

**Sterling Community  
School 251 Sterling Road  
Sterling, CT 06377**

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**2018/2019  
Student/Parent Handbook**

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# MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of Sterling Community School is to foster a safe and engaging learning community of critical thinkers, effective communicators and collaborators, creative problem solvers and imaginative innovators that will persevere to become motivated learners who are responsible, compassionate, contributing citizens in our ever-changing technological society.

## VISION OF A STERLING GRADUATE

1. Engages in **critical thinking**: analysis, evaluation, reasoning and reflection to build understanding, solve problems, and identify alternative solutions.
2. Engages in **collaborative** work with others to set and achieve common goals
3. Articulates clear thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal **communication**
4. Transfers **problem solving** from familiar to unfamiliar situations
5. Uses their **imagination** to think creatively and engage in productive struggle to persevere towards an intended goal
6. Uses **technology** to advance learning
7. Reflects on their own learning, understanding learning is a life-long process that requires a **growth mindset**
8. Is a **caring, compassionate contributor** to their school, community and world

# SCHOOL HOURS

The instructional school day is 8:00 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.

Shortened day instructional hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 12:40p.m.

Pre-School hours are as follows:

Morning	8:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Afternoon	12:00 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Pre-School schedule for shortened days: **NO AFTERNOON SESSION**

Pre-School schedule for delayed openings: **NO MORNING SESSION**

### **STERLING COMMUNITY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

Gail Lanza –Superintendent/Director of Special Services

Shari Ternowchek – Principal

Laura Smith – Clinical Supervisor/Social Worker

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Leatrice Shippee - Chair

Barbara Salisbury -Vice Chair

Dottie Capobianco

Kathryn Fantoli

Rosalind Choquette

Jon Turban

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability in providing education services. Shari Ternowchek has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. Gail Lanza has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Sterling Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of district services, programs, or activities. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interested persons should contact Gail Lanza.

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Sterling Board of Education holds regular business meetings usually on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 PM in the Sterling Community School Community Room. Parents, students, and other community members are encouraged to attend.

Meetings of the Board follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement or to express a viewpoint. In addition, if they give advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda for a more thorough discussion of the topic. Board agendas are posted on the school's website.

The Board's main purpose is policy setting designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public's opinion on district issues, which can assist them in formulating policy which reflects community values and expectations.

### **MIGRANT STUDENTS**

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, gifted education, vocational education, language programs, counseling programs and elective classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation and evaluation of the migrant program.

# ATTENDANCE/PLACEMENT

## ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence. The Board of Education requires that accurate records be kept of the attendance of each child, and students should not be absent from school without parental knowledge and consent.

Absence means an excused absence, unexcused absence or an in-school suspension that is greater than or equal to one-half of a school day.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or an expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school district offices.

A child whose total number of absences at anytime during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a “chronically absent child.” The child will be subject to review by the district and/or the school attendance team.

A student must remain in school until age 18, unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district provided form to leave school at age 17.

## ABSENCE

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent/guardian determines that an absence is necessary, parents/guardians are required to contact the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

The parent/guardian shall then follow up with a written note, email, or doctor’s note when the student returns to school. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office. Parents/guardians should contact the main office to take advantage of special services such as the collection of homework assignments for the student who must be out several days.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCE**

Students receive an excused absence when they are absent from school for the following reasons:

1. Death in the immediate family.
2. Serious illness of a member of the family.
3. Illness or injury of the student.
4. Religious obligation.
5. Emergency or other exceptional circumstances.
6. Other absences as approved by the principal's office in advance.

Students who plan to be absent for reasons other than those listed above should seek approval by presenting a note from home to the Principal or designee.

The responsibility for makeup of work is on the student, not the teacher. Unless a student has an extended illness, all makeup privileges must be completed within 5 days after the student returns to school.

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definitions.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

Unexcused absences are those that do not fall under any of the excused absences.

## **CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

A student whose total number of absences at anytime during a school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at such school during the school year is considered to be a "chronically absent child." Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and appropriate action will be taken. The first offense will result in a letter being sent home, the second offense will result in a phone call from the principal, and the third offense will result in a meeting with the attendance team.

## **LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS/RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records.

## **TARDINESS**

If students arrive late, they must report to the office. After six incidents of tardiness you will receive a letter, after 8 incidents you will receive a telephone call, and after 10 incidents a meeting will be scheduled with the principal. Parents will be contacted to arrange a meeting to review the situation and to develop a plan of correction.

**TRUANCY**

A student is truant if they have four unexcused absences in a month (period of time, not specific months named in a calendar) or 10 unexcused absences in a school year.

**VACATIONS**

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times that coincide with school vacations. It is the student's/family's responsibility to request work directly from the child's teacher through email or letter. All absences for a vacation which put the student's absences at 10 or more are unexcused absences. Parents please note due to the varying instructional methods and activities of a unit of study, it may be impractical for a teacher to provide all assignments/make up work to a student in advance; therefore, the student may need to make up work upon their return to school. The makeup period for assignments will be equal to number of days while on vacation, extended make up time may be granted at the discretion of the teacher.

**CLASS PLACEMENT**

Class placement decisions are made by the school principal in consultation with faculty. Due to the complex nature of placing students to best meet their academic, social, and emotional needs, student placements will not be determined based on parent requests.



