

West Branch High School Handbook 2023-2024



This agenda belongs to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____ ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

STUDENT NO. _____



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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This handbook is intended to provide a brief, concise, and understandable overview of some of the most important opportunities, general rules, guidelines, policies, and expectations about our high school. It is not intended to be all inclusive; its contents may be subject to change. Please take the time to review this handbook thoroughly as it can be an important source of information for both students and parents. Your questions and concerns are important to me; therefore, please contact me as needed. In addition, the other administrators, faculty, and staff are here to help as well, so call upon any of them at any time. It is important to me that the school and community form a strong alliance. Get involved where and when you can. With mutual respect and support, we can make anything possible.

Sincerely,

Brandy F. O'Hare

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WEST BRANCH SCHOOL CALENDAR – 2023-2024

Approved: **January 23, 2023**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	STUDENT DAYS	TEACHER DAYS	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	STUDENT DAYS	TEACHER DAYS
JULY 2023							JANUARY 2024						
3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5		
10	11	12	13	14			8	9	10	11	12	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
17	18	19	20	21			15	16	17	18	19	<u>101</u>	<u>106</u>
24	25	26	27	28			22	23	24	25	26		
31							29	30	31				
AUGUST 2023							FEBRUARY 2024						
	1	2	3	4						1	2		
7	8	9	10	11	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	5	6	7	8	9	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>
14	15	16	17	18	<u>6</u>	<u>9</u>	12	13	14	15	16	<u>120</u>	<u>125</u>
21	22	23	24	25			19	20	21	22	23		
28	29	30	31				26	27	28	29			
SEPTEMBER 2023							MARCH 2024						
				1							1		
4	5	6	7	8	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	4	5	6	7	8	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>
11	12	13	14	15	<u>26</u>	<u>29</u>	11	12	13	14	15	<u>138</u>	<u>143</u>
18	19	20	21	22			18	19	20	21	22		
25	26	27	28	29			25	26	27	28	29		
OCTOBER 2023							APRIL 2024						
2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4	5		
9	10	11	12	13	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	8	9	10	11	12	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>
16	17	18	19	20	<u>47</u>	<u>51</u>	15	16	17	18	19	<u>158</u>	<u>163</u>
23	24	25	26	27			22	23	24	25	26		
30	31						29	30					
NOVEMBER 2023							MAY 2024						
		1	2	3					1	2	3		
6	7	8	9	10	<u>18</u>	<u>18</u>	6	7	8	9	10	<u>22</u>	<u>22</u>
13	14	15	16	17	<u>65</u>	<u>69</u>	13	14	15	16	17	<u>180</u>	<u>185</u>
20	21	22	23	24			20	21	22	23	24		
27	28	29	30				27	28	29	30	31		
DECEMBER 2023							JUNE 2024						
				1									
4	5	6	7	8	<u>15</u>	<u>15</u>	3	4	5	6	7		
11	12	13	14	15	<u>80</u>	<u>84</u>	10	11	12	13	14		
18	19	20	21	22			17	18	19	20	21		
25	26	27	28	29			24	25	26	27	28		

August 21-23	Teacher In-Service	January 15	Teacher In-Service
August 24	First Day for Students	January 26	No School (Act 80/Data Day)
September 4	Labor Day	February 16, 19	Winter Break
September 29	Half Day Dismissal (Data Day)	February 20	No School (Act 80)
October 9	County-Wide In-Service	March 8	Winter Break
November 9	Parent Teacher Conferences (dis. @1:15/2:15)	March 28-April 2	Easter Vacation
November 10	No School (Act 80)	May 27	Memorial Day
November 23-28	Thanksgiving / Deer Season	May 31	Last Student Day
December 22-Jan 1	Christmas Holiday	May 31	Graduation

Sept 29 & Nov 22: MS/HS/PreK Dismiss at 11:15 a.m.; Elem. Dismiss at 12:15 p.m.
 Dec. 21 & Mar. 27: MS/HS/PreK Dismiss at 1:40 p.m.; Elem. Dismiss at 2:25 p.m.

*** Note: December 22, 2022 (If used as inclement weather makeup day then MS/HS/PreK Dismiss at 11:15 a.m.; Elem. Dismiss at 12:15 p.m.)**

 School Not In Session	 Act 80 Day
 First and Last Student Day	 Parent Teacher Conferences
 Teacher In-Service Days	 Data Day

Days missed due to inclement weather will be made up on the dates below in the following order: Nov. 28, Dec. 22, Feb. 16; April 2, March 28, and April 1 and June as needed

WEST BRANCH AREA HIGH SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULES 2023-2024

Tardy: After 8:00 AM

Breakfast grades 9-12: 7:50 – 8:00 AM

Dismissal: 2:40 PM

Students Eating A Lunch		Students Eating B Lunch	
7:50	Warning Bell	7:50	Warning Bell
8:00 – 8:46	First Period	8:00 – 8:46	First Period
8:49 – 9:32	Second Period	8:49 – 9:32	Second Period
9:35 – 10:18	Third Period	9:35 – 10:18	Third Period
10:21 – 11:04	Fourth Period	10:21 – 11:04	Fourth Period
11:07 – 11:50	Fifth Period	11:07 – 11:50	Fifth Period
11:53 – 12:23	A Lunch	11:53 – 12:35	Sixth Period (6B)
12:26 – 1:08	Sixth Period (6A)	12:38 – 1:08	B Lunch
1:11 – 1:54	Seventh Period	1:11 – 1:54	Seventh Period
1:57 – 2:40	Eighth Period	1:57 – 2:40	Eighth Period

AM Vo-Tech

7:55 – Depart for CTC.

8:20 – Arrival at the CTC. Attendance taken at the CTC

10:35 - Departure from CTC

11:05 – Return to West Branch and go to period 5

PM Vo-Tech

11:30 – Eat lunch

11:50 – Depart for CTC

12:15 – Arrival at CTC

2:35 – Departure from CCCTC

3:00 – Return to West Branch

School Closings

Should it become necessary to close school (due to weather, power outage, etc.), an announcement will be made on the local radio and television stations and via Alert Solutions. The school's phone system will also be used to contact parents for two (2) hour delays and early dismissal announcements. Please do not call the school or the radio/TV stations. The following stations should be broadcasting any delay or cancellation information: WPSU, Fox 8 WWCP, ABC 23 WATM, WTAJ, WJAC, and WOKW 102.9 FM. In addition, the information will be posted on the West Branch School District Facebook page.

West Branch parents are encouraged to provide cell phone information as texts have the quickest delivery time when messages are sent. Currently, if you are able to login to the PowerSchool website, you have the ability to change your contact information. This will allow you to select your preferred method of contact.

School Delays

A school day involving a 2-hour delay will begin at 10:00 AM. Students will be attending 1st period from 10:00 – 10:18 and then moving on to their regular schedule. Driving conditions and other factors will certainly be given consideration when determining tardies on days involving inclement weather.

FID (Flexible Instructional Days)

During the 2023-2024 School Year, West Branch Area School District will be utilizing Flexible Instruction Days (FIDs) which may be used in place of a school day that would be canceled because of inclement weather or another emergency situation. On a FID, students will complete learning activities and assignments provided by their teachers. Implementing a FID will not require additional make-up days when school is canceled. The District can use up to five (5) FIDs per school year. Students and parents/guardians will be informed of a FID through the District's notification systems in the same way that school closings and delays are currently announced.

What will be expected of my child during a FID (grades 3-12)?

Students in grades 3 through 12 will download offline FID lessons to their device prior to the FID day. Students with internet may log on to Google Classroom to access assignment information. Students are expected to complete all lessons during the FID day. Students will submit/return their assignments upon their return to school the next day. Any student who fails to complete their FID assignments on their FID day, will be marked as absent unexcused from school and will receive a zero on any graded assignment that was not submitted.

What will be expected of my child during a FID (grades PreK-2)?

Elementary students will work on FID lessons unique to their grade level. Students will receive a FID folder with 5 lessons. Students are expected to complete all lessons during the FID day. Students will submit/return their assignments upon their return to school the next day. Any student who fails to complete their FID assignments on their FID day, will be marked as absent unexcused from school and will receive a zero on any graded assignment that was not submitted.

How does student attendance work?

Student attendance will be determined by verification and completion of the FID lesson and/or assignment. Students should not report to school on a FID.

How can I contact a teacher or staff member during an FID?

All teachers and professional staff members will be available via email during a FID. This includes special area teachers such as music, art, library, physical education, learning support, teachers in specialized programs, reading specialists, and school counselors, nurses, social workers, speech therapists, interventionists, and principals, unless the individual is ill that day.

What if my child needs help with a lesson/assignment on a FID, will teachers be available to answer questions?

Yes, all school-based staff members will be available to answer questions on a FID via email during the hours below. The student technology help desk will also be available.

- High School-8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
- Middle School-8:00 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
- Elementary School-9:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.

My child has an IEP, will his/her lesson be modified appropriately?

The FID lesson will be designed for students with special needs utilizing their program modifications, specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and services identified in their individualized education plans. Upon return from a FID, teachers of students with special needs will meet with their students to review work submitted, checking for completion and understanding. Any related services (Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech, etc.) scheduled during the FID will be rescheduled according to the frequency requirements of the students' individualized education plan.

Will after school activities be canceled on a FID?

After school activities may be cancelled based on the nature of the event that led to the FID day.

Remote Learning Guidelines and Etiquette

During remote learning sessions, the following guidelines will be in effect. In an effort to create a positive and productive environment for all learners:

- Students must attend the class, remote session, and return digitally when directed, and/or complete the asynchronous learning activity.

- Students must have their video on during the entire class session to be considered present, unless formal arrangements have been made with the teacher.
- Attendance is required at all sessions. Staff will take attendance.
- Recording of live lessons is prohibited. Any use of a teacher or other students' images is always inappropriate.
- Students will abide by class rules and expectations that their teachers have outlined.

Always	Never
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Find a quiet place to work and limit distractions ➤ Be dressed for school ➤ Have a neutral background ➤ Turn off your microphone unless you are speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Take pictures, record, or share images of your classmates and/or teacher without permission ➤ Use profanity or display inappropriate images ➤ Don't multitask (no texting or playing games while in a meeting)

CTC Students – 2 Hour Delay

The AM students of the CTC will depart as close to 9:55 AM as possible in order to arrive at the CTC at their usual time. They will report directly to the CTC bus upon their arrival to school. Attendance will be done at the CTC. All AM CTC students will return to WB at 11:40 and should report directly to their 5th period class as indicated by their individual schedule. The PM CTC students will be reported to 3rd period just like everyone else and leaving for the CTC at their usual time. If there are any changes to the current plans, all of the students will be notified.

CTC Students – Activity Day/Pep Assembly

The departure and the return times for the AM students will remain the same. Upon return, the AM students would report to their 5th period class or to B Lunch depending on their respective schedules.

The PM students who are staying for the pep rally will be assigned to rooms after they have attended their 5th period class and lunch. Those PM students choosing to attend the CTC will depart at 11:30 AM.

CTC Students – Attendance

The CTC places a high priority on instructional time in which a student is actively engaged in learning while in attendance in the classroom or lab; therefore, it is imperative that each student strive to maintain a good attendance record while enrolled in one of the programs.

Students from the West Branch HS can be excused from the CTC throughout the school year for events such as pep rallies, assemblies, or make up work. Athletic events and academic related functions (Envirothon, etc.) are excused as applicable. Students must receive approval if they want to remain at the home school for the day. Approval to stay all day at the CTC must be granted by principals at both schools (CTC and WB). Academics at both schools will be a big factor in the decision to grant approval.

All unexcused absences at the CTC are recorded by the teacher and the student receives a zero for that day.

Expectations for Activity Day Meetings

Students are to report for meetings when they are scheduled. Likewise, students who leave a class to attend a meeting must be a member of the club and/or be included on the roster that is sent to teachers prior to activity day events. If you leave a class under false pretenses, you may be subject to disciplinary referral. Sometimes a student will have more than one meeting scheduled at the same time.

Unfortunately, the student will have to choose which meeting to attend and then be sure to see the advisor for the one that is missed. When the meetings are completed, the students are to go directly back to class or move on quickly to their next meeting.

Expectations for Pep Assemblies

Students will be dismissed to go to assemblies and pep rallies via the public address system. At the appropriate time, students should move quickly and quietly to assigned areas in the auditorium or gym with their teacher. All students must sit in their assigned area and be monitored by their teacher. Failure to comply with these requests will be treated as insubordination. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Appropriate behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstrating respect for the speakers or presenters.
- Listening attentively while the performers are addressing the audience.
- Sitting in an appropriate manner, keeping feet off chairs and out of the aisles.

Disruptive students will be removed by administrators or teachers and may receive further disciplinary consequences.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Announcements

Announcements will occur specifically at 8:00 AM and again at approximately 2:35 PM. Any class, club, or organization wanting to have an announcement read must present the announcement, written legibly, and signed by the advisor of the activity, to the office secretary in order to be approved by the principal for reading. In order to ensure that an announcement is approved, it is advisable to submit it as early as possible. Unapproved requests will not be read during the scheduled announcement times.

In addition to the normal daily announcements, classes, clubs, athletics, and organizations frequently request permission to post announcements in the high school to advertise numerous activities. Permission to post these announcements throughout the school must be obtained from the office of the principal prior to putting up any items in the high school.

Special announcements concerning cancelations or postponements of athletic events or extra-curricular activities will be completed through emails.

Arrival to School in the Morning

All students in 5th through 12th grade, arriving by bus, driving, or being dropped off, shall enter the high school through the three sets of double doors nearest the main office unless being dropped off by a parent.

Parent drop-off for students will be in the rear of the building at the set of doors beyond the band room - door #29. Once the student has exited the vehicle, parents will need to continue around the back of the building and exit the property on the elementary playground side.

The doors will be unlocked at 7:35. Once allowed into the building, HS students shall report to the HS cafeteria. MS students shall report to the library. Students will be released from those locations at 7:43 to report to their homerooms.

If students arrive prior to 7:35 they are to wait outside of the rear door, or they may go to the front main entrance of the school and wait inside between the double set of doors. The exterior doors will be unlocked but the doors leading into the school itself will remain locked until 7:35.

Students consistently arriving prior to 7:35 can be dropped off at the front door and wait in the lobby area accordingly. After 7:35 no students are permitted to be dropped off at the front of the school because it interferes with the buses.

Attendance – Senior Privilege

Seniors must obtain prior approval from the high school principal before early dismissal or late arrival privileges can begin. A student with a job may leave after 5th period providing, they have scheduled all of their graduation requirements and are on track for graduation. If a student leaves the job for whatever reason, the student has two weeks to secure another job or return to school.

For senior students without a job, they can obtain approval for early dismissal or late arrival if they have a study hall at either the beginning of the day or at the end of the day. No students will be dismissed for periods of time in between 1st and 8th period. All students seeking approval must meet academic and attendance standards. Students who violate behavior, academic, or attendance expectations and guidelines may have their privilege suspended or revoked indefinitely.

NOTE: No juniors will be allowed to arrive late or leave early because of work and/or study hall at the beginning or the end of the day, respectively.

Athletic Events

Good sportsmanship is learned, practiced, and executed. Respect for the opponent, spectators, coaches, and officials are a must at all levels of athletics. At interscholastic contests, behavior on the part of everyone should be characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others.

Students who attend any athletic event at West Branch Area HS are not to display any unsportsmanlike conduct toward officials and/or any opposing players, spectators, or coaches. Doing so will result in an immediate suspension from the event with possible disciplinary action for future events. This includes inappropriate comments, gestures, profanity or any behavior of any kind that could be considered disrespectful.

Authority Statement

All students shall comply with directions of the administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, bus drivers, or any other school official whenever a student is under the authority of the school. All students shall demonstrate proper respect toward all school officials and must comply with all reasonable directives from such officials.

NOTE: Students having assessments as a result of policy violation must comply by those recommendations at parental expense or be subject to exclusion from school. A timetable will be set.

Breakfast

West Branch HS offers a grab and go breakfast each regularly scheduled day from 7:50 to 8:00. Students may eat breakfast in the lunchroom or on the way to class. Please throw all of your trash in the proper containers that are located in the hallways. Students are permitted to eat during the opening of class (approximately 5-7 minutes).

Bus Notes

West Branch Area SD may provide transportation to/from an alternate location, provided there is room available on the route and the following guidelines are met:

1. The alternate location is consistent five days per week for morning and afternoon. Alternative locations will remain the same for at least one semester. Example: Student may be transported from one location to school in the AM and from school to another location in the PM.
2. The alternate location is along a regularly scheduled route at a regularly scheduled stop.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria is for the convenience of every student. In addition to the school discipline code, students are to adhere to the following:

<p>Please properly dispose of trash. Please keep your table area clean. Please remain in your assigned seating area. Throwing food, paper, or other items is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action.</p>	<p>Students may not have food delivered from local restaurants. Please be respectful of others.</p>
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The goal of cafeteria services is to provide nutritious meals, within USDA-approved guidelines, to promote optimum student performance in the classroom. Menus are posted in the cafeteria and circulated throughout classrooms and offices. Menus are also posted on the school's web page (www.westbranch.org).

