby, Patricia – Office para	LIBRARY (LMC)
	Blake, Tracy
HEALTH	
Whiting, Deborah - RN	COMPUTER LAB
	Wehner, Tina
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST	
Cushing, Mary Ann	FOREIGN LANGUAGE (Spanish)
Flanagan, Nancy – Secretary/ParaProfessional	Gonzalez, Jennifer
ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR	ART
Decker, A.C.	Kelfer, Holly
FOOD SERVICES	MUSIC
Lyons, Cheryl (Manager)	Turner, Dorothy
McEachen Helen	Bellis, Joann - Band
Burke, Maria	Gorczyca, Barbara - Strings
	Young, Joe - Chorus
CUSTODIANS	
Caliri, Anthony	
Stella, Robert	
Mason, Bill	
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY	
Pratt, Jennine	
PHYSICAL THERAPIST	
Jordan, Ann	
READING SPECIALIST	
Osterman, Catherina	
READING TUTORS	
Kirk, Wendy	
Kracunas, Annmarie	
MATH SPECIALIST	
Doyle, Blake	
SPEECH	
Stenson, Mary	
SCIENCE	
Conroy, Brian	

CLASSROOM TEACHERS	PARAPROFESSIONALS
KINDERGARTEN	Anderson, Samantha
Bensten, Elizabeth	Brennan, Peggy
Maescher, Amy	Donovan, Ellie
Riley, Julianne	Fenton, Cheryl
Rogg, Christine (Sped K,2)	Finnerty, Wendy
	Gay, Kimberly
GRADE 1	Harrington, Janette
Bucey, Nancy	Kaulins, Maryann
Mannar(Burritt), Katherine	Kennedy, Stephanie
McHugh, Sue	Lotano, Christine
Shapiro, Michelle	Lumbert, Deborah
Galvin, Elizabeth (Sped 1)	Madden, Jennifer
	Martin, Lynda
GRADE 2	McAllister, Jaqueline
Bilodeau, Krystal	Paine, Virginia
Bonani, Cyndi	Rau, Poornima
Cotton, Rebecca	Romanowski, Denise
McGrath, Sheila	Romanowski, Kyran
Rogg, Christine (Sped K,2)	Whamond, Mary-Courtney
	Whitcomb, Janet
GRADE 3	White, Margaret
Falvey, Laura	
Kremer, Kara	
Ottati, Meagan	
Reames, Shawna	
Valley, Alisa (Sped 3)	
Foley, Eizabeth (Sped 3,4)	
GRADE 4	
Samarov, Boris	
Talbot, Maura	
Willison, Susan	
Foley, Elizabeth (Sped 3, 4)	
GRADE 5	
Benoit, Brooke	
Kilban, Joan	
Harrington, Julie	
Vella, Meryl	
O'Brien, Kim (Sped 5)	

I. DAILY PROCEDURES

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Gr. 1–5 & Full Day K: 8:20 – 2:30 PM
Half-Day Kindergarten: 8:20 – 11:25 AM
Early Release dismissal time: 12:30PM (special early releases are 11:30)

Students should not be dropped off before 8:05 a.m.; there is no supervision before that time.

It is imperative that if your child is walking or being driven to school that they arrive in their assigned classroom not later than 8:20 a.m. as routines and instruction will begin promptly at 8:20 a.m.

Dismissal for students on Conference/Inservice days for grades K through 5 is 12:30 p.m. The exception is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the last day of school in which case dismissal is 11:30. Students will receive lunch on early release days; however, they will not receive lunch on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

We respectfully request that parents not escort their children to classrooms in the morning or wait for them at dismissal outside their classroom. Both times of the day are busy for teachers; therefore, they need to devote their full attention on greeting children and helping them prepare for dismissal.

ALL SCHOOL MEETING

Every Day 1 at 8:25 a.m. you will find the entire student body and faculty celebrating their membership at PRS with an All-School Meeting. Classrooms quickly and quietly file into the cafeteria with subdued lighting and calming music setting a relaxed, yet serious tone. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend but please respect our request for silence during the meeting. With fifth grade students and faculty seated in chairs and another 380+/- students seated on the floor, the fifth grade MC leads the meeting. First he/she asks us to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Next, there is a celebration of birthdays for the week and student performances of poetry, dance, and music. The meeting concludes with a sharing of important activities for the week, areas of success, and areas that need improvement in the school.

PARKING

There are two parking lots for the Plymouth River School. The lot adjacent to the tennis courts is reserved for parent and visitor parking. The lower lot is reserved for staff and parents. **Parking on the grass adjacent to the lower parking lot is prohibited.** A warning will be placed on the windshield of the vehicle in violation of this policy and contact will be made to the district's safety officer to rectify the situation if it becomes habitual. Stated simply, if you are not parked in the upper or lower lot during school hours, you are in violation of this policy.

Parking in the circle must be **live parking only** and is only allowed between 8:30 – 2:00 PM for the purpose of dropping off or picking up material or your children.

TRAFFIC PATTERN

A crossing guard is assigned at the end of the driveway to assist students in crossing High Street. We have congested traffic at the start and close of school. Your cooperation is necessary to ensure that all children arrive and depart school safely. Drop off and pick up of students between 8:05-8:20 AM and 2:20-3:00 PM must occur in the parking lot adjacent to the tennis courts.

Dismissal for students and teachers is a very busy time of the day; therefore, we are asking parents who are meeting children at the close of school to please do so near the tennis courts or outside the front doors. Please avoid going to classrooms as this will eliminate congestion in the hallways and classrooms and provide us with a safe environment for our students. Kindergarten students should be picked up in the cafeteria. Walkers will be dismissed at 2:28 PM.

HEALTH

School Entrance Requirements

Kindergarten

According to Massachusetts State Law, in order to enter kindergarten, the following immunizations are required:

Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis Vaccine (DPT, 5 doses); Polio (IPV, 4 doses), Hepatitis B (Hep B, doses), Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR, 2 doses) & Varicella (Varivax, 2 doses). A current physical examination, including an eye exam and up to date immunization record must be submitted to the school nurse before the start of school. State and local laws prevent us from making any exceptions to this policy. Students will not be allowed to start school until all information has been received.

Grade 4

All students entering grade 4, are required by Massachusetts state law, to submit a current physical health form signed by the student's health care provider.

New Students

Students who are new to PRS School must submit a current physical form and immunizations to the school nurse before school starts.

Exemptions

Exemptions from health record requirements are possible for medical or religious beliefs, or to meet compliance of the McKinney Veto Homeless Act. A Physician's note is required for a medical exemption. Requests for religious exemption/waiver must be in writing by the parent.

Annual Health Screenings

According to Massachusetts state law, health screenings are done annually for specific grade levels:

- Vision and hearing screenings are conducted by the health staff. Vision screenings are performed on all students K-12. Hearing screenings are performed through grade 3, once in grades 6-8 and once in grades 9-12.

- Postural screenings are conducted by the Physical Education Staff and health staff for all students in grade 5-9.
- Heights and weights are measured by the physical education staff and recorded on the student's confidential school health record form for grades 1, 4, 7 and 10. These measurements are used to calculate each student's Body Mass Index (BMI). These results are strictly confidential and will be provided to parents upon request.

Parents will receive a letter from the school nurse, if any abnormal findings or concerns are noted during the vision, hearing or postural screenings only. Upon written request from a parent/guardian, a child may be exempt from any of the above health services.

Medication

According to Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 112, Section 80B, a licensed nurse must have a medication order from a physician, dentist, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant in order to administer any **prescription** medication. The Hingham Public Schools also require a parent permission form to be on file before medication can be dispensed.

Occasional over-the-counter (OTC) medication, such as Tylenol or Advil, may be given, by the nurse, under the standing orders of the school physician, providing parent permission is in place. If your child needs a daily OTC medication, then your child's physician needs to complete a medication order form.

Medications should be delivered to the school in a pharmacy or manufactured-labeled container by you or a responsible adult. Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. No more than a thirty-day supply of the medicine should be delivered to the school.

Allergies

To ensure a safe learning environment for students with food allergies, such as peanuts and/or tree nuts, certain classrooms will be nut safe. Parents are notified of nut safe classrooms in August and all students in those classrooms are asked to bring in only nut free snacks. Please read all food ingredient labels carefully.

There is a "nut free table" in the cafeteria for students with nut allergies in all grade levels. All students will rotate sitting at this table throughout the year. Parents of students with food allergies may request to have their child sit at a regular table.

Illness and Communicable Diseases

If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the school nurse. Students may return to school as follows:

- Chicken Pox – 7 days from appearance of first eruption, lesions crusted and fever free for at least 24 hours.
- Strep Throat – 24 hours after the first dose of medication
- Impetigo -24 hours after medical treatment has begun, lesions should be covered in school.

Head Lice – Remember to check your child's head frequently for head lice, as they can be a common occurrence in young children. Please refer to the Hingham Public School Nurse website, for the HPS head lice guidelines and parent information. This website is located on the PRS website under the link, Health Services.

School health policy, regarding school attendance, asks that you please keep your child home if he/she...

- Has had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- Has been dismissed from school due to fever, vomiting or diarrhea. He/she may not return to school the next day.

- Is being treated for contagious illness (strep throat, the flu, and bronchitis) he/she must remain at home until on antibiotics for a full 24 hours.

Please inform the school nurse of potential problems or changes in health status such as:

- Update of immunizations
- Illness or injury requiring prolonged absence
- Surgery
- Treatments requested by physician
- Change in activity status
- Emotional Concerns

Orthopedic Injuries:

A physician's note is required for any child who is unable to participate in physical education class, recess, academic work or testing, such as MCAS, due to orthopedic injury or concussion. A physician's note is also required for the use of crutches and or a wheelchair. Documentation and a recovery/treatment plan, for a physician, must be on file with the school nurse with regard to concussions. Please inform the school nurse, as soon as possible, if your child has suffered a concussion or orthopedic injury.

Health Curriculum

Health education on the topics of Human Growth and Development, Immune System and Blood Borne Pathogens are presented to students in grades 4 and 5. Detailed information with the date and time of presentation will be sent home to the parents. Health videos are also available for viewing at home. Please contact school nurse if you are interested in borrowing a video.

Emergency Information Forms

Emergency information forms are sent home at the beginning of each school year. This form will be referenced for the phone numbers of parents, emergency contacts and physicians to be notified in case of illness, injury, or emergency. It is extremely important that this information be kept up-to-date and accurate. Please notify the school office in writing of any changes. Include cell phone numbers and work numbers if available. The emergency contact person should be someone who is available to pick your child up at school in the event that we are unable to contact you. Emergency transportation via ambulance will be to South Shore Hospital.

Pets at School

Due to the increased number of students and staff members with allergies to animals, pets and other animals at school are discouraged.

Educational Services in Home or Hospital

Upon receipt of a physician's statement for temporary home or hospital admission for a period of not less than fourteen (14) school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Administrator of Special Education for eligible students. Such education services shall not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

Wellness Policy

The Hingham Public Schools District is committed to providing a healthy school environment that enhances learning and the development of lifelong wellness practices, including the areas of nutrition education, physical activity, and nutrition guidelines for all foods available at each school. Through the involvement of parents, students, the foods service director, the School Committee, teachers, administrations, staff and the public, the following goals have been established:

- A sequential nutrition education program, a component of a comprehensive health education curriculum, is provided to all students to promote healthy eating habits.
- The food services program provides well-balanced, nutritious and varied meals, snacks and beverages that are in compliance with federal, state and district requirements.
- Guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Foods and beverages sold in school vending machines, snack bars, stores and for school sponsored fundraising purposes and provided to students as refreshments during the school day meet district guidelines.
- Students are provided regular opportunities for physical activity during and after the school day through physical education classes, through daily recess periods for elementary students and through a range of after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics and physical activity clubs.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

The decision as to whether or not the schools will be closed or delayed is made by the Superintendent of Schools after consideration of several weather reports and consultation with the Department of Public Works, other area school superintendents, and appropriate town officials. The decision is based on the practical considerations of the safe transportation of students and the accessibility of the schools to staff and students. Under normal circumstances, the decision is made before 5:30 a.m. and is based on the predictions of road conditions and general weather conditions at the time the children are scheduled to be transported. Anyone living in the Boston area knows that those predictions are often unreliable. Therefore, parents are encouraged to use their own judgment in deciding whether to send their child to school based on the actual conditions in their area of town at the time their children would be leaving for school.

No school announcements will be broadcast on radio stations WRKO (680 AM), WBZ (1030 AM), WATD (95.9 FM), WBUR (90.9 FM), WJDA (1300 AM), and TV stations 4, 5, 7, and 56. No school announcements will also be posted on the school department's website www.hinghamschools.org. There are also multiple news stations that have alerts that individuals can sign up for. Individuals are asked not to call PRS; the number of lines is limited and staff may not be able to answer before school hours. Parents and students are urged not to call the Police Station or the Fire Department for information about the operation of the schools. These agencies are not the proper sources of information, and numerous phone calls may impede communications over phone lines which are designed for emergencies.

Should there be an emergency and children need to be released from school early, notification will be made via e-mail. Please refer to the above radio and TV stations for information regarding early closings due to weather or special circumstances.

It will be a rare occurrence that children are released early from school due to weather because of the child care problems that it would create. However, parents need to make arrangements ahead of time in the event of an early release from school.

DELAYED OPENING

Parents should be aware that the Hingham Public Schools may use the option of delaying the opening of school one or two hours when weather conditions are predicted to be better. If there is a one-hour delay, it simply means that children will be picked up by the buses exactly one hour later than typically scheduled. Parents should, therefore, plan to make contingency plans for child care, where appropriate, in the event of such a delayed opening. School closing times will remain the same unless otherwise indicated.

Delayed Opening for half day Kindergarten: In the event of a two hour or more delay, half day kindergarten students will not attend.

EVACUATION

If there is a need to evacuate the school and move buses out of the area of the school, students will be transported via bus to the Hingham High School parking lot. A back-up site will be the parking lot of the Resurrection Church on Main Street.

If the evacuation appears to be a long-term situation (in excess of one hour), students will be supervised in the High School cafeteria. If the cafeteria is closed, students will be supervised in the gymnasium.

The administration would request that in the event of an emergency parents/guardians do not come to the school to pick up their children, as this will only exacerbate the situation. Parents/guardians will be notified when time permits. The administration needs to account for all children at all times and, therefore, would request that parents/guardians do not dismiss their child until and unless administration has determined that it is safe to do so.

Parents will be contacted regarding emergency dismissals via e-mail.

MESSAGES

The main office of the school is a center of activity and often a busy place. Therefore, parents will find that day-to-day information can be exchanged best by sending a note with their child. Messages of a routine nature for youngsters can be delivered to the school secretary in the main office for delivery to students at an appropriate time.

The office telephone and, classroom telephones are available for students to call home in an emergency **only**. Use of the phones requires teacher permission. Phone calls will not be permitted for forgotten items such as homework, sneakers, or after school plans with friends.

Items that were forgotten at home and need to be delivered to students should be left in the school office, **appropriately tagged with your child's name and classroom**, and the office staff will assume the responsibility for their delivery to the classroom.

To minimize interruptions in the instructional day, general announcements will be made at 2:20 PM.

Parents are asked to phone in student absences before 8:15 AM. Messages may be left on the voice mail system. Do not just leave a message for your child's teacher regarding an absence. The office will not know of our communication with the teacher and will result in a phone call from the office confirming the whereabouts of your child.

If office personnel are unavailable to answer the phone, you will be directed to a voice messaging system. You will be asked to record your message with the appropriate staff member.

VISITORS

For the safety of our students, all persons visiting the school and parent volunteers must sign in and sign out at the office. The receptionist will provide visitors with information about the school and any forms that you may need. Should you desire to visit your child's classroom during school hours, please make an appointment with your child's teacher for a mutually convenient time. All visitors must wear a visitor's badge at all times.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

A twenty minute lunch period followed by a fifteen minute recess is scheduled daily. Lunch and recess are supervised by staff.

- Hot lunch is served daily at a cost of \$3, which includes milk.
- The Bonus Meal (larger portion) is available for an additional \$1.
- Milk may be purchased separately at a cost of \$.50.
- Bottled water may be purchased separately at a cost of \$1.00
- Fruit may be purchased separately at a cost of \$.50.
- Gluten Free options are available daily.
- Free and reduced lunch forms for low income families are available in the office.
- Please refer to the Hingham Schools website <http://www.hinghamschools.org/> “Administration” “Food Services” for monthly menu and further information.
- If paying by check, please make payable to **PRS Food Services**
- If paying online, please go to www.schoolcafe.com

If students forget their lunch money, at any grade level, they may borrow from the cafeteria. Reimbursement should be made to the cafeteria on the following day. If borrowing becomes habitual, you will be contacted and other arrangements will need to be made. Free and reduced lunch forms for low income families are available in the office.

A short break during the school day is provided for children to have a snack. Snacks should be nutritious. High sugar content may have a negative impact on student attention.

The school is requesting that parents reduce the frequency at which they use peanut butter in preparing their child’s snacks or lunches. Students with severe nut allergies are present in every grade level of our school and coming in contact or ingesting peanut butter will cause them to experience an allergic reaction, and more seriously, anaphylactic shock. Peanut-free classrooms and special procedures in the cafeteria have been created to provide a safe environment for these children.

RECESS

In addition to lunch recess, a 15-minute morning recess is scheduled and supervised by the staff. Except in inclement weather, students go outdoors; therefore, we strongly urge that children come to school properly clothed, e.g. hats, boots, and mittens.

HOMEWORK

Homework at the elementary level is an expected part of the educational program. Homework assignments will vary in frequency and intensity as appropriate to the age and grade level of the students involved. All homework assignments will be made in accordance with the following guidelines.

General

1. Guidelines reflect the time that typically might be expected to complete the assignment and may vary according to individual differences
2. Homework assignments may include such activities as creative work and primary research initiatives that require more time than is usually available in class or that involve parent participation or support.
3. In certain cases, homework assignments may be given to individual children to meet the need for extra study or practice in a subject where a child is having difficulty or to provide a child with enrichment activities.
4. Daily, at home, reading (to, with, or by a child) is an important aspect of a child’s education and enhances the building of a strong foundation for life long learning and the enjoyment of reading.

Purpose of Homework

1. To reinforce school learning by providing practice and application.
2. To extend and to reinforce study skills and techniques taught in school.
3. To offer opportunities which enrich the school experience through related homework activities.
4. To stimulate voluntary effort, initiative, independence, responsibility, self-direction, and a habit of life long learning.
5. To strengthen the home-school link by involving parents in discussions or explorations that are related to topics being taught in the classroom.
6. To help children make up work lost due to absence (after appropriate instruction has been given in school).

Role of the Teacher

1. Teachers should design assignments to accomplish specific purposes that are closely related to the learning activities occurring in the classroom.
2. Teachers should articulate assignments carefully and give clear directions for completing the homework task(s).
3. Teachers will assist students in learning and practicing independent study skills, especially in the case of long-term assignments.
4. Teachers will review completed homework assignments so that children can learn from their mistakes and so that concepts/skills learned can be utilized effectively in the instructional program.
5. Teachers should plan assignments which encourage and develop voluntary effort, initiative, responsibility, and self-direction in the pupil.
6. Teachers will communicate promptly with student and parents if problems concerning homework arise.

Role of the Student

1. Students are expected to maintain a notebook in which to record each day's homework assignments.
2. Unless otherwise specified by the teacher, students are expected to submit completed homework on the day following the assignment.
3. Homework quality should reflect the students' best efforts and be consistent with the standards for classroom work.
4. Students are expected to work for the time specified (recommended times and frequency will follow) whether or not they are able to complete fully the task(s) assigned.
5. Students are expected to make up incomplete homework within the week it was assigned, unless excused from doing so by the teacher.

Role of the Parent

1. Parents are responsible for providing a suitable environment for the child to complete homework requirements and for assisting.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate fully in homework activities that explicitly involve them in discussions or other explorations related to classroom learning activities.
3. Parents are encouraged to foster and support both recreational and assignment related reading.
4. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher whenever concerns arise about homework.
5. Parents are encouraged to be supportive and helpful to children but to provide content assistance only when needed or asked for by the student.

Recommended Times and Frequency

Kindergarten

Homework at this level will be informal and given at the teacher's discretion. Assignments may be geared more to requests by the teacher for children to seek out and bring in objects and/or materials that will

enhance what the child is studying in school. Frequently, children will be instructed to seek the assistance of a parent or other adult or an older child. Daily reading to or with the child is encouraged.

Grades 1 and 2

Regular homework should be expected. However, as is the case with Kindergarten, assignments may be geared toward requests for the child to seek out and bring in objects or materials that will enhance what the child is studying in school. The support of a parent, other adult, or older child may also be specified and will sometimes be in the form of a suggested exploration or discussion. Mathematics homework may be called "Home Links." With the cooperation of parents, some children may be recommended to complete unfinished class work at home or to practice further skills that have been taught but not yet mastered. Daily reading is encouraged.

Grade 3

Homework assignments will generally range from 15 to 30 minutes, occasionally longer for a special project. Typically, homework is given four times per week. Children may be asked to practice taught skills, master spelling words, complete written exercises, or work with a parent, other adult, or older child on a mathematics exploration called "Home Links." Daily reading of 15 to 20 minutes, beyond other assignments, is an expectation at Grade 3.

Grade 4

Children at this level are expected to complete assignments of 30 to 45 minutes in duration four times per week. Children may be asked to practice taught skills, master spelling words, complete written exercises, or work with a parent, other adult, or older child on a mathematics exploration called "Home Links." There may be occasional long-term projects assigned. Daily reading of at least 20 minutes is expected.

Grade 5

Children at this grade level may be asked to complete homework assignments averaging 60 to 75 minutes in duration four times per week. Assignments may consist of work from more than one subject on a given day, and the amount of homework may vary from one day to the next. The nature of assignments is similar to that described above for Grades 3 and 4. Long-range assignments, requiring students to plan ahead and to budget time and pace, may be given from time to time. Daily reading remains an expectation at this level.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

1. *Please become familiar with the following important points in our transportation policy:*

- Students in grades K-5 are eligible to ride a bus if they live over one mile from the school. All kindergarten students are eligible to ride the bus when they are the only grade level on the bus, e.g. morning session students may ride the bus at the close of their session no matter how close to the school they live.
- Students who are bus riders must have written permission from their parent or guardian and approval by the Assistant Principal and transportation department before they will be allowed any short-term change in their assigned bus
- In an emergency situation i.e. illness, mechanical car problem, sudden childcare problem please contact Transportation at 781-741-1510. Once Transportation has been informed of the situation, please contact the PRS office and the information will be relayed to your child and your child's teacher.
- We cannot honor a verbal request by a child to change their daily transportation plans.
- Hingham school buses are equipped with interior video cameras. The purpose of the cameras is to encourage proper bus behavior, allowing the bus driver to focus attention on the important job of driving. Videotapes will be viewed by the Supervisor of Transportation and the Building Principal

or Assistant Principal if there is a question related to misbehavior on a school bus. Videotapes are reused (taped over) on a regular basis.

- Walkers are never allowed bus transportation.
- You may request transportation for your child to and/or from an address other than your home for day-care purposes. (A child may be picked up at a different location than they are dropped off as long as the location is the same five days per week). Please forward a written request to both the PRS office and Transportation.
- Children who usually are transported by bus are allowed to walk or to use other means of transportation on receipt of a note from the parent.
- Children riding bicycles to school are required to register their bicycles with the Hingham Police Department and wear a helmet. The school bike rack should be used for students to store their bicycles. **Note: Rollerblades, skateboards, and scooters are not to be used on school property.**
- Parents must provide transportation when a student stays for after school programs, extra help, discipline, etc. One-day notice will be given so the parent can make arrangements for transportation.
- Remember: It is a privilege to ride the school bus. If a student is not well-behaved and courteous, or if he/she endangers the health or safety of other students, this privilege may be revoked. The bus driver has complete authority over students during this time and it is his/her responsibility to deliver them safely to and from school.

2. *These rules of behavior must be obeyed . . .*

- Arrive at the assigned bus stop in advance of the posted time for the bus arrival. Parents are responsible for the supervision of students until the students board the bus in the morning and after students leave the bus at the end of the day.
- While waiting for the bus, keep as far off the road as possible until the bus has arrived, stopped and opened its door. Do not run or fool around at the bus stop.
- Keep clear of the area around the bus where the driver might not be able to see you. If you drop something under the bus, do not try to get it – report your problem to the bus driver.
- If you have to cross a street to get to your bus, wait for the bus driver to signal to you then look both ways before crossing . . . some cars do not stop when the bus lights are flashing.
- Get onto the bus in a single file. Do not push.
- Take a seat and remain seated until the bus arrives at school. Make room for others to be seated.
- No standing or changing seats is allowed when the bus is moving.
- Do not throw anything in the bus or out of the bus window or hang any part of your body out the bus window.
- Pay attention to the instructions of the bus driver. Make sure that your behavior does not distract the driver from the important job of driving the bus.

- Keep the aisles clear. Large items and large musical instruments that will not fit on your lap are not permitted on the bus.
- Do not use inappropriate or loud talk or make other noises that might distract the driver.
- Be courteous to the driver, fellow students, and passersby. Keep your hands, feet and objects to yourself.
- No eating or drinking is allowed on the bus. Do not litter.
- Treat bus equipment well. Damage to bus equipment will be paid for by the offender.
- If you must cross the road when getting off the bus, wait for the bus driver to signal to you, then pass in front of the bus at a distance where you can see the driver and the driver can see you. Remember to look both ways before crossing. (If you do not usually cross in front of the bus at the end of the day, but need to do so, let the driver know before you get off the bus.)
- At the end of the day, go directly home.

3. Bus Disciplinary Action

First Incident: Initial report of an infraction of a school bus safety rule: Student conference with the Assistant Principal or Principal. Administrator may choose to notify parent.

Second Incident: Second report of an infraction of a school bus safety rule or initial report of a more serious nature: Student conference with Assistant Principal or Principal (and bus driver as needed). Written notification to parent.

Third Incident: Third report of an infraction of a school bus safety rule or any misconduct that seriously threatens the safety of the school bus: Loss of bus riding privileges for a period not to exceed ten (10) days. Written notification to parents.

Fourth Incident: Fourth report of an infraction of a school bus safety rule or a second misconduct that seriously threatens the safety of the school bus: Loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year.

At any point in time the administration may diverge from these guidelines to ensure the safety of all children.

4. Tardy Bus

Occasionally, buses are tardy to or from the school due to situations beyond the control of the bus driver (i.e. bus breakdown, road delays, weather conditions, etc.). A road event may require another bus from the nearest bus route be sent to assist the troubled bus to continue bringing those children on to their next destination. However, this could cause a “ripple” effect for that particular bus driver’s route, causing delays at all schools. These events are situational, and administrative decisions are made with the information at the moment, with the safety of all children being the paramount concern. In the event that a bus is delayed leaving PRS for the afternoon route home, parents are asked to call the school to ascertain the whereabouts of their bus. If the concern is one of time, information may be available as to why their bus is late and a possible time estimate of the delay. In the event of a bus accident involving your child’s bus, every effort will be made by PRS staff to contact parents.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are encouraged to use good judgment in keeping children home from school. Students who are ill will have a difficult time attending to work and will expose other children to the illness.

Assuring good attendance and punctuality is a primary responsibility of parents. Frequent or extended absences are detrimental to the learning process for the individual child and may also be disruptive to the routines of the rest of the class. Punctuality is an important life long habit. It is particularly important at the elementary school level where start-of-school activities set the agenda and tone for the remainder of the day. Parents are asked to plan vacations only during school breaks. Makeup work, while important, is not a substitute for classroom learning.

An elementary attendance policy establishes common guidelines for attendance procedures and protocols for communicating attendance concerns and consequences to parents. Specifics of the policy are as follows:

Absence: Parents are asked to call the school **office** before 8:15 AM if a child will be absent. Notes are required for all absences. A physician's note may be requested for absences of more than five (5) school days. When there is a concern about attendance or tardiness, the classroom teacher and/or school nurse will make a home contact to discuss the concern and to request an improved record.

Based on the discretion of the principal, a letter from the principal will result if a child is absent for seven (7) or more days in the marking period unless there has been a doctor's note. A copy of the letter will be placed in the student file.

A parent conference with the principal will result if the attendance issue persists. The principal will review the specifics of MGL Chapter 76, Section 4 and/or MGL Chapter 76, Section 2. Both of these statutes describe parental responsibility for ensuring school attendance and the consequences of failure to do so. Other possible school responses to a continued pattern of poor attendance will also be discussed, and the parent(s) and principal will develop a remedial plan. A record of the meeting will be placed in the child's file.

Tardiness: A child is deemed to be tardy if he/she is not in his/her classroom or at the assigned location where teachers collect children at the designated start of the school day. **A parent/guardian must accompany the tardy student to the office** where he/she can be signed in. As with absences, classroom teachers will make the first contact (after three (3) tardies in a marking term). Based on the principal's discretion, conferences will follow at five (5) and seven (7) tardies respectively if the issue persists.

Makeup Work: Parents can request makeup work after the first day of a multiple day absence. The nature of makeup work for a long-term absence will be determined by the teacher. Teachers are not expected to provide specific assignments in advance of a vacation or long-term absence. However, they may be able to provide a general sense of what topics/areas the class will cover. In the case of long-term absences of a medical nature, home tutoring may be available. Parents should contact the school counselor. The classroom teacher will establish the period allowed for the completion of makeup after an extended absence. Teachers generally will not have time to provide individual tutoring in the work that is missed due to absence or tardiness.

DISMISSALS

All dismissals must occur through the main office. Any child leaving the school premises during the school day must be dismissed by a written note indicating the time and reason to his/her teacher. The

parent/guardian will be asked to report directly to the office to sign the student out of school while waiting for their child's arrival at the office. Parents of kindergarten children should first report to the office to sign their child out of school and then pick-up their child at the kindergarten classroom.

For safety reasons parents should not take their children from the bus lines during dismissal.

Please try to avoid calling in a dismissal, specifically after 1:15 p.m.; supplying the school with a note will make the early dismissal a smoother and safer process.

A note is also required for dismissal of a child to anyone other than a parent or a guardian. Notes should be specific to the time and identification of the adult picking up the student. ID's of unknown persons will be checked in the office.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Each classroom at PRS supports the notion of a classroom as a community of learners. Consistent with that theme there is the expectation of consistent and respectful approaches to interactions between staff and students, students and students, and staff and staff. You will also find many classrooms who utilize "morning meeting" and the Social Competency Program to teach students appropriate interpersonal skills.

Creating classroom rules is an important part of the first week of school. Rules and consequences should allow children to feel safe to take the necessary risks to learn. The process involves teacher and students developing a vision of the classroom and collaboratively writing rules and consequences to support that vision. Rules should guide all school behavior and exhibit the following characteristics:

Positive: guiding desired behavior.

Global: serving as broad guidelines for all types of situations.

Constantly examined and interpreted: by students and teacher to fit specific situations.

Classroom rules should also connect with the Hingham Rules of the Road:

- Treat each other with care and respect.
- Support a positive learning environment.
- Be serious about learning.
- Take care of your school.

Logical consequences are an important part of supportive classroom discipline. In simple terms, the consequence must be related to the deed and the broken rule. Children will learn that consequences will be consistently and democratically implemented.

It is important that the school and home work together to develop appropriate behavior in all children. Accordingly, parents will be notified when their child is experiencing behavior difficulty. Action will be taken to secure compliance with the school's various regulations.

When a student repeatedly functions outside the behavior norms and regulations of the school, we may request that he/she consult with the guidance counselor. A result of this meeting may be extended counseling and the development of an individualized "behavior modification plan."

There are basically four forms of logical consequences that the school may give to those in violation of rules: withholding privileges, making up classroom time, in-house suspension and exclusion (suspended or expelled). A severe clause may be implemented for a set of behaviors that jeopardize the health and safety of the child initiating the behavior or others. Specifically, fighting, harassment, vandalism, and racial or ethnic slurs will require that the parent meet with the principal, teacher, and child before the student is permitted into the classroom and school life.

RISK-ASSESSMENT

Students who exhibit behavior that is unsafe to themselves and/or others will undergo a risk-assessment by the school adjustment counselor. It is the principal's discretion to suspend the student during the data gathering if s/he feels the student is a safety threat to themselves and others. Following the completion of a risk-assessment a decision on a return to school will be made by the principal.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

The Hingham Public Schools has adopted the Steps to Respect program to teach children how to identify and handle bullying behavior. The program uses the 3R's of Bullying: Recognize, Refuse and Report. **Bullying behavior is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional** 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 himself or of damage to his 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 . . . Ch. 370 (a).

This is different from a peer conflict that is two sided. Other problems with behavior are addressed through the Hingham Code of Discipline, such as peer conflicts or one-time mean or hurtful behaviors. After identifying bullying, students are taught to assess safety and decide whether to refuse (respond) by standing up to the person bullying and/or by supporting the person being bullied. Next, the students are taught to report bullying behavior to an adult.

A perpetrator is now defined as a student or member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional.

For additional information on the bullying policy and to access the bullying report form, please see the school's web site. Parents of the target and alleged bully are notified of the bullying report. The principal or designee will investigate the report and make a determination of what action should be taken and initiate an appropriate response to protect the target of the bullying behavior (safety plan) and to address the bullying behavior.

In grades K-3 the Second-Step violence prevention program is used. This program uses a problem solving approach to resolve problems.

CAFETERIA DISCIPLINE

Cafeteria Rules

1. Follow adult directions.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
3. Walk at all times.
4. Use an indoor voice.
5. Leave your space clean.
6. No visiting other tables.
7. Line up properly in a single, straight, alphabetized line.

Consequences for breaking the rules are:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Issue a Cafeteria Manners Matter form. The teacher will send the form home for a parent signature.
3. Students with patterns of inappropriate behavior should be referred to the Principal or Assistant Principal for discussions and consequences.

PLAYGROUND DISCIPLINE

Playground Rules

1. Follow directions the first time given.
2. No contact sports.
3. Appropriate language should be used at all times.
4. Keep objects and body within the playground boundaries.
5. Put trash in receptacles.
6. No running near or on the Energy Outlet.

Consequences for breaking the rules are:

1. Five minute time-out.
2. Stand against the wall for the remainder of recess.
3. Two recesses against the wall or remain in for recess, note home to parent, and/or a conference with the administrator.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The disciplining of students with disabilities is governed by federal and state laws and the regulations promulgated there under. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education (2004), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws (Ch. 69-78A).

Students with IEPs, 504 plans who violate school rules are subject to removal from their current placement for up to ten (10) consecutive school days, to the extent that such removal would be applied to students without disabilities, without a prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability. For any suspension or change in placement that exceeds ten (10) days, in addition to educational services, students must receive, as appropriate, a functional behavior assessment, behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation.

For infractions related to the carrying of a weapon or the possession, use, sale, or solicitation of drugs or controlled substances on school property or at a school event, school personnel may order a change in the placement of a student with an IEP or 504 plan to an interim alternative school setting for not more than forty-five (45) school days.

For additional information on, or clarification of, the details of these regulations, you may contact the Director of Student Services.

DRESS CODE

Appropriate dress, appearance and proper behavior are vital to each member of the school community. Developing good tastes in attire, good grooming habits, and good behavior is a part of the educational program. Wearing inappropriate dress to school can have a negative influence on the educational process and the educational climate of the school.

Each student should dress in a manner which is appropriate for school and its related activities. Hats are not permitted to be worn in the building (Some exceptions include spirit days, field day, etc.) Children must have sneakers for physical education classes, plus appropriate clothing for physical activities. Flip flops are discouraged from being worn to school. Dress should be consistent with conventional standards of modesty and decorum. Low cut tops, spaghetti straps, and short shorts are not appropriate attire.

Children should be properly equipped for both warm and cold weather conditions. Layered clothing usually works well. Since the youngsters need a fresh air break every day, they should be dressed accordingly. We do go out in the snow so hats, gloves and boots are required.

LOST & FOUND

The lost and found is located in the cafeteria. To assist students in finding clothing and lunch boxes labeling these items is recommended. Clothing not claimed will be donated to charity several times during the school year.

LOST CURRICULUM BOOKS

The school needs to be reimbursed for lost curriculum books. Please contact the office to make arrangements for the reimbursement of the lost book(s).

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

The use of electronic equipment such as cell phones, radios, IPODs, etc. in school is not permitted as they can interrupt instruction or interaction with peers.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

At Plymouth River School, we feel the taking and sharing of photos and/or videos of our students while participating in activities/events promote not only an individual's academic/personal achievement but also highlights the collaborative classroom and group activities that are representative of the exciting and innovative learning environment within the PRS community.

Examples of times when PRS would be photographing/videotaping students and sharing these photos/videos within the PRS community include (but are not limited to): Field Trips, Classroom Activities, Weekly Wizard PTO newsletters, Fifth Grade yearbook, All School Meeting presentations, monthly slide shows, teacher websites (password protected), and/or special events covered by organizations such as the Hingham Journal and HCAM Productions.

All students will be included in photos/videos unless a parent/guardian notifies the Principal in writing of their explicit request by the end of September.

III. PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Plymouth River School Council was formed as a result of the Massachusetts Educational Reform Bill as a model for shared leadership. The School Council consists of the principal, the assistant principal, a school committee member, one teacher, two parents, and one community member. Their duties and responsibilities include adopting educational goals, identifying educational needs, reviewing the school budget, formulating a school improvement plan, and advising the principal on matters that the Council deems important to the success of the school.

School Council meeting dates, times, and agendas will be highlighted in the school newsletter. Parents are welcome to address the Council during the first fifteen minutes of each meeting if they have issues to be raised.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The PTO is a very active organization working throughout the year to provide children of the Plymouth River School with opportunities to enhance their learning. Special Week, Cultural Enrichment opportunities, Get Smart About Art, and a strong parent volunteer program are just several ways the PTO supports student learning. All parents of students at the Plymouth River School are members of the PTO. All members are encouraged to attend these meetings to express individual ideas, opinions, and concerns. Monthly meeting dates and times will be highlighted in the school newsletter. Please visit the PTO website at <http://prsppto.weebly.com/>

PARENT- TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Parent/teacher conferences are collaborative endeavors that should focus on the needs and the progress/development of the student.
- Parents should share with the teacher important information that may affect student performance.
- Parents and teachers should be prepared to listen to the other's perspective, to ask questions, and to share concerns.
- By the end of the conference, the parties should have discussed and developed next steps, including plans for any future communication that may be needed.
- When conferences involve specific issues of concern, it is important to focus first on identifying the problem and then on solving it together.

Appointments with teachers to discuss your child's progress can be made online by going to [http://ptcfast.com/schools/ 71](http://ptcfast.com/schools/71)

If you do not have internet access, or if you wish to make a conference on a date other than the pre-scheduled dates, contact your child's teacher requesting the same and he/she will contact you.

PARENT-PRINCIPAL MEETINGS

In an effort to promote open communication between parents and the administration, parents may schedule appointments to meet with the building principal at any time during the day.

CURRICULUM NIGHT

Each grade level will host a Curriculum Night in September. A note will be sent home with the date and time. This evening is designed exclusively for parents to provide them with an overview of our programs, classroom routines, and communicate expectations.

PARENT COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

- In most cases of concern about a classroom situation, parents should communicate directly with the teacher or specialist involved.
- General questions or concerns may be most appropriately addressed by the guidance counselor (or SPED chair/liaison).
- If direct communication with the teacher is not possible, or does not resolve the concern, parents should contact the building principal who may refer some issues to a department director or to other appropriate specialist.
- Anonymous concerns or complaints cannot be addressed.

NEWSLETTER

The Plymouth River School Newsletter is published and emailed by the PTO. The intent of the newsletter is to communicate to parents important dates, student accomplishments, PTO news, special events, educational research, and curriculum happenings. If you would like to submit an article, please submit it to prsnewsletter@yahoo.com. If you do not have access to the internet, to either receive a copy of the Newsletter or to submit an article or if you have any other questions or concerns, you may contact a member of the newsletter committee.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Report cards will be issued as indicated on the HPS Calendar.

Summative and formative assessment provides teachers with a window on student understanding. Portfolio and performance based assessments are often used to inform instruction to determine success toward a standard. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is used in kindergarten and first grade to identify children with potential problems and to modify teaching approaches if the student is not on course to achieve state and district goals.

Assessment of students also comes in the form of standardized tests. Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS 2.0) English Language Arts and Mathematics to students in grades 3-5. In addition, Grade 5 will take a Science assessment. Test results are used to measure individual growth of students in these content areas. Test date administration dates are in the Spring and will be posted on the PRS website and a reminder letter will be emailed to parents. Individual student and school reports will be issued in the Fall. Further information is available at the Massachusetts Department of Education website: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>

Testing is available to parents and teachers to help the Child Study Team determine whether your child needs the services of the Special Education Department.

In order to identify children who may need special services or a modified program, a Kindergarten screening is conducted in September. Parents are informed of the results in late October, early November. Kindergarten registration is held in late March.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

After a careful evaluation by the principal, classroom teacher and other specialists of all factors, placement, promotion, or retention decisions shall be made in the best interest of the student. This is all done while taking into account advantages and disadvantages of all alternatives possible.

In retaining or promoting a student, the school will consider not only the student's academic achievement and needs, but the student's age, his/her social and emotional maturity and needs, and the wishes of the

student's parents. At the secondary level, credit guidelines for retention, and graduation and state graduation requirements will be spelled out annually in the Program of Studies booklet.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student records policy is mandated by the Massachusetts State Department of Education. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of such records. The student records include the transcript and temporary record. The transcript includes minimal information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress, e.g. name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school district for at least sixty (60) years after the student leaves the system. The temporary record contains the majority of information maintained by the school about the student. This record includes such things as test results, evaluations and comments made by teachers, counselors, other persons, and disciplinary records. The temporary record is destroyed within five (5) years after the student leaves the school system. A parent or an eligible student has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available by school personnel within two (2) days of the request. The parent may also request that portions of the record are photocopied and interpreted by professional personnel. No individuals or organizations other than the parent, student and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information from the student record. The Parent/Guardian should sign a release (available from the PRS office) for a student transferring from PRS so the academic records may be mailed by PRS directly to the new school. Upon withdrawal from the school system, parents will be given their child's health records for enrollment into their new school.

IV. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER (LMC)

The Library Media Center (LMC) provides books, technology, and audio-visual materials to fill curriculum needs, as well as supplementary and recreational reading materials. Students are allowed to check out books for two (2) weeks and are responsible for returning them in good condition. They are expected to pay replacement cost for lost or damaged books and magazines.

Students receive one period of instruction in research and library skills every other week. On alternate weeks they have a book selection period during which they have an opportunity for research and exploration of library materials or listen to a story.

In honor of birthdays, teacher appreciation, and other special occasions, The Birthday Book Club provides the opportunity for teachers, students, and parents to donate a book to the library. During the month of their birth, students receive a letter explaining the procedure along with a form to return to school. Books are selected from a collection located in the library and parents are notified as to the book's cost. A bookplate will be placed in the book with the appropriate inscription.

If library books taken out by a student are not returned by the end of the school year (or reimbursement made for lost books), that student's report card will not be issued until the books are returned.

There is a process available for parents and community members to follow if they consider instructional materials, including library resources, to be objectionable. You may request reconsideration of a text, library book or other media. Please contact the librarian if you wish to make a request.

TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Our mission is to teach students in grades K-5 the technology curriculum according to the Massachusetts Technology Literacy Standards. These include: Standard 1: Proficiency in productivity tools such as word

processing, spreadsheet, presentation, research and databases. Standard 2: Digital Citizenship which includes responsible use of technology, ethics and online safety. Standard 3: Application of technology for higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, collaboration, and innovation.

Our school currently houses SMARTboards in every classroom; provides access to mobile carts that include laptops, chromebooks and iPads; a computer lab; document cameras, scanners, and printers. We provide training and support to teachers in innovative technologies to help them maximize student learning in the classroom.

INTERNET/COMPUTER USE

The Hingham Public School system provides computers and technical equipment for the professional use of staff, and as educational aids for students. Use of any of the Hingham Public School District's computer systems is limited to school-related activities. Administration and classroom systems can be re-allocated at the discretion of the school administration or technology department without advance notice.

The Hingham Public School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the computer services it is providing. Hingham Public Schools will not be responsible for any damages resulting from delays or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or your errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at your own risk. Hingham Public Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its computer services.

The following set of technology policies applies to all users of Hingham Public Schools' computer systems. Failure to comply with the guidelines herein may result in termination, suspension, or other limitation of an employee's or student's computer privileges. These regulations may be amended and updated at the discretion of Hingham Public Schools' administration.

1. Computers, including software and hardware, are the property of Hingham Public Schools. Computer systems are to be used for school-related activities, and are not to be removed from the premises without written permission from the District Technology Manager.
2. Users should not have any expectation of privacy with respect to personal data stored on Hingham Public Schools' computers. Electronic mail (E-mail) messages are considered public records and are therefore legally discoverable and subject to record retention. Users should not expect that electronic mail messages (even those marked "Personal") are private or confidential.
3. The Hingham Public School system may monitor electronic mail and Internet activities on the schools' computer systems for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. system checks.
 - b. reviews of productivity.
 - c. investigations into claims of possible criminal activity.
 - d. investigations into inappropriate use of the District's Internet connection.
4. Use of the District's computer systems constitutes consent to monitoring of E-mail transmissions and other on-line services, and is conditioned upon strict adherence to this policy.
5. The following activities are strictly prohibited:

- a. Any illegal activity, including, but not limited to, the transmission of copyright or trade secret material, or the participation in any type of criminal activity.
 - b. Attempts to violate the computer security systems implemented by the Hingham Public Schools, Town of Hingham, or other institutions, organizations, companies or individuals.
 - c. Accessing material that is inappropriate for school use, such as Internet sites promoting pornography, gambling, or hate.
 - d. Attempts to circumvent the Internet filtering capabilities of the Hingham Public Schools or the school systems' Internet provider(s).
 - e. Reproduction of copyrighted material without explicit permission.
 - f. The use of profanity or inappropriate language in electronic mail.
 - g. Use of school computer systems for political or commercial purposes.
 - h. Using school computer systems to send unsolicited bulk E-mail (SPAM).
 - i. Developing or disseminating malicious software programs, such as computer viruses.
 - j. Downloading, installing, or copying any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks without written permission from the network administrator or District Technology Manager.
 - k. Misrepresentation of your identity by using another user's account, or by masking your own identity.
 - l. Accessing files or e-mail of another without proper authority or consent.
6. No profane, abusive, or impolite language should be used to communicate, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behavior. Should a user encounter such material by accident, they should report it to an appropriate authority immediately.
 7. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Hingham has installed filtering and/or blocking software to restrict access to Internet sites containing material harmful to minors. The software scans for objectionable words or concepts, as determined by the Hingham School District. However, no software is foolproof. A user who accidentally connects to an inappropriate site must immediately disconnect from the site and notify a teacher or supervisor. If a user sees another user accessing inappropriate sites, he or she should notify a teacher or supervisor immediately. Students and staff may not disable the District's filtering software at any time when students are using the Internet system if such disabling will cease to protect students against access to inappropriate materials. Authorized staff may temporarily or permanently unblock access to sites containing appropriate materials if the filtering software has inappropriately blocked access to such sites.
 8. Staff must supervise student use of the District's Internet system in a manner that is appropriate to the students' age and the circumstances of use.
 9. The following restrictions against inappropriate speech and messages apply to all speech communicated and accessed through the District Internet system, including all email, instant

messages, Web pages, and Web logs:

- a. Students shall not send obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful messages.
 - b. Students shall not post information that could cause damage, danger, or disruption, or engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.
 - c. Students shall not harass other persons, or knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
10. Students' home and personal internet use can have an impact on the school and on other students. If students' personal Internet expression - such as a threatening message to another student or a violent Web site - creates the likelihood of material disruption of the school's operations, students may face school discipline and criminal penalties.
11. Hingham takes bullying and harassment by computer very seriously. Students shall not use any Internet or other communication device to intimidate, bully, harass, or embarrass other students or staff members. Students who engage in such activity on school grounds or who engage in such activity off campus and create a material disruption of school operations shall be subject to penalties for bullying and harassment as contained in the student handbook, as well as possible criminal penalties.

In the event of a claim that a student has violated this policy, the District will provide the student with notice and an opportunity to be heard in the manner set forth in the student handbook.

Best Practices

DO be polite and use appropriate language in your network communications. Email, however informal, is subject to the same rules of etiquette as the more traditional forms of correspondence. DO NOT get abusive in your messages to others. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language.

DO NOT reveal your personal address or phone number, or that of other students or colleagues online or elsewhere on the network.

DO respect the privacy of others. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

DO NOT use another individual's account without written permission from that individual. To do so constitutes fraud.

DO logoff a computer workstation when you are through using that system. This is the best way to safeguard your work and your network identity.

DO NOT use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users.

DO help the system run smoothly. If you feel you can identify a security problem on the network or the Internet, notify a system administrator. DO NOT demonstrate the problem to other users.

DO NOT open email attachments unless you know the source and expect the file.

BAND, ORCHESTRA, CHORUS

Students in grade five have the choice of taking lessons and participating in the school band, orchestra, or chorus. Students must choose one of these lessons. Lessons and ensembles take place during the school day. Band, orchestra, and chorus meet twice in a six-day cycle.

Students in grades three and four may take string lessons after school for an additional fee.

Students with large instruments such as a drum and cello will not be allowed to transport them on the school bus because of limited space and safety. If parents are unable to transport their child's instrument on the day of their lesson or ensemble, they should consider leaving their instrument in the school on the evening prior to its use.

GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAM

This program services children in grades K-5 who by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. Students are identified by an informal process in grades K-2 and through a more formalized procedure beginning at the end of grade 3. This process involves objective data including DIBELS, MCAS, NEML, CML, and classroom grades as well as more subjective measures such as teacher recommendation. Students identified as academically talented in grades 4 and 5 are eligible for the Saturday Milton Program. Students are also tested in math in the Euclidean and Pythagorean divisions and receive awards at Math Night for outstanding performance.

Services provided through Curriculum Extension may include vertical acceleration, program modification, horizontal extensions, or special projects within the regular classroom setting, specific pull-out programs (primarily at grades 4-5), individual or small group mentor relationships for unique talents or interest, and a few options, such as Milton Academy Saturday Program, requiring time beyond the school day.

Reading and mathematics specialists are available to support classroom teachers in providing for special curriculum needs and to help to plan program modifications.

Both classroom and pull-out activities are necessary components of the Hingham program.

Some examples of in-class responses to a student's need for academic challenge include: clustering of similarity able students for reading, math, or project work; differentiated assignments or programs; compacting of curriculum; contests and competitions; research or study projects; and across grade or next grade placement.

Specific pull-out programs in grades 4-5 are available. Students who meet the criteria will have the opportunity to participate in Math Plus is available for students in grades 4-5 to study three basic strands: problem-solving, geometry, and number theory. Emphasis is on higher level thinking skills and inductive and deductive reasoning. However, the major portion of services for gifted and talented children are provided within the classroom.

The assistant principal is the building liaison for gifted and talented students.

FIELD TRIPS

Transportation is by bus and in a few instances by automobiles driven by parents or teachers. Also, children may participate in field trips that require them to walk to a site within town. Occasionally, parents may be asked to drive children to different sites. All field trips must integrate and support the classroom curriculum. Families experiencing financial difficulty may request payment of the field trip through the Principal. Children can look forward to several exciting field trips. For example, in first grade children may visit the New England Aquarium and Plimoth Plantation; in second grade, students will have the opportunity to visit the Museum of Fine Arts; Third graders will visit the Gardner Museum; fourth grades

participate in a two-night and three-day marine environmental program on Cape Cod in the fall; and fifth grade students will visit the Museum of Fine Arts.

VOYAGER PROGRAM

Students in grades K-5 have the opportunity to take courses in the fine and performing arts, sciences, cooking, literature, physical education, and languages from some of the premier instructors in their fields. In most cases, each course is taught in six one hour sessions during the fall/winter or early spring. Courses are held immediately after dismissal at PRS. The cost of a class ranges from \$45 to \$60. Some classes may also have a materials fee. Free tuition for one course is offered to students of families experiencing financial problems.

ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR/PSYCHOLOGIST

The school adjustment counselor and the school psychologist provide students with direct assistance in the form of crisis intervention and/or individual or small group counseling. The counselors consult and collaborate with parents and staff about students as the need arises. Administration of Chapter 766 (special education program) for the school is done by the school psychologist who also does psychological assessments for Chapter 766 and participates in the identification of students in need of special education services. The counselor chairs Child Study Team Meetings and 766 Team Meetings, and contributes to the development of Individualized Education Plans (IEP) with special education staff. The department also offers programs to parents and children to help them deal with contemporary societal problems.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Hingham Public School system is committed to excellence in learning and to the fulfillment of individual potential for all students. Children with disabilities must be given an opportunity to access the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment possible. With that goal in mind, we continue our efforts to improve the capacity of educators to meet the needs of all students; to increase the skill bank of our special education staff in providing specialized instruction; to assist all educators in making appropriate curriculum and instructional modifications. Parents are encouraged to be active participants in the development of their children's educational programs and to meet with their child's teacher at least at the beginning of each school year. Parent workshops/seminars related to special education, are made available throughout the school year. The individualized nature of special education services means that educational programs are developed to meet each student's unique needs. When parents (or students) are concerned about lack of academic progress, or when they believe that a disability may be preventing effective progress, requests to meet first with the student's teacher(s) should be made, then (if needed) with the guidance counselor. Appropriate accommodations may be available to assist the student within the general education framework.

Section 504 students are students who, due to substantial mental and/or physical disabilities that limit one or more of the students' major life activities, require special accommodations. A 504 accommodation plan is designed according to their individual needs. Under Section 504, a person is considered to have a disability if s/he:

- Has a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning in school, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, or working;
- Has a history of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

Some students would be placed on a 504 Plan if he/she is making effective progress but needs accommodations such as a piece of equipment to access the regular education curriculum.

***The student referral process includes the following steps:**

1. Parents are encouraged to meet first with their child's teacher(s), and then they may choose to talk with the School Psychologist, School Adjustment Counselor or other appropriate specialists. Parents have the right to request a Team Evaluation for their child.
2. Classroom teachers are encouraged to brainstorm with their grade level Team members, including the special education teacher, and appropriate specialists about student issues and potential accommodations, and to attempt implementation of accommodations. Teachers are required to make instructional and social accommodations prior to proceeding with a special education eligibility determination process. This protocol is outlined in the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Before students are referred to the Child Study Team, a set of protocols identified as the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan must be implemented. Teachers are required to make curriculum and social accommodations to help the child become successful.
3. As part of our ongoing support of our students, the staff regularly collaborates to develop strategies to address academic and behavioral needs. All efforts are made to modify the regular education program to meet such needs. Such efforts may include, but are limited to: modification of the curriculum, teaching strategies, teaching environments, or materials; and use of support services, consultative services, and building-based teams to meet the child's needs in the regular education classroom. The **ISIT** (instructional support intervention team) is composed of trained school staff. Members may include administrators, counselors, teachers, coaches, school psychologists, social workers, support staff, and others.
4. If the student still does not make effective progress, the Team may recommend a Team Evaluation. If the learning problems persist, the Team may recommend a 766 evaluation. If the parents agree to an evaluation, the child is tested in the areas designated within thirty (30) school days.
5. The Team, including the parents, meet to discuss the results of the evaluation and to determine if special education services are needed. If services are deemed appropriate, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed for the student with the team. Parents will leave the meeting with a completed draft of the educational plan.
6. After the parents accept the plan, special education services are implemented.

*Parents have the right to request a Team Evaluation for their child.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

The speech and language specialist provides small group and classroom support services to students with language difficulties, unintelligible speech, and fluency problems.

READING

A reading tutor and literacy paraprofessionals are available in kindergarten and grade one for students significantly delayed in their reading. A second reading tutor, following the protocols of the Title I program services grades one and two. A reading specialist is available to work with teachers in a consultant role to improve curriculum and instruction and offer suggestions to modify programs for individual students. He/she also tests and diagnoses students who are suspected of having reading problems.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER EDUCATION

Hingham Public Schools adheres to all Massachusetts Department of Education requirements for English Learner Education programs. Upon student enrollment, a home language survey is completed and if a child does not speak English or comes from a home in which English is a second language, the student is referred to the English Learner Education teacher who accepts referral for evaluation from the principal and/or the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services oversees the school district's English

Learner Education program. Upon completion of the prescribed testing, eligibility is established and sheltered English immersion services and English language development instruction is offered to the student.

V. OTHER

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

Hingham Public Schools' students may in rare circumstances require physical restraint when non-physical interventions would not be as effective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to self and/or others. Such physical restraint should be limited to the use of such reasonable force as necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious physical harm. Only personnel who have received training pursuant to 603 CMR 46.03(2) or 603 CMR 46.03(3) shall administer physical restraint on students. Such incidents of restraint must be reported to an administrator and the principal or the director of pupil services will inform the parent as soon as possible and follow with a written report within three (3) working days.

RESTRAINING ORDERS

Court Orders must be filed in the office within twenty-four hours of the Order being executed. Any changes in restraining orders must be communicated to the school secretary.

CIVIL RIGHTS

It is the policy of the Hingham Public Schools that all programs, activities, courses of study, and employment opportunities are offered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.

Coordinator of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for the Hingham Public Schools: The person serving as the Coordinator of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for the Hingham Public Schools is Dorothy H. Galo, Superintendent for the Hingham Public Schools. Title VI "prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on race, color and national origin." Anyone having questions or concerns about Title VI with respect to the Hingham Public Schools should contact Dr. Galo at the School Department, 220 Central Street, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. She can be reached by telephone at her office at (781) 741-1500 or by E-mail at dgalo@hinghamschools.org or by fax at (781) 749-7457.

Coordinator of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: The person serving as Coordinator of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 for the Hingham Public Schools is Dr. James LaBillois, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Hingham Public Schools. Title IX "prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits in education programs based on sex." Anyone having questions or concerns about Title IX with respect to the Hingham Public Schools should contact Dr. LaBillois at the School Department, 220 Central Street, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. He can be reached by telephone at his office at (781) 741-1500 or by E-mail at jlabillois@hinghamschools.org or by fax at (781) 749-7457.

Coordinator of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: The person serving as Coordinator of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for the Hingham Public Schools is Heather Rodriguez, Director of School Counseling Services for the Hingham Public Schools. Section 504 "prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disability." Anyone having any questions or concerns about Section 504 with respect to the Hingham Public Schools should contact

Mrs.Heather Rodriguez at Hingham High School, 17 Union Street, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. She can be reached by telephone at her office at (781) 741-1565 or by E-mail at hrodriguez@hinghamschools.org or by fax at (781) 741-1515.

School District Homeless Education Liaison: The person serving as School District Homeless Education Liaison for the Hingham Public Schools is Dr.James LaBillois Assistant Superintendent. The McKinney-Vento Education Act for Homeless Children and Youth requires that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youth. Anyone having questions or concerns about the legal rights of homeless children or youth should contact Dr.LaBillois at the School Department, 220 Central Street, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. He can be reached by telephone at his office at (781) 741-1500 or by E-mail at jlabillois@hinghamschools.org or by fax at (781) 749-7457.

Title II, ADA Compliance Liaison: The person serving as the contact for concerns about school facilities and compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 is John Ferris, Director of Business & Support Services. Anyone having questions or concerns about Title II with respect to the Hingham Public Schools should contact John Ferris at the School Department, 220 Central Street, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. He can be reached by telephone at his office at (781) 741-1500 or by E-mail at jferris@hinghamschools.org or by fax at (781) 749-7457.

Grievance Procedure:

1. Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against should contact in writing the appropriate coordinator as soon as possible, normally within thirty (30) days of the discrimination.
2. The Coordinator will meet with the person (s) to discuss the situation within seven (7) days of receiving the written complaint.
3. The Coordinator will have fourteen (14) days to respond to the grievance in writing.
4. If the grievance is not settled at this level, a representative from the Office of Civil Rights or the Department of Education will be contacted for mediation.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

A student determined to be homeless will be enrolled immediately in the school where he/she is temporarily residing or be provided with transportation if he/she chooses to remain in the school of origin until the end of the school year. Students considered to be homeless are entitled to fully participate in all classes, school activities, and all educational opportunities provided to the students of Hingham Public Schools. Included in this definition of homeless are children and youth awaiting foster care placement. If you are aware of homeless students who are not taking advantage of the Homeless Education Act, please notify the school principal or assistant principal.

CORE VALUES

- Learning must occur in a supportive and no-threatening environment where the uniqueness of each person’s individual talents, abilities, and learning styles is recognized.
- Problem solving requires an inquiring mind that readily engages in reflection, flexible thinking, and questioning.
- Effective communication is the mastery and application of speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills.
- All members of our community will be treated with tolerance, openness, and respect.
- Learning is a process of constructing knowledge and creating personal meaning from new information while being actively engaged.
- Every individual must be afforded the opportunity to display his or her understandings, knowledge, and skills through a variety of performance channels.

- Learning and social development are best achieved when the learner possess a high degree of self-esteem, strong motivation, and a clear understanding of their strengths and weakness.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

The recently enacted No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires schools that receive Title 1 grant funds to notify all parents that they can ask for and receive specific information about teacher qualifications.

As a parent of a student at Plymouth River Elementary School, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if you ask for it. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the Massachusetts Department of Education has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the Massachusetts Department of Education has granted a waiver so that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being licensed or qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Whether any teachers' aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and if they do, their qualifications.