

# West Branch Area Middle School

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



## Mission Statement

Learn Today

Compete Tomorrow

Succeed Always

356 Allport Cutoff  
Morrisdale, PA 16858

(814) 345-5627 (School)  
(814) 345-6116 (Fax)

Principal: Kevin Hubler  
Secretary: Laura Coble

## Student and Parent Handbook 2023-2024

## **WELCOME!**

Welcome to West Branch Area Middle School!

Great things are happening here at West Branch Area Middle School! We are committed to providing the best middle school education possible in a safe learning environment. Once again, we will be utilizing block scheduling and advisory between students and staff. Our plan is to develop a community of learners. In addition, we strive to continue to increase academic performance and success for all students through the implementation of PA Core Curriculum Standards. We believe that success is best attained through the cooperation of students, parents, and school staff.

Another research-based program West Branch Area Middle will continue to implement is Positive School Behavior supports. The middle school staff will be setting clear and high expectations for student behavior. Students will be given positive supports for making good decisions.

Should you wish to become involved or if you would like to contact us for any reason, please call our main office at (814) 345-5627. It would be our pleasure to speak with you!

We are looking forward to an exciting and rewarding school year!

Respectfully,

Kevin Hubler  
Middle School Principal

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |       |   |       |
|--|-------|---|-------|
| <b>Administration/District Staff</b>   | 3     | Appeals Process                           |       |
|  |       | 24  |       |
| <b>School Calendar</b>                 | 4     | New Students                              | 24    |
|  |       | Educational Trip Guidelines               | 24-25 |
| <b>General Information</b>             |       | <b>Transportation Policies</b>            |       |
| InfoSnap                               | 5     | School Bus Procedures                     | 25-26 |
| Student Drop-off/Pick-up               | 5     | <b>Participation</b>                      |       |
| Parent Letters                         | 5     | General Rules of Participation            | 26-27 |
| Visitors                               | 6     | <b>Cafeteria Procedures and Policies</b>  |       |
| Textbooks                              | 6     | Meal Prices and Buying Procedures         | 27-28 |
| Lockers                                | 6     | Cafeteria Etiquette                       | 28    |
| Student Devices                        | 7     | <b>Internet Use Rules and Regulations</b> | 28-29 |
| Library Books                          | 7     | <b>Discipline</b>                         |       |
| School Closings/Delays/FID Days        | 7     | School-Wide PBS                           | 29-32 |
| 7                                      |       | Description of Discipline                 | 32    |
| Remote Learning                        | 8     | Searches/Seizures                         | 32-33 |
| Standardized Tests                     | 8     | Video Surveillance                        | 33    |
| <b>Guidance Programs and Services</b>  |       | Reasonable Force                          | 33    |
| Advisory Program                       | 9     | Tobacco Policy                            | 33    |
| Referral Services                      | 10    | Weapons Policy                            | 33-34 |
| SAP                                    | 10    | Confidential Communications               | 34    |
| Bullying                               | 10-13 | Sexual Harassment                         | 34    |
| <b>Academic Issues</b>                 |       | Hearings                                  | 34    |
| Progress Reports                       | 13-14 | Dress Code                                | 34-35 |
| Honor Roll/Class Assignments           | 14    | Cell Phones/Electronic Devices            | 35-36 |
| Promotion/Retention                    | 15    | Drug Policy                               | 36    |
| Homebound Instruction                  | 15    | <b>Programs for Handicapped Students</b>  | 36-37 |
| <b>Student Records</b>                 |       | <b>Appendices/Letters and Forms</b>       |       |
| Disclosure                             | 15    | A – Pest Management Letter                | 39    |
| Review                                 | 16    | B – Asbestos Management Plan Letter       | 40    |
| <b>Health Office Policies</b>          | 16-18 | B – Bullying Harassment Form              | 41    |
| <b>General Attendance Requirements</b> |       | C – Acceptable Usage Policies             | 42-45 |
| General Attendance Information         | 18    | D – Drug Policy                           | 46-47 |
| When a Student is Absent               | 18    | Homeless Policy                           | 47-55 |
| Types of Excuses                       | 18-19 |   |       |
| Attendance Policies/Regulations        | 19    |   |       |
| 19                                     |       |   |       |
| Types of Absences                      | 19-21 |   |       |
| Attendance Accounting Procedures       | 21-22 |   |       |
| Late/Tardy to School                   | 22    |   |       |
| Early Dismissal                        | 23    |   |       |
| Consecutive Medical Absences           | 23    |   |       |
| Excessive Absences & 24 Day Rule       | 23-24 |   |       |

## ADMINISTRATION/DISTRICT STAFF

### Superintendent of Schools

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### Middle School Principal

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### Attendance Officer

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### School Nurse

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### School Counselor

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### Literacy Coach

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### Instructional Technology Coach

Carrie Peterson  
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# West Branch School Calendar 2023-2024

Approved: January 24, 2022

| Mon                   | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | STUDENT DAYS | TEACHER DAYS | Mon                  | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | STUDENT DAYS | TEACHER DAYS |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|--------------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|--------------|
| <b>JULY 2022</b>      |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>JANUARY 2023</b>  |     |     |     |     |              |              |
|                       |     |     |     | 1   |              |              | 2                    | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   |              |              |
| 4                     | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   |              |              | 9                    | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | <u>20</u>    | <u>21</u>    |
| 11                    | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  |              |              | 16                   | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 100          | 105          |
| 18                    | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  |              |              | 23                   | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  |              |              |
| 25                    | 26  | 27  | 28  | 29  |              |              | 30                   | 31  |     |     |     |              |              |
| <b>AUGUST 2022</b>    |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>FEBRUARY 2023</b> |     |     |     |     |              |              |
| 1                     | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |              |              |                      |     | 1   | 2   | 3   |              |              |
| 8                     | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | <u>5</u>     | <u>8</u>     | 6                    | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | <u>18</u>    | <u>18</u>    |
| 15                    | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | <u>5</u>     | <u>8</u>     | 13                   | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 118          | 123          |
| 22                    | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  |              |              | 20                   | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  |              |              |
| 29                    | 30  | 31  |     |     |              |              | 27                   | 28  |     |     |     |              |              |
| <b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b> |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>MARCH 2023</b>    |     |     |     |     |              |              |
|                       |     |     | 1   | 2   |              |              |                      |     | 1   | 2   | 3   |              |              |
| 5                     | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | <u>21</u>    | <u>21</u>    | 6                    | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | <u>22</u>    | <u>22</u>    |
| 12                    | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | <u>26</u>    | <u>29</u>    | 13                   | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 140          | 145          |
| 19                    | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |              |              | 20                   | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  |              |              |
| 26                    | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |              |              | 27                   | 28  | 29  | 30  | 31  |              |              |
| <b>OCTOBER 2022</b>   |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>APRIL 2023</b>    |     |     |     |     |              |              |
| 3                     | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |              |              | 3                    | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |              |              |
| 10                    | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | <u>20</u>    | <u>21</u>    | 10                   | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | <u>16</u>    | <u>16</u>    |
| 17                    | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | <u>46</u>    | <u>50</u>    | 17                   | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 156          | 161          |
| 24                    | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  |              |              | 24                   | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  |              |              |
| 31                    |     |     |     |     |              |              |                      |     |     |     |     |              |              |
| <b>NOVEMBER 2022</b>  |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>MAY 2023</b>      |     |     |     |     |              |              |
|                       | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |              |              | 1                    | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |              |              |
| 7                     | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | <u>18</u>    | <u>18</u>    | 8                    | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | <u>22</u>    | <u>22</u>    |
| 14                    | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | <u>64</u>    | <u>68</u>    | 15                   | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 178          | 183          |
| 21                    | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  |              |              | 22                   | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  |              |              |
| 28                    | 29  | 30  |     |     |              |              | 29                   | 30  | 31  |     |     |              |              |
| <b>DECEMBER 2022</b>  |     |     |     |     |              |              | <b>JUNE 2023</b>     |     |     |     |     |              |              |
|                       |     |     | 1   | 2   |              |              |                      |     |     | 1   | 2   |              |              |
| 5                     | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | <u>16</u>    | <u>16</u>    | 5                    | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | <u>2</u>     | <u>2</u>     |
| 12                    | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | <u>80</u>    | <u>84</u>    | 12                   | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 180          | 185          |
| 19                    | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |              |              | 19                   | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  |              |              |
| 26                    | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |              |              | 26                   | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30  |              |              |

|                   |                               |                 |                    |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| August 22-24      | Teacher In-Service            | January 16      | Teacher In-Service |
| August 25         | First Day for Students        | January 27      | No School (Act 80) |
| September 5       | Labor Day                     | February 17, 20 | Winter Break       |
| September 30      | Half Day Dismissal (Data Day) | February 21     | No School (Act 80) |
| October 10        | County-Wide In-Service        | March 10        | Winter Break       |
| November 10       | Parent Teacher Conferences    | April 6-11      | Easter Vacation    |
| November 11       | No School (Act 80)            | May 29          | Memorial Day       |
| November 24-29    | Thanksgiving / Deer Season    | June 2          | Last Student Day   |
| December 23-Jan 2 | Christmas Holiday             | June 2          | Graduation         |

Sept 30 & Nov 23: MS/HS/PreK Dismiss at 11:15 a.m.; Elem. Dismiss at 12:15 p.m.  
 Dec. 22 & Apr. 5: MS/HS/PreK Dismiss at 1:40 p.m.; Elem. Dismiss at 2:25 p.m.  
 \* Note: December 23, 2021 (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                 | Days missed due to inclement weather will be made up on the dates below in the following order: Nov. 29, Dec. 23, Feb. 17; April 11, 6, and 10 and June as needed |
| First and Last Student Day | Parent Teacher Conferences |   |
| Teacher In-Service Days    | Data Day                   |   |

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### INFOSNAP

The West Branch Area School District is moving to a paperless student registration/form system. As a result, the district will be utilizing the InfoSnap management system. Therefore, district forms will be accessible online for parent/guardian signatures. Please locate the InfoSnap link on the district website at <http://www.westbranch.org> to locate the necessary documents for signature. Some of the documents included but not limited to will be: the student and parent handbook signature page, the emergency contact form from the nurse, the internet acceptable use policy, the educational trip form, and the field trip permission form. Failure to complete the forms may result in the denial of student privileges – i.e. field trips, monthly rewards, etc.