At West Branch, students may choose whether or not to participate in lunch meal programs. The cafeteria provides meals via an offer versus serve system. Under this system, the student may decide not to select any one of the five lunch items required to be served on the menu. A-la-carte food and drink items are sold in the cafeteria daily. Students must have a positive balance in order to purchase a-la-carte items.

Teachers and/or monitors are responsible for maintaining an orderly and pleasant atmosphere in the cafeteria. Shouting, unnecessary moving around, and boisterous behavior which interferes with a climate conducive to good eating habits and a comfortable environment for all are not permitted.

Meal Prices and Procedures

For the 2023-2024 school year, breakfast and lunch are free for students. The district promotes good nutrition and wellness by providing breakfast and lunch to students as a part of the Community Eligibility Provision program (CEP) in compliance with the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program. The CEP program provides a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day at no charge for all students enrolled during the school year. This program does not include second meals and a la carte purchases, however, these are available for an additional cost. Meal and a la carte pricing can be found on the district's website.

A computerized pre-pay accounting system maintains student accounts and meal data. Students are to bring or parents may send payments of cash or checks payable to West Branch Cafeteria for deposit into individual student accounts. Payments should include name, homeroom, and amount enclosed to ensure accuracy. Payment boxes are provided in the office and cafeteria and must be deposited by 8:00 AM to ensure same day credit. These accounts are debited as students purchase meals, milk, a-la-carte, etc.

Students are to report to the cafeteria at their designated lunch time. As they pass through the food line, they will select a tray and be able to add food items. Items selected in addition to the regular menu will be charged by the computer operator. Each student enters their pin number. The transaction is entered into the computer and the student's individual account is debited.

Students are encouraged to bring in payments without excessive reminders. Parents should keep records at home so payments can be sent in a timely manner. This reduces paperwork and time spent maintaining the system. Individual student account information is available upon request. We encourage payments to be made in the form of a check. This ensures that we can track your child's payments. Cash payments are not traceable. Large amounts of change must be rolled. We will not accept large amounts of loose change. A \$25.00 fee plus banking charges will be charged for any returned checks.

As a matter of standard practice, refunds for account balances over \$2.00 after the end of the school year are processed for students who withdraw or graduate. The school reserves the right to initiate legal action for unpaid negative account balances. Students with negative account balances of \$5.00 or more will also not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities (i.e. clubs, sports) or field trips, and may lose parking or other privileges, until the balance is paid in full. Referrals and/or other consequences will be given to those in violation of the above.

*Payments may be made in varying amounts, which may fit each household's financial circumstances. Any questions or concerns can be addressed by calling 345-5627 and asking to speak with cafeteria staff.

Cell Phones / Electronic Devices

The West Branch Area HS recognizes the usefulness of cellular telephones and other devices as a means of supplementing educational instruction under staff supervision. Any unauthorized use of electronic devices will result in disciplinary action. Headphones or earbuds being used in class without permission are a violation as well.

Students may use a cell phone / electronic device under the following conditions:

- In the classroom in connection with instruction and with teacher permission.
- During his/her scheduled lunch period.
- In the library with teacher/staff permission.
- Before school begins at 8:00 AM.
- After school is completed at 2:40 PM.
- In the hallways during class changes.

Students may not use a cell phone / electronic device:

- During instructional time (classrooms – study halls are considered instructional time).
- Without administrative and/or teacher approval.
- In cooperation with an external speaker or in a manner that bothers others (ex. loud music, speaker phone, etc.)
- In the restrooms and locker rooms during class or during class changes due to privacy expectations

Computers such as notebooks, Kindles, Nooks, and iPads are ok in cooperation with teacher or administrative permission. Students are encouraged to use the school wireless internet when using these devices. It will be faster than airtime data and save on home cell phone plan data being used.

When a device is in use in the classroom, students will not:

- Answer an incoming SMS (text) message or phone call
- Be on any social media site (Facebook, Twitter, etc...) for personal usage
- Access or play any game or access any entertainment site on their device
- Access or use any application (app) on their device unless expressly instructed to by the instructor
- Take any picture or video that the instructor has not expressly asked you to take
- Upload any picture or video taken in any class to any social media site or website
- SMS (text) message or email any picture or video taken in class to any person, including themselves
- Access any type of mobile web browsing for any reason unless directed by the instructor
- Take any picture, video or text any class assignments or assessments without permission

Due to the evolving nature of emerging technologies, additional rules and regulations may be added throughout the school year.

NOTE: Any electronic communication device used to create a hostile situation such as cyber-bullying or sexting or any other type of inappropriate communication conduct may merit the confiscation of a cell phone/device and be used/held as evidence for an extended period of time pending the alleged misuse of the device and appropriate disciplinary action.

Clubs

At West Branch HS, students can be actively involved in many ways. Besides academic work and interscholastic sports activities, there are a number of organized clubs that students can join. Students will be encouraged and required to choose a club(s) to attend during monthly activity days. Students will not be required to attend any club related functions outside of activity day. Parents or guardians can decline permission for their student(s) to belong to any club(s). Exemption can be completed by the parent or guardian by indicating it in writing to the high school principal.

Dismissal

School is dismissed at 2:40 PM unless otherwise directed. Students who ride the bus should report immediately to the bus while those who walk, or drive should leave the school as soon as possible. After 2:40 PM, all students should vacate the premises unless they are under the immediate supervision of a teacher, coach, chaperone, or advisor. Students are not permitted to congregate on school property without supervision. Those students who remain must sit in the main lobby until their ride arrives. Any unsupervised student who is in an area other than the main lobby can be subject to disciplinary actions.

Students being excused during the school day are to exit the building through the main office doors after signing out.

Driving / Parking (see also Arrival to School in the Morning)

All students in 5th through 12th grade, driving or being dropped off, are to enter the high school through the three sets of double doors nearest the main office.

Please understand that driving on school property is a privilege and safety is vital; therefore, those who do not follow the driving guidelines listed in this section will immediately lose their driving/parking privileges and/or incur other consequences. A student can also lose driving/parking privileges for not parking in his/her assigned spot, as well as for other offenses.

Parking Spaces

Students will be assigned to spaces in the front of the building as much as possible. After being assigned a parking space, a student is to continue to use that space unless given permission by the administration to do otherwise. If you arrive to find your parking space taken, please notify the principal. Likewise, please do not park anywhere but your assigned space during school hours. Students are not to be parking in the church lot.

Access to Vehicles during the Day

Students are not permitted to go out to their vehicle during the school day without the permission of the principal. In general, students must wait until the end of their school day to go out to their vehicles.

Clearfield County Career and Technology Center

No student may drive to the C.C.C.T.C. without the permission of the principal from West Branch and the C.C.C.T.C.

NOTE:

Off road motor vehicles such as snowmobiles, dirt bikes, ATV's are prohibited on school property at any time.

Financial Obligations

All student financial obligations must be satisfied before receiving a report card and/or being able to participate in graduation services at the end of the year. Students must pay the replacement value for lost or damaged books. No student will be able to participate in graduation services from WBHS who has not met all financial obligations such as cafeteria debt, payment for library or test books, project costs, or replacement costs of damaged school property.

Fundraisers

When a student participates in a fundraiser under any of the Activity Clubs in West Branch HS, the parent will write one check to the club for payment of all items ordered. The payment can also be made in cash or money order. Receipts will be given upon request. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, the parent must pay back the amount of the check plus a \$25.00 West Branch fee and a \$10.00 bank fee for a total of \$35.00. This fee must be paid in the form of cash or a money order to the West Branch HS before the student's order will be placed. If a check is returned insufficient, then parent checks will no longer be able to be used for that student. Any future fundraisers will have to be paid in cash or by money order. These rules apply only to Activity Clubs within the school; outside booster clubs have their own set of rules regarding fundraisers.

Hall Lockers

Lockers are assigned for each student. All students must keep books, coats, hats, backpacks, bags, and other belongings in their own locker. Any student backpack, bag, purse, etc. that is carried into a class must be able to fit under the desk/chair in that classroom so that it doesn't block any walkway or present a hazard to others. Athletes, musicians, etc. with bags or cases too large for the locker or to be carried class to class must be stored in a designated area. For example, many athletes will take a larger bag to a coach's room to store for the day. Band students take their instruments to the band room or place in a designated area as directed by the band director.

The school provides students with hall lockers and locks but assumes no responsibility for the safe-keeping of the contents of the lockers. Lockers must be kept locked at all times. Valuables should not be left in lockers. If necessary, students may store valuables in the high school office during the day and pick them up after school. In the event that your locker or lock is not functioning properly to protect your items, it is your responsibility to inform Mr. Williamson in a timely manner. He will see that the locker or lock is fixed or that you are assigned a new locker.

Students and parents are reminded that lockers remain the property of the West Branch Area School District. There is no right to privacy extended to any student concerning his/her locker. The school district and its officials reserve the right to inspect and search a student's locker at any time and remove any object or material which is illegal, contrary to school rules, or which may be detrimental to the school or student. Such materials may be used as evidence against the student in disciplinary, juvenile, or criminal proceedings. Prior to a locker search, the student may be notified and given the opportunity to be present; however, when such authorities have a reasonable suspicion that a locker contains materials which pose a threat to the health, welfare, and safety of students/staff/visitors in the school, the locker may be searched without the student's presence. The school assumes no responsibility for student's belongings stored in a hall locker.

Each student will be provided a combination lock for use on his/her locker. Students are responsible to return their locks at the end of the school year. Students are responsible for not sharing their combination or locker with others and ensuring the lock is kept locked. Students losing locks may choose to purchase a second combination lock through the office at a cost of \$5.00. The \$5.00 fee will be charged to any student not turning in the assigned lock at the end of the school year.

Health Office Policies

1) Students are to report to the nurse if they are ill, have an injury, or need to be evaluated for health reasons. Students may not use a cell phone or school building phones to call their parents to leave for health problems. If students use a cell phone or building phone to contact their parents without approval from the nurse, the absence will be unexcused. Students must be evaluated, and dismissed by the nurse if medically necessary to leave school due to illness, injury, or other health reasons. A parent can choose to take his/her child to the physician to get a doctor's excuse if the parent wishes for the absence to be considered an excused absence. However, the student must be evaluated by the physician the day the student left school and the excuse returned per the student handbook's absence procedures. To be in compliance with attendance requirements, if a student has already missed 10 days or more and he/she leaves school due to illness or injury, a doctor's excuse is needed for that absence from the school day. The school nurse is not able to provide the excuse for any student with excessive absences.

2) Please do not send your child to school and ask the nurse to diagnose your child's health problem or previous injury. The nurse is not a physician, and under the Nurse Practice Act is not allowed to diagnose health conditions. In addition, if your child had an injury on a previous day, and is unable to participate in gym class; the school nurse cannot excuse the student from gym class. A doctor's excuse is required.

3) Delivery and Storage of Medications – Policy 210.

All medication shall be brought to the nurse's office, or the main office if the nurse is in another building, by the parent/guardian or by another adult designated by the parent/guardian. All medication shall be stored in the original pharmacy-labeled container and kept in a locked cabinet designated for storage of medication.

Medications that require refrigeration shall be stored and locked in a refrigerator designated only for medications. The district shall not store more than a thirty-day supply of an individual student's medication.

Medication should be recorded and logged in with the date, name of student, name of medication, amount of medication, and signatures of the parent/guardian or designated adult delivering the medication and the school health personnel receiving the medication.

Nonprescription medication must be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with the student's name.

Prescription medication shall be delivered in its original packaging and labeled with:

1. Name, address, telephone and federal DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) number of the pharmacy.
2. Student's name.
3. Directions for use (dosage, frequency and time of administration, route, special instructions).
4. Name and registration number of the licensed prescriber.
5. Prescription serial number.
6. Date originally filled.
7. Name of medication and amount dispensed.
8. Controlled substance statement, if applicable.

All medication shall be accompanied by a completed Medication Administration Consent and Licensed Prescriber's Medication Order Form, or other written communication from the licensed prescriber.

4) **Each student must have a completed emergency card, updated yearly, on file in the health office.** See the Info Snap section of the handbook. Only persons designated on the emergency card may pick up students from school if the nurse is unable to reach the student's parent/guardian. If the student does not turn in an emergency card for the current school year, and the nurse is unable to reach his/her parent/guardian, the student will not be allowed to leave the school building with anyone other than the parent/guardian. Parents: If possible, please include at least one other contact person who is able to drive to pick up the student if needed.

5) **Health History Forms** will be passed out to students yearly, are available in the health office, and available to download from the school nurse's webpage. It is very important to update this form yearly and return it to the nurse so the nurse is aware of any health problems that may impact your child during the school day. If you choose not to indicate that your child has any health problems, we ask that you still sign and return the form so that the nurses know that you received it. If you, the parent/guardian, would like any teacher, bus driver, or any other staff member to be made aware of your child's health problems, it is your responsibility to notify them.

The nurse will not routinely share this information except in an emergency situation or if the nurse determines that an employee has an immediate need to know for the welfare of your child. In addition, if you notify the teacher of your child's health condition, and you would also like the nurse to be made aware of the same, it is your responsibility to notify the nurse.

6) All students must abide by the school health law and have the required health screenings and immunizations completed for that grade. Dental exams are mandatory for students in grades K, 3, and 7. Physical exams are mandatory for students in grades K, 6, and 11. For dental and physical exams, parents have the option of either having a school dental/physical

exam free of charge, or taking their child to their private dentist/physician at their expense, and returning a copy of the exam to the school nurse prior to the date of the school screening/exam. Private physical and dental forms are available in the nurse's office and available to download from the school nurse's webpage. Vision, Height, Weight, and Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings will be done yearly as required by law. Hearing Screenings will be done for students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7, and 11 as required by law. Scoliosis screenings will be done for all 7th grade students as required by law. Students who do not submit required immunization and health screenings paperwork by the deadlines set by the district will be excluded from school until the paperwork is submitted to the school nurse.

7) Students are not permitted to be in school with lice. If a student is found to have lice during the school day, the parent will be contacted and the child will be sent home. Students will also be sent home if nits (lice eggs) are found and the student was not recently treated with a lice shampoo. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to properly treat the lice, and return the student to school the next school day to be checked by the school nurse. If the student does not return to school the next school day because of lice, the student will only be excused for the day the student was sent home by the nurse.

8) Please address hygiene issues with your children at home.

Please be aware that children can be sensitive to odors, such as odors from animals that may linger on clothing, chemicals, perfumes, and personal body odor.

9) Extra clothes – The nurses recommend that all students carry an extra set of clothes in their backpacks or store in lockers. Many times, extra clothes are needed for reasons such as bowel or bladder accidents, menstrual problems, muddy/wet clothes, or food spills.

10) **Temperature checks** – The District reserves the right to conduct temperature checks upon arrival for all employees, students, and visitors throughout the school year and as warranted by increased illness

Homework / In-Class Work

Students at West Branch HS are to complete all assignments when they are due. Students must assume responsibility to produce original work, arrange to complete any missed assignments, ask for additional help when needed, and put forth reasonable effort. In addition, students should bring their laptops to class on a daily basis.

Immunizations

The Pennsylvania Department of Health regulations require that all students attending school must be fully immunized. All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code (28 PA Code, Ch 23). Complete immunization records must be delivered to the school prior to a students' acceptance for enrollment. The only exceptions to these regulations are those students for whom immunization is not medically advisable, those for whom immunization is contrary to religious or moral convictions, and students who qualify for admission to school under the auspices of the McKinney Vento Act regarding homelessness. Students who are not fully immunized will be prevented from entering school.

InfoSnap

InfoSnap is an online, cloud-based, student registration system. This system allows parents to fill out student forms via the Internet. Please locate the InfoSnap link on the district website at <http://www.westbranch.org> in order to locate the necessary documents. If you are unable to access InfoSnap from home, the school will be open at specific times through late summer and early fall for the purpose of assisting families with the process of entering the information. All other information regarding this program, including tutorials, will be found on the school website. Parents/guardians are required to provide the district with this information annually using the district system. Letters will be sent indicating the due date for completion. Failure to complete the work by the due date will result in loss of privileges.

Insurance

A student accident insurance program is available to all students. All students participating in interscholastic athletics programs are required to have student insurance or furnish proof of comparable coverage with another company. Students participating in other school activities are encouraged to have insurance.

Internet Services

The West Branch Area School District (WBASD) Acceptable Use Policy outlines all of the regulations governing the WBSD computer network. Students and their parents/guardians must read the WBSD Acceptable Use Policy, as well as the WBSD Acceptable Use Policy User Agreement.

The WBSD Acceptable Use Policy User Agreement must be completed and signed by both the student and the parent/guardian and then be returned to school. A computer account for the student will not be created until the Acceptable Use Policy User Agreement is completed and signed by both parties and returned to school. A copy of the West Branch Area School District Acceptable Use Policy will be distributed during the first week of school and will be available online at the school website. In addition, the school district will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

Library Services

The high school library has an extensive fiction collection. Among the collection, you can find popular series and recent literary award winners. Our non-fiction collection includes titles that are high-interest and also books chosen specifically to address assignments such as research papers. To aid in locating books, there is an online catalog that is available at school or at home.

West Branch is a member of the AccessPA system, so students have access to the resources of the Power Library, including AskHere PA. We also subscribe to the Ebscohost database, where one of the favorite items for our students is a readers' advisory service called Novelist. Students can use it to find suggestions of other books similar to books they have enjoyed, or perhaps identify the next book in a series. Ebscohost includes a full periodical database as well as Consumer Health, Auto Repair, History Research Center and others. It is available to students for home use by accessing the Ebscohost link on the West Branch High School Library website.