# ACADEMICS

## **STANDARDS-BASED GRADING**

Sterling Community School utilizes a standards-based system of instruction, grading, and academic reporting that is based on students demonstrating understanding of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In a school that uses a standards-based approach to education, teachers utilize concisely written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education in order to determine the goals of a lesson and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations. The general goal of standards-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. Standards-based learning is common in American elementary schools, but it is becoming more widely used in middle and secondary schools. When using a standards-based approach to assessment, students are considered proficient on an assessment once they have demonstrated that they have learned the knowledge and skills described in the expected standards. The students may need to retake a test several times or redo an assignment, or they may need additional help from the teacher in order to become proficient in a standard. In standards-based schools, educators will use a variety of instructional and assessment methods to determine whether students have met the expected standards and to determine their grade.

## **BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS**

All students participate in Benchmark assessments three times per school year. Benchmarks help educators to determine a student's academic ability. The results of the benchmark assessments help teachers to plan instruction for their students. These assessments also allow teachers to track the progress of individual students and to identify students that may be in need of differentiated instruction.

## **HONOR ROLL CRITERIA**

- **High Honors** – No twos. Must have fours on 70% (or more) of fully taught concepts.
- **Honors**- No twos. Must have fours on 40-69% of fully taught concepts.
- **Honorable Mention**- No twos. Must have fours on fully taught concepts for the trimester.
- **Principal's Award** - Must have a minimum of threes on fully taught concepts.

*\*Students that meet the Honor Roll criteria will be recognized at the end of each trimester.*

## **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

**Scholarship**- 1) No grade less than a 3 on fully taught concepts  
2) 2 semesters of grades must be considered

**Service**-This involves voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, done without compensation.

**Leadership**-Student leaders are those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, and idea contributors. Leadership experiences can be drawn from school or community activities while working with or for others.

**Character**-The student of good character is cooperative; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and generally, maintains a clean disciplinary record.

**Citizenship**-The student who demonstrates citizenship understands the importance of civic engagement; has a high regard for freedom and justice; respects the U.S. form of government (a representative democracy); respects the law for all citizens at the local, state, and federal levels; and demonstrates mature participation and responsibility in activities such as scouting, community organizations, or school clubs.

***\*With the exception of the scholarship section, this criteria was adopted from the National Junior Honor Society website (<https://www.njhs.us/students/membership/how-to-become-a-member>)***

### **NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY PROCESS/PROCEDURES**

- 1) At the end of the second trimester, administration creates an initial list of students (grades 6-8) that qualify for NJHS.
- 2) This list is shared with the faculty council in grades 6 through 8.
- 3) The faculty council collaboratively reviews the list to determine which students meet the NJHS criteria.
- 4) Once the lists of students being recommended by the Faculty Council are created, they are shared with administration for a final review.
- 5) Students that meet the criteria are then invited to join National Junior Honor Society via a letter.

Members are expected to maintain appropriate academic status to remain a member of the National Junior Honor Society.

### **HOMEWORK**

A reasonable amount of study and preparation is necessary for the scholastic growth of students. The amount of preparation and complexity of homework assignments should increase as children progress through the grades. Homework assignments will be given to reinforce and augment the lessons taught in class and provide exercises in the development of responsibility, good work, and study habits.

**Parent involvement should be kept to a minimum:** Parents should help facilitate homework, however; studies show minimal gains or even negative effects when parents try to solve content problems. See how you can help by following the parents' guide to homework.

### **Students' Guide To Homework:**

- Record assignments in agenda (grades 5-8)
- Place materials you need for home in your backpack
- Stick to your homework routine
- Try your best
- Have Parent/Guardian review work and initial agenda
- Pack your backpack in the evening to be organized and ready for the next day.

Remember – Make homework your top priority.

### **Parents' Guide To Homework**

- Make homework a priority
- Have a regularly scheduled time and place to do homework
- Have supplies on hand
- Encourage, motivate, and prompt your child
- Limit TV or video games until homework is complete
- Discuss assignments with your child
- Initial his/her agenda every night (**grades 5-8**)
- Encourage your child to place homework back in his/her backpack

### **HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

Sterling's staff wants parents to feel connected to what is happening at school and feel comfortable asking for information and/or assistance. If there is ever a situation that might affect your child(ren)'s attitude or performance, be sure to contact the school to let us know what is going on. Discuss the best communication method with your child's teacher and keep in touch. If your child complains about a class, teacher, or peer, listen closely and try to determine what's going on. While doing so, remember that part of your child's education is to learn how to succeed in subjects that he/she might not particularly feel comfortable engaging in. It is important that students recognize their learning styles and build strategies that will reflect the instructional approach of their teacher(s).

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS**

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in school parent organizations, attendance at board of education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

### **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational successes. Parent conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring and attendance is strongly encouraged. However, conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators may initiate a conference.

## **PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

PTO is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the PTO.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are issued to students three (3) times a year. Students are expected to deliver report cards to their parents. Acknowledgement of receipt of report cards must be returned to school within 3 days.

## **SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES**

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among students. Therefore, activities in school commemorating national holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and President's Day are encouraged. Sterling Community School reminds students, faculty, and administration of the variety of religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

An opportunity will be provided, at the beginning of each school day, for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and pause for a moment of silence.

## **SPECIAL SERVICES**

Special Services for students in the Sterling Community School are provided by a number of professionals. The delivery of Special Services for students is driven by the individual needs of each student, the requirements of the Federal and State mandates (IDEA), and the availability of resources within the student's home and the Sterling School District or extended school community.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a Special Education Planning & Placement Team (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of an evaluation, will be developed by the PPT with parental involvement.