### STUDENT DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

#### ● STUDENT DROP-OFF

If you will be dropping your child off for school in the morning (instead of having your child ride the bus to school) you must do the following:

##### ○ DROPPING OFF BEFORE 7:45 a.m.

You must drop your child off at the side of the building nearest the football field. **You cannot drive through the playground to access the back of the school – you must enter through the far end of the school.** If you drop off your child before the buses unload, your child must go to the library until students are released to the cafeteria or their classroom. Please contact the middle school office if you plan to drop your child off at the school before 7:45 a.m.

##### ○ DROPPING OFF AFTER 7:45 a.m.

Students dropped off after 7:45 a.m. must enter through the office.

**NOTE:** If you drop your child off after 8:00 a.m. your child will be considered late, and MUST have an excuse. If your child does not have an excuse, your child will be considered Tardy (Late) Unexcused. If your child does have an excuse, your child will be considered Tardy Excused. **(See Late/Tardy Policy under Attendance)**

#### ● STUDENT PICK-UP

Middle school students will be picked up at the corner of the administration wing at dismissal. Parents should park in an available space and wait for their child to exit the building.

### PARENT LETTERS FROM TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATION

Many times throughout the school year memos and letters are sent home to parents to keep you informed of events and schedules with dates and times. **Please communicate with teachers via Parent Square.** This will ensure your awareness of any and all events that take place throughout the year.

## **VISITORS**

Parents are cordially invited to visit the school at any time. Upon arriving at school please ring the buzzer and state your name and reason for admittance to the building. Upon entering the school, please report directly to the HS office lobby to scan in. You will need your driver's license upon entering for scanning purposes. Students are only released from the building through the office. Anyone having business in the building will be given a visitor's pass that must be visible at all times. Upon leaving the building, the visitor must scan out in the office and return the pass before leaving the building. Appointments to see specific teachers must be made in advance and scheduled during non-instructional times. If you would like to volunteer and/or visit your student during lunch, you must have current clearances on file in the district office. Forms for filing for the necessary clearances are available in the Superintendent's office. Failure to complete InfoSnap forms may result in being unable to volunteer within the school, eat lunch with your child, or attend field trips.

## **Student/Item Pick-up & Drop-off During School Hours**

As part of increased school safety efforts, new student pick-up and drop-off procedures will be implemented this year. Before entering the office waiting area, you will be asked to state the nature of your visit (student pick-up, drop-off, item drop-off, etc.). Upon being granted entry into the waiting area, you will scan your license and sign the appropriate form (time in/out, reason, etc.). For student pick-up, we will bring the student to meet you in the waiting area. If you are dropping off an item (backpack, lunch items, instrument, etc.), you will fill out the appropriate form, and we will be sure to get the item to the appropriate person.

## **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.

## **LOCKERS**

Homeroom teachers will assign each student a hall locker. All students must keep their books, coats, backpacks, and other belongings in their own locker. Sharing lockers with other students is not permitted. 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.

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 middle school office during the day and pick them up after school.

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 their 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 the 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 hall locker.

Each student must lock his/her locker. If a key lock is being used, an extra key must be given to the office in case his/her key is lost. Students not locking lockers will be subject to the school discipline code for violation of school rules. Students are responsible for not sharing their combination or key with others and ensuring the lock is kept locked. Students who are unable to purchase a lock will be given one by the office. A \$5.00 fee will be charged to any student

not turning in the school provided lock at the end of the school year. In addition, if a student loses a school provided lock during the school year, they can purchase an additional lock from the office for \$5.00.

## **STUDENT DEVICES**

Students are responsible to transport, store, and carry their school issued devices safely. When students are transporting their devices room-to-room, to the cafeteria, or to other parts of the building, etc. they must place their device in it's proper carrying case. Students will need reminders initially and periodically to remember to always use their case. If students fail to follow this policy, there may be disciplinary action taken and/or they may lose their device privileges.

## **eHallpass**

Students and staff utilize an electronic hall pass system during the school day.

## **LIBRARY BOOKS**

In order for all students to have access to library books, it is important that students return library books on their due dates. Students have ample access to the Library throughout the day to check out and return books.

## **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 Alert Solutions 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. Please also refer to the school website and 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.

## **Flexible Instructional Days (FID)**

During the 2021-2022 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 the 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 a 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 canceled based on the nature of the event that led to the FID day.

**Page 11- Addition-Remote Learning Etiquette and Guidelines**

**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.

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

## STANDARDIZED TESTS

All students in grades 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> take the Pennsylvania Assessment English Language Arts and Math tests. In addition to an English Language Arts, and Math test, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will also be assessed in the area of Science. Individual student scores will be sent to parents. The scores help to determine individual needs, scope and sequence, and opportunities for tutoring.

Results from these tests are kept in each student’s cumulative file and are strictly confidential. Available copies are sent to parents. All test data concerning each student is used as reference materials for parents, teachers, administrators, and the students themselves to assist in making more informed decisions regarding student progress within the educational program.

### Middle School Teams for the 2023-2024 School Year

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grade 5 Team</b></p> <p><b>Mr. McCamley</b>    <b>Math</b><br/> <b>Ms. Green</b>        <b>Science and Social Studies</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Moslak</b>     <b>English Language Arts</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Bickel</b>       <b>Learning Support</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Cantolina</b>   <b>Learning Support</b></p>                                 | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grade 6 Team</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Trude</b>        <b>Math</b><br/> <b>Mr. Wood</b>         <b>Science and Social Studies</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Rockey</b>     <b>English Language Arts</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Bickel</b>       <b>Learning Support</b><br/> <b>Mrs. Cantolina</b>   <b>Learning Support</b></p>                                 |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grade 7 Team</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Carter</b>       <b>Math</b><br/> <b>Mr. Socash</b>       <b>Science</b><br/> <b>Mr. Matson</b>       <b>Social Studies</b><br/> <b>Mrs. McDowell</b>   <b>English Language Arts</b><br/> <b>Mrs. McGarvey</b>   <b>Learning Support</b><br/> <b>Mr. Hauck</b>        <b>Learning Support</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grade 8 Team</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Nines</b>        <b>Math</b><br/> <b>Mr. Socash</b>       <b>Science</b><br/> <b>Mr. Matson</b>       <b>Social Studies</b><br/> <b>MS. Plyler</b>        <b>English Language Arts</b><br/> <b>Mrs. McGarvey</b>   <b>Learning Support</b><br/> <b>Mr. Hauck</b>        <b>Learning Support</b></p> |

## GUIDANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The guidance counselor will assist you throughout your years at West Branch Middle School. The counselor is available to discuss a variety of issues, including student issues, academics, school, and family. Other guidance programs focus around the areas of: academics, social emotional, and career exploration and readiness.

### Advisory Program

**Program Rationale:** The period of adolescence is a time of rapid change and growth for students as they approach physical, mental, and emotional maturity. During this stage they desire more independence, experience new responsibilities, and search for social identity. With these new discoveries, they alter their role in their family, in their class, and in the world around them.

The mission of the West Branch Middle School Advisory Program is to assist students with understanding their own developmental needs so they can better make sense of themselves and the world around them, and become caring, responsible, ethical citizens. This is accomplished by each faculty member serving as an advisor to a small group of students with whom they will foster a close relationship throughout the school year. The faculty advisors work together in grade level teams to plan a program to help students learn more effectively and efficiently in their academic work, including helping them to grow socially and personally as they journey through the middle school years. All students will meet with their advisor daily.

The Advisory Program fosters a positive school climate where our students see their teachers as caring advocates who are interested in their lives and development as well as their academic growth.

## REFERRAL SERVICES

There are times in some people's lives when social and emotional problems come to the point where outside help may be needed. The guidance department of West Branch Middle School has knowledge of agencies that may be of assistance during these times.

If a student or parent would need any information or direction to a needed service, please contact the guidance counselor.

### Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The Student Assistance Program is a team of professionals working together to provide help for students 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 the educational process - a student who is troubled struggles to learn.

#### SAP Team Members:

|                |              |             |              |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Mr. Hubler     | Mr. McCamley | Mr. Matson  | Mr. Caldwell |
| Mrs. McGonigal | Mrs. Trude   | Mrs. Rockey | Mrs. Dixon   |

It is the parent's right to be involved in the SAP 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, the referral is considered by the team and recommendations are made for support such as: Tier 2, homework club, school based, etc. The information gathered is confidential. The evaluation service is at no cost to the family or student. We are here to help!

### West Branch 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."

## BULLYING/CYBERBULLYING/HARASSMENT

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 be defined as 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.

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 website, if available.

#### Preventive Measures Against Bullying

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 Regarding Bullying

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 Related to Bullying

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.

### **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.

**A copy of our Bullying or Harassment Complaint Form is located in Appendix B at the back of this handbook.**

### **Safe2Say**

Safe2Say Something is a youth violence prevention program coordinated 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.

### **ACADEMIC ISSUES**

## PUPIL PROGRESS REPORTS

In order to inform parents of the progress their child is making, report cards are sent home four times during the school year on a nine-week basis. Progress reports are sent home between report cards if a child is experiencing problems.