Make-up Work

Students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work and tests after any absence. The following guidelines should be used for make-up work:

1. It is the responsibility of the student, upon returning to school, to contact the teacher for make-up work and to complete that work.
2. It is the responsibility of each teacher to provide make-up work for absences.
3. A student will be given a reasonable amount of time for make-up work. Generally, a student will be given two days after a single day's absence and five days after two or more days absent, unless the student was already aware of the assignment. Teachers may use their discretion to further extend the amount of time for make-up work.
4. If a student fails to complete a test/assignment that has been rescheduled by a teacher due to an absence, the grade automatically becomes a zero and the teacher should contact the parents.
5. If a student arrives late to school, he or she is responsible for contacting the teacher that day to take any test scheduled or submit work due that day.
6. Students may make up all work missed during a suspension from school within the allotted time established above.

Outstanding Obligations to the District

The West Branch Area School District reserves the right to restrict participation in extracurricular activities if students have any outstanding obligations to the district. Examples would include overdue lunch account balances, overdue library books, vandalism, fundraising debts, etc. Participation in extracurricular activities and field trips will be restored when all obligations have been fulfilled.

Permission to Leave Class

A student may receive permission to leave a classroom by obtaining a pass from his/her teacher. It is up to each teacher to decide whether or not to allow a student to leave his/her class.

1. Locker passes should only be issued in special situations. Students should go to class each day with all necessary materials and should not leave that class to get or put away classroom materials.
2. Restroom passes will be issued by the classroom teacher. Students are to have a pass in order to go to the restroom.
3. Students are not permitted to leave the building or go to the elementary or middle school without written permission from the principal.

eHallpass

The West Branch Area Jr/Sr. High and Middle school utilize the eHallpass system. Any time students leave for the classroom, they must first enter a pass and have it approved. Teachers may also fill out passes when requesting students for various reasons. Passes must be started and ended when appropriate. Auto passes may be created for bathroom and water fountain use. However, students must still seek permission before starting their pass. It is the student's responsibility for ending an auto pass.

Any excessive hallway activity by a student will be investigated.

Physical Education

Students at West Branch Area HS are required to participate and pass physical education classes as mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. A change of clothes is required when participating in the physical education classes and should include appropriate dress for both indoor and outdoor activities. In addition, athletic shoes are required. Jewelry is not permitted in any physical education class. Students should not bring valuables to the locker room or to class. The Physical Education staff is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Due to privacy expectations of others, students are not to use electronic devices in the locker rooms.

When a student is unable to participate in regular physical education classes for a physical or other compelling reason, a doctor's excuse will be submitted to the PE teacher. The excuse will give the nature of the injury or illness, length of time to be excused from regular physical education classes, and a description of the activities in which the student can participate. We will also accept notes from our athletic trainer. For medical absences longer than two weeks, the school reserves the right to assign an alternate physical activity. The school nurse will seek clarification in order to define the best course of action for the student. If an alternative physical activity is not able to be worked out, the student will work on a computer health class, or a teacher approved assignment until he/she is able to return to class.

Physical Education Jewelry Policy

Introduction

This Physical Education Jewelry Policy has been established to provide guidelines for students who wish to wear jewelry during physical education classes. While jewelry is generally allowed, it is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of all students. Therefore, parents and guardians will be held liable for any potential injuries or damages resulting from the wearing of jewelry during physical education activities.

Policy Guidelines

1. **Permission to Wear Jewelry:** Students are permitted to wear jewelry during physical education classes. However, it is encouraged to keep jewelry to a minimum to minimize potential risks.
2. **Safety Considerations:** Students must consider the potential safety risks associated with wearing jewelry during physical activities. It is strongly recommended that students remove any jewelry that may pose a risk, such as dangling or sharp-edged items. Jewelry that may interfere with safe and effective participation in physical education activities should be taken off.
3. **Liability:** Parents and guardians of students are solely responsible for any injuries or damages resulting from the wearing of jewelry during physical education classes. The school and its staff will not be held liable for any accidents or incidents involving jewelry worn by students.
4. **Notification and Consent:** Before the start of the school year, parents or guardians will be informed of this policy and its implications. They must provide written consent acknowledging that they understand the risks associated with wearing jewelry during physical education activities and that they will assume liability for any potential injuries or damages.
5. **Storage of Jewelry:** Students are responsible for the safe storage of their jewelry during physical education classes. The school will not be held liable for lost or stolen jewelry. It is advisable to use lockers or designated storage areas for valuable items.
6. **Regular Monitoring:** The physical education instructor will regularly remind students about the policy and the importance of adhering to safety guidelines regarding jewelry. They will also have the authority to address any safety concerns during physical education activities.

This Physical Education Jewelry Policy aims to strike a balance between allowing students the freedom to wear jewelry while participating in physical education classes and ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. By providing clear guidelines and involving parents and guardians in the decision-making process, we aim to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. It is essential for parents and guardians to understand the risks involved and accept liability for their child's choice to wear jewelry during physical education activities.

Physical Education Dress Code

The following dress code is established to ensure the safety, comfort, and optimal participation of all students in physical education classes. Please adhere to these guidelines when selecting your attire for physical education sessions:

General Guidelines:

1. **Athletic Attire:** Students are required to wear appropriate athletic attire suitable for physical activities. This includes sportswear that allows for ease of movement and breathability.

2. Footwear: Athletic shoes (Sneakers) with non-marking soles and proper support are mandatory. Sandals, flip-flops, crocs, and open-toed shoes are not allowed for safety reasons.

3. Weather Considerations: Dress according to the weather conditions. In colder weather, students may wear additional layers, such as sweatshirts or long-sleeved athletic shirts.

4. Medical Conditions: If a student has a medical condition that requires specific attire or accommodations, they should provide a doctor's note outlining the necessary modifications.

This dress code is implemented to promote a safe and inclusive environment in physical education classes, allowing all students to engage comfortably and participate fully. It is essential to follow these guidelines to ensure the well-being and safety of everyone involved in physical activities. If you have specific concerns or require accommodations, please contact your physical education instructor in advance.

Privileges

There are many privileges available to students during their time in high school. Students in good academic and disciplinary status can participate in clubs, sports, school dances, field trips, pep rallies, and be able to obtain on-site parking passes. Any one of these privileges or others not listed may be revoked by the school administration, coach, or advisor if a student's academic, social behavior, and/or school attendance warrants such an action. In some instances, students can regain privileges through consistent demonstration of improved conduct and performance.

Safe2Say

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program run by the PA Office of the Attorney General. The program teaches youth and adults how to recognize warning signs and signals, especially within social media, from individuals who may be a threat to themselves or others and to say something before it is too late. With Safe2Say Something, it is easy and confidential to report safety concerns to help prevent violence and tragedies.

Submit an anonymous tip report through the Safe2Something system via the phone application (Safe2Say Something PA) or at the tip line number: 1-844-SAF2SAY.

Student Handbook

The student handbook will be available online for viewing. It contains important rules, policies, and procedures pertaining to our school. Parent sign off will be completed online via the Info Snap program. Copies of the student handbook can be printed from the webpage or issued at the request of the parent.

Study Hall Procedures

The following general procedures are followed for study halls:

- Permission to talk or work together must be obtained from the teacher in charge of the study hall.
- Students must have study hall material with them when they arrive. Passes to lockers are issued only on rare occasions.
- Students should be quiet throughout the study hall.
- Game playing (i.e. cards, checkers) is prohibited.
- Students should utilize study hall time effectively. It is expected that students use this time for study or homework.
- Students must have a pass signed by a teacher to be permitted to leave a study hall.
- All students leaving study hall to go to another location in the building are required to go by the most direct route. Failure to do so can result in being considered out of assigned area or a misuse of pass. Restrictions may be assigned by the study hall teacher including loss of privileges.
- Study hall teacher may grant permission for a student to use a cell phone for school purposes.

Appointments to see specific teachers should be made in advance and scheduled during non-instructional times.

Threat Assessment Team

The West Branch Area School District has a Threat Assessment Team. The team includes the Safe School Safety Security Coordinator, Building Principals, Building Counselors, School Police, and Special Education Supervisor.

A Threat Assessment Team is “a multidisciplinary group of individuals identified by a chief school administrator responsible for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others.”

Telephone Usage

Students needing to use the phone for emergencies may get a pass from their study hall teacher to the office. The Principal will determine if it is an emergency (forgetting homework is not an emergency).

If either party allows the student to use the phone, the student will complete a log. The student must fill out the log before the phone call is placed. Students are not permitted to call home to have their parents come and pick them up. Students who are not excused by the nurse or the office will be considered to be absent unexcused.

Textbooks

All basic textbooks are loaned to the students for their use during the school year and are to be kept clean and handled carefully. Textbooks must be covered if required by the classroom teacher. Any student losing or damaging a textbook will be required to reimburse the school district the amount of the replacement cost. Textbooks should be kept in a locked locker when not being used to avoid loss or theft.

Video Surveillance

To ensure the safety of all students and visitors, the high school building is equipped with video cameras and recording devices. All students and visitors who enter the high school building acknowledge that they are subject to video surveillance upon entering the building. These recordings may be used as evidence against the student/visitor in disciplinary, juvenile, or criminal proceedings.

NOTE: According to Board Policy 810.2, the West Branch Area School Board authorizes the use of video and audio recording on school buses and school vehicles. The West Branch Area School Board prohibits the use of audio recording on any school bus or school vehicle that is not being used for a school-related purpose.

Visitors

All persons who wish to visit West Branch Area High School must report directly to the High School Office and register their presence and receive a name tag. When leaving, the visitor will return to the office and check-out at the kiosk.

ACADEMICS

Weighted Grades

All courses to be weighted are to be courses that are full year, college-preparatory, and academic in nature. In order to obtain the multiplier, you must pass the course for the year. Weighted average is used for class rank and final grade point average.

Courses will be divided into two different categories: Academic and Honors.

Subject	Academic	Honors
English		Public Speaking Advanced Composition
Math	Pre-Calculus	Calculus
Science	Advanced Biology	Honors Physics Honors Chemistry II Honors Anatomy
Social Studies	Advanced American History Advanced U.S. History Advanced World Cultures	US History I and II Intro to Sociology
Multiplied by	1.04	1.08

Final Exams

Final Exams will be scheduled at the end of the fourth marking period and will include the classes from the chart above. We encourage you to take this exam seriously and demonstrate your competencies in the above classes.

Dual Enrollment

West Branch High School has dual enrollment agreements with Penn Highlands Community College and Mount Aloysius College. This agreement allows junior and senior West Branch students to take courses at West Branch and pay the per credit rate determined by the college to receive college credits. Students must complete the registration and payment process to sign up for the Dual Enrollment option at the beginning of the course. The following courses are currently approved for Dual Enrollment credit: Honors Chemistry II, Calculus, US History I & II, Advanced Composition, Intro to Sociology, and Public Speaking.

Penn State Dubois / Clearfield Campus - LHU

This program allows eligible junior and senior students to qualify to earn college credit through universities that have an agreement with us. We currently have agreements with Penn State-DuBois and Lock Haven University-Clearfield Campus. This program permits students in grade 12 during the 2023-2024 school year to enroll in college courses if they meet the requirements as set forth by the agreement between West Branch Area School District and these post-secondary institutions. Tuition and fees will be the responsibility of the parents unless grant funds are obtained by West Branch Area School District to defray costs. Key requirements for students to participate in the Dual Enrollment Program are as follows:

1. Student must be a high school senior during the 2023-2024 school year.
2. Student must be making satisfactory progress toward high school graduation as determined by the school district.
3. Student must demonstrate readiness for college level work based on the recommendation of his/her high school guidance counselor and/or interview with college department chair/faculty.
4. Students who do not meet the above criteria may be permitted to enroll based on strong recommendation of the high school guidance counselor/principal.
5. Student must adhere to all criteria, policies, and procedures of the West Branch Area School District.

NOTE: Dual enrollment classes are available contingent on teacher availability and the student's daily class schedule.

College Credit Courses

Exceptionally able students shall be permitted to enroll in approved college courses full time under regulations established by the Superintendent and administered by the High School Principal. College credits earned by the students under this policy shall apply toward the graduation requirements of the school district.

Promotion Requirements

Students in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 must accumulate graduation requirement credits. The following number of credits is required for promotion. Students must have earned the required credits at the end of the previous year to be enrolled in that year's homeroom.

Grade	Credits
9	6 credits
10	12 credits
11	17 credits
12	25 credits

Course requirements in core subject areas include:

English	4 credits
Math	4 credits
Science	4 credits
Social Studies	3.5 credits
Physical Education	2 credits
Arts & Humanities	2 credits
Health	0.5 credits
Safety Education	0.5 credits
Career Readiness and Personal Finance	0.5 credits (beginning with class of 2025)
Electives	3.5 credits
Computer Technology	0.5 credits

NOTE: Students who fail classes due to attendance issues (SEE 15/24 DAY RULE) will receive no credit for those courses. If a student does not meet promotion requirements due to the 15/24 Day Rule, the student will be retained in their same grade for the following school year.

Other Graduation Requirements

In addition to credits, the following requirements must also be met to be eligible for graduation:

Act 158 and State Testing (Keystone Exams)

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in academic content. The Keystone Exams serve a dual purpose.

Students must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams as a pathway to graduate. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the Keystone Exams throughout their high school careers.

Act 158 was signed into law by Governor Tom Wolf on October 24, 2018. This legislation addresses high school graduation requirements and how the Keystone Exams along with other pathways factor into these requirements for students graduating in 2023 and later. Students must meet one of the five graduation pathways outlined below to graduate and earn their diploma by demonstrating their readiness that they are career and/or college ready.

Keystone Proficiency Pathway: Requires students to score proficient or advanced on each Exam—Algebra I, Literature, and Biology.

Keystone Composite Pathway: Requires students to earn a satisfactory composite score of 4452 on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams while achieving at least a proficient score on at least one of the three exams and no less than a basic score on the remaining two.

OR

Requires students to earn a satisfactory composite score of 2939 on any 2 of the 3 Keystone exams - Algebra I, Literature, and Biology - while achieving at least a proficient score on at least one of the three exams and no less than a basic score on the other.

Alternative Assessment Pathway: Requires students to earn a 70% in the Keystone aligned course associated with the Keystone Exam in which the student did not achieve proficiency AND one of the varieties of other indicators. (Click this [link](#) for the Pennsylvania Pathway to Graduation diagram for more details)

Evidence-Based Pathway: Requires students to earn a 70% in the Keystone aligned course associated with the Keystone Exam in which the student did not achieve proficiency AND demonstration of three pieces of evidence consistent with the student's goals and career plans. (Click this [link](#) for the Pennsylvania Pathway to Graduation diagram for more details)

CTE Pathway: For Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrators, this pathway requires students to earn a 70% in the Keystone aligned course associated with the Keystone Exam in which the student did not achieve proficiency AND attain an industry-based competency certification related to the CTE Concentrator's program of the student. (Click this [link](#) for the Pennsylvania Pathway to Graduation diagram for more details)

NOTE: In order for a student to attend any activities related to local or state assessment (reward day, etc.), the student must participate in the assessment. If a student is opted out of an assessment, that student may not participate in any related events to that assessment.

Graduation Project

Per Chapter 339 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, all students are required to complete career readiness activities as part of the curriculum. The following activities are required for graduation:

GRADE 9:

- Budgeting Project
- Career Cluster Survey/Selection
- Time Management Activity
- Update Academic Career Plan

GRADE 10:

- Education Planner Career Cluster Survey/Selection
- Soft Skills in the Workplace Activity
- Update Academic Career Plan

GRADE 11:

- Job Shadowing Experience
- Career Research Paper
- ASVAB or Career Interest Inventory
- Post-Secondary Essay – College/Technical School or Scholarship
- Post-Secondary Fair
- Update Academic Career Plan

GRADE 12:

- Resume & Cover Letter
- Job or College Application
- Mock Interview
- Register Resume with Career Link Office
- Present Post-Secondary Plan to Faculty

Transfer Students

- Students who move into the district prior to the halfway point in a given year will be required to complete all activities listed for their current grade level and all remaining years before graduation.
- Students who move into the district after the halfway point in a given year will complete any remaining activities for their current grade level that school year and all remaining years before graduation.
- Highlighted items will be required of all graduates, regardless of when they move into the district.

NOTE: Students will not be permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies unless they have completed all graduation requirements and fulfilled all school obligations before the day of graduation.

Grading Scale

93-100	A	85-92	B	77-84	C	70-76	D	Below 70 Failing
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Honors Students for Graduation

Students must compile a 93% or above cumulative final average over the course of at least 25 credits to be considered an Honor Student for graduation. This the cumulative GPA is not rounded up.

Class Rank

All students, grade 9 through 12, will be ranked by grade point average. Class rank will be computed by the final grade in all subjects for which credit is averaged. Any two or more students whose computed grade point average is identical shall be given the same rank. A student's grade point average and rank in class shall be entered in his/her record and transcripts.