## **STARRS (Grades K-4)**

Sterling Community School's positive behavior intervention and support program for grades K through 4 is S.T.A.R.R.S. S.T.A.R.R.S. is a program that fosters positive behaviors throughout the school and is meant to promote a positive school climate! STARRS is our slogan and it stands for Sterling Team-members Are Respectful, Responsible, and Safe. We use this slogan to encourage, recognize, and celebrate positive behaviors in all areas of the school including, but not limited to, classrooms, bus, hallways, playground, cafeteria, and bathrooms. When you enter our school, you will notice our wildcat mascot wearing a Sterling STARRS shirt. He is posted in various locations around the school with friendly reminders about what respectful, responsible, and safe behaviors look like.

### **EPIC (Grades 5-8)**

Sterling Community School's positive behavior intervention and support program for grades 5 through 8 is E.P.I.C. (Students are: Engaged, Prepared, Independent, and Collaborative). The goal of EPIC is to provide a systems approach of behavioral support that includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments (PBIS).

We use the EPIC slogan to encourage, recognize, and celebrate positive behaviors in all areas of the school including, but not limited to, classrooms, bus, hallways, playground, cafeteria, and bathrooms. When you enter the grade 5-8 area will notice our signs that represent the EPIC principles. They are posted in various locations around the school to be friendly reminders about what engaged, prepared, independent, and collaborative behaviors represent.

### **TESTING**

Students in grades 3 through 8 participate in state assessments.

### **STUDENT SUCCESS PLAN (Middle School – Grades 6, 7, and 8)**

The Student Success Plan is an individualized, student driven, plan developed to address a student's needs and interests helping the student stay connected in school and to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. The SSP begins in sixth grade, continues through twelfth grade and includes three core areas: Academic Development, Career Development; and Social, Emotional, and Physical Development.

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION AND PLACEMENT**

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Typically, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a typical rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and administration after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school administration.

Students must demonstrate attainment of the basic skills needed for graduation based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

### **ASSEMBLIES**

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to enrich, engage, and motivate the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

**EDUCATIONAL FIELD STUDY EXPERIENCES**

Field study experiences may be scheduled to be used as springboards or culminating activities for units presented in the classroom or to provide “hands on” experiences. In addition, these opportunities introduce students to new learning experiences through participation and observation of such activities as exhibits, dramatic presentations, civic protocols, and other timely events. Please note that only children who are members of the class that have the scheduled field trip may participate. Siblings are not permitted to attend. Also, please note that field trips are a part of your child’s educational experience and attendance is strongly encouraged.

**SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Students in grades K-8 will be involved in a prevention –oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

# EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## ATHLETICS

Interscholastic sports can be a valuable educational resource in fostering student achievement. Athletics provides experiences that may be difficult to duplicate in other areas of a student's education. The program operates within the overall objectives and goals of the education program. The importance of health, wellness, and lifelong activities is included. Additionally, a concussion education plan is a specific component.

## INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS PHYSICALS

Sports physicals are required for participation in interscholastic sports. All medical and athletic release forms must be completed by a licensed physician and returned to the Athletic Director prior to the start of the athletic season. Additionally, specific forms related to topics such as cardiac arrest and concussion management may be required to be completed by parents.

### Sports Offered

- Girls and Boys Varsity and Jr. Varsity Soccer
- Girls and Boys Varsity and Jr. Varsity Basketball
- Varsity Cheerleading
- Girls and Boys Varsity Track & Field

Please note that sports participation may require a pay to play fee.

Sterling Community School is a charter member of the Southeastern Connecticut Middle School Athletic Conference.

## DANCES AND SOCIAL EVENTS

School sponsored dances are open only to Sterling Community School students in grades six, seven, and eight. Students attending dances will not be permitted to leave the building and then re-enter. Once they leave the building, they must leave school grounds. Students are expected to be picked up by an authorized adult promptly at the end of the dance. Dances, with the exception of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation dance, will be kept to a 2-hour maximum.

Students are expected to dress appropriately for all dances. Admission costs and other pertinent instructions for a particular dance will be announced prior to the dance.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards are met pertaining to all food and beverages available for sale to students. A physical education program is provided, in addition to time during the school day for supervised recess.

### HEALTH SERVICES

The Nurse's office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Scoliosis and hearing tests are administered to students in grade eight.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the typical pattern of health, and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the school nurse in case of student's illness.

If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

### Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse. Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. All medication must be in original containers with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician's, dentist's or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. A written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.



A school nurse, or in the absence of a nurse, a “qualified school employee,” may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience anaphylaxis but were not previously known to have serious allergies, and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional. EPIPEN OPT OUT forms are provided at the start of the school year for individuals who do not wish to have their child receive epinephrine for unknown reactions.

A diabetic student may test his/her own blood glucose level per the written order of a physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self-testing. Such self-testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

A school nurse, or in the absence of a nurse, a “qualified/school employee” may administer anti-epileptic medication to a specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student’s individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and a written order from a physician is required.

### **Communicable/Infectious Diseases**

Students with any medical condition which, within the school setting, may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

### **COUNSELING**

Social services and counseling are rendered by professionally qualified members of the school staff. The responsibilities of the clinical staff include helping students function more successfully within the school environment.

Counseling is an opportunity for students to talk with someone about things that are important to them. These opportunities may be personal, social, educational, or vocational.

### **DISABILITIES**

Sterling School district does not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT**

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physician or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons a required document per state regulation must be provided.

For further information regarding immunizations contact the school nurse.

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10- 204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 7. All students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, 5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse. Postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grades 5 and 7; all male students will be screened in grade 8.