In addition to the written reports, every parent is given the opportunity to meet with their child's teachers in a scheduled conference after school. Parent conferences take place in November. Information will be sent home and/or posted online in order to make arrangements for a conference. Parents may also schedule individual conferences, as needed, by contacting their child's teacher. We always encourage parents to come in for conferences, and will make all attempts to work around your schedule (within reason).

## ACADEMIC HONOR ROLL

Middle school students will be selected for academic Honor Roll on a quarterly basis. The criteria for Honor Roll selection are as follows:

- A quarterly grade point average (GPA) of 93% or higher. Please note that GPA's are not rounded up for the purpose of Honor Roll selection.
- A minimum grade of 90% in all subjects, including core subjects, special subjects, phys. ed., etc.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT IN WEST BRANCH AREA MIDDLE SCHOOL

To maintain an equitable balance of students in each room, the following procedures are followed:

1. A team consisting of the principal, classroom teachers, and school counselor will review the following information prior to grouping students:
  - A. A grade level list of students identified as high, medium or low ability students as prepared by the current teacher.
  - B. Advice from the learning support teacher in regard to any special needs their student's may have.
  - C. Recommendations from current homeroom teachers as to who should or should not be placed in the same room based on current peer interaction.
  - D. Input from the school nurse based on her confidential health list.
2. Classroom assignments will be made as equitable as possible with regard to gender, total number of students, student abilities, student disabilities, or any other special needs a student may have.

### 3. Parent Requests:

**Requests made for a child to have a particular classroom teacher will not be accepted.** This includes asking for a male/female teacher, younger/veteran teacher, etc. as this may identify a particular staff member without specifying that teacher by name.

**NOTE:** There are a variety of reasons why specific teacher requests will not be granted (i.e. last minute staffing changes due to retirements, leave of absences, transfers, classes being added or reduced, etc. which may create openings within our building, and that may impact our staffing). This policy is made in order to be fair to all families and will allow us, as a team, to make the decisions which are in the best interest of every student.

4. Classroom lists will be reviewed by a grade level team of the current grade level and specials teachers for any possible changes (i.e. behavior issues, student compatibility, academic issues, etc.).
5. Classroom assignments will be provided prior to the start of the next academic year.

**NOTE:** This assignment may change over the summer due to enrollment issues (i.e. student withdrawals causing an uneven number of students in a classroom) and/or staff issues (**see NOTE above under Part A**).

6. New students enrolling in the middle school over the summer will be assigned to the grade level classroom with the lowest number of students.
7. If issues arise during the school year, they will be dealt with by the administration (including meeting with parents).

### **PROMOTION/RETENTION**

The promotion of the pupils from grade to grade is dependent upon:

- a. Academic Achievement
- b. Attendance

#### **PROMOTION BASED ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**

The grading of the teacher and their evaluation of the students' progress and achievement is a large determining factor in a student's promotion/retention. In the middle school, progress is from grade to grade.

In determining the promotion or retention of a student the guiding rule used by the teacher is, "What is best for the student?" This, however, does not imply automatic promotion. Promotion may not be the optimal solution for all students. The teacher is obligated not to send a student into a classroom situation or environment in which that student does not have a chance to experience success. "Success breeds success and failure breeds failure." The student must be placed in the grade level that best affords them the opportunity to experience success.

Retention is based on a thorough analysis of the child's ability to master skills and profit from retention, as compared to automatic promotion into an academically frustrating environment that can only foster negative self-concept and self-esteem. Retention, therefore, requires an individual analysis of the effects that it may have on the total child (academically, intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, physically, and socially).

The key person in determining a child's readiness for the requirements associated with promotion into the next grade is the teacher. The teacher, better than anyone inside the school system, knows the academic problems and strengths associated with the children under their tutelage. **Teachers are instructed to inform parents as soon as difficulties affecting possible promotion arise.** This is accomplished through written reports, report cards, notes, and parent/teacher conferences. The middle school principal will be informed of and be in agreement with all retentions.

#### **PROMOTION BASED ON ATTENDANCE**

If a student is absent 24 total days or more the student will be retained in their same grade for the following school year. **Please see the policy on Excessive Absences and the 24 Day Rule in the Attendance Section of this Handbook.**

#### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

For students to be eligible for summer school they must have achieved a 60% or higher to be eligible to participate in summer school classes. The maximum number of classes allowed to be taken in the summer will be two.

#### **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.

#### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Students are expected and required to complete their own work. Use of AI "Artificial Intelligence" is not permitted.



## 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**

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 finds 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.

## 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 students miss over 10 days of school and leave school due to illness or injury, they must provide a doctor's excuse for any absence from the school day. The school nurse is not able to provide the excuse for students 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 the 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. The administration of medication to students by the nurse shall be permitted only upon the proper written authorization by a physician** (a signed physician's order), and the student's **parent/ guardian's written consent. This includes over- the-counter medications** such as Tylenol and Advil. The school nurse has medication forms available in the health office, **and available to download from the school nurses' webpage.** Please note that students must provide their own medications in the proper container labeled by the manufacturer or pharmacy. The school does not provide medications. Students are not allowed to carry any medications with them unless authorized by the school nurse. In order to be permitted to carry medications, the student must provide the school nurse with a physician's order from the student's physician stating that the student is permitted to carry and self-administer the medication along with written parental consent. Example: inhalers and emergency medications. Any students carrying medications without a written physician's order on file in the health office, and permission from the nurse, are in violation of the school's drug policy and may be disciplined. This is for the safety of all of the students in the district.

4. **Health History Forms** will be passed out to students yearly, are available in the health office, **and available to download from the school nurses' 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.

5. **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 nurses' office, and available to download from the school nurses' 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.

6. **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, the student will only be excused for the day the student was sent home by the nurse.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

### **Delivery and Storage of Medications**

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.

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

### GENERAL ATTENDANCE POLICY INFORMATION

Regular daily attendance is an integral part of an effective educational environment. There is a positive relationship between regular attendance and success in both school and the world of work. Daily attendance contributes to a student's sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and good work habits. Regular attendance is essential if students are to understand the continuity of the curriculum and derive the maximum benefit from their fullest potential.

Compulsory school attendance is also a requirement in the Pennsylvania School Code. Every child of compulsory school age is required to be in attendance at school, unless absent for an approved reason. Parents/guardians are charged with the responsibility for their child's/children's school attendance. School attendance is also mandated at the federal level, with the federal law known as No Child Left Behind. This law sets benchmarks for percent attendance rates to meet Adequate Yearly Progress.

Because of state law and federal mandates, and to ensure the success of all students, the following attendance policies detailed below have been developed:

### WHEN A STUDENT IS ABSENT:

**Any time your child misses school, or any part of the school day, you must submit a written excuse for the absence.**

**NOTE: By state law, this written excuse MUST be received within 3 days of your child's return to school. If it is not received within 3 days, the absence will be marked as unexcused. THE ABSENCE WILL NOT BE CHANGED TO EXCUSED IF THE WRITTEN EXCUSE IS SUBMITTED AFTER THE 3 DAY PERIOD.**

When your child is absent you will receive a phone call from our automated calling system (School Reach) stating that your child is absent. You will receive a phone call in the morning and in the evening to inform you that your child was absent from school. If you receive this phone call and feel there is an error (your child was in school) or if you do not receive a phone call when your child is absent, please contact the Middle School office so we can correct this.

### TYPES OF EXCUSES

| TYPE OF EXCUSE | WHEN MUST IT BE TURN IN?   | WHAT INFORMATION MUST BE ON THE EXCUSE? |  |                     |            |                    |
|----------------|--|---|--|---------------------|------------|--------------------|
|                |  | CHILD'S NAME?                           | DATE(S) OF ABSENCE?  | REASON FOR ABSENCE? | SIGNATURE? | OTHER INFORMATION? |
| PARENT EXCUSE  | Within 3 days of child's return to school<br><br><b>If the excuse is not received within 3 days the absence will be Unexcused.</b> | YES                                     | YES<br><br>Only the date(s) listed on the excuse will be considered Excused. | YES                 | YES        | NONE               |
| MEDICAL EXCUSE | See Above  | YES                                     | YES  | YES                 | YES        |                    |

|  |   |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
|  | If the doctor's office offers to fax an excuse, please contact the school to make sure we have received the excuse. If we do not receive it within the 3 day window, we cannot accept it. |  | <b>See Above</b><br><br>Any date(s) not listed on the doctor's note require a written parent excuse, or the absence for that day will be considered unexcused. |  |  | <b>TIME OF APPOINTMENT</b><br><br>If a student is absent a full day of school for an appointment, the time and location of the appointment will be considered to determine whether the absence will be excused the full day, or a half day (the other half day would be unexcused). |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES/REGULATIONS

Absences will generally be recognized as **Cumulative** or **Noncumulative**. **Cumulative absences** refer to days that contribute to the allotted number of days a student may be absent before a doctor's note is required (10 days). **Noncumulative absences** do not contribute to the allotted number of days.