Honor Roll

High Honors

In order to receive High Honors a student must:

1. carry at least seven (7) credits
2. average 95% for all classes
3. have no grade lower than 90%

Honors

In order to receive Honors a student must:

1. carry at least 6.5 credits
2. average 90% for all classes
3. have no grade lower than 85%

All grades will be used in computing honor roll. Points will be assigned based on the credit value of the course.

Adding / Dropping Classes

Adding a class: All classes must be added to the student's schedule within the first 3 days of school for full year classes and first semester classes. Students must add second semester classes within 3 days of the start of the second semester. No classes will be added after these deadlines.

Dropping a class: Routine dropping of a class must be within the first 3 days of school for full year classes and first semester classes. Students must drop a second semester class within 3 days of the start of the second semester.

If a student wishes to drop a class after the 3 days and before the 20th day of the first nine weeks, the student must see his/her guidance counselor to schedule a meeting with his/her parent, the teacher, and the principal. After the 20th day of school, students will still need to schedule a meeting but they will also be given a failing grade for the class if they drop. This same procedure applies to classes that start the second semester with the 20th day beginning at the start of the semester.

Students must carry a minimum of 7 credits per school year and will be unable to drop a class if they fall below 7 credits. The administration reserves the right to change a student's schedule when extenuating circumstances exist.

Academic Detention

Students will be required to stay for academic detention as their course progress is deemed necessary. This intervention is intended to help ensure student success.

Academic Dishonesty

1. Academic dishonesty shall in general mean conduct which has as its intent or effect the false representation of a student's academic performance, including but not limited to:
2. Cheating on an examination,
3. Collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course,
4. Plagiarizing, including the submission of others' ideas or papers (whether purchased, borrowed or otherwise obtained) as one's own. Please note the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is considered plagiarism and will be considered as such.
5. Stealing or having unauthorized access to examination or course materials,
6. Falsifying records, laboratory, or other data,
7. Submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course,
8. Knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination, or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

Students should not give or receive aid during examinations, quizzes, tests or lab assignments. Students should not use answers to examinations, quizzes and tests written on cheat sheets, clothing or body parts, or obtained from others who have taken the same test prior to them. Students should not use in any written work, without proper acknowledgement, the wording of any sentence or part of a sentence of another author without acknowledgement of the original author. Students should not use calculating devices during tests where calculators are not permitted.

Summer School

West Branch High School may offer a summer school program for the summer of 2024. Information will be distributed with the 4th 9-week report card. Course work, if offered, will be done through a cyber class and at the expense of the parents/student requesting the class. Transportation will not be provided by West Branch Area School District. Students must earn a minimum of 60% or higher to be eligible to participate in summer school classes. The maximum number of credits earned in summer school is two credits.

PARTICIPATION - EXTRACURRICULAR

The West Branch Area School District reserves the right to restrict participation in extracurricular activities (i.e. athletics, clubs, field trips, dances, class trips, etc.). Students will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities if any of the following occur:

Absences - Practice/Rehearsals

Students who are absent from school past 11:07 a.m. or who are sent home by the nurse because of illness during the school day shall not practice or participate in any activities, rehearsals, etc. for that day.

Day of Game/Activity/Performance

Students will be ineligible for participation in games, performances, contests, etc. if the student is not present in school by 8:35 AM without a valid excuse. Students who arrive after 8:35 AM will not be permitted to participate unless they have produced a valid excuse or have received prior approval by the principal. Missing the entire day with or without a valid excuse may exclude a student from an extracurricular activity as per the rules governing that team or group. For students to be eligible to participate in a Saturday contest/performance/school event, attendance in school on Friday is required.

Academic Issues

Students must meet basic academic requirements to participate in extracurricular activities. Athletes must meet the requirements outlined in the athletic handbook. Students involved in clubs, activities, etc. must have teachers sign a grade chart, and turn it back on to the advisor before being allowed to participate in a trip/activity/etc. Students who do not turn in a completed grade chart will be considered to be not eligible to participate in the given activity/trip/etc. Also, students failing two major subjects, or one major subject and two minor subjects will also be considered not eligible to participate in the given activity/trip/etc.

West Branch Virtual Academy (WBVA)

To remain athletically eligible, WBVA students need to meet the following requirements:

- Must be passing the course with a minimum of 70%.
- Must be within 10% of the suggested pacing guideline for the course (for example, if the course requires 20 total assignments, the student would need to be within 2 assignments of the suggested pacing guideline).

Attendance

Any student accruing 20 days of absence will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities until the student is present for 45 school days. Any days the student is absent will not count toward the 45-day requirement.

Any student accruing 24 days of absence will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year.

Discipline

Any student accruing 10 discipline/attendance referrals will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for 45 school days. Any additional referrals during the 45-day period will result in an additional 5 days added on to the ineligibility period.

Any student accruing 15 discipline/attendance referrals will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year.

Rules of Conduct

The Athletic Director and Head Coach of that sport will establish specific rules of conduct for each sport. These rules will be in accordance with the policies established by the West Branch Area School Board of Directors and the constitution by-laws of the P.I.A.A.

The High School Principal is responsible to the West Branch Area Board of Directors and the P.I.A.A. for all matters pertaining to interscholastic athletics.

Title IX Compliance

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces, among other statutes, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Title VI Compliance

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Procedures and Expectations for Students on Overnight Trips

The West Branch Area School Board is supportive of our student groups when requesting overnight trips. These trips many times allow for greater competition and the opportunity for our students to learn and/or improve their skills. We also understand that there are many more risks for our students' safety. To help keep our students safe the following procedures and expectations will be in effect.

1. **Rules:** All school rules apply during overnight trips. School rule violations preceding the trip may result in the denial of attending the trip. Coaches/advisors will review these rules with students before the trip departs. Students are reminded that they must respect each other and that there must be no bullying, harassment, hazing, fighting, or other misconduct. Students should report any misconduct immediately to a coach/advisor. The staff will be even more vigilant about enforcing school rules on the trip and students will face serious disciplinary action for any misconduct. Students are expected to remain in their rooms at the direction of their coach/advisor and/or chaperone at all times. Violations will result in administrative review. Following the review, disciplinary action up to and including removal from the team/student group will be administered. Violations relating to drugs, alcohol, and/or weapons will result in an immediate call to the appropriate authorities.
2. **Supervision:** The coaches/advisors and their assistants/chaperones must supervise students whenever possible during the trip, including in the middle of the night. Students are expected to adhere to all directives given by coaches/advisors and/or chaperones.
3. **Searches:** Searches of students' personal property, purses, briefcases, backpacks, and bags will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that a student is violating school rules or the law. These searches may occur at any time; before, during, and/or after the trip. Coaches/advisors and/or chaperones will be in contact with administration during the search process.
4. **Release of Student:** If a student has violated the law, such as by possessing drugs, alcohol, or a weapon, in addition to calling the authorities, parents may be requested to retrieve their child from the trip. In the event of parent/guardian refusal to retrieve their child from the trip, any associated costs to return the student will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

ATTENDANCE

GENERAL ATTENDANCE POLICY INFORMATION

Upon the student's return to school after an absence, a written excuse must be brought from home explaining the reason for your absence. Excuses for absence should be taken to the attendance window during homeroom. The student must submit an acceptable excuse *within three (3) days* of their return to school. If the student does not submit an acceptable excuse within three (3) days of his/her return to school, the day(s) will result in an illegal absence if the student is 16 years

of age or younger or an unexcused absence if the student is 17 years of age or older. **THE DAY(S) WILL NOT BE CHANGED IF AN EXCUSE IS BROUGHT IN AFTER THE THREE (3) DAY PERIOD.**

Students who are eighteen or older, who live at home and are enrolled in school, remain the responsibility of their parents/guardians until graduation. All excuses, dismissals, and permission slips must be signed by their parents/guardians.

Attendance Accounting Procedures

Arriving:

8:01 – 8:46 AM

Register Entry

Tardy excused/unexcused
(written excuse required)

8:46 – 11:04 (Period 4)

Absent ½ day
(written excuse required)

After 11:05

Absent all day
(written excuse required)

Leaving:

Before 11:04 AM

Register Entry

Absent all day
(written excuse required)

11:05 – 1:54 (Period 7)

Absent ½ day
(written excuse required)

After 1:54

Present for the entire day
(written excuse required)

Early Dismissal

Early dismissal will be granted under certain conditions for medical appointments. When requesting an early dismissal, a written request must be presented to the office at least one (1) day in advance of the requested day. If a request is not presented at least one (1) day in advance the parent/guardian will be required to come to the school and sign the student out. Parents must report to the office before picking up a student. Students are responsible for all work missed due to an early dismissal.

At the scheduled early dismissal time, the student must report to the main office. Students must exit the building at the front entrance by the main office. The school asks that parents pick up the student at this entrance only.

All students, regardless of age or where they have chosen to park their vehicle, must adhere to this policy unless there is a compelling reason for a modification as determined by the principal or his designee.

Students who are dismissed prior to the completion of 4th period will be marked a full day absent if they do not return to school. If the student returns to school and is present in the building for at least 3 ½ total hours, the student will only be marked as ½ day absent. Students who leave after 4th period will be marked a ½ day absent.

NOTE: A student must have a valid reason to be excused early from school. If a student does not have a valid reason for dismissal, the absence will be counted as an unexcused absence. If a student has an early dismissal for a doctor

appointment, the student must provide a physician's note within three (3) days of their return to school for the excuse to be counted as an excused absence. If a doctor's note is not received within three (3) days, the absence will be considered unexcused/illegal.

Examples of unexcused/unlawful absences include:

Shopping trips, babysitting, fishing/hunting, missing the bus/ oversleeping, haircuts, employment, senior pictures, educational trips/vacations (not approved in advance), and leaving the building without signing out in the office.

Attendance Violations

Attendance violations include late to class, late to school, unexcused class absences (including class cuts and leaving school grounds without permission). Class cutting and leaving school grounds without permission are clear cut violations and will be dealt with by administration.

Unexcused Tardies to School

Any class periods missed will be treated as class absences and will count towards the 15/24 Day Rule.

Students will have three (3) days to bring in an excuse for being tardy to school. If a valid excuse is not submitted within three days, the tardy will be marked unexcused/illegal. The day the student is tardy is counted as day 1 of the 3.

Excused Tardies to School (with legal excuse)

Students will be warned for infractions 1-4 if they present a legal excuse. After the fourth, a doctor's note will be required; otherwise, they will be counted as unexcused.

NOTE: Students who arrive late, but do not sign in at the main office and get a late slip, will be charged with an illegal/unexcused absence.

Tardy to Class

A student is considered tardy for a class if he/she is less than five (5) minutes late for that class. Tardies are cumulative. Being late for any class period adds to the cumulative total.

If the student is more than five (5) minutes tardy for class, the tardy will be considered an unexcused absence from class (class cut).

Procedure for Truancy – Illegal / Unexcused Absences

Students 16 years and under who are absent from school without a legal excuse are considered truant, while the students 17 years and older committing the same act are considered unexcused.

Students 16 years and under action taken:

<p>1st NOTICE LETTER: 3 days of illegal absences – certified letter sent home indicating the accumulation of three (3) illegal days</p> <p>Parent meeting held Truancy Elimination Plan created</p>
<p>2nd NOTICE LETTER: If the child is illegally absent after the date of the parent meeting (whether the parent attends or not) legal action may follow. Each succeeding day of illegal absence becomes another second offense.</p>

Students 17 years and older action taken:

3 rd unexcused absence – Principal’s meeting parents/student
5 th unexcused absence – ISS
7 th unexcused absence – ISS
10 th unexcused absence – School Attendance Contract

Loss of Privileges

According to state laws 24 PS 13-1333 and 24 PS 13-1338.1, and 24 PS 13-1327 (Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Elimination Plan):

- For children convicted of violation of compulsory attendance requirements by the magisterial district judge, the court, including a court not of record, must send a certified record of the conviction or other disposition to the Department of Transportation.
- Upon the first conviction, the child’s operating privilege for operating an automobile will be suspended for 90 days

Upon the second or subsequent conviction, the child’s operating privileges will be suspended for six (6) months

Children who do not yet have a driver’s license will be ineligible to apply for a license for the time periods of 90 days for the first conviction and six (6) months for the second and any subsequent conviction

Withdrawal – 10 or More Days of Consecutive Absences

If a student is absent from school for ten (10) consecutive school days, the student will be removed from the active school roster unless one of the following occurs:

1. The district has been provided with evidence that the student’s absence may be legally excused.
2. Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued.
3. Student has not signed School Attendance Contract within ten (10) school days.

Excessive Absences and 15/24 Day Rule

Parents will receive notice letters regarding student attendance at the following times and containing the information indicated below as well as information already outlined within the handbook:

5th Total Absence – Letter will indicate that doctor’s notes will be required beyond the 10th day and will highlight other points made within this handbook regarding absences.

10th Total Absence (Cumulative only) - Statement that all further cumulative absences will require a doctor’s excuse. Any absences beyond ten (10) cumulative days without a doctor’s note will be considered unexcused.

10th Total Absence (Cumulative and Non-cumulative) - Section which indicates that upon total absences of fifteen (15) days for a minor class (a class that does not meet every day) the student will not receive credit for the class. This includes unexcused class absences (class cuts).

15th Total Absence - Notice that the student has reached 15 total days of absence. If the 15 days are within the same semester the student will not get credit for any minor classes (classes that do not meet every day). This includes unexcused class absences (class cuts).

17th Total Absence - Mandatory parent meeting regarding the 24-day rule, medical absences, short and long term, are discussed. Attendance and academic records reviewed.

24th Total Absence - The student will receive no credit for their classes and/or will be retained in their current grade the following school year. The student may be placed in an alternative school setting and/or expelled. The student is ineligible from all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the school year

NOTE: Any student who has prior compulsory attendance violations filed before the District Court can be referred to Children Youth Services as a dependent child upon the first unexcused absence of a new school year.

NOTE: Out of School Suspension days will not be counted toward the 24-day rule as in the past. Please note, that periods of extended medical absences of consecutive days even verified by a physician's note are not combined into one (1) total day toward the 24-day rule.

New Students

New students who enter during the school year will follow the same guidelines with allowable limits prorated according to the date of entry.

Educational Trip Guidelines

1. The completed Educational Trip form WITH ALL OF THE SIGNATURES (student, parent, and teachers) must be turned in to the high school office AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE TRIP. If the Educational Trip form is not turned in at least one week prior to the trip, the days missed may be counted as unexcused/illegal absences.

Students with attendance, academic, or discipline issues may not receive approval.

NOTE: If the student has missed 10 cumulative days or 17 total days prior to submitting the request, or if the student will miss over 10 cumulative days or 17 total days counting the trip, the request will NOT be approved. Days missed will be considered as unexcused/illegal absences.

2. Students are only permitted a maximum of 5 days total per school year for Educational Trips.
3. Students are responsible for getting work from their teachers PRIOR TO going on the trip. Students should have work to turn in upon their return from their trip.
4. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for the education of the student during the trip, assuring the completion of assignments and any make-up work.
5. Upon their return to school, students should turn in their assigned work. They must also complete any other work missed during their trip.
6. STUDENTS MUST HAVE ALL WORK SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED TO THEIR TEACHERS FIVE DAYS AFTER THEIR RETURN.
7. The School District shall accept neither financial responsibility nor liability for students excused for the purpose of educational travel.
8. DAYS MISSED FOR EDUCATIONAL TRIPS WILL COUNT INDIVIDUALLY TOWARD THE 15/24 DAY RULE.
9. Educational trips may not be approved during periods of district testing (i.e. PSSA exams, 4Sight Exams, Final Exams, etc.). If an Educational Trip is approved during Final Exams, the student and parent are responsible for making arrangements with the school to make up missed exams. Exams not made up within a timely manner (as determined by the administration) will be counted as a zero (0).

College Visits

1. The student must bring a parent note **PRIOR TO** the college visit stating the date and the name of the college being visited.
2. The student must bring a note back from the college on college letterhead confirming the visit. This note must have the name of the student and the date of the visit
3. If these procedures are not followed, the day will be marked as **UNEXCUSED**.

4. Students in grades 11 and 12 are permitted a maximum of three (3) college visits per school year.
5. **DAYS MISSED FOR COLLEGE VISITS WILL COUNT TOWARDS THE 15/24 DAY RULE.**

Firefighters

Students who are qualified firefighters will be excused from school at the request of the fire company when serving at emergencies with the Fire Company. **A PARENT’S PERMISSION FORM** and documentation of membership of the fire department must be on file at the school. **A LETTER FROM THE FIRE COMPANY** must be presented the following day to be considered an excused day.

Appeals Process

To appeal a loss of credit/retention due to 24 total absences, the parent/guardian must submit a written request for appeal to the principal within 10 days of receiving the 24-day letter. At this meeting the parent may present appropriate evidence to an attendance committee appointed by the principal. The burden of proof of attendance shall be on the student/parent/guardian.

STUDENT SERVICES

Guidance Programs and Services

The guidance counselors will assist you in meeting the Pennsylvania state and West Branch Area School District requirements for graduation. Your counselor will meet with you each year to plan your educational and career goals. Your counselor is available to discuss a variety of issues, including career, academics, school, and family. Other guidance programs include: bullying prevention, career groups, anger management, organizational skills, study skills, drug and alcohol awareness, and community service.

Academic Support Services

Academic support services are available for high school students who encounter academic difficulty with their classes. Services may include tutoring with subject teachers, with peer tutors, or with a teacher in a structured study hall. Students should see the guidance counselors or the high school principal.