## **DEFIBRILLATORS IN SCHOOLS (AED'S)**

Our school has (2) two automatic external defibrillator (AED), and all bus drivers and multiple school personnel trained in AED operation and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The (AED) and trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours. The school also has an emergency action response plan addressing the use of trained school personnel to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life threatening emergencies.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management. A plan based upon guidelines promulgated by the State Department of Education will be implemented for each student for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease.

Substitutions to the regular meal provided by the school will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of the disabilities, when that need is certified by a physician. Meal services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law.

## **PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE**

In conformity with state statute, the Sterling Board of Education prohibits all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any student enrolled within the school system. For purposes of this policy, the term "recommend" shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child use psychotropic drugs. However, school health or mental health personnel including school nurses, the District's Medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers,

and school counselors may recommend that a student be evaluated by appropriate personnel and may consult with the medical practitioner regarding such use.

The Board recognizes that the refusal of a parent or other person having control of a child to administer or consent to the administration of any psychotropic drug to the child shall not, in and of itself, constitute grounds for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to take such child into custody or for any court of competent jurisdiction to order that such child be taken into custody the department, unless such refusal causes such child to be neglected or abused, as defined in C.G.S. 46b-120.

### **GREEN CLEANING**

Sterling Community School adheres to green cleaning protocols. Please refrain from bringing any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize, or disinfect into the school.

### **POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

PBIS is a proactive, team-based framework for creating and sustain safe and effective schools. The goals of PBIS are to increase student academic performance, decrease problem behavior, increase safety, and establish a positive school climate through research-based strategies and systems.

The school-wide PBIS framework at Sterling Community School includes differentiated programs for grades K-4 and grades 5-8. These programs include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment.

PBIS methods are research-based and are proven to significantly reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors. The key is to focus on prevention by consistently acknowledging positive, appropriate behaviors while using preventative strategies for problem behavior when it occurs.

The primary components of an effective school-wide PBIS system involve:

- Clearly defining and teaching a set of behavioral expectations.
- Consistently acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior.
- Proactively preventing problematic behavior.
- Effectively using behavioral data to assess progress.

An important piece of the PBIS framework is creating a set of 3-5 behavior expectations/positive rules that are well known to all affiliated with our school. These behavior expectations are explicitly taught for all locations in a student's school day: the classroom, hallways, café, bathroom, recess, assemblies and the bus. As part of our system to catch students being good, all staff and faculty distribute colored tickets for each program to acknowledge students who demonstrate positive behaviors throughout the day in all areas.

## **CHECK-IN/CHECK-OUT (CICO)**

The PBIS initiatives help to improve the culture and climate by teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors. The majority of students in any given school will not need support beyond Tier 1. However, for the roughly 15% of who need behavior intervention support beyond the supports of Tier 1 implementation, there is Tier 2. CICO can give students the extra support they need and allow them to meet their set behavioral goals that can lead them back to Tier 1. CICO is a program that is customized to reflect behaviors that need additional focus. This program promotes specific feedback on these behaviors throughout the day to support students to meet their individual goals. As students in Tier 2 meet their goal, their goal is increased until they are able to meet the Tier 1 criteria.

The PBIS team created acronyms to help define and communicate the behavior expectations. The PBIS framework at SCS has two differentiated programs across grade levels. STARRS (Students That Are Respectful, Responsible and Safe) supports grades K-4 and EPIC (Engaged, Prepared, Independent, Collaborative) supports grades 5-8.

### **STARRS – GRADES K-4**

Students That Are Respectful, Responsible and Safe

When children begin school and as their foundation is formed through the elementary grades, behavioral expectations are established that seek to build a common understanding of fundamental expectations for success at school. Here at SCS we shine the light on Respect, Responsibility and Safety with our STARRS program. Students are specifically taught the expectations for these behaviors in all settings throughout the school day. Students are acknowledged with specific praise statements regarding their behaviors and accompanying STARR tickets. Students save tickets in their classrooms and use them for bi-weekly incentive activities.

### **EPIC – GRADES 5-8**

In addition to the expectation that our students have learned to be **STARRS** (respectful, responsible and safe), beginning in 5th grade students are acknowledged for being **EPIC**. Students in grades 5-8 are recognized for being Engaged, Prepared, Independent and Collaborative within the classroom and throughout the day. Students are acknowledged with specific praise statements and accompanying EPIC tickets. Students use tickets for bi-weekly incentive activities.

As our programs develop, the PBIS core team is working hard to expand our incentive activities to include ideas and suggestions generated from student feedback about what motivates them learn.

# CONDUCT GUIDELINES

For a description and explanation of the discipline management structure of Sterling Community School please review the Student Code of Conduct which is located on our school website ([www.sterlingschool.org](http://www.sterlingschool.org)).

## CONDUCT

Students are responsible for conducting themselves properly in a responsible manner appropriate to their age and level of maturity. The district has authority over students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. This jurisdiction includes any school-related activity, regardless of time or location, and any off campus school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location.

Student responsibilities for achieving a positive learning environment in school or school related activities include:

1. Attending all classes, regularly and on time.
2. Being prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
3. Being dressed appropriately.
4. Showing respect toward others.
5. Behaving in a responsible manner.
6. Obeying all school rules, including safety rules, and rules pertaining to Internet safety.
7. Seeking change in school policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner, through appropriate channels.
8. Cooperating with staff investigations of disciplinary cases and volunteering information relating to a serious offense.

Students who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct and shall be referred when appropriate to legal authorities for violation of the law.