### TYPES OF ABSENCES

#### EXCUSED ABSENCES

| REASON FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE   | INFORMATION ABOUT ABSENCE  |
|--|--|
| Student absent from school <b>with parent note</b>                         | Parents may provide notes for 10 days of absence. Once a student reaches 10 cumulative absences a doctor's note is required for all future absences.<br><b>NOTE: Parent note must be turned in within 3 days after the student returns to school. If a note is not turned in within 3 days the absence becomes unexcused. Any illness or injury that exceeds three (3) days must be substantiated by a doctor's note.</b>  |
| <b>Pre-approved</b> Educational Trip                                       | Students are permitted a maximum of <b>five (5)</b> days of absence per school year for Educational Trips. If the student has 10 cumulative absences prior to or during the Educational Trip, the trip will not be approved. <b>For example</b> , if a student has eight absences and applies for a five day educational trip, two educational trip days may be approved, but the remaining three will be counted as unexcused absences. If you would like to have an educational trip pre-approved, please obtain a form from the Middle School office.<br>If you do not get your trip pre-approved, all absences will be counted as unexcused.   |
| Funeral for a non-family member  | This will be considered excused as long as the student has not reached 10 cumulative absences.   |
| Student sent home from the nurse's office – <b>no doctor note received</b> | If the student is later seen by a doctor and we receive a doctor's note within 3 days, the absence will be Noncumulative (see below). If we do not receive a doctor's note, the absence will be considered a parent note absence and count toward the 10 days before a doctor's note is required.<br><b>To be in compliance with attendance requirements, if a student has missed over 10 cumulative days of school and leaves due to illness or injury, a doctor's excuse must be provided for the absence to be considered excused. If the student does not turn in a doctor's note, the absence will be considered unexcused. The school nurse is not able to write a medical excuse for the student.</b> |

| Excused Absence | District Consequences   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1-4             | <b>Safety phone call will be made from attendance officer</b>   |
| 5               | <b>A letter will be sent from the attendance officer explaining the attendance rules</b>  |
| 8               | <b>A phone call will be made from the attendance officer to verify understanding of attendance rules</b>  |
| 10              | <b>A phone call will be made and a letter will be sent to verify that the child must bring a doctor's note for any additional absences throughout the remainder of the school year. Any absence without a doctor's note will be considered unexcused.</b> |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 17 | A phone call will be made and a letter will be sent to verify that the student is reaching the limit of 24 days absent, and a mandatory parent meeting will be scheduled. Additionally, the student will lose permission to attend field trips until he/she attends school for 45 school days after the 17 <sup>th</sup> absence. |
| 24 | A phone call will be made and a letter will be sent to verify that the student may not pass for the year due to excessive absences and a mandatory parent meeting will be schedule. The student will lose permission to attend field trips until he/she attends school for 45 school days after the 24 <sup>th</sup> absence.     |

### UNEXCUSED/ILLEGAL ABSENCES

| REASON FOR ABSENCE  | INFORMATION ABOUT ABSENCE  |
|---|--|
| Student absent from school <b>without parent note turned in within 3 days</b> | By state law we cannot accept a note after 3 days of a student's return to school.   |
| Student has missed 10 cumulative days and turns in a parent note, or no note  | Once a student reaches 10 cumulative days of absence we can no longer accept parent notes. A doctor's note must be submitted for these absences, or the absence is considered unexcused. |
| Any absence not approved by administration                                    | If a student misses school for any other reason than above, and the absence is not pre-approved by administration, the absence is considered unexcused.                                  |
| Truancy   | <b>See Procedures for Illegal/Unexcused Absences</b>   |

**NOTE:** Examples of unexcused/unlawful absences include (this list is not all inclusive): Shopping, babysitting, fishing/hunting, educational trips **not approved in advance**, missing the bus, oversleeping.

### PROCEDURE FOR TRUANCY - ILLEGAL/UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Students who are absent from school without a legal excuse are considered truant. The following steps will be taken:

| Unexcused Absences                       | Parent Letter Sent?  | Parent Meeting?  | Student/Parent Fined Through Magistrate's Office?  | Children and Youth Services Contacted?   |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup></b> | <b>NO</b><br>A letter is sent to the parent after the 3 <sup>rd</sup> unexcused absence. A parent phone call will be made. | <b>NO</b><br>A parent meeting is scheduled after the 3 <sup>rd</sup> unexcused absence.<br><br>A Truancy Elimination Plan will be developed to avoid any further unexcused absences. | <b>NO</b><br>The student and parent are not fined until the first Unexcused Absence after the date of the parent meeting.<br><br>The student and parent will be fined for every further unexcused absence. | <b>NO</b><br>Children and Youth Services will be contacted for Truancy if a student continues to have unexcused absences after the student and parent have been fined through the magistrate's office. |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>                    | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>  | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>  |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup></b>                    | <b>NO</b><br>A parent phone call will be made.   | <b>NO</b>  | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>  |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> and further</b>        | <b>NO</b><br>A parent phone call will be made.   | <b>NO</b>  | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br><b>See above</b>   |
| <b>10th</b>                              | <b>YES</b><br><b>See above</b><br>A parent phone call will be made.  | <b>YES</b><br><b>See above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br><b>See above</b>   |

|                  |   |    |                  |                  |
|------------------|---|----|------------------|------------------|
| 11th and further | NO<br>A parent phone call will be made. | NO | YES<br>See Above | YES<br>See above |
|------------------|---|----|------------------|------------------|

### BAD WEATHER/IMPASSABLE ROADS

The superintendent will make the final decision on whether absences for these reasons will be considered Excused or Unexcused. If an absence is considered excused, it would be a cumulative absence and fall under this category (**see above for more information**).

**NONCUMULATIVE ABSENCES – These absences DO NOT count toward the 10 parent absences permitted before a doctor’s note is required.**

| Reason for absence  | Information about absence   |
|---|---|
| Suspensions from school   | Since the school is suspending the student, a note from the parent is not required.   |
| Illness verified <b>by a doctor’s note</b>                              | The doctor’s note must be submitted within 3 days of the student’s return. <b>If a physician’s note is not received within three (3) days of a student’s return, the absence will be considered a cumulative unexcused absence. Parents are responsible for ensuring the school receives a physician’s note. If the physician’s office is faxing a note, please check with the physician to make sure the note was faxed, and with the school to make sure the note was received.</b> The District reserves the right to contact the dentist or physician to verify appointments. |
| Death in the family   | The student will be considered excused from the date of death until two (2) days after the funeral unless otherwise authorized by the principal or designee.<br><b>The parent must send in a note listing all of the days absent for the absence to be Excused (note must be submitted within 3 days of the student’s return).</b>  |
| Religious holidays  | The parent must submit a note detailing the reason for the absence within 3 days of the student’s return to school.   |
| School-sponsored activities   | If the student is absent for a field trip or some other trip, the student will be considered Excused. No note is required to excuse the absence.  |
| Medical appointments (i.e. doctor/dentist)                              | An excuse must be submitted from the doctor/dentist within 3 days of the student’s return. The excuse should include: student’s name, date of appointment, time of appointment, doctor signature.<br><b>If a doctor’s note is not received for the appointment, the absence will be considered a parent note absence (cumulative absence) and count toward the 10 days (before a doctor’s note is required).</b>  |
| Student sent home from the nurse’s office – <b>doctor note received</b> | If the student is later seen by a doctor and we receive a doctor’s note, the absence will be Noncumulative (see below). If we do not receive a doctor’s note, the absence will be considered a parent note absence and count toward the 10 days before a doctor’s not is required.  |

## ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

### ARRIVING AT SCHOOL LATE

|                          |  |                     |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Time Arriving At School? | Is the Student Tardy (Late) or Absent? | Is a Note Required? |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Before 8:00 a.m.             | The student is considered on time.                  | <b>NO</b>   |
| 8:00 a.m. until 8:45 a.m.    | The student is considered TARDY (LATE) to school.   | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Late/Tardy to School Policy</b>  |
| 8:45 a.m. through 11:15 a.m. | The student is considered ½ DAY ABSENT.             | <b>YES</b><br>If a note is provided, the student has a ½ day Excused Absence. If a note is not provided, the student has a ½ day Unexcused Absence. |
| After 11:15 a.m.             | The student is considered ABSENT for the whole day. | <b>YES</b><br>If a note is provided, the student has an Excused Absence. If a note is not provided, the student has an Unexcused Absence.           |

## LATE/TARDY TO SCHOOL

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 the first day of the three days the student may submit the excuse.

**NOTE: All doors will be secured at 8:00 a.m. Students arriving after this time must buzz in to the office and sign in.**

### UNEXCUSED TARDIES TO SCHOOL (student has no excuse or an illegal excuse)

The following discipline will be enforced for unexcused tardies to school:

| TARDY # | CONSEQUENCE  |
|---------|--|
| 1       | verbal warning from homeroom teacher                                 |
| 2       | verbal warning from homeroom teacher                                 |
| 3       | a phone call to parents/guardians will be made by attendance officer |
| 4       | a phone call to parents/guardians will be made by attendance officer |
| 5       | parent meeting held to discuss tardies with attendance officer       |
| 6       | student will receive an after-school detention until 4:15 pm         |
| 7       | student will receive an after-school detention until 4:15 pm         |
| 8+      | each unexcused tardy will result in a ½ day Unexcused absence        |

### EXCUSED TARDIES TO SCHOOL (with a legal excuse)

The following will be enforced for excused tardies to school:

| TARDY # | CONSEQUENCE   |
|---------|---|
| 1 -2    | no discipline action or attendance action will be taken   |
| 3-4     | a phone call to parents/guardians will be made by attendance officer  |
| 5 - 7   | A letter will be sent from the attendance officer that a doctor's note will now be required, otherwise additional tardies will be counted as unexcused and follow the unexcused tardy discipline policy |
| 8+      | each excused tardy (doctor's note required) will result in a ½ day excused absence  |

## LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY

|                      |                        |                     |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Time Leaving School? | Is the Student Absent? | Is a Note Required? |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|

|                              |  |   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Before 11:15 a.m.            | The student is considered ABSENT for the whole day.  | <b>YES</b><br>If a note is provided, the student has an Excused Absence. If a note is not provided, the student has an Unexcused Absence.           |
| 11:15 a.m. through 2:10 p.m. | The student is considered ½ DAY ABSENT.              | <b>YES</b><br>If a note is provided, the student has a ½ day Excused Absence. If a note is not provided, the student has a ½ day Unexcused Absence. |
| after 2:10 p.m.              | The student is considered PRESENT for the whole day. | <b>YES</b><br>A note needs to be sent stating that the student is leaving early.<br><b>See Early Dismissal Policy</b>                               |

### EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY

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. **All students, regardless of age must adhere to this policy!**

**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.

### WITHDRAWAL - 10 OR MORE DAYS OF CONSECUTIVE ABSENCE

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:

- a. The district has been provided with evidence that the student's absence may be legally excused
- b. Compulsory attendance prosecution has been or is being pursued

### EXCESSIVE ABSENCES and 24 DAY RULE

Letters will be sent for absences according to the following chart. Information on each letter is also in the chart.

| Cumulative (Excused or Unexcused) Absence | Contents of Letter  |   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
|   | Doctor's Note Required?   | Mandatory Parent Meeting?   | Loss of Field Trips?   | Student Retained in Same Grade?  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Cumulative Absence        | <b>NO</b><br>A doctor's note is not required until after the <b>10<sup>th</sup></b> cumulative absence. | <b>NO</b><br>A mandatory parent meeting will be held once a student misses <b>17</b> total days (cumulative and noncumulative). | <b>NO</b><br>Once a student reaches <b>17</b> total absences the student will not be permitted to attend field trips until he/she attends school for | <b>NO</b><br>A student will be retained in the same grade for the following school year if a student misses <b>24</b> total days (cumulative and |



|  |  |   |  |   |
|--|--|---|--|---|
|  |  |   | 45 school days after the 17 <sup>th</sup> total absence. | noncumulative combined).  |
| 10 <sup>th</sup><br>Cumulative<br>Absence  | <b>YES</b><br>All further cumulative absences require doctor notes, or they will be Unexcused absences (see <b>Unexcused absence policy</b> ). | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>   | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>                            | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>   |
| 17 <sup>th</sup><br>Total Absence<br>(Cumulative<br>and<br>Noncumulative<br>combine) | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br>If the parent/guardian does not attend the meeting the student will be suspended until the parent attends the meeting. CYS will be contacted if the parent still refused to attend the meeting. | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>                           | <b>NO</b><br><b>See above</b>   |
| 24 <sup>th</sup><br>Total Absence<br>(Cumulative<br>and<br>Noncumulative<br>combine) | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>   | <b>YES</b><br>If the parent/guardian does not attend the meeting the student will be suspended until the parent attends the meeting. CYS will be contacted if the parent still refused to attend the meeting. | <b>YES</b><br><b>See Above</b>                           | <b>YES</b><br>The student will be retained in their same grade for the following school year. The student must continue to attend school or he/she will face consequences under the Unexcused Absence Policy. |

**NOTE:** Out of School Suspension days will not be counted toward the 24-day rule. Also, periods of extended medical absences of consecutive days verified by a physician's note may NOT be combined toward the 24-day rule. Each Individual absence counts as 1 day toward the 24-day rule and retention in the same grade.

### APPEALS PROCESS

To appeal student 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. A meeting will be held with a committee appointed by the principal. At this meeting the parent may present appropriate evidence. The burden of proof of attendance shall be on the student/parent/guardian.

### 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

- A. The completed Educational Trip form **WITH ALL OF THE SIGNATURES** (student, parent, and teachers) must be turned in to the middle 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.**

- B. 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.**
- C. **Students are permitted a maximum of 5 days total per school year for Educational Trips.**
- D. 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.
- E. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for the education of the student during the trip, assuring the completion of assignments and any make-up work.
- F. Upon their return to school, students should turn in their assigned work. They must also complete any other work missed during their trip.
- G. **STUDENTS MUST HAVE ALL WORK SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO THEIR TEACHERS FIVE DAYS AFTER THEIR RETURN. IF WORK IS NOT SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO THEIR TEACHERS WITHIN FIVE DAYS OF THEIR RETURN TO SCHOOL, THEIR ABSENCES FOR THE EDUCATIONAL TRIP WILL BE CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED.**
- H. The School District shall accept neither financial responsibility nor liability for students excused for the purpose of educational travel.
- I. **DAYS MISSED FOR EDUCATIONAL TRIPS WILL COUNT INDIVIDUALLY TOWARD THE 24 DAY RULE.**
- J. Educational trips may not be approved during periods of district testing (i.e. PSSA exams, 4Sight Exams, etc.).

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

### **SCHOOL BUS PROCEDURES**

The transportation service provided by the West Branch Area Board of Education is a privilege which may be denied to students who misbehave on the bus. Students and parents/guardians must be aware of and observe the following regulations:

1. The bus driver is in charge of maintaining discipline on the bus and has the authority to verbally reprimand any student who misbehaves. The bus driver may assign seats for students and may change seat assignments at any time in order to control student behavior. For their own safety all students are expected to remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
2. Bus riding privileges may be suspended for up to ten (10) days for misbehavior. Examples:
  - Failing to follow reasonable instructions from the driver
  - Eating, drinking, or chewing gum on the school bus
  - Entering or leaving the bus at any other point than the front door
  - Not keeping arms, hands, and heads inside the bus at all times
  - Not keeping conversations at low volume, as prescribed by the bus driver. There should be no shouting or screaming, or any behavior which might endanger anyone's safety.

**NOTE:** For serious or repeated offenses, a student may lose riding privileges for more than 10 days (possibly for the remainder of the school year).

3. The parent/guardian must reimburse the bus contractor the full amount of repair/replacement costs or any intentional damage to a bus by a student.
4. In addition to suspension of riding privileges, misconduct on a school bus can also result in detention or suspension.
5. When a student's bus privileges have been suspended, the parent/guardian will be notified by phone and/or in writing. The parent/guardian will be responsible for the suspended student's transportation and attendance during the suspension.

### **STUDENT BUS RULES**

**NOTE: Parents are asked to keep your address correct with the school so that your child can receive the appropriate transportation throughout the school year. It is also required that all students utilize their assigned bus stop on a daily basis unless a note is present at the school and in the possession of the student; we ask that this be done so accurate records are available in case of an emergency.**

**NOTE: Senate Bill 1077, Act 56 of 2016.** The bill permits those school districts engaging in video and audio recording on school busses to fulfill the notification requirement, which originally required an annual notice to be mailed home to each student, by including the policy in a student handbook and in any other publication of the school entity that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the school entity as well as posting a notice of the policy on the district website.

#### **LOADING AND UNLOADING AT THE BUS STOP**

1. Be at your assigned loading zone on time (5 minutes before pickup). Buses cannot wait for late students and still get to school on time.
2. Exercise extreme caution in getting to and from your assigned bus stop.
3. Look in both directions before stepping from behind parked cars.
4. Stay well off the roadway until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver indicates that it is safe to board.
5. Do not play on or near the road while waiting for the bus to arrive.
6. Look in both directions before crossing the roadway.
7. Never walk on the road when there is a sidewalk or pathway.
8. Always walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic and step off the road when a motor vehicle approaches.
9. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before trying to load or unload.
10. All articles of clothing or attachments that dangle or swing freely while a student is walking must be secured before boarding the bus.
11. Use the handrail while getting on and off the bus.
12. If possible, wear white or light colored clothing or carry a flashlight if you walk on the roadway in the dark in order that the motoring public can see you.
13. When you must cross the road to board or exit the bus, always cross at least 10 feet in front of the bus after getting the "okay" from the driver.
14. Occasionally buses are delayed due to weather or traffic conditions. Students should wait a reasonable amount of time for a bus that is late. Parental discretion is needed for the amount of time depending on weather conditions. If a bus is more than fifteen minutes late please call the school office.

**NOTE: Due to the obvious lack of supervision the school can provide at bus stops, parents must assume responsibility for the conduct and safety of their own child as they walk to (and from) the stop and wait for the bus. Rules/regulations of student conduct and appropriate behavior also apply at these times. Students who violate them are subject to the school discipline code. **Throwing rocks, snowballs or other harmful objects is not permitted at bus stops.****

#### **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.

#### **WHILE ON THE BUS/GETTING ON THE BUS AT SCHOOL**

The rules/policies for Riding the Bus and Getting on the Bus at School are included in the Discipline section of this handbook. Please read this section (Under School-Wide Positive Behavior Support).

## **PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### **GENERAL RULES OF PARTICIPATION**

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

### **ACADEMIC ISSUES**

Students must meet basic academic requirements to participate in extracurricular activities. Students who have academic issues (i.e. low grades, incomplete homework) will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities until all work is made up. In order to participate in any activities relating to the PSSA test, the student must participate in the assessment.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Any student accruing 17 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.

Students must be in attendance the day of an event by 11:15 AM in order to be eligible to participate in practice.

Students will be ineligible to participate in a contest/performance if they are not in the building by 8:35am. For students to be eligible to participate in a Saturday contest/performance/event, attendance in school on Friday is required.

### **DISCIPLINE**

\*Discipline referrals refer to office referrals, or Level 3 or Level 4 behavior infractions, according to the information in the school-wide PBS portion of the handbook.

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.

### **OUTSTANDING OBLIGATIONS TO THE SCHOOL 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.

### **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.

## CAFETERIA PROCEDURES & GENERAL POLICIES

The goal of cafeteria services is to provide nutritious meals, within USDA-approved guidelines, to promote optimum student performance in the classroom. Menus are published in Thursday's issue of The Progress newspaper, and on local radio station WPHB AM 1260. 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](http://www.westbranch.org)).

At West Branch, students may choose whether or not to participate in lunch meal programs.

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 BUYING PROCEDURES

West Branch is now participating in the CEP program. This program is available to schools and districts that are participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

All enrolled students of West Branch Area School District are eligible to receive a nutritional breakfast and lunch each school day at **no charge** to your household.

No further action is required of you. Your child(ren) will be able to participate in these meal programs without paying a fee or submitting an application

Students will still have a cafeteria account and be able to purchase ala carte breakfast & lunch items.

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 assure accuracy. Payment boxes are provided in the office and cafeteria to collect payments every morning. Payments must be deposited by 8:40 AM to ensure same day credit. Payment can also be made via the My School Bucks website, which can be accessed under the Food Service tab on the West Branch website. These accounts are debited as students purchase meals, milk, etc.