Buddy System

A buddy system is available to all new students to assist in their entry into West Branch. Upon registering, new students will be paired with a volunteer student who has agreed to serve as a “Buddy”. The Buddy student will escort the new student through his/her schedule, introduce the new student to teachers and students, and be available to assist the new student in general. The Buddy system will be coordinated by the Guidance Department.

Homebound Instruction

Homebound education is defined as carrying the public-school program into the home through the visiting teacher. The primary purpose of the program is to help the physically handicapped child and those students with extended absences due to illness or injury to maintain the continuity of their class work.

Students who are absent from school for an extended period of time may receive homebound instruction if the attending physician and the parents request, in writing this service. **Students must be re-evaluated every three months by a physician.** A student on Homebound will receive a maximum of five (5) hours instruction per week.

Need Help Chart (lists issue and who to see)

Need Help With:

See:

Attendance Issue	Mr. Williamson or Mrs. Hampton
Locker Issue	Mr. Williamson
Schedule Change	Guidance Office
Transcripts	Guidance Office
Job Shadowing Forms	Guidance Office

Community Service	Guidance Office
Work Permit	Main Office
Finding a Lost Item	Main Office - anyone
Disciplinary Question	Mrs. O'Hare
State Testing Question	Mrs. O'Hare, Mr. Mitchell, or Guidance Office
Parking Passes	Officer Tom Reed
Athletics/Physical Packets	Mr. Williamson
Bus Passes	Mr. Williamson
Technology/One to One	Technology Office
Cyber School	Mr. Caldwell – Guidance Office
Activities/Clubs	See Advisor
Class Grades	Teacher (first) or Guidance Office or Mrs. O'Hare
Sickness/Injury	Nurse's Office (or see a teacher or staff member)
Athletic Injuries	Athletic Trainer (Ashlee)
Homelessness	Mrs. O'Hare or Mr. Williamson

Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students

In compliance with the state and federal law, notice is hereby given by the West Branch Area School District that it conducts ongoing identification activities as a parts of its school program for the purpose of identifying students who may be in need of special education and related services. If your child is identified by the District as possibly in need of such services, you will be notified of applicable procedures. Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:

1. Autism/pervasive development disorder
2. Blindness or visual impairment
3. Deafness or hearing impairment
4. Developmental delay
5. Mentally gifted
6. Intellectually disabled
7. Multi-handicapped
8. Neurological impairment
9. Other health impairments
 - Physical disability
 - Serious emotional disturbance
 - Specific learning disability
 - Speech and language impairment

If you believe that your school-age child may be in need of special education services and related programs, or your child (age 3 to school-age) may be in need of early intervention, screening, and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost, upon written request. You may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the District's public-school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are to be made in writing to the principal or special education supervisor.

In compliance with state and federal law, the West Branch Area School District will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum intent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped

student, the child must be school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for “protected handicapped student” are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation and screening (including purpose time and location), and rights to due process procedures, you may contact the special education supervisor.

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program is a team of professionals working together to provide help for adolescents who are experiencing problems. Alcohol and other drug abuse, disruptions at home, depression, pressure from peers, trouble at work, loss of a loved one, or many other factors can lead a student to feel alone and hopeless. The cause may differ, but the result is usually the same - the student’s problems interfere with educational process - a student who is troubled struggles to learn.

SAP Team:

It is the parent's right to be involved in the process and to have full access to all school records under the applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Involvement of parents in all phases of the student assistance program underscores the parent's role and responsibility in the decision-making process affecting their child's education and is key to the successful resolution of problems.

A student can be referred to the program by parents, teachers, and/or friends. This can be accomplished by contacting any SAP team member. From there, a referral is made for an interview with the student and parents, if necessary, to gain information about the students and the nature of the problem. The information gathered is confidential. The evaluation service is at no cost to the family or student. We are here to help!

STUDENT RECORDS

Disclosure

School districts are permitted to disclose student records to state or local officials within the juvenile justice system. School districts may also release records concerning disciplinary action taken against a student for conduct that posed a significant risk to the safety or well-being of that student or to other members of the school community without prior consent. However, such disclosures should be limited only to those teachers or school officials who have a “legitimate educational interest in the behavior of that student.”

Review

Students (18 years of age) and parents/guardians of students under age 18 have a right to inspect and review a student’s educational records by contacting the Guidance Office and scheduling a time for the review.

If the student and/or parent find inaccurate or misleading information he/she should request, in writing, that the Principal review the inaccurate or misleading information and consider altering the same. No personal information will be disclosed without prior approval except as stated in the previous section “Disclosure”.

Complaints regarding compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act may be filed with the U.S. Department of Education.

STUDENT CONDUCT

It is the belief of the West Branch School Board, Administration, Faculty, and Staff that our school will maintain an environment that will allow continuous and uninterrupted learning.

The school policies relating to discipline are reasonable and intended to benefit the safety of our school. Every student has the right to an education and no student has the right to take this opportunity away. Every student has been able to review a Student/Parent Discipline Handbook, which explains each discipline policy. Discipline sanctions will be addressed in the following ways: Detention, In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, Friday School, and/or Alternative Education Program. Refer to the Discipline Sanction Chart.

School Rules

The School Board has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the conduct of students in school. The rule making power however is not unlimited; it must operate within statutory and constitutional restraints.

1. A School Board has only those powers enumerated in the laws of the State, which may reasonably be implied or necessary for the orderly operation of the school.
2. School Boards may not make rules which are arbitrary, capricious, or outside their authority granted by the General Assembly. Rules must stand the test of fairness and reasonableness. A rule is generally considered reasonable if it uses a rational means of accomplishing some legitimate school purpose.
3. School rules are assumed to be reasonable until they are rescinded or waived. Students, therefore, should obey school rules even while working through appropriate channels to change those rules that seem unfair.
4. All rules and regulations also apply when students are participating in any extracurricular activity.
5. The Administration shall have the right to formulate other rules, regulations, and disciplinary actions that it deems necessary to conduct a well-disciplined, safe and orderly school.
6. In the event of a violation of great severity or a violation which includes physical assault, fighting, intimidation, and/or serious threats, steps preceding suspension or expulsion may be bypassed.

Detention

Detention will typically be held from 2:45 – 3:45 PM, Monday through Friday as needed. Students are expected to serve detention on the assigned day. Students may change the day of a detention one (1) time with written or verbal notification from a parent/guardian. An additional day of detention will be assigned for failure to attend on the scheduled day or failure to bring work materials with them. If a second skipped detention occurs, the student will receive two (2) additional hours. A third skipped detention will result in loss of all extracurricular activities and hall pass privileges until all detention hours have been served. **Hours not served by the end of the school year will be carried over to the following school year. The student will be on the Loss of Privilege List (loss of extracurricular activities, hall passes, etc.) until all hours have been made up and served (after the start of the new school year).**

Friday School

Friday School will be held from 2:45 – 5:45 PM on assigned Fridays. **ALL STUDENTS MUST ARRIVE PROMPTLY AFTER SCHOOL TO THE ASSIGNED ROOM AND HAVE TRANSPORTATION HOME AT 5:45 PM.** Students must bring school work to do.

Failure to bring school work or to work on school work will result in an additional assignment to Friday School, as well as Out of School Suspension. Failure to attend Friday School will result in an additional day assigned, as well as Out of School Suspension. Failure to report a 2nd time will result in Out-of-School Suspension, a mandatory parent meeting, and a possible hearing for expulsion.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

Students who have ISS must report to the designated ISS room at the beginning of first period. Students must have all necessary materials (books, etc.) when they arrive at the ISS room. Students must work on their assignments and are not permitted to talk. A formal list of rules is posted in the ISS room and must be followed at all times. Students are to submit phones to the 1st period teacher. Cell phone usage in ISS is prohibited and is considered insubordinate behavior. Students who violate ISS/school rules will be disciplined. Failure to complete any assigned class work could result in a 0% for that assignment. Students will be dismissed with the bell at the end of the school day (2:40).

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

Students who receive OSS are not permitted on school property during the length of their suspension. If the suspension includes Friday, the student is not permitted on school property over the weekend. The student is not permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities during the length of the suspension (including weekends if the suspension includes a Friday). At the student or parent's request, the guidance office will attempt to furnish assignments. Students are still responsible for all work.

Loss of Privileges

A student's school privileges may be revoked for a period of time due to negative behavior and/or attendance issues. This could include, but is not limited to, restrictions from attending school assemblies and/or functions (dances, sporting events, etc.), loss of parking privileges, restriction from participating in school trips not of a purely educational nature, restriction from holding a student office, restriction from participating in extracurricular activities and group and athletic programs, and loss of membership in school related organizations.

Searches and Seizures

To maintain order and discipline in the schools and to protect the safety and welfare of students and school personnel, school authorities may search a student, student's locker and desk and may seize any illegal, unauthorized or contraband materials discovered in the search. Student desks and lockers are school property and may be searched at any time by authorized school officials. Periodic inspections of lockers and desks may be conducted at any time by school personnel without notice.

Students' personal effects (book bag, purse, athletic bag, etc.), as well as a motor vehicle parked on school property, may be searched if there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that illegal or unauthorized materials may be found, or that the student is violating law, school board policy or school rules, or poses a threat to the student or the school population. Searches conducted by the administration may include, but not be limited to, utilization of certified drug dogs or any device used to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the student and the school population. A student's failure to permit searches and seizures could result in a 5-day suspension and possible police contact.

Bullying / Cyberbullying

Policy 249 – adopted October 24, 2011

The West Branch Area School District Board of School Directors is committed to providing all students with a safe, healthy, and civil school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with mutual respect, tolerance, and dignity. To that end, the school district has in place policies, and practices that are designed to reduce and eliminate bullying and harassment when they occur.

This policy is in effect while students are on property within jurisdiction of the school district; while on school-contracted or school-operated vehicles; and while attending or engaged in school-sponsored activities. Students who file a bullying complaint or who have assisted or participated in any manner in a bullying investigation may not be retaliated against. Any violation of this policy shall be considered an infraction of the Code of Conduct, with discipline implemented accordingly. All bullying behavior that is a violation of the PA Crimes Code will be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.

The Board encourages students who have been bullied to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee.

Bullying shall mean an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act, or series of acts:

1. Directed at another student or students.
2. Which occurs in a school setting.
3. That is severe, persistent or pervasive.
4. That has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - a. Substantially interfering with a student's education.
 - b. Creating a threatening environment.
 - c. Substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

School setting shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop, or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school.

Bullying, as defined in this policy, includes cyberbullying.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy.

This policy shall be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the Superintendent, building administrators, school staff members, parents/guardians, regional police and state police, and the school district's community.

Each staff member shall be responsible for maintaining an educational environment free from bullying. Staff members who observe or become aware of an act of bullying shall take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene unless the intervention would be a threat to staff members' safety. In that case, or if the bullying persists, s/he shall report the bullying to the school principal for further investigation. This investigation may include interviews with students, parents/guardians, and school staff; review of school records; and any other appropriate means of investigation.

The Board expects that students and parents/guardians who become aware of an act of bullying shall report it to a school official (usually the building principal) for further investigation. Any student who retaliates against another person for reporting bullying, intimidation and/or physical assault shall be subject to further disciplinary action.

Students shall be informed about the policy on the district's publicly accessible Internet web site, and in every classroom. The policy shall be posted at a prominent location within each school building where such notices are usually posted. Each school building principal shall ensure that the policy and procedures for reporting bullying incidents are reviewed with students at least once each school year.

The Superintendent or designee, in cooperation with other appropriate administrators, shall review this policy every three (3) years and recommend necessary revisions to the Board.

District administration shall annually provide the following information with the Safe School Report:

1. Board's Bullying Policy.
2. Report of bullying incidents.
3. Information on the development and implementation of any bullying prevention, intervention or education programs.
4. The Code of Student Conduct, which shall contain this policy, shall be disseminated annually to students.

This policy shall be accessible in every classroom. The policy shall be posted in a prominent location within each school building and on the district web site, if available.

Preventive Measures

A copy of this policy will be included in the student handbooks annually. Teachers, counselors, specialists, and school administrators will routinely discuss bullying with students and will provide appropriate examples to assist students with recognizing, identifying, and reporting bullying incidents. All students shall be informed that bullying will not be tolerated in any form. All students shall be encouraged to report any bullying regardless of whether they are the victim or an observer.

When an investigation substantiates that bullying has occurred, the building principal or assistant principal shall inform staff who work with the offending student and the victim about the bullying so that those staff can more closely monitor for future incidents of bullying. The primary purpose of such action is to protect the victim and deter such behavior in the

future. The disciplinary action imposed on the offender will match the severity of the offense.

Reporting Procedures

All students who believe they have been the victim of bullying shall promptly report the bullying incident to a teacher, counselor, or building administrator.

All parents/guardians are encouraged to report the bullying incident(s) to a building administrator.

Any teacher/counselor who witnesses bullying or receives a report of bullying shall document such incident and promptly investigate the matter. After the investigation has been completed, the building principal shall take appropriate actions consistent with this policy.

Disciplinary and Other Actions

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:

1. Counseling within the school.
2. Parental conference.
3. Loss of school privileges.
4. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities.
5. Detention.
6. Suspension.
7. Expulsion.
8. Board Hearing
9. Referral to law enforcement officials.

If an investigation substantiates that bullying has occurred, a written record of the incident shall be placed in the file of the offending students(s). Parents/Guardians of the offending students will be encouraged to attend one (1) or more conferences with an administrator to review the bullying behavior and cooperative strategies for correcting it. The building principal or designee shall also inform the victim's parents/guardians of any and all bullying incidents involving their child. Disciplinary action shall be in accordance with the Board approved Code of Student Conduct depending on the severity of the offense. If the investigation has determined that the conduct rises to the level of a crime, disciplinary action may also include referral to law enforcement officials.

All incidents of confirmed bullying, shall be recorded in writing and placed in the offending student's discipline file. The penalties and prohibitions in this policy are in addition to, and do not replace or supersede, any related provisions in district policy prohibiting conduct such as harassment, violence, assault, and hazing.

Controlled Substances / Paraphernalia

Policy 227 – adopted October 24, 2011

The Board recognizes that the abuse of controlled substances is a serious problem with legal, physical and social implications for the whole school community. As an educational institution, the schools shall strive to prevent abuse of controlled substances.

For purposes of this policy, controlled substances shall include all:

1. Controlled substances prohibited by federal and state law.
2. Look-alike drugs.
3. Alcoholic beverages.
4. Anabolic steroids.
5. Drug paraphernalia.
6. Any volatile solvents or inhalants, such as but not limited to glue and aerosol products.

7. Substances that when ingested cause a physiological effect that is similar to the effect of a controlled substance as defined by state or federal law, such as but not limited to herbal incense or other products containing synthetic cannabinoids.
8. Prescription or patent drugs, except those for which permission for use in school has been granted pursuant to Board policy.

For purposes of this policy, under the influence shall include any consumption or ingestion of controlled substances by a student.

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would violate the Code of Student Conduct if:

1. There is a nexus between the proximity or timing of the conduct in relation to the student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.
2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.
3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.
4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, such as an agreement to complete a transaction outside of school that would violate the Code of Student Conduct.
5. The conduct involves the theft or vandalism of school property.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to identify and control substance abuse in the schools which:

1. Establish procedures to deal with students suspected of using, possessing, being under the influence, or distributing controlled substances in school, up to and including expulsion and referral for prosecution.
2. Disseminate to students, parents/guardians and staff the Board policy and administrative regulations governing student abuse of controlled substances.
3. Provide education concerning the dangers of abusing controlled substances.
4. Establish procedures for education and readmission to school of students convicted of offenses involving controlled substances. Incidents of possession, use and sale of controlled substances by any person on school property shall be reported to the Office of Safe Schools on the required form at least once each year.

In all cases involving students and controlled substances, the need to protect the school community from undue harm and exposure to drugs shall be recognized.

No student may be admitted to a program that seeks to identify and rehabilitate the potential abuser without the intelligent, voluntary and aware consent of the student and parent/guardian.

Anabolic Steroids

The Board prohibits the use of anabolic steroids by students involved in school related athletics, except for a valid medical purpose. Body building and muscle enhancement of athletic ability are not valid medical purposes. Human Growth Hormone (HGH) shall not be included as an anabolic steroid.

Students shall be made aware annually of the dangers of steroid use; that anabolic steroids are classified as controlled substances; and that their use, unauthorized possession, purchase, or sale could subject students to suspension, expulsion and/or criminal prosecution.

The following minimum penalties are prescribed for any student athlete found in violation of the prohibited use of anabolic steroids:

1. For a first violation, suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the season.
2. For a second violation, suspension from school athletics for the remainder of the season and for the following season.
3. For a third violation, permanent suspension from school athletics. No student shall be eligible to resume participation in school athletics unless a medical determination has been submitted, verifying that no residual evidence of steroids exists.

Reasonable Suspicion/Testing

If based on the student's behavior, medical symptoms, vital signs or other observable factors, the building principal has reasonable suspicion that the student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the student may be required to submit to drug or alcohol testing. The testing may include but is not limited to the analysis of blood, urine, saliva, or the administration of a Breathalyzer test.