Students at school or school-related activities are prohibited from:

1. Engaging in academic dishonesty, including cheating, intentionally plagiarizing, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination, and wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores.
2. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or damage property.
3. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
4. Disobeying directives from school personnel or school policies, rules, and regulations.
5. Being disrespectful or directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward teachers, other school employees, and/or students.
6. Playing with matches, fire, or committing arson.
7. Committing robbery or theft.
8. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by the school, other students, or school employees.
9. Disobeying school rules on school buses.
10. Fighting, committing physical abuse, or threatening physical abuse.

11. Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail; that is, forcing an individual to act through the use of force or threat of force.
12. Name-calling, making ethnic or racial slurs or derogatory statements that may substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
13. Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact disruptive to the school environment or disturbing to other students.
14. Assaulting a teacher, staff member or other individual.
15. Selling, giving, delivering, possessing, using, or being under the influence of drugs such as: marijuana, a controlled substance or drug, or an alcoholic beverage.
16. Possessing a weapon (real or fake) or dangerous instrument.
17. Smoking or using tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes) and vapor products.
18. Violating the district's Internet Safety policy
19. Hazing, bullying environment.
20. Behaving in any way that disrupts the school educational process.
21. Using electronic devices during the school day in school buildings, with-out prior approval from a teacher or administration.
22. Cheating, plagiarizing.
23. Threatening in any manner , including orally, in writing, or via electronic communication, a member of the school including any teacher, a member of the school administration or another employee, or a fellow student
24. Taking, storing, disseminating, transferring, viewing or sharing of obscene, pornographic, lewd or otherwise illegal images or photographs, whether by electronic data transfer or other means, including but not limited to texting and emailing.
25. Violating any state or federal law which would indicate that the student presents a danger to any person in the school or to school property.

## **DISCIPLINE**

A student who violates the district's code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Sterling Public School's disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

## **BULLYING**

The Board of Education (the Board) and Administration promotes a secure and happy school climate, conducive to teaching and learning that is free from threat, harassment, and any type of bullying behavior. Therefore, it shall be the policy of the Board that bullying of a student by another student is prohibited.

The Board and Administration believes that a school environment in which students feel safe, supported, engaged, and helpfully challenged is optimal for learning and healthy development. The Board seeks an environment in which students and adults feel socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe; an environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

**“Bullying”** means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral, or electronic communication, such as cyber bullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. *(The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)*

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Physical violence and attacks
- 2. Verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
- 3. Threats and intimidation
- 4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
- 5. Exclusion from peer groups within the school
- 6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within school or out of school (“cyber bullying”)
- 7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic or academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Such conduct is disruptive of the educational process and, therefore, bullying is not acceptable behavior in this district and is prohibited.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-

related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school,

are subject to appropriate disciplinary action in up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement officials as set forth and in accordance with the student code of conduct.

A comprehensive program to improve the school climate, involving everyone in the school and the community, to address bullying at all school levels is essential to reducing incidences of bullying. Such a program must involve interventions at all levels, school wide, classroom, and individual.

A student and/or their parent may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. This procedure can be found in Section VI of policy number 5131.911.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

The Safe School Climate Specialist is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school.

### **Cyber Bullying**

The District's computer network and the Internet, whether accessed on campus or off campus, during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of harassment. All forms of harassment over the Internet, commonly known as cyber bullying, are unacceptable, a violation of District policy and of the District policy and of the District's acceptable computer use policy and procedures. Cyber bullying means any act of bullying through the use of the internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Cyber bullying includes, but is not limited to, such misuses of technology as harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs. It is also recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material may be disguised or logged on as someone else.



Students and community members, who believe they have been victims of such misuses of technology as described, should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the Safe School Climate Specialist, the Principal or Director of Technology. All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist.

In situations in which the cyber bullying originated from a non-school computer, but brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of school. Also, such conduct must be in violation of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes but is not limited to, threats, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student.

Disciplinary action may include loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion. A communicated threat or hate crime will be reported to the police.

Students will be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior.

#### **COMPUTER ON-LINE SERVICES AND USE**

The Sterling Board of Education recognizes the value of computers, technology, and phone/on-line services in providing instruction to students. The Board also recognizes that particular procedures and safeguards are necessary for the protection of the school system, its students, staff and community. With this in mind, the Board requires all users of school system's computers, and its on-line internet services, to abide by the following practices:

1. To use computer technology and on-line services in productive ways that are within the law and that are not harmful physically, financially, socially, or otherwise;
2. To protect oneself and others by not issuing any addresses or telephone numbers over the Internet/ on-line services, remembering that such communications are not private;
3. To use Internet/on-line services only with permission of the staff members who are in charge of them, or with permission of supervising teachers;
4. To be considerate of others while using the Internet/on-line services, abiding by the same rules that apply in school;
5. To refrain from commercial activity (buying, selling, bartering or advertising) including but not limited to the use of credit cards without written permission from the Principal;
6. To avoid disruption of the Internet/on-line services, supporting equipment, or information available on it, including but not limited to tampering or vandalizing with hardware or software, vandalizing data, introducing or using computer viruses, attempting to gain access to restricted information or networks, or violating copyright laws;

7.

8. To immediately report any problems or breaches of these responsibilities to the supervision staff member.

Failure to abide by these procedures may result in loss of computer and/or on-line privileges and services and other disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

All forms of cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. The misrepresentation by students of homework, class work, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidences require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating are in accordance with the student code of conduct and take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

### **DANGEROUS WEAPONS AND INSTRUMENTS**

Weapons, real or fake, including those sold in toy or department stores are never permitted at Sterling Community School. Violators will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct.