Students report to the cafeteria at their designated lunch time, receive their tray, and enter their individual PIN number. The transaction is entered into the computer and the student's individual account is debited. Warning notices appear on the screens reminding the computer operator and students when accounts are low so payments can be made the next day.

Students are encouraged to bring in payments without excessive reminders. Parents are also encouraged to keep records at home so payments can be sent in a timely manner. This reduces paperwork and time spent maintaining the system. A threshold is built into the system, which allows a day or two to make a payment after the first warning. 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 are processed for students who withdraw and graduating seniors, for account balances over \$2.00 after the end of the school year. 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. field trips, assemblies).**

### CAFETERIA ETIQUETTE AND PROCEDURES

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

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Please properly dispose of trash.</li><li>● Please keep your table area clean.</li><li>● Please remain in your assigned seating area.</li><li>● Throwing food, paper, or other items is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Students are to use the restroom closest to the cafeteria.</li><li>● Students may not have food delivered from local restaurants.</li><li>● Please be respectful of others.</li></ul> |
|--|---|

### INTERNET USE RULES AND REGULATIONS

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

The West Branch Area School District Acceptable Use Policy User Agreement must be completed and signed by both the student and the parent/guardian. The signed form must then be returned to school. A computer account for the student will not be created until the West Branch Area School District Acceptable Use Policy User Agreement is completed and signed by both the student and the parent/guardian, and returned to school. **A copy of the West Branch Area School District Acceptable Use Policy is located in Appendix C.**

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES, POLICIES, GUIDELINES**

### **SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

In an effort to continue to improve our school climate, many of the staff at West Branch Middle School have worked together to form a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Committee. The focus of this committee, and all of the staff at West Branch, is to continue to create a positive school climate that fosters cooperation, academic excellence, safety, respect, and readiness.

**We can Be safe** – Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Consider the personal space of others while remaining calm and in control of yourself.

**We can Be respectful** – Use language and actions that show concern and consideration toward all adults, fellow students, and school property.

**We can Be ready** – Be where you are supposed to be on time. Have all of your materials (homework, pen/pencil, books, etc.) out and ready to go. Be attentive.

The PBS program is a school wide behavior program. Research shows us that students achieve at a higher level when they know the expectations and feel safe. Positive Behavior Support will help us improve both of these. Our plan provides detailed expectations in every area of the school while putting an extreme emphasis on safety, respect, and readiness.

We are kicking off this program starting the first day of school with posters around the building and in classrooms and classroom activities. All staff will take the time to teach their students the positive behaviors they are expected to demonstrate at school, as well as the consequences for not following these behaviors. We will acknowledge and reinforce students who consistently demonstrate these positive behaviors.

The success of our plan will improve with time and with the participation of our families. Research shows us that school behavior plans that are followed in the home greatly improve their effectiveness in the school. Throughout this process, West Branch Middle School will provide information to parents to help with home implementation of the Positive Behavior Support Plan.

### **CONSEQUENCES AND DOCUMENTATION**

Despite teaching, modeling and reinforcing expected behaviors within the school setting, students will make mistakes and demonstrate poor choices. When inappropriate behaviors are displayed, students should be redirected and reminded of appropriate behaviors. However, when students continue to display inappropriate behaviors, despite redirection, or when students demonstrate behaviors that put others at risk, consequences for those behaviors must be provided.

In order to increase tracking of student behavior, West Branch Middle School documents problem behaviors online. This allows staff members to document a student's inappropriate behavior via drop-down menu choices. Furthermore, staff members are able to look up student's discipline records and graph data based upon student, location, time, or behavior. Graphs will be provided to staff members monthly to determine where additional interventions may be needed.

**Minor Referral (previously referred to as level 1 and 2 infractions):**

**Level 1:** Students who have been documented as displaying guidance concerns/Level 1 behaviors 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.

**Level 2:** Students who demonstrate classroom-managed behavior concerns should be re-taught/redirected following the behavior.

- If the student has been retaught/redirected regarding a specific behavior, and that behavior continues, the teacher should 1) reteach the appropriate behavior, 2) provide a classroom-based consequence, and 3) log the behavior and the consequence within the discipline tracking system web site.
- If the student continues to demonstrate the inappropriate behavior, the teacher should 1) reteach the appropriate behavior, 2) provide a classroom-based consequence, 3) contact the parent, and 4) log the behavior, parent contact, and the consequence within the discipline tracking system web site.
- If the student continues to demonstrate the inappropriate behavior, the teacher should 1) reteach the appropriate behavior, 2) provide a classroom-based consequence, 3) contact the parent, and 4) log the behavior as an office referral: Level 3: Repeated Disruption of Educational Environment.

**Office Referrals (previously referred to as level 3 and 4 infractions):**

**Level 3 :** Students who demonstrate office-managed behavior concerns should be immediately redirected.

If the classroom teacher does not provide a classroom-based consequence, the student will receive an office-based consequence (e.g., detention or ISS), and a consequence letter will be sent to the students’ parent/guardian. A signed copy of the consequence letter should be returned to the office the following day.

- If the classroom teacher provides a classroom-based consequence, it should be documented when the teacher enters the infraction into the discipline tracking web site
- If the classroom teacher does not provide a classroom-based consequence, the student will receive an office-based consequence (i.e. detention, ISS, OSS), and a consequence letter will be sent to the student’s parent/ guardian. A signed copy of the consequence letter should be returned to the office the following day.

**Level 4:** 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

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| <h2>Infraction List</h2> |
|--------------------------|



**1 Level 1**

- Isolated from Peers
- Hygiene Concerns
- Emotional/Crying in Class
- Easily Frustrated
- Sudden Change in Grades/Performance
- Deteriorating Appearance

**2 Level 2**

- Inattention
- Incomplete Homework
- Unprepared for Class
- Forgot Library Book
- Dress Code Violation
- Talking out
- Gum chewing
- Computer Misuse
- Electronic Devices
- Mistreating School Property
- Running in the Hall
- Disrupting Educational Environment
- Not Following Directions
- Bathroom Misuse
- Personal Space Violations
- Horseplay

**3 Level 3**

- Name Calling/Teasing/Bullying
- Work Refusal
- Verbal Aggression
- Stealing
- Cheating
- Lying
- Insubordination
- Physical Aggression
- Lewd Notes
- Refusal to Leave Assigned Area
- Perceived or Confirmed Threats
- Vandalism
- Inappropriate Language/Vulgarity
- Leaving Assigned Area without Permission
- Cafeteria Misuse
- Repeated Disruption of Educational Environment
- Disrespect
- Inappropriate Display of Affection
- Bus Misbehavior
- Forgery
- Bus misuse

**4 Level 4**

- Repeated Harassment
- Leaving School Property
- Weapons
- Repeated Computer Misuse
- Drug Policy Violation
- Tobacco Violation
- Severe Computer Misuse
- Fighting
- Other
- Repeated Bus Misbehavior

**Tier 2**

West Branch Middle School staff members are providing continued redirection, modeling and reinforcement for appropriate student behavior throughout the year. However, some students may still struggle to demonstrate expected behaviors. These students may demonstrate internalizing, externalizing or organizational concerns. When staff members (teachers or the Tier 1 team) identify such students, they should be referred to the Tier 2 team. The Tier 2 team will determine if that student should be included in the Check-In/Check-Out program, or another individualized behavior program depending on their needs.

The check-in/check-out (Partnering Our Warriors With Outstanding Warriors) program is a Check-In/Check-Out program, which provides the means to respond positively to students who need extra support with their behavior. On a daily basis, staff can teach them appropriate behaviors and provide them with opportunities to practice them as they move from activity to activity.

Additionally, the Tier 2 program provides for reinforcement and positive attention from adults. The Tier 2 program also provides for daily communication between a student and his/her teachers and between the school and parents. In addition, data is collected to determine whether the program is successful or changes need to be made.

The Tier 2 Program consists of a plan and process that allows students to:

- Check in with a adult before school
- Carry a tracking form

- Ask their teacher to rate their behavior
- Check out at the end of each day
- Take the form home to parents
- Return the form the next day.

Tier 2 is designed to facilitate positive interactions between students with and assigned adults, teach good behavior skills, and provide a means for home-school communication. The WOW check-in creates a safe space for these students and they learn to trust and respect the adults who are consistently there for them. The program does not include negative consequences or punishment, only encouragement and positive attention. Parents are encouraged to provide reinforcement at home when the Tier 2 goal is met and consistently offer feedback and encouragement to their sons or daughters.

If another behavior modification is needed, the team will work with the homeroom teacher to create this plan based on the student's needs.

Parents who would like to refer students to the Tier 2 program should contact your child's advisory teacher.

## **DESCRIPTION OF DISCIPLINE CONSEQUENCE PENALTIES**

### **LUNCH DETENTION**

Students have modified seating during their lunch period.

### **DETENTION**

Detention will be held from after school until 3:45 p.m. Students are expected to serve detention on the assigned day. Parents must pick up their children at the Middle School office at 3:45 – transportation home is not provided. Students must bring work to detention, as this is a silent work period.

### **FRIDAY SCHOOL**

Friday School will be held from 2:45 PM – 5:45 PM on assigned Fridays. All students must arrive promptly to the room and have transportation home at 5:45. Failure to bring school work or an AR book to read will result in an additional assignment to Friday School. Students will not be permitted to return to their classrooms to get school work. Failure to **work on** school work will result in an additional assignment to Friday School as well as other consequences.

### **ACADEMIC DETENTION**

Academic Detention is an opportunity to get caught up on missing assignments. It is not discipline related.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

Students who have ISS must report to the elementary office after announcements. Students must have all necessary materials (books, A.R. book, 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 who violate ISS/school rules will be disciplined according to the Discipline Sanction Chart. Failure to complete any assigned class work could result in a 0% for that assignment. Students will be dismissed to their homeroom to get all materials to take home.