Dress Code

Policy 221 – adopted October 24, 2011

The Board recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of personal style and individual preference. The Board has the authority to impose limitations on students' dress in school. The Board will not interfere with the right of students and their parents/guardians to make decisions regarding their appearance, except when their choices disrupt the educational program of the schools or affect the health and safety of others.

Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing while participating in physical education classes, technical education, extracurricular activities, or other situations where special attire may be required to ensure the health or safety of the student.

The building principal or designee shall be responsible to monitor student dress and grooming and to enforce Board Policy and school rules governing student dress and grooming. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all rules implementing this policy impose only the minimum necessary restrictions on the exercise of the student's taste and individuality. Staff members shall be instructed to demonstrate by example positive attitude toward neatness, cleanliness, propriety, modesty, and good sense in attire and appearance. **These rules and guidelines can be changed at the discretion of the School Board and/or the Administration. The following is a list of guidelines and inappropriate articles of clothing or accessories which are expressly forbidden:**

GENERAL

1. Footwear must be worn. Shoes that may damage floors or inhibit safety are not permitted.
2. Shirts, t-shirts, patches, or other articles of clothing, including facemasks, with written and/or pictured references to drugs, alcohol, sex, tobacco products, and nudity are unacceptable. This shall include clothing with vulgar language, double meanings, or disrespectful references to religion, race, or ethnic origin.
3. Heavy winter jackets, gloves, and trench coats are prohibited during school hours. Please keep them in lockers.
4. Pants that are worn in such a manner as to expose underwear are unacceptable.
5. Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing and footwear while participating in physical education classes, industrial technology, extracurricular activities and other situations where special attire may be required to ensure health and/or safety of the student.
6. At the principal's discretion, "School Spirit Days" (i.e. Homecoming Week) may be held. Appropriate attire for these days will be determined by the building principal and announced/presented to the students prior to these days.

Tops

1. Tank tops are unacceptable style of dress for boys unless worn under another shirt. Sleeveless tops or dresses are permitted **with a two-inch minimum strap**. Spaghetti strap dresses must have a t-shirt underneath. Sleeveless

tops/dresses must have a tighter fit and high scoop armholes and neckline. Sleeveless tops with large or low-cut armholes are not permitted.

2. Any top determined by the principal or his designee to be too revealing is not acceptable. Students are asked to exhibit modesty in their dress. Examples of unacceptable clothing include mesh or see-through tops, very low-cut tops, half-shirts, and halter tops.

Pants / Shorts / Skirts / Skorts

1. Pants, shorts, skirts, skorts must be secured and worn no lower than the hip. Low riding/sagging style is not permitted. Any pants with holes determined by the principal or his/her designee to be too revealing are prohibited. In addition, excessive tearing, as determined by the principal or designee is prohibited. **NOTE:** This rule is subject to cooperation by students. Misuse of this rule will result in changes being made immediately (EX: rule rescinded).

2. Length of pants should not extend beyond the bottom of the shoe and should not drag on the floor.

3. Boxer shorts or undergarments worn as outerwear are not permitted.

4. All shorts, skirts, and skorts must be a reasonable length. Wearing a longer pair of Spandex shorts or other clothing under shorts, skirts, and skorts DOES NOT meet the reasonable requirement.

5. Shorts, skirts, skorts may not be fashioned so as to be revealing or offensive.

Footwear

1. Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing and footwear while participating in physical education classes, industrial technology, extra-curricular activities and other situations where special attire may be required to ensure health and/or safety of the student.

2. Any shoe that poses a safety hazard, as determined by the administration and/or school board, is not permitted.

Jewelry / Piercings

1. Piercings. Administrators and/or teachers will make reasonable requests of students to remove piercing if they pose a danger to the student's safety or the safety of others during class or in the hallways.

2. Consistent with the weapons policy, there shall be no chains worn, including wallet chains, other than those designated as jewelry. All necklaces/jewelry will not exceed ½" in width, and will be limited in length in the neckline area to be considered jewelry. All bracelets and watches must be snug fitting. There will be no safety pins, pointed studs, or pins worn on clothing, hats, book bags, etc., except for practical application.

Headwear / Hair

1. Hats, caps, bandanas, hoods, sunglasses, visors, sweatbands, and other head coverings are not permitted. They must be taken off upon entering the building and left in lockers.

2. Students are not permitted to carry headwear to classes or in the hallway during the school day.

3. Hair coloring of a fluorescent or distracting color shall not be permitted.

4. Hairstyle should be acceptable to the school setting.

Health and Hygiene

1. Any apparel that is judged to be unhealthy or unsanitary (i.e. clothing that is dirty and/or gives off a foul odor) is not permitted.

2. Each student is expected to maintain good personal hygiene.

Fighting

Fighting is forbidden at the West Branch High School. If one student punches, hits, slaps, kicks, pushes, bites, or chokes a second student, the second student is to move away and tell a teacher, counselor, nurse, or administrator. While students may take actions to protect themselves, under no conditions is retaliation (fighting back) permitted. Local law enforcement agencies will be contacted when fighting occurs.

A mandatory suspension of one (1) to nine (9) days shall be imposed for any student who willfully participates in, initiates, or instigates a fight on WBHS property during school hours, traveling to or from school, at a school bus stop, or at any school-sponsored event.

Hearings

Policy 233 – adopted October 24, 2011

Education is a statutory right, and students must be afforded all appropriate elements of due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing, which is a fundamental element of due process.

Harassment

Crime Code Citation §2709. Harassment: A person commits the crime of harassment when, with intent to harass, annoy, or alarm another, the person:

- 1) strikes, shoves, kicks or otherwise subjects the other person to physical contact, or attempts or threatens to do the same;
- 2) follows the other person in or about a public place or places;
- 3) engages in a course of conduct or repeated commits acts which serve no legitimate purpose;
- 4) communicates to or about such other persons any lewd, lascivious, threatening, or obscene words, language, drawings or caricatures;
- 5) communicates repeatedly in an anonymous manner;
- 6) communicates repeatedly at extremely inconvenient hours; or
- 7) communicates repeatedly in a manner other than specified in sections (4), (5) and (6).

Homeless Students

Policy 251 – adopted October 24, 2011

Authority

The Board recognizes the need to promptly identify homeless children and youths within the district, facilitate their immediate enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.[1][2][3]

The Board shall ensure that homeless children and youths have equal access to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students.[1][2][3][4]

The Board, authorizes the Superintendent to waive district policies, procedures and administrative regulations that create barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of homeless children and youths.[3]

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.[5][6]

Definitions

Enroll or Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[7]

Homeless children and youths mean individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:
[7][8]

1. Children and youths who are:

- a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or
 - d. Abandoned in hospitals.
2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
 3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
 4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
 5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations. School of origin is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.[6]

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.[7]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the High School Principal to serve as the district’s liaison for homeless children and youths.[6]

The district’s liaison shall ensure outreach and coordination with:[6]

1. Local social service agencies and other entities that provide services to homeless children and youths and families.
 2. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.
 3. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[9][10]
 4. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.
- The district’s liaison shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.[6]

The district’s liaison shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania’s Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[6]

Guidelines

Enrollment/Placement

Best Interest Determination -

In determining the best interest of a child or youth, the district shall:

1. Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.[6]
2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, health and safety, giving priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.[6]
3. If, after such consideration, the district determines that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth, the district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall include information regarding the right to appeal.[6]

Placement - In accordance with the child's or youth's best interest, the district shall continue to enroll a homeless student in his/her school of origin while s/he remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which s/he obtains permanent housing.[6]

Parents/Guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area where the student is actually living or other schools. [6]

The district's liaison shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the student in determining where s/he will be enrolled.[6]

The district shall provide the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of any district decision related to school selection or placement, including the right to appeal.[6]

Enrollment - The selected school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if:

1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.[3][11][12][13][14][15][16][17]

2. The application or enrollment deadline has passed during any period of homelessness.[6][11]

The district's liaison shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.[6][11][12][13][14][15][16][17]

The district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.[6]

Assignment -If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district shall administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's assignment within the school.[6][18]

Dispute Resolution -

If a dispute arises over eligibility, enrollment or school selection:[6]

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's liaison, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process.

2. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.

3. The district's liaison shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.

A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal a district's written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

Education Records

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information. [16] [17]

Comparable Services

Homeless students shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to: [1] [6] [19]

1. Transportation services. [20]
2. School nutrition programs. [21]
3. Career and technical education. [22]
4. Preschool programs.
5. Educational programs for which the homeless student meets the eligibility criteria, such as:
 - a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs. [23]
 - b. Programs for English Language Learners. [24]
 - c. Programs for students with disabilities. [10]
 - d. Programs for gifted and talented students. [25]

Transportation

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the school district. [1] [6] [20]

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation. [6]

Training

The district's liaison shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program. [6]

The district's liaison shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff. [6]

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to: [6]

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

Discriminatory Harassment

Harassment by students, employees or third parties on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy, handicap/disability or for participation in reports or investigations of alleged discrimination is a form of discrimination and is subject to this policy. A person who is not necessarily an intended victim or target of such harassment but is adversely affected by the offensive conduct may file a report of discrimination on his/her own behalf.

For purposes of this policy, **harassment** shall consist of unwelcome conduct such as graphic, written, electronic, verbal or nonverbal acts including offensive jokes, slurs, epithets and name-calling, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, or other conduct that may be harmful or humiliating or interfere with a person's school or school-related performance and which relates to an individual's or group's race, color, age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability when such conduct is:

1. Sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive; and
2. A reasonable person in the complainant's position would find that it creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment such that it deprives or adversely interferes with or limits an individual or group of the ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities or opportunities offered by a school.

Sexual Harassment

Policy 248 – adopted October 24, 2011

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, and/or inappropriate verbal or physical conduct. Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following: Verbal harassment or abuse, pressure for sexual activity, repeated remarks with sexual or demeaning implications, unwelcome touching, suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats.

Any person who alleges sexual harassment may file a complaint with the building principal. A substantiated charge will result in disciplinary action. All complaints will be sent to the Title IX coordinator for action.

Tobacco

Policy 222 – adopted October 24, 2011; last revised April 27, 2020

State law defines the term **tobacco product** to broadly encompass not only tobacco but also vaping products including Juuls and other electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Tobacco products, for purposes of this policy and in accordance with state law, shall be defined to include the following: [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)

1. Any product containing, made or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to, a cigarette, cigar, little cigar, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff and snus.
2. Any electronic device that delivers nicotine or another substance to a person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, electronic nicotine delivery systems, an electronic cigarette, a cigar, a pipe and a hookah.
3. Any product containing, made or derived from either:
 - a. Tobacco, whether in its natural or synthetic form; or
 - b. Nicotine, whether in its natural or synthetic form, which is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration as a deemed tobacco product.
4. Any component, part or accessory of the product or electronic device listed in this definition, whether or not sold separately. (see **West Branch Areas School District Policy 222 on the website for further information**).

Crime Code Citation §6306.1. Use of tobacco in schools prohibited. A pupil who possesses or uses tobacco in a school building, a school bus or on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district commits a summary offense.

Weapons

Purpose

The Board recognizes the importance of a safe school environment relative to the educational process. Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and is prohibited by law.

Definitions

Weapon - the term shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.[1][2]

Possession - a student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; and under the student's control while on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is coming to or from school.

Authority

The Board prohibits students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school district buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity or while the student is coming to or from school.[2][3]

The Board shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law and Board policy. The Superintendent may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.[2][4]

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, the district shall take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[2][5][6][7][8][9]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall react promptly to information and knowledge concerning possession of a weapon. Such action shall be in compliance with state law and regulations and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials and the district's emergency preparedness plan.[11][12]

Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee shall immediately report incidents involving weapons on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.[11][13][2][14][15]

The Superintendent or designee shall notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Superintendent or designee shall document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian.^{[14][16]}

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent shall annually, by July 31, report all incidents involving possession of a weapon to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form.^[13]

The building principal shall annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Board policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, who shall prescribe special conditions or administrative regulations to be followed.^[2]

In accordance with federal law, possession or discharge of a firearm in, on, or within 1,000 feet of school grounds is prohibited. Violations shall be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.^{[17][18]}

Transfer Students

When the school district receives a student who transfers from a public or private school during an expulsion period for an offense involving a weapon, the district may assign that student to an alternative assignment or may provide alternative education, provided the assignment does not exceed the expulsion period.^[2]

High School Dance Policy

General Information

1. For all informal dances, students in grades nine through twelve are permitted to attend. NO middle school or elementary students will be allowed to attend high school dances under any circumstances. Some formal/semi-formal dances have specific age/grade requirements; for example, to attend the West Branch Jr./Sr. Prom, a student or guest must be in Grade 9 through 20 years of age. No attendee can be 21 years of age or older. Only students who meet these requirements are permitted to attend the dance. This information will be given to the students at the time they sign up for the dance. No guests over the age of twenty will be permitted to any school dance.
2. Some formal/semi-formal dances have specific dress code requirements. This information will be given to the students at the time they sign up for the dance. Students who do not follow these requirements will not be permitted entrance to the dance.
3. A West Branch student may sign in ONE guest for a dance and meet all deadlines for registering. The student will need to fill out the Guest Permit Form. Guests must be able to show proof of age upon request and follow our grade level requirements. Students are to show their ID cards to any chaperone(s) who request(s) to see them.
4. Upon entering the dance, all students are to proceed immediately to the "money" table in order to enter the dance. There is to be no loitering in the lobby. Students are either attending the dance, or they are to leave school property.
5. Students are to conduct themselves according to all school policies, rules, and guidelines.
6. Students will be removed from the dance for any infraction for which the advisor(s) in charge deem(s) necessary. Students removed from the dance will immediately call for transportation home, will sit on a bench in the front hall with a chaperone or security guard, and will sign out when leaving. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the student's parents/guardians will be contacted by the advisors.

7. A student in grade nine must stay at the dance until it is over, or until his/her parent/guardian notifies the head chaperone(s) that the student is leaving.
8. All students leaving before the dance is over will sign out, and must leave school property immediately.
9. Drinking and eating are permitted in the cafeteria during a dance. Students are expected to be responsible for any garbage they generate. Trash cans are always available.
10. The advisor(s) will determine the appropriateness of dance styles and reserve(s) the right, at any time, to stop the music and/or end the dance itself. "Moshing," slamming into one another, will not be tolerated!

If students have any questions about rules/policies for dances, they should contact the advisor and/or the principal.

Disciplinary Levels

Level 1: Students who have been documented as displaying guidance and SAP concerns. Level 1 behavior will not receive consequences for these behaviors. The guidance concerns are logged so that students' teachers and guidance counselors may track changes in student behavior that could be related to mental health issues or significant changes in students' environment that could have an effect on educational success.

Examples of Level 1 Behaviors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated from Peers • Hygiene Concerns • Emotional/Crying in Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden Change in Grades/Performance • Deteriorating Appearance • Not Dressing for PE Class
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Level 2 (Minors): The student exhibits misbehavior that impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school. Many of these acts of misbehavior will be handled by the faculty or staff member who observes the infraction, while repeated offenses may require administrative or guidance office support.

Example of Level 2 Behaviors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cell Phone Violation • Inappropriate Language • Public Display of Affection • Dress Code Violation • Computer Misuse (minor) • Inappropriate Language • Disrespect to students/staff • Safety Violation (LABS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tardy to Class (Office Handled 1-4 Warnings) • Cafeteria Disturbance • Academic Dishonesty • Horseplay • Defiance • Misuse of Pass
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Level 3 (Major/Office Level): The student exhibits misbehavior that is serious enough or frequent enough that it disrupts the learning of others. Many of these infractions will be the continuation of Level 2 misbehaviors because consequences at that level have failed to correct the problem.

Examples of Level 3 Behaviors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment – Verbal or Physical • Bus Violation • Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated Documented Minors • Skipping Class • Minor Altercation
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Level 4 (Major/Office Level): When a student demonstrates a Level 4 behavioral concern, the behavior should immediately be logged and the office administrator should immediately provide an office-based consequence. Offenses in this level could result in police action.

Examples of Level 4 Behaviors:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeated Harassment • Leaving School Property • Weapons Policy Violation • Tobacco Violation, including vaping • Drug Policy Violation • Disregard for School Authority, including persistent violation of school policy and rules. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terroristic Threats • Fight • Simple Assault • Aggravated Assault • Criminal Mischief • Repeated Level 3 Behaviors
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NOTE: Violations of the school discipline code may result in one or more of the following disciplinary options/responses at the discretion of the building level administrator.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal reprimand • Withdrawal of Privileges • Written warning • Guidance Referral • Lunch detention • Parental Contact • Detention • In-school suspension • Out-of-school suspension (1-10 days) • Restitution or Community Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary or complete removal from class • Referral to appropriate law enforcement agencies • Charges under the criminal code • Drug and alcohol policy • 10-day full suspension with an informal hearing • Referral for psychological services • Referral to SAP • Referral to outside agency • Referral to an alternative education program • Formal hearing with school board/expulsion
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NOTE: Level I, II, III and IV examples and disciplinary options are not limited to those provided. The administration reserves the right to assign a level offense to an unlisted infraction or reassign the level of offense dependent upon its severity and frequency. In addition, students will be referred to alternative education settings if behavior is consistently showing disregard for policy and school rules.