### **DRESS CODE**

The goal at Sterling Community School is to have students feel comfortable without causing distractions to the learning process. Students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive, or contrary to law.

Any school dress which impairs safety or increases the risk of injury to self or others, causes discomfort to others (e.g., uncleanliness, inappropriate language), causes distraction or disruption of the learning environment, advertises or advocates the use of alcohol or drugs, pornography, or is libelous or inherently contains unreasonable potential to upset and hurt others is prohibited. Disciplinary actions as a result of dress code violations will be in accordance with the student code of conduct.

The following are examples of attire prohibited:

- Coats, jackets, or other attire normally worn as outerwear
- Head coverings of any kind, including but not limited to scarves, bandannas, masks, kerchiefs, hoods, or caps (except on assigned Spirit Days)
- Footwear which marks or damages floors
- Sunglasses (unless required by a doctor's order)
- Spiked or studded bracelets, oversized rings, or belts
- Clothing that is excessively revealing, such as miniskirts, shorts, spaghetti straps, or tank tops
- Flip-flops
- Oversized necklaces
- Pajamas – except on assigned PJ day

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of personal electronic equipment including but not limited to CD players, MP3 players, recorders, laser pointers, beepers, camcorders, DVD players, cell phones, and other electronic equipment is prohibited during the instructional day. The instructional day starts at the time you enter the building and ends when you exit the building at the end of the day. Unless otherwise banned under this policy, all electronic devices must be kept off and in a locker during the instructional day unless, (a) the Principal grants permission for use, (b) use of the device is provided in a student's IEP, or (c) the electronic device is needed in an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff or other individuals. For purposes of this policy, "instructional day" refers to student school hours (8:00-2:55).

Students must store electronic devices in lockers or backpacks upon entering the building, unless otherwise approved by the Principal under regulations developed by the Superintendent. In no case will personal communication devices with an unfiltered connection to the Internet be permitted for use on school grounds nor will the transmission of texts or images be permitted.

Electronic devices not stored properly will be collected by teachers, or other personnel, and turned into the main office. The Principal will determine whether to return the electronic device at the end of the day to be taken home by the student or whether the parent will be contacted to pick up the item.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct. Specifically, any student using a cell phone or other electronic device in any manner that disrupts the educational environment, including using the device to cheat, signal others, or otherwise violate student conduct rules or violates confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual (i.e. the taking, storing, disseminating, transferring or sharing of texts or images, whether by electronic transfer or other means including but not limited to texting and emailing) will be disciplined.

## **HARASSMENT**

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

Harassment, hazing, teasing, bullying, or abuse of students or staff will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in an act that injures, degrades or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interferes with a student's opportunity to obtain an education shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Parents are urged to speak with their children about appropriate responses to teasing, harassment, or bullying. If any student is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else they should report the behavior directly to a teacher or the Principal. All allegations will be fully investigated and addressed, and appropriate disciplinary action taken, where necessary.

## **OUT-OF SCHOOL MISCONDUCT**

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct which is seriously disruptive to the educational process and is a violation of a publicized Board policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Examples of off-school conduct that may result in such discipline include but are not limited to the sale, possession, use, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including martial arts weapons; use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs; violent conduct or making of a bomb threat, etc.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

The District wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/ or parent in a conference with the Principal. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the student code of conduct in the event a sexual harassment complaint is verified.

## **SMOKING**

Students shall not smoke or use tobacco products or any facsimile of tobacco or tobacco products on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property as provided by state and federal law. Smoking, lighting, or attempting to light up tobacco products or facsimile of tobacco or tobacco products is strictly prohibited and subject to immediate suspension from school or other disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Sterling Community School prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with the student code of conduct [www.sterlingschool.org](http://www.sterlingschool.org). Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious, underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

## **VIDEO RECORDERS IN SCHOOL BUILDING/BUS**

Video/audio equipment is used to monitor student behavior in common areas of the school. Students

are not told when the equipment is being used. The Principal or his/her designee review tapes routinely and document students' misconduct. Discipline is in accordance with the District's discipline policy.

## LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

A student who violates the District's code of conduct may be subject to disciplinary action in addition to a reteaching of our school's expectations. The Sterling Community School's disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. In addition, when a student violates the law, that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized Board of Education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

### **DETENTION**

A student may be detained outside of school hours for not more than one hour on one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. The detention shall not begin, however, until the student's parents have been notified of the reason for the detention and can make arrangements for the student's transportation on the day(s) of the detention.

### **SUSPENSION**

A student who deliberately causes serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom and/or presents a safety concern may be removed from a class.

The administration may suspend a student either in-school or out-of-school for infractions of school rules. Suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed. In-school suspension shall be served in the school attended by the student.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the administration or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation, unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such instance the informal hearing will be held during the suspension. Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

## **EXPULSION**

The Board of Education may expel a student from school privileges if, after a full hearing, the Board finds that the student's conduct endangers person(s), property, the educational process or is in violation of a publicized Board policy. Students who have been expelled may be eligible for an alternative educational program.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extracurricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion. Student possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school sponsored activity is cause for expulsion in accordance with Board of Education policies.

A student who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion in accordance with Board of Education policies. The Board of Education may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

If a student is expelled, notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education record. The record will be expunged when the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE**

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

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

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

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matter, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs.

# BUILDING OPERATIONS

## CAFETERIA

Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the student Code of Conduct.