### **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

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.

## **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 will result in a 5-day suspension and possible police contact.

### **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.

### **REASONABLE FORCE**

Reasonable force may be used by teachers, staff, and school administrators to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all students, staff, and visitors.

### **TOBACCO & VAPE POLICY**

Any person who uses or possesses tobacco products or look-alike products in any form (Vapes) in the building, on school buses, or on school property will be subject to a fine through the local magistrate's office.

### **WEAPONS POLICY**

The Gun-Free School Act of 1994 and Act 26 of 1995 require that no student be allowed to have a weapon on school property. Students are also prohibited from having any toy, replica, or other look-alike instrument represented as a weapon. Any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; the frame or receiver of any such weapon; any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or any destructive device. It shall also include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, and any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

**Weapon** – Shall include any toy, replica, or other look-alike instrument, represented as a weapon.

**Destructive Device** – Any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb; grenade; rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces; missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce; mine; or device similar to any of the devices described in preceding; any type of weapon by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted, to expel a projectile by which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended to be used in converting any device into a destructive device described as any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or the frame or receiver of any such weapon and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

**Guidelines** – Any student who is determined to have brought or possessed a weapon in school or school facility shall be expelled from school for a period of not less than one (1) year. The expulsion proceeding shall follow the procedures outlined in **West Branch Area School District Policy #233**. The Superintendent may recommend discipline short of expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

The Superintendent may, on a case-by-case basis, modify the period of expulsion for those students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, consistent with the rules and regulations governing the education of exceptional children there under.

Students and staff shall be informed concerning this policy at least annually.

An exception to this policy may be made by the Superintendent, who shall prescribe special conditions or procedures to be followed. Weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel are permitted on school property. The principal will report the discovery of any weapon prohibited by the weapons policy to the student's parents and to local law enforcement officials. The superintendent will report all expulsions for possession of a weapon to the Department of Education.

### **CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Statutes govern the use of a student's confidential communications to school personnel in legal proceedings and regulations appropriate to the proceeding. 42 PA C.S. ss5945 (relating to confidential communications to school personnel). Information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents, the principal or other appropriate authority where the health, welfare or safety of the student or other persons is clearly in jeopardy.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

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 (see West Branch Area School District Policy #248).

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.

### **HEARINGS**

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 (see West Branch Area School District Policies #219 and #233).

### **DRESS CODE**

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 attitudes toward neatness, cleanliness, propriety, modesty, and good sense in attire and appearance.

**Therefore, these rules 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 are not permitted.
2. Shirts, t-shirts, facemasks, or patches 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. Students must keep them in their designated areas.
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, extra-curricular 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 an 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 could include mesh or see-through tops, 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.
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 no shorter than four inches (4") above the knee. Wearing a longer pair of Spandex shorts or other clothing under shorts, skirts, and skorts DOES NOT meet the four inch (4") requirement.
5. Shorts, skirts, skorts may not be fashioned so as to be revealing or offensive.
6. Cut-offs of any type are not permitted.

### **FOOTWEAR**

1. Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing and footwear while participating in physical education classes, 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/ACCESSORIES**

1. Piercings. Hoops or bars to the nose, mouth, eyebrows, or face are not allowed.
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 the proper designated area.
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.

## **CELL PHONES AND MUSIC/ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Cell phones and electronic devices are not to be used in the school building between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. (prior to bus dismissal). Any cell phones or music/electronic devices used by students or visible to staff during these hours will be considered a violation of this policy. It is also a violation to use cell phones on the bus for purposes or recording or taking videos or pictures of any kind. Violations will be dealt with according to the School-Wide Positive Behavior Support system.

**NOTE: Any student refusing to turn over a cell phone or music/electronic device to staff will be suspended out of school until a parent meeting is held.**

**STUDENTS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO TAPE OR RECORD EVENTS IN THE CLASSROOM, ANYWHERE IN THE BUILDING, OR ON THE BUS, UNLESS ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL IS GIVEN (i.e. for a class project).**

**THE SCHOOL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS OF A CELL PHONE OR ELECTRONIC DEVICE (i.e. Nintendo DS, MP3 player, etc.). THE SCHOOL WILL NOT SEARCH FOR LOST DEVICES, AS POSSESSION OF THEM IS A VIOLATION OF SCHOOL POLICY.**

## **DRUG POLICY**

**The Drug Policy chart (see APPENDIX D) details guidelines for discipline based on listed offenses. Discipline given to students may be increased or decreased based on the specific infraction(s).**

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

## **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 developmental disorder
2. Blindness or visual impairment
3. Deafness or hearing impairment
4. Developmental delay
5. Mentally gifted
6. Intellectually disabled
7. Multihandicapped
8. Neurological impairment
9. Other health impairments
10. Physical disability
11. Serious emotional disturbance
12. Specific learning disability
13. 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 of special student programs.

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 students" 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.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department.

# **APPENDICES**

## **LETTERS AND FORMS**





West Branch Area School District  
 516 Allport Cutoff  
 Morrisdale, PA 16858  
 814-345-5628 fax: 814-345-5220  
[www.westbranch.org](http://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 345-5627.

Sincerely,

Mr. Mark Mitchell  
 Superintendent



West Branch Area School District  
 516 Allport Cutoff  
 Morrisdale, PA 16858  
 345-5628 fax: 814-345-5220  
[www.westbranch.org](http://www.westbranch.org)  
*Mark Mitchell, Superintendent*

Faculty, Staff, Parents and Guardians:

This letter is to give notice and to comply with the AHERA rules that the West Branch Area 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 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



West Branch Area School District
516 Allport Cutoff
Morrisdale, PA 16858
814-345-5628 fax: 814-345-5220
www.westbranch.org
Mark Mitchell, Superintendent

Bullying/Harassment Complaint

Incident Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Who committed the act(s) against you? \_\_\_\_\_

Who witnessed the incident? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you kicked, shoved, struck, or threatened? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If so, explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Has the person engaged in these activities repeatedly? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If so, where, when, and what happened? \_\_\_\_\_

Has this person teased or taunted you in any way? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

Notice: False Reports – A person, who knowingly gives false information to any person of authority with the intent to implicate another of harassment, will incur discipline equal to the false allegation.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

It is the policy of the West Branch Area School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin or handicap/disability in its educational programs, activities, or employment. Services and facilities are accessible to and usable by disabled persons as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.

## West Branch Area School District 2013-2014 Acceptable Use Policy

**Please read the following Acceptable Use Policy carefully before signing the attached User Agreement (page 5). No account will be created until the User Agreement has been signed and returned.**

New technologies are shifting the ways that information may be accessed, communicated, and transferred. Those changes may also alter instruction and student learning. West Branch Area School District offers students and staff members access to the electronic information highway and the Internet.

Along with access to computers and people all over the world, comes the availability of materials that may not be considered appropriate in the classroom. However, on a global network it is impossible to control all materials. Ultimately, the school staff and parents/guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the sources. West Branch Area School District supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to allow their child to apply for access to the Internet.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on networks are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

West Branch Area School District Internet is provided for the student to conduct research and communicate with others in relation to school and community work. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Parents/guardians permission is required, by signing the Acceptable Use Policy. Access is a privilege, not a right. Teachers and the administration will deem what is inappropriate use and provide appropriate sanctions, if deemed necessary.

### Educational Purpose

The West Branch Area School District computer network has been established for a limited educational purpose. The term "educational purpose" includes classroom activities and career development activities. The West Branch Area School District computer network has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. The West Branch Area School District has a right to place reasonable restrictions on the material you access or post through the system. You are expected to follow the rules set forth in the Student Handbook, as well as the law, in your use of the West Branch Area School District computer network. You may not use the West Branch Area School District computer network for commercial purposes. This means you may not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the network.

### Student Internet Access

All students will have access to Internet World Wide Web information resources through their classroom, library, or school computer lab. The District will utilize filtering software or other technologies to prevent students from accessing visual depictions that are (1) obscene, (2) child pornography, or (3) harmful to minors. Educational staff will, to the best of their ability, monitor minors' use of the Internet in school, and will take reasonable measures to prevent access by minors to inappropriate material on the Internet and World Wide Web, and restrict their access to materials harmful to minors.

### Unacceptable Uses

**Personal Safety.** Students/staff will not post personal contact information about yourself or other people. Personal contact information includes your address, telephone, school address, work address, social security number, credit card number, etc. You will promptly disclose to your teacher or other school employee any message you receive that is inappropriate or that makes you feel uncomfortable. Personally identifiable information concerning students will not be disclosed or used in any way on the Internet without the permission of a parent or guardian.

**Email, Blogging, Chat, and Instant Messaging.** Students/staff will not use commercial Web-based mail (Hotmail, YahooMail, etc.) on any school computer, or any type of instant messaging including, but not limited to, AOL Instant Messenger, MSN Messenger, and ICQ. You are not permitted to contribute to weblogs or to be in online Web-based chat rooms unless it is part of a collaborative sharing project under the direct supervision of a teacher and are prohibited from using IRC chat programs on any school computer.

**Social Networking Sites.** Accessing Social Networking websites from the West Branch Area School District computer network is prohibited. Such websites include, but are not limited to, MySpace, Xanga, and Facebook.

**Games/Online Games.** The playing of games, including online games, without the consent of the teacher is prohibited. Downloading/saving of any games is also prohibited.

**Illegal Activities.** Students/staff will not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the West Branch Area School District computer network or to any other computer system through the West Branch Area School District computer network or go beyond your authorized access (“hacking”). This includes attempting to log in through another person’s account or accessing another person’s files. These actions are illegal, even if only for the purpose of “browsing.” You will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means. These actions are illegal. You will not use the West Branch Area School District computer network to engage in any other illegal act, such as arranging for a drug sale or the purchase of alcohol, engaging in criminal gang activity, threatening the safety of a person, etc.