DISCIPLINE SANCTION CHART

The chart below details guidelines for discipline based on listed offenses. Discipline given to students may be increased or decreased based on the specific infraction(s) and at the discretion of the principal. Also, the chart below is a guideline and may not include all scenarios that can occur. Level 1 offenses are submitted to the guidance office separately.

Level 2 (Minor Referrals)

Offense	Progression of Disciplinary Measures			
Cafeteria Disturbance (Minor)	Documented Warning Assigned Seating (Temporary)	Assigned Seating Parent Contact	Assigned Seating Lunch Detention Principal Meeting	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense
Cheating on Tests/Assignments	Grade of 0% is assigned for the test and/or assignment Parent notification SAP			
Dress Code Violation	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Cell/Electronics Violation	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Horseplay	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Inappropriate Language	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Computer Misuse	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Defiance	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Misuse of Pass	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact Restricted Movement	Restricted Movement (11+ days)	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense
Safety Violation (minor)	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	
Public Display of Affection	Documented Warning	Documented Parent Contact	Repeated Offenses – Becomes a Level 3 Offense	

Level 3 (Office Referrals)

Offense	Progression of Disciplinary Measures			
Tardy to School – after 8:00 AM and up until 8:46 AM	1 – 4 tardies (verbal, verbal, verbal, and written warning)	5 tardies – 1 hour detention	6 tardies – 2 hours detention	7+ tardies – 2 hours detention Truancy Elimination Plan
Tardy to Class – late to class no more than five minutes	Tardies are recorded and sent to the office for all classes. Verbal Warning (Teacher)	Verbal Warning (Principal) Written Warning 5-8 tardies – 1 hour detention	9-11 tardies – 2 hrs detention 12-15 tardies – 3 hrs detention Behavior Plan	ISS OSS
Repeated Level 2 Offense	Written Warning Meeting with Principal 1 hour detention	2-3 hours detention/1-3 days ISS	3-5 Days ISS Detention hours	Becomes a Level 4 Offense
Bus Violation	Written Warning Meeting with Principal 1 hour detention	Loss of Riding Privilege for 3 days or more	Loss of Riding Privilege for 5 days or more	Becomes a Level 4 Offense
Parking Violations	Written Warning Meeting with Principal 1 hour detention	Loss of Riding Privilege for 3 days or more	Loss of Riding Privilege for 5 days or more	
Harassment – Verbal/Physical	Written Warning Detention ISS/OSS	Detention ISS/OSS Possible Police Contact	Becomes a Level 4 Offense	
Minor Altercation	Written Warning Parent Notification ISS possible	Parent Notification ISS Police Referral	Becomes a Level 4 Offense	
Skipping Detention, ISS, etc.	Additional Consequence (hour for hour or day for day)	Additional Consequence (hour for hour or day for day)	Becomes a Level 4 Offense	
Skipping Class	3 hours detention ISS 0% on assignments for the class(es) skipped	3 hours detention ISS 0% on assignments for the class(es) skipped	3 hours detention ISS 0% on assignments for the class(es) skipped	Becomes a Level 4 Offense

Level 4 (Office Referrals)

Offense	Progression of Disciplinary Measures			
Fighting	3-10 days OSS Police Contact Parent Contact SAP	3-10 days OSS Police Contact Parent Contact SAP	Any fight or other physical altercation can reach other levels of discipline and/or police involvement including, but not limited to, disorderly conduct, harassment, aggravated assault, simple assault, or terroristic threats.	
Drug Policy Violation	Varies/See Handbook Section on Drug Policy pp. 52-54.			
Tobacco Violation	Fine from District Magistrate Vape class successfully completed within 3 days. If class is not completed, a 3-day suspension will be issued.	Fine from District Magistrate 3 days OSS	Fine from District Magistrate 4 days OSS	
Disorderly Conduct	0-10 days OSS Police Contact Parent Contact			
Weapons Violation	OSS Police Contact Parent Contact Expulsion Hearing			
Leaving School Property	Parent Contact Police Contact Minimum 3 hours Detention 0% for classwork missed			
Criminal Mischief/Vandalism	0-10 days OSS Police Contact Parent Contact	0-10 days OSS Police Contact Parent Contact		
Repeated 3 Behaviors	OSS Loss of Privileges	OSS Loss of Privileges		
Disregard for School Authority, including persistent violation of school policy and rules	Minimum 5 days suspension Parent Conference	Minimum 10 days suspension Parent Conference Informal Hearing		

DRUG POLICY CHART OF CATEGORIES

Situation / Category	Immediate Action/Investigation /Notification of Parents/Notification of Police/Disposition of Substance/Discipline and/or Rehabilitation
<p>1. A student volunteers information about personal drug or alcohol use and asks for help.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: The student is informed of services available, encouraged to seek help. No disciplinary action will be taken against students seeking help.</p> <p>Investigation: A staff member will request advice from the SAP Team, counselor, nurse, or principal.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Only with the consent of the student, unless there is clear and imminent danger.</p> <p>Notification of Police: No</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: N/A</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: No disciplinary action will be taken against students asking for help; possible referral to the SAP program.</p>
<p>2. A student contacts a staff member in regard to the drug use or alcohol use of another student.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Student who contacts a staff member is encouraged to get the student with a problem to personally seek help.</p> <p>Investigation: A staff member will request advice from the SAP Team, counselor, nurse, or principal.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: N/A</p> <p>Notification of Police: No</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: N/A</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: No disciplinary action will be taken against students asking for help; possible referral to the SAP program.</p>
<p>3. The possible use of drugs, alcohol, or mood-altering substance by a student is indicated, but there is no evidence of violation of law or school regulations.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member writes an anecdotal report of the incident.</p> <p>Investigation: The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Notification of behavior and/or performance indicators if warranted.</p> <p>Notification of Police: No</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: N/A</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: Referral to the SAP Team.</p>

Drug Policy Chart of Categories continued

Situation / Category	Immediate Action/Investigation /Notification of Parents/Notification of Police/Disposition of Substance/Discipline and/or Rehabilitation
<p>4. The student has a drug, mood-altering substance, alcohol-related medical emergency.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Standard health and safety procedures will be followed. Parents will be summoned as soon as possible. Student will be transported to a medical facility at parental expense.</p> <p>Investigation: The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Parents notified as soon as possible.</p> <p>Notification of Police: Yes. Police will be notified.</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for further proceedings.</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: Referral to the SAP Team upon evidence of violation. Refer to appropriate situational category.</p>
<p>5. A student possesses drugs, mood-altering substances, look-alike drugs, paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, or alcohol. This includes aerosol cans, gasoline, flammable glue, paint and paint thinners, CO2, butane fluid, or any other flammable product, at school or any function.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member immediately confiscates the material and writes an anecdotal report of the incident.</p> <p>Investigation: The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Parental conference at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.</p> <p>Notification of Police: Yes. Police will be notified.</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for further proceedings.</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: 0-10-day suspension. Formal School Board expulsion hearing may be held. Referral to the SAP Team and abide by their recommendation which may include an assessment by a licensed D/A assessor and compliance with recommendation of the assessor. Loss of all extracurricular activities for a period of 45 school days.</p>

Drug Policy Chart of Categories continued

Situation / Category	Immediate Action/Investigation /Notification of Parents/Notification of Police/Disposition of Substance/Discipline and/or Rehabilitation
<p>6. A student is caught AGAIN in possession, use of, or under the influence of drugs, mood-altering substances, look-alike drugs, paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, or alcohol.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member immediately confiscates the material and writes an anecdotal report of the incident.</p> <p>Investigation: The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Parental conference at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.</p> <p>Notification of Police: Yes. Police will be notified.</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for further proceedings.</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: 0-10-day suspension. Formal School Board expulsion hearing may be held. Referral to the SAP Team and abide by their recommendation which may include an assessment by a licensed D/A assessor and compliance with recommendation of the assessor. Loss of all extracurricular activities for a period of one calendar year.</p>
<p>7. A student is distributing drugs, mood-altering substances, look-alike drugs, paraphernalia, anabolic steroids, or alcohol.</p>	<p>Immediate Action: Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member immediately confiscates the material and writes an anecdotal report of the incident.</p> <p>Investigation: The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions.</p> <p>Notification of Parents: Parental conference at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.</p> <p>Notification of Police: Yes. Police will be notified.</p> <p>Disposition of Substance: Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for further proceedings.</p> <p>Discipline/Rehabilitation: 0-10-day suspension. Formal School Board expulsion hearing may be held. Referral to the SAP Team and abide by their recommendation which may include an assessment by a licensed D/A assessor and compliance with recommendation of the assessor. Loss of all extracurricular activities for a period of one calendar year.</p>

APPENDIX

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

For the purpose of this document, references to West Branch Area School District will be referred to as WBASD. References to the Acceptable Use Policy will be referred to as AUP.

The WBASD supports the use of the Internet and its own intranet, including, but not limited to the district owned instructional and operational programs that are designed to foster learning, reaching, and the daily operations through communications, access to information, research, and collaboration.

WBASD's proxy servers may be configured to prevent users from connecting with certain Internet locations. Users of WBASD computers who discover they have connected with a location that contains sexually explicit, racist, violent, or other potentially offensive material must immediately disconnect from that location. The ability to connect with a specific location does not itself imply that users of WBASD systems are permitted to visit a location.

The use WBASD owned network facilities shall be consistent with the board approved curriculum adopted by the district as well as supporting the various instructional needs, learning styles, abilities, and development of both students and staff.

This policy applies to all users (i.e. Administrators, Teachers, Aides, Substitutes, Students, etc.) who use the Internet with the WBASD computing or networking resources. All Internet users are expected to be familiar with and comply with this policy. Questions about the policy should be directed to your building principal, technology facilitator, or superintendent.

- All users should be aware that technology is not flawless. Therefore, WBASD will not be held responsible for the loss or corruption of data contained within the WBASD network. Although every effort will be made to digitally protect, through backup technology, all information stored within the network, it is the individual user's responsibility to back up data periodically to a multitude of media, including, but not limited to: hard-drive, network drive, CD medium, and all other types of medium.
- The school district will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyber bullying awareness and response.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that all users will be protected from harassment, unwanted contact, programs or websites of a malicious intent, threatening or unwelcome contact, however, users of the WBASD network should be aware that the Administration of WBASD cannot identify all possible sources of such services nor block access to all possible offensive sites.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that information technologies will be used by both students and staff in a safe, ethical, and legal manner.
- The district Superintendent or his designee will have the authority to determine inappropriate content and the ramifications for inappropriate usage of the computer network.

- The District Superintendent or his designee shall be responsible for implementing technology and procedures to determine acceptable use of district owned technologies. This procedure may include but in no way is limited to:

1. Utilizing filtering hardware/software to protect students and staff from objectionable, illegal, or inappropriate content. These safety measures shall effectively address the following:

- Control of access by minors to inappropriate content on the Internet.
- Safety and security of students while using electronic communications.
- Prevention of unauthorized online access by students, including “hacking”, “cracking” or any other derivative of these types of activities.
- Unauthorized use, disclosure, and dissemination of personal information.
- Restriction of student’s access to materials that may be harmful.

2. Monitoring online activities of students.

3. Use of software/hardware to remotely view, capture, or log computer usage for determination of inappropriate usage.

- All WBASD Network usage is considered a privilege, not a right that can be terminated if the administration of WBASD feels that a user or group of users has violated any portion of the AUP.
- All users of the WBASD owned network are expected to act in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with district policy, local, state, and federal law.
- All computer communication system and all communications stored, received, saved, transferred, or contained within the WBASD network is to be considered the property of the WBASD.
- WBASD Administration reserves the right to monitor the use of the WBASD network, including, but not limited to Internet use, files, programs, email, and computer systems to ensure compliance with the AUP. (Acceptable Use Policy).
- All members of the WBASD will be granted access after undertaking an internet safety class. This class will be to educate them on appropriate online behavior and Internet use.
- All school owned computer/devices must be filtered, whether it’s used on school property or off, or used by an adult or student.
- Any personal- owned computer/device must be filtered if using school or library Internet access.
- All users will be required to change their password on a regular basis (i.e., every 30 days).
- Passwords should meet the minimum syntax requirements of eight characters and include alpha, numeric, and special characters.

Homeless Liaison Letter

Attention Parents and Guardians

Federal guidelines, as set forth in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, require that local school identify name children who are homeless. The federal mandate, and the intention of West Branch S/D is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children. Children who are homeless, including those living with others, may qualify for assistance with school lunch, with school supplies/materials, with tutoring, and with transportation so that they can remain in their school of origin.

If you believe your child(ren) may qualify for this service, please contact the principal of your child(ren)'s school. You may also contact Dave Williamson at (814) 345-5615 extension 1006.

Homeless children may be identified as living in the following situations:

- Public or private shelters;
- Public or private places not designated for/or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations such as vehicles, parks, motels, campgrounds, etc.;
- Living with a parent(s) in a domestic violence shelter;
- Individuals and/or families living with relatives or friends due to a lack of housing;
- Living in transitional housing programs;
- Runaway children (under age 18) and children who have been abandoned or forced out of the home by parents or other caretakers. They may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies, or may live alone on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends or acquaintances. This also includes such youth from 18 to 21 of age who may still be eligible for educational services in regular or special education;
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing;
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care; or
- School-age, unwed mothers or expectant mothers living in houses for unwed mothers when they have no other available living accommodations.

If your living situation changes during the school year or over the summer, and you and your child(ren) become homeless, please be sure to contact the schools. We will work with you so that your child(ren)'s education is disrupted as little as possible.

Sincerely,

Dave Williamson

Homeless Program Liaison

Asbestos Management Plan Letter



Mark Mitchell

Superintendent

516 Allport Cutoff

Morrisdale PA, 16858

Phone - 814.345.5615 x 4000

Fax - 814.345.5220

www.westbranch.org

Mark Mitchell, Superintendent

Dear Parents / Guardians:

This letter is to give notice and to comply with the AHERA rules that the West Branch School District has an asbestos management plan in place that was completed by a certified environmental service company. This plan is in place to provide a safe environment for our students and staff. The company completing the plan for the district was Volz Environmental Services, Inc. of Pittsburgh Pa.

The Management Plan which consists of the AHERA 3 Year Reinspection Report and Management Plan Update for the district satisfies all requirements of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) as they pertain to 40 CFR Part 763, Section 763.85 of the Asbestos – Containing Materials in Schools, Final Rule and Notice. The Management Plan is kept in the District's Administration Business Office and is available for inspection.

The District's contact person concerning the Asbestos Management Plan is Mr. David Catherman – Maintenance Supervisor.

Sincerely,

Mr. Mark Mitchell

Superintendent

Integrated Pest Management Program Letter



Mark Mitchell

Superintendent

516 Allport Cutoff

Morrisdale PA, 16858

Phone - 814.345.5615 x 4000

Fax - 814.345.5220

www.westbranch.org

Mark Mitchell, Superintendent

Dear Parents / Guardians:

West Branch Area School District has an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program for control of insects, rodents and weeds. Our IPM Program focuses on making the school building and grounds an unfavorable habitat for pests by removing food and water sources and eliminating pests' hiding and breeding places. We accomplish this through routine cleaning and maintenance. We monitor the school buildings and grounds to detect any pests that are present. The pest monitoring team consists of our building maintenance, office, and teaching staff, as well as our students. Pest sightings are reported to our IPM Coordinator who evaluates the 'pest problem' and determines the appropriate pest management techniques to address the problem. The techniques can include increased sanitation, modifying storage practices, sealing entry points, physically removing the pest, etc.

From time to time, it may be necessary to use chemicals to control a pest problem. Chemicals will only be used when necessary and will not be routinely applied. When chemicals are used, the school will try to use the least toxic products possible. Applications will be made only when teachers and students do not have access to the area(s) being treated. Notices will be posted in these areas 72 hours prior to application and for two days following the application.

Parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school may request prior notification of specific pesticide applications made at the school. To receive notification, you must request to be placed on the school's 'Notification Registry'. If you would like to be placed on this registry, please send a signed letter to your child's principal requesting to be added to the registry. Each year the district will prepare a new Notification Registry.

If a chemical application must be made to control an emergency pest problem, notice will be provided by telephone to any parent or guardian who has requested such notification. Exemptions to this notification include disinfectants and anti-microbial products; self-containerized baits placed in areas not accessible to students, and gel type baits placed in cracks, crevices or voids.

This letter conforms to the requirements of the Integrated Pest Management Act 35 of 2002 and assures parents and guardians of our commitment to continue providing the safest atmosphere possible for our students. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. David Catherman, IPM Coordinator at 345-5615.

Sincerely,

Mr. Mark Mitchell
Superintendent

Title 18: Use of tobacco products in schools prohibited.

(a) Pupils.--A pupil commits a summary offense if the pupil possesses or uses a tobacco product:

- (1) in a school building;
- (2) on a school bus or other vehicle owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district; or
- (3) on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district.

(a.1) Other persons.--

- (1) Any person, other than a pupil, commits a summary offense if the person uses a tobacco product:
 - (i) in a school building;
 - (ii) on a school bus or other vehicle owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district; or
 - (iii) on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district.

(2) The board of school directors may designate certain areas on property owned by, leased by or under the control of the school district where tobacco product use by persons other than pupils is permitted. The areas must be no less than 50 feet from school buildings, stadiums or bleachers.