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches and breakfasts are available based on financial need. Information on this program can be obtained from the main office and on the school website.

Food and beverages offered for sale to students in the cafeteria meet federal and state standards and guidelines. No soda or sports drinks are sold.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations are provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur.

## COMPUTER RESOURCES

District resources have been invested in computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for an increasingly computerized society. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents are asked to sign a user agreement regarding appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges.

Students and parents should be aware that e-mail communications, using District computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

## EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements, notifications, and school closings because of bad weather, emergencies, or other general announcements are made through School Messenger and/or on radio stations and TV Channels:

WINY	1350 AM	Putnam
WTIC	1080 AM/96.5 FM	Hartford
WVIT	Channel 30	Hartford
WTNH	Channel 8	New Haven
WFSB	Channel 3	Hartford
WTIC	Channel 5	Hartford

## **FACILITIES**

Certain areas of the school are accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place.

After dismissal and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately.

## **FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Fire drills are held monthly as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months. Such crisis response drills will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place responses.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. When the emergency evacuation alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet, and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the main office. Unclaimed articles are disposed of at the end of the school year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office.

## **LIBRARY**

Students are invited to use the books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials located in the library. Students are responsible for any materials they sign out. Materials must be returned to the circulation desk. Students must pay for any materials they lose or damage.

If you do not want your child to check out books, please send a note to the school.

Guidelines have been established for the use of the Internet. Student violations of the guidelines may result in the termination of access privileges and in disciplinary actions. It is the policy of the Board of Education that all students must sign an acceptable use policy which indicates that a student agrees to use the Internet exclusively for educational purposes. Each contract must also include a signature from the student's parent/guardian.

## **PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT NOTICE AND MISUSE**

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through fault of the student.



Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline as determined by the student code of conduct including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities may be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

All equipment assigned to students is the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year and should be kept in good order and not abused.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Students may not bring in locks from home for assigned lockers. Only students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are provided lockers with locks. All students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school; liability for these items remains with the student.

# TRANSPORTATION

## BUSES

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus shall result in possible suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct in accordance with the student code of conduct.

No student shall be picked up or let off the school bus at any stop other than their regular stop, without the expressed written permission of parents/guardians and approval by the Principal. Permanent changes in a drop off location need to be formally requested by completing the **Long-Term Bus Schedule Change Form**.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall not engage in any behaviors that are a distraction to the driver.
2. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
3. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
4. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
5. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
6. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
7. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
8. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco.
9. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
10. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed - unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, is prohibited.
11. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
12. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the Principal, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) may be required and the provisions of the student code of conduct for bus misconduct are implemented.
2. The Principal may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges in accordance with the student code of conduct. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The Principal and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The

student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

### **BUS PICK UP AND DROP OFF**

Students should be at their bus stop 5 minutes prior to scheduled bus arrival. No student shall be picked up or let off the bus at any stop other than their regular stop without written permission from a parent/ guardian and approved by the administration due to safety and security. In the case when multiple students are dropped off at one location, an approved adult must be present to receive each student.

Students in pre-kindergarten through third grade must be greeted at the assigned bus stop by a parent or guardian. Students will be returned to school in the event that a parent/guardian is not present at the assigned bus stop and phone contact cannot be made with a responsible adult. The office will call the student's parent or guardian to notify them that their child is being returned to the school. School personnel will make their best judgment as to the course of action necessary to protect the student's safety.

Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives mandated training in their use.

In emergency situations, a 5-point harness or secure strap may not be used.

### **Parent Pick-Up Procedures for Grades Pre-K/K**

- Pre-K parent pick up time is 10:45 AM and 2:55 PM.
- Kindergarten parent pickup time is 2:55 PM for a full day or 12:40 PM for a half day of school. The designated pickup location is the side entrance of the Kindergarten wing as indicated by signage.
- Parents/Guardians may request a child be placed on the parent pickup list by sending a note with the date, time, and the name of the person picking up the child to the main office by 9:00 AM. We will not be taking phone calls. Parents/guardians must send in a written note.
- Parent/guardians must contact the main office, in advance of dismissal time, to inform the main office that someone from the child's authorized pickup list is picking up the child.
- Pre-K/K families utilizing parent pickup will proceed to the designated parent pickup car line, indicated with traffic signs.
- Once in line parent/guardians/authorized adults should wait in line until they are greeted by staff to sign their child out from school. Once the parent/guardian/authorized adult has signed the child out and staff has confirmed their identity, the staff member will release the child to the adult's car. Please have your photo identification with you. If the staff member on duty does not recognize you, you will be asked to present your photo identification.

- Students are called to the kindergarten wing to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms parent pickup and students wait for their names to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- **Sterling Community School staff will not buckle or secure students in the vehicle. The parent or guardian shall be responsible for properly restraining the child or children into their vehicle.**
- Sterling community staff is on duty to assist families with the dismissal process, please note that no student will be dismissed to a vehicle without confirming the identity of the authorized adult. Parents do not need to leave their vehicles for parent pick up. The children are brought directly to the vehicle by staff; there is no need for parents to park and exit their vehicles unless to assist a child into a seat belt/car seat.
- For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

#### **Parent Pick-Up Procedures for Grades 1-8**

- Parent pickup time is 2:55 PM for a full day or 12:40 PM for a half day of school. The designated pickup location is the main entrance as indicated by signage.
- Parents/Guardians may request a child be placed on the parent pickup list by sending a note with the date, time, and the name of the person picking up the child to the main office by 9 AM.
- Parent/guardians must contact the main office, in advance of dismissal time, to inform the main office that someone from the child's authorized pickup list is picking up the child.
- Grades 1-8 families utilizing parent pickup will proceed to the designated parent pickup car line, indicated with traffic signs. Once in line parent/guardians/authorized adults should wait in line until there are greeted by staff to sign their child out from school. Once the parent/guardian/authorized adult has signed the child out and staff has confirmed their identity, the staff member will release the child to the adult's car. Anyone picking up a child shall present their photo identification in order for the child or children to be released to the vehicle. Parents/Guardians/Authorized adults shall bring their identification with them to parent pickup even if you have previously been to parent pickup. **Remember that the grades 1-8 parent pick up car line is at the main entrance of the building.**
- Grade 1-8 students that have a PK/K sibling are called to the kindergarten wing to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms the family for parent pickup and students wait to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- Students are called to the Library to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms parent pickup and students wait for their names to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- **Sterling Community School staff will not buckle or secure students in the adult's vehicle. The parent or guardian shall be responsible for properly restraining the child or children into their vehicle in accordance with state law.**

- **Remember for grade 1-8 students that have a PK/K sibling they will meet their younger sibling for parent pick up in the PK/K line.**
- Sterling community staff is on duty to assist families with the dismissal process, please note that no student will be dismissed to a vehicle without confirming the identity of the authorized adult. Parents do not need to leave their vehicles for parent pick up. The children are brought directly to the vehicle by staff; there is no need for parents to park and exit their vehicles unless to assist a child into a seat belt/car seat.
- For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

### **Parent/Student Drop Off – General Information**

Sterling Community School allows families to drop off students for the school day between 7:45 and 8:00 AM. After 8:00 AM the student is tardy and must report to the main office with a parent to check in, parents should use visitor parking when bringing in their child.

**Families with siblings in Pre-K/K shall drop off all their children at the Pre-K/K drop off location.**

For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

### **Parent Drop Off Procedure for Pre-K/K Students**

1. The Pre-K/K student drop off location is at the side entrance of the kindergarten wing of the school. Students arriving for school prior to 8:00 AM shall enter through the kindergarten wing side entrance and report to the following designated waiting area:
  - a. Pre-K/K – Library
2. Parent/Guardians shall pull up in their car to the designated drop off location and wait to be greeted by staff. The designated drop off location is indicated with traffic signs.
3. Staff members greet and escort students from their parent’s vehicle; therefore parents no longer need to leave their vehicle or park the vehicle for student drop off.
4. Staff is on duty to assist students arriving to school prior to 8:00 AM.

### **Parent Drop Off Procedure for Grades 1-8**

1. The Grade 1-8 student drop off location is at the main entrance of the building. Students arriving for school prior to 8:00 AM shall enter through the main entrance and report to the following designated waiting areas:
  - a. Grades 1-5 – Cafeteria
  - b. Grades 6-8 – Gymnasium

2. Parent/Guardians shall pull up in their car to the designated drop off location and wait to be greeted by staff. The designated drop off location is indicated with traffic signs.
3. Staff members greet and escort students from their parent's vehicle; therefore parents no longer need to leave their vehicle or park the vehicle for student drop off
4. Staff is on duty to assist students arriving to school prior to 8:00 AM.

#### **BICYCLE RIDERS/WALKERS**

Due to unsafe conditions along Sterling Road (Route 14), students are not permitted to walk or ride a bicycle to school.

## OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

### **CHILD ABUSE/MANDATED REPORTERS**

Teachers, administrators, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, board certified behavior analysts, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment, such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect are also considered child abuse.

The Board of Education will post in the school the telephone number of the Department of Children and Families' child abuse hotline, Careline, and the Internet web address that provides information about the Careline in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages appropriate for the students enrolled in the school.

### **VISITORS**

Sterling Community School parents and visitors must first report to the main office. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in the school building or on school grounds. The Principal is authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy, conduct, and confidentiality.

### **PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE**

The staff at Sterling School use children's photographs, videos, etc., as a means of acknowledging the child's efforts and recognizing excellent programs. The school has published children's photographs in yearbooks, calendars, the school website, and sports articles. These are only some of the ways we have used photos in constructive, positive ways.

**YOU ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM ON PAGE 36.**  
**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

Please read, sign, detach and return this page by September 28, 2018.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read and understand all policies and practices contained in the 2018/2019 Sterling Community School Student/Parent Handbook and consent to the responsibilities outlined in the District's Student Code of Conduct. I also understand and agree that my child, \_\_\_\_\_, shall be held accountable for the behavior and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct at school and school-sponsored and school-related activities, including school-sponsored travel, and for any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. I understand that any student who violates the Student code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including referral for criminal prosecution for violations of law.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian(s) signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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The Sterling Board of Education retains the absolute right and permission to copyright and use, reuse and publish portraits, pictures, or videotapes of my child or in which my child may be included, in whole or in part, without restrictions as to changes or alterations in composite of photograph/video.

The photograph/videotapes are used by the Sterling School System and no fees are collected or profits made from these photographs/videotapes

**I give my child permission to be photographed.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **YES**                  \_\_\_\_\_ **NO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian(s) signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**COMPUTER USAGE**

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Computer On-Line Services and Use Policy (page 25/26). I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I recognize it is impossible for the district to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to access the Internet. I certify that the information contained on this form is correct. I understand that any violation of the school's policy or regulations by my child may result in loss of access and/ or disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the administration.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian(s) signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