**System Security.** You are responsible for your individual account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use your account. Under no conditions should you provide your password to another person. You will immediately notify a teacher or the system administrator if you have identified a possible security problem.

**Inappropriate Language/Harassment.** Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages. Students/staff must not use the system to create, send, receive, or use any offensive or disruptive materials or messages. Messages which are considered to be offensive include, but may not be limited to, those which contain sexual implications, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments that offensively address someone’s sex, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability. Also considered offensive are messages or materials which are fraudulent, harassing, or obscene, and those which contain abusive, profane, or offensive language. You will not post information that could damage or endanger another’s reputation. You will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks. You will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If you are told by a person to stop sending them messages, you must stop. You will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or an organization.

**Respecting Resource Limits.** Students/staff will use the system only for educational activities. **You will not download any files. Loading or use of unauthorized games, programs, files, or other electronic media is prohibited.** No software is to be installed onto the network by students at any time for any purpose. You will not post chain letters or engage in “spamming.” Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people. Students/staff will be given a set amount of space on the network server to save appropriate/educational data. Students/staff should periodically review the information saved on their server location and delete any outdated and/or unnecessary information.

**Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement.** Students/staff will not plagiarize works that you find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours. You will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when you inappropriately reproduce a work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specified appropriate use of that work, you should follow the expressed requirements. If you are unsure whether or not you can use a work, you should request permission from the copyright owner. Copyright law can be very confusing. If you have questions, ask a teacher.

**Inappropriate Access to Material.** Students/staff will not use the West Branch Area School District computer network to access material that is profane or obscene (pornography), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination towards other people (hate literature). A special exception may be made for hate literature if the purpose of your access is to conduct research and both your teacher and parent have approved. If you mistakenly access inappropriate information, you should immediately tell your teacher or another District employee. This will protect you against a claim that you have intentionally violated this Policy. Your parents should instruct you if there is additional material that they think would be inappropriate for you to access. The district fully expects that you will follow your parents’ instructions in this matter.

**Vandalism.** Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, hardware or software utilized on the network, hardware or software with any individual device, or other networks that are connected to the West Branch Area School District computer network. Vandalism by a user will result in immediate cancellation of privileges. No user shall upload, download, or create computer viruses. You will be responsible for any damages done to the equipment, system, and software.

#### **Future Rules**

Additional rules and restrictions may be added if the need arises. Students and staff are responsible for reading and following these rules.

## Security

### **Monitoring**

The West Branch Area School District reserves the right to log, monitor and review Internet, E-mail and other network use of each user. This logging, monitoring and review may be conducted without cause and without notice. Each user of a West Branch Area School District's computer by the use thereof agrees and consents to such logging, monitoring and review and acknowledges that s/he has no right or expectation of confidentiality or privacy with respect to Internet, E-mail or other network usage. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review student and staff files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that students and staff are using the system only for appropriate purposes. Users should expect that files stored on district servers or computers will not be private.

### **Electronic Mail (E-Mail)**

Users of the network are hereby notified that the West Branch Area School District administration has the authority to intercept and monitor e-mail messages of all persons using the West Branch Area School District computer network. The West Branch Area School District does not recognize the right to privacy of any user or the statements, writings, graphics, e-mail messages or other electronic or video transmissions of any user as a result of access over or through the West Branch Area School District computer network. All users are bound by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986, as amended, and the Communications Decency Act, which prohibit the unauthorized interception or disclosure of e-mail messages by third parties, as well as the appropriateness of certain material being remitted on the Internet. No user shall intercept or disclose any information garnered as result of access to the West Branch Area School District computer network without the consent of the sender or receiver of the communication. The Act recognizes that the West Branch Area School District may monitor an employee's e-mail messages, as long as the interception device is included in the e-mail equipment.

**Search and Seizure.** The West Branch Area School District reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, access, and disclose all uses of the system. The contents of electronic communications may be disclosed within the West Branch Area School District or to law enforcement officials without the permission of the author. You should not assume confidentiality of any material produced. Even when the material is erased from the system, it is usually possible to retrieve that material. Further, the use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality or privacy. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the West Branch Area School District computer network may lead to discovery that you have violated this Policy, the provisions of the Student Handbook, or the law. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that you have violated this Policy, the provisions of the Student Handbook, or the law. The investigation will be reasonable and related to the suspected violation. Your parents have the right at any time to request to see the contents of your files.

**Due Process.** The West Branch Area School District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the West Branch Area School District computer network. If the violation also involves a violation of other provisions of the Student Handbook, it will be handled in a manner described in the Student Handbook. Additional restrictions may be placed on your use of your Internet account.

**District Limitation of Liability.** The West Branch Area School District makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the service it is providing. The school district is not responsible, and will not be responsible, for any damages, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, missed deliveries, or service interruption. Use of any information obtained through the use of the West Branch Area School District's computer network is at the user's risk. The West Branch Area School District disclaims responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through the Internet or E-mail.

**Filtering.** The West Branch Area School District has provided a filtering solution for the district in compliance with the Children Internet Protection Act, a federal law. Filtering is being done based on certain categories as determined by the administration of the school district. Though filtering is being provided, it is to be considered neither a failsafe system nor a guarantee that all controversial or inappropriate materials are blocked. Students and staff should follow proper procedures and report any sites that may be deemed inappropriate to the computer department so that steps may be taken to block those sites. Users who access inappropriate sites or fail to report unblocked inappropriate sites may find themselves losing their Internet privileges.

### **VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY**

Violation of the West Branch Area School District's Acceptable Use Policy in any way may result in loss of the privilege to access the Internet or other technology resources provided by the school. Other disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with existing West Branch Area School District policies and will be tailored to meet specific concerns related to the violation. When necessary, the District may call in law enforcement agencies. The district will cooperate fully with local, state or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to any illegal activities conducted through the district system.

## Category 1 Violation

**Examples (not a complete list):** Accessing non-education websites, playing games, printing non-education material (i.e. game codes, pictures not pertaining to a class, etc.)

**First offense:** Loss of privileges 15 days/other possible discipline sanctions

**Second offense:** Loss of privileges 45 days/other possible discipline sanctions

**Third offense:** Loss of privileges remainder of year/other possible discipline sanctions

## Category 2 Violation

**Examples (not a complete list):** Attempting to bypass the security/filtering system (i.e. accessing proxy websites), accessing Social Networking Websites (i.e. MySpace, Xanga, Facebook, etc.), hacking, giving out your password to another student, using another student's password to access the computer network, downloading any files (games, pornography, etc.)

**First offense:** Loss of privileges 90 days/other possible discipline sanctions

**Second offense:** Loss of privileges remainder of year/other possible discipline sanctions

**NOTE: Any student who is taking a computer class and loses their computer privileges may receive a failing grade and be removed from the course.**

## Vandalism

Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges for the remainder of the school year. The violator will also be financially responsible for repair/replacement of software, equipment, etc.

Offenders may also be subject to criminal prosecution. Under Pennsylvania law, it is a felony punishable by fine of up to \$15,000 and imprisonment of up to seven (7) years for any person to access, alter or damage any computer system, networking, software or database, or any part thereof, with the intent to interrupt the normal functioning of an organization. Knowingly and without authorization, disclosing a password to a computer system, network, etc. is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$10,000 and imprisonment of up to five (5) years, as it is intentional and unauthorized access to a computer, interference with the operation of a computer or network, or alteration of computer software.

**DRUG POLICY**

| <b>Situation/Category</b>  | <b>Immediate Action</b>   | <b>Investigation</b>  | <b>Notification of Parents</b>  | <b>Notification of Police</b>                               | <b>Disposition of Substance</b>   | <b>Discipline/Rehabilitation</b>  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>1.</b> A student volunteers information about personal drug or alcohol use and asks for help  | The student is informed of services available, encouraged to seek help. No disciplinary action will be taken against students seeking help                            | A staff member will request advice from the Student Assistance Team, counselor, Nurse, or principal                               | Only with the consent of the student, unless there is clear and imminent danger | No  | Not Applicable  | No disciplinary action will be taken against students asking for help. Possible referral to Student Assistance Team   |
| <b>2.</b> A student contacts a staff member in regard to the drug use or alcohol use of another student  | Student who contacts a staff member is encouraged to get the student with a problem to personally seek help.  | A staff member will request advice from the Student Assistance Team, counselor, nurse or principal.                               | Not applicable  | No  | Not Applicable  | No disciplinary action will be taken against students asking for help. Possible referral to Student Assistance Team   |
| <b>3.</b> 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  | Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member writes an anecdotal report of the incident  | The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions  | Notification of behavior and/or performance indicators if warranted             | No  | Not Applicable  | Referral to the Student Assistance Team   |
| <b>4.</b> The student has a drug, mood-altering substance, alcohol-related medical emergency   | Standard health and procedures will be followed. Parents will be summoned as soon as possible. Student will be transported to a medical facility at parental expense. | The principal and his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions | Yes, parents notified as soon as possible                                       | Yes, at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee | Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for use in further proceedings. | Referral to the Student Assistance Team upon evidence of violation. Refer to appropriate situational category   |
| <b>5.</b> 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 school function. | Principal or his/her designee is summoned. Staff member immediately confiscates the material and writes an anecdotal report of the incident                           | The principal or his/her designee will investigate. This may include search of the student, his/her locker and other possessions  | Yes, Parental conference at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee | Yes, at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee | Confiscate the material. Analysis will be made if necessary for use in further proceedings. | 0-10 day suspension. Formal School Board expulsion hearing may be held. Referral to the S.A. Team and abide by their recommendation which may include an assessment by a licensed D/A assessor & compliance w/recommendation of the assessor. Loss of all extra-curricular activities for a period of 45 school days. |



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

**\*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.

## Homeless