(a.2) Policy.--

(1) The board of school directors shall establish a policy to enforce the prohibition of tobacco product use under this section and may further establish policy relating to tobacco product use at school-sponsored events that are held off school premises.

(2) The board of school directors shall notify employees, pupils and parents of the policy developed in accordance with paragraph (1) by publishing the information in a student handbook and parent newsletter and on posters or other efficient means.

(b) Grading.--A pupil who commits an offense under this section shall be subject to prosecution initiated by the local school district and shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than \$50 for the benefit of the school district in which such offending pupil resides and to pay court costs. When a pupil is charged with violating subsection (a), the court may admit the offender to an adjudication alternative as authorized under 42 Pa.C.S. § 1520 (relating to adjudication alternative program) in lieu of imposing the fine.

(c) Nature of offense.--A summary offense under this section shall not be a criminal offense of record, shall not be reportable as a criminal act and shall not be placed on the criminal record of the offending school-age person if any such record exists.

(c.1) Preemption.--This section preempts any municipal ordinance or school board regulation to the contrary.

(d) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

"Electronic cigarette." An electronic device that delivers nicotine or other substances through vaporization and inhalation.

"Electronic nicotine delivery system" or "ENDS." A product or device used, intended for use or designed for the purpose of ingesting a nicotine product. The term includes an electronic cigarette.

"Nicotine product." A product that contains or consists of nicotine in a form that can be ingested by chewing, smoking, inhaling or any other means.

"Pupil." A person between the ages of 6 and 21 years who is enrolled in school.

"School." A school operated by a joint board, board of directors or school board where pupils are enrolled in compliance with Article XIII of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, including a career and technical school, charter school and intermediate unit.

"Tobacco product." As follows:

(1) The term includes:

(i) Any product containing, made or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed or ingested by

any other means, including, but not limited to, a cigarette, a cigar, a little cigar, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff and snus.

(ii) Any electronic device that delivers nicotine or another substance to a person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, electronic nicotine delivery systems, an electronic cigarette, a cigar, a pipe and a hookah.

(iii) Any product containing, made or derived from either:

(A) Tobacco, whether in its natural or synthetic form; or

(B) Nicotine, whether in its natural or synthetic form, which is regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration as a deemed tobacco product.

(iv) Any component, part or accessory of the product or electronic device under subparagraphs (i), (ii) and (iii), whether or not sold separately.

(2) The term does not include:

(i) A product that has been approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for sale as a tobacco cessation product or for other therapeutic purposes where the product is marketed and sold solely for such approved purpose, so long as the product is not inhaled.

(ii) A device under paragraph (1)(ii) or (iii) if sold by a dispensary licensed under the act of April 17, 2016 (P.L.84, No.16), known as the Medical Marijuana Act.

(Dec. 4, 1996, P.L.902, No.145, eff. 60 days; Nov. 27, 2019, P.L.669, No.93, eff. 60 days; Nov. 27, 2019, P.L.759, No.111, eff. July 1, 2020)

2019 Amendments. Act 93 amended the section heading and subsecs. (a) and (d) and added subsecs. (a.1), (a.2) and (c.1) and Act 111 amended the section heading and subsecs. (a) and (d) and added subsecs. (a.1), (a.2) and (c.1). Act 111 overlooked the amendment by Act 93, but the amendments do not conflict in substance and have both been given effect in setting forth the text of section 6306.1.

1996 Amendment. Act 145 added section 6306.1.

Homeless Students: Policy 251

Policy 251 – adopted October 24, 2011

Purpose

The Board recognizes the challenges encountered by students experiencing homelessness, foster care and other educational instability. The Board is committed to facilitating the immediate enrollment; eliminating barriers to the attendance, education and graduation; and providing additional supports in compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and Board policy, for such students.[1][2][3][4][5] [6][7][8]

Authority

The Board directs the district to collaborate with school staff, other school districts, local agencies and other entities in supporting the needs of students experiencing educational instability.

The Board shall ensure that students experiencing educational instability have equal access to the same educational programs, activities and services provided to other district students.[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to waive specific requirements in Board policies, procedures and administrative regulations to the extent that they create barriers for the enrollment and attendance of students experiencing educational instability. Such waivers include, but are not limited to, requirements regarding:[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

1. Dress code.[9]

2. Transportation.[10]

3. School-sponsored or extracurricular activities for which students meet placement and qualification requirements, including, but not limited to, clubs, athletics, performing arts, class trips, social events, career and technical education, internships and specialized classes.[11][12][13][14][15] [16][17]

4. Fees related to school-sponsored or extracurricular activity participation fees, and other fees including, but not limited to, school identification (badges, cards, etc.), uniforms, materials, lost or damaged items, athletic physical exams, parking or driving, food services, library, locker or padlock rental or replacement, summer school or credit recovery, technology and graduation regalia.[9][13][14][15][18] [19] [20][21][22]

5. Graduation.[19]

6. Registration deadlines.

It is the policy of the Board that no student shall be discriminated against, segregated or stigmatized based on their status as a student experiencing educational instability.

Definitions

Student Experiencing Educational Instability means a student who has experienced one (1) or more changes in school enrollment during a single school year due to any of the following: [4]

1. Homelessness.[1][3][Z]

2. An adjudication of:[23][24]

a. Dependency relating to child protective services and juvenile matters;

b. Delinquency, if disclosed by the student's parent/guardian; or

c. As part of court-ordered services under a voluntary placement or custody agreement.

A student experiencing foster care may also qualify as a student experiencing educational instability as defined above, if such circumstances apply.[25]

Enroll or Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.[26]

Additional costs means the difference between what the district spends to transport a resident student to the student's assigned school and the cost to transport a child in foster care to the child's school of origin.

Foster care means twenty-four (24) hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions and pre-adoptive homes. A child is in foster care in accordance with this definition regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are made by the state, tribal or local agency for the care of the child, whether adoption subsidy payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption or whether there is federal matching of any payments that are made.[25]

Homeless children and youths means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:[26]

1. Children and youths who are:

a. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason;

b. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

c. Living in emergency, transitional or domestic violence shelters; or

d. Abandoned in hospitals;

2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings;
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above; and
5. School-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.

School of origin is the school in which the student experiencing educational instability was last enrolled.

- The school of origin for a homeless child or youth - the last school in which the homeless child or youth was enrolled when permanently housed or the school in which the homeless child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool.[27]
- The school of origin for a child in foster care - the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin is the school the child is attending immediately prior to each change in placement. [8]
- When the homeless child or youth, or child in foster care, completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall become the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason. [26]

Delegation of Responsibility

The Board designates the Pupil Services Coordinator to serve as the district's point of contact for students experiencing educational instability.[4][5][27]

The name and contact information of the district's point of contact shall be included in the student's education records and provided to the student's education decision maker.[4]

The district's point of contact shall ensure outreach and coordination with the following, as appropriate to each individual student's needs: [4][5][27]

1. Local children and youth agency to:
 - a. Establish formal mechanisms to ensure that the district is promptly notified when a child enters foster care or changes foster care placements;
 - b. Develop a protocol on how to make best interest determinations; and
 - c. Develop and coordinate transportation procedures.
2. Other local service agencies and entities that provide services to students experiencing educational instability.
3. Other school districts on issues of prompt identification, transfer of records, transportation and other inter-district activities.
4. District staff responsible for the provision of services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.[11][28]
5. State and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies.

The district's point of contact, in consultation with the school counselor, school social worker, home and school visitor or school psychologist and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team or Section 504 Team, shall: [4]

1. Facilitate the student's expedited consultation with the school counselor or other mental health professionals, as appropriate.
2. Facilitate the prompt placement of the student in appropriate courses.
3. Connect the student with educational services that meet the student's specific needs.
4. Immediately request the prior school entity, county agency and the student's education decision maker to provide the complete student information and records, including an IEP or Section 504 service agreement, if applicable. Within ten (10) business days, the prior school entity located within Pennsylvania, including schools with residential placements, shall provide the requested information and records to ensure proper transfer of course credits, grades and an IEP or Section 504 service agreement, if applicable.
5. Develop and execute a graduation plan in collaboration with the student in grades nine (9) through twelve (12). The graduation plan shall be customized to meet the specific needs of the student and shall detail the courses necessary for on-time graduation and transition to postsecondary education or the workforce. The graduation plan shall be included in the student's education records.

Additional Responsibilities to Support Homeless Students -

The district's point of contact shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens. Such notice shall be provided in a manner and form understandable to the parents/guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.[27].

The district's point of contact shall provide reliable, valid and comprehensive data to the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.[27]

Training

The district's point of contact shall provide professional development and training to school staff on the education needs of students experiencing educational instability.

Additional Training to Support Homeless Students -

The district's point of contact shall participate in professional development programs and other technical assistance activities offered by the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.[27]

The district's point of contact shall arrange professional development programs for school staff, including office staff.[27]

School personnel providing services to homeless children and youths, including school enrollment staff, shall receive professional development and support to: [27]

1. Improve identification of homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths;
2. Understand the rights of such children, including requirements for immediate enrollment and transportation; and
3. Heighten the awareness of, and capacity to respond to, the educational needs of such children.

Guidelines

Students enrolled in this district experiencing educational instability shall be provided support and services, as appropriate to each individual student's needs, in accordance with Board policy.[4]

Minimal documentation shall be required for a student experiencing educational instability to qualify for supports and services. Information used to determine that a student is experiencing educational instability may be confirmed verbally, in writing or by another manner by shelter providers, outreach workers, case managers, juvenile probation officers and others.

Parents/Guardians and students have the authority to determine what information shall be shared with the district.

Information related to the student's educational instability status shall be confidential and disclosed by the point of contact or other administrators only to other school staff who have a legitimate need to know unless authorized by the student or parent/guardian.[29][30]

Enrollment

Except when an unaccompanied youth or the parents/guardians of a homeless youth request otherwise, it shall be presumed that a student experiencing educational instability shall continue to be enrolled in their school of origin unless it is determined that it is not in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin.[5][27]

In accordance with the homeless child's or youth's best interest, the district shall continue to enroll a homeless student in the student's school of origin within the district while the student remains homeless and through the end of the academic year in which the student obtains permanent housing.[27]

An unaccompanied youth or the parents/guardians of a homeless student may request enrollment in any grade-appropriate school within the district regardless of the district attendance area where the student is actually living or a school of origin in another district.[27]

The district's point of contact shall assist an unaccompanied youth in placement or enrollment decisions, giving priority to the views of the student in determining where the student will be enrolled.[27]

Best Interest Determination -

The best interest determination shall be made in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, court orders and established local procedures.

In making a best interest determination, the district shall:[5][27]

1. In the case of a homeless child or unaccompanied youth, give priority to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
2. Consider student-centered factors related to impact of mobility on achievement, education, appropriateness of the current educational setting, health and safety, and proximity to living arrangements including foster care placement.

The cost of transportation shall not be used as a factor in the best interest determination.

Documentation related to the best interest determination shall be maintained in the student's education record.[29][30]

Timeliness of Enrollment -

When a school receives a student experiencing educational instability, the school shall immediately enroll the student and begin instruction, even if:[4][5][Z][29][30][31][32][33][34] [35]

1. The student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. [27][31]
2. The application or enrollment deadline has passed.[27][31][32]

The district's point of contact shall immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic or other records.[27]

The district may require a parent/guardian to submit contact information.

Grade Level Assignment -

If the district is unable to determine the student's grade level due to missing or incomplete records, the district may administer tests or utilize appropriate means to determine the student's assignment within the school. [36]

Dispute Resolution

If a dispute involving a student experiencing educational instability arises, the concern shall be addressed and/or resolved at the lowest appropriate level in accordance with Board policy, unless otherwise stated below.[37]

Dispute Resolution for Homeless Students -

If the district determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian, the district shall provide the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination. The explanation shall be in a manner and form understandable to the unaccompanied youth or parent/guardian and shall include information regarding the right to appeal. [27]

If a dispute arises over eligibility, enrollment or school selection:[27]

1. The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's point of contact, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process.
2. The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
3. The district's point of contact shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute.

A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program.

Dispute Resolution for Students in Foster Care -

If a dispute arises over the appropriate school placement for a child in foster care, to the extent feasible and appropriate, the child shall remain in their school of origin, pending resolution of the dispute. [2] [38]

Education Records

Information about a student's educational instability shall be treated as a student education record subject to the protections of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and shall not be deemed to be directory information.[29] [30][39]

The district may disclose personally identifiable information from the education records of a student without written consent of the parent/guardian or the eligible student if the disclosure is: [29][30][39]

1. To comply with a court order authorizing the disclosure of education records in a case where a parent is a party to a proceeding involving child abuse or neglect or a dependency matter.
2. To an agency caseworker or other representative of a state or local child welfare agency, or tribal organization, who has the right to access a student's case plan, as defined and determined by the state or tribal organization, when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with state or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student, provided that the education records, or the

personally identifiable information contained in such records, of the student will not be disclosed by such agency or organization, except to an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs and authorized by such agency or organization to receive such disclosure and such disclosure is consistent with the state or tribal laws applicable to protecting the confidentiality of a student's education records.

Comparable Services

Students experiencing educational instability shall be provided services comparable to those offered to other district students including, but not limited to: [3][27][40]

1. Transportation services.[10]
2. School nutrition programs. [21]
3. Career and technical education.[12]
4. Educational programs for which the student meets the eligibility criteria, such as:
 - a. Services provided under Title I or similar state or local programs.[41]
 - b. Programs for English Learners.[42]
 - c. Programs for students with disabilities. [11]
 - d. Programs for gifted and talented students.[16]
5. Preschool programs.

Transportation for Homeless Students -

The district shall provide transportation for homeless students to their school of origin or the school they choose to attend within the district.[3][10][27]

If the school of origin is outside district boundaries or homeless students live in another district but will attend their school of origin in this district, the school districts shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs of the transportation.[27]

Transportation for Students in Foster Care -

The district shall ensure that children in foster care needing transportation to their school of origin promptly receive transportation in a cost-effective manner.[6][10]

To ensure that transportation for children in foster care to their school of origin is provided, arranged, and funded, the district shall collaborate with the local children and youth agency to develop a local transportation plan.[6]

The transportation plan shall address the following: [6]

1. The procedure the district and local children and youth agency will follow to provide transportation for children in foster care in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with applicable law. [8]
2. How transportation costs will be covered if additional costs are incurred. Options include:
 - a. The local children and youth agency agrees to reimburse the district;
 - b. The district agrees to pay for the cost; [6]
 - c. The district and the local children and youth agency agree to share the costs; or
 - d. The district of origin, the district of foster residence, and the placing children and youth agency agree to share the costs.

1. 3. Dispute resolution procedures to ensure that any disagreements regarding the cost of transportation are resolved promptly and fairly, and do not impact a student's ability to remain in the school of origin during the dispute resolution process.

The district shall submit the local transportation plan, including any updates or revisions, to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Transportation shall be provided to children in foster care in accordance with the local transportation plan regardless of whether transportation is provided to district students.

Course Credit and Graduation

The district shall ensure that each student experiencing educational instability in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) is provided with a graduation plan to facilitate the student's timely graduation. The graduation plan shall specify the courses and other requirements necessary for the student to graduate. The district's efforts to ensure that the student experiencing educational instability graduates in a timely manner may include: [4][5][6]

1. Waiving a specific course required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school entity or the student has demonstrated competency in that content area. Evidence as to whether coursework has been satisfactorily completed and the amount of full or partial credit assigned, may be determined through any of the following: [4][19]

- a. Competency demonstration, which could include, but is not limited to:

- i. Submission of an essay, presentation or project.

- ii. Recognition that the student has already successfully completed a higher-level course, an experiential learning opportunity or internship that demonstrates competence in the content area.

- b. Performance on an examination.

- c. Successful completion of a career and technical education course.

- d. Other evidence or method determined appropriate by the district.

2. If a specific course requirement cannot be waived, the district shall provide an alternative or modified course of study that is currently offered to students and that will assist the student with acquiring the required work or competency requirements by the anticipated graduation date.

3. If, after considering full and partial course credits, waiving courses or providing alternative courses of study, the district determines that the student meets the established graduation requirements, the student shall be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and graduate with their peers.

If the student is determined not eligible for graduation, the district may request a high school diploma from the prior school entity. The prior school entity may issue a diploma if the student meets the prior school entity's graduation requirements.

Keystone Diploma

In any school year for which demonstration of proficiency on a Keystone exam is required for graduation, a student who has successfully satisfied the graduation requirements may obtain a secondary school diploma known as the Keystone Diploma from the PA Department of Education, if both of the following provisions apply:[4][43]

1. All other graduation options have been exhausted.

2. The student is unable to obtain a diploma from the student's prior or receiving school entity.

The district's point of contact shall assist the student in determining the student's eligibility for a Keystone Diploma and, if eligible, obtaining the Keystone Diploma from the PA Department of Education.[4][43]

Students with Disabilities -

Students experiencing educational instability who have an IEP shall maintain the right to special education and the right to graduate either through attainment of credits or through the completion of the goals established in their IEP.[11][19]

Students with an IEP may elect to remain in school until age twenty-one (21) even if the district determines there is an earlier pathway to graduation. Such students may participate in the graduation ceremony with their current graduating class, even if the student elected to remain in school.[19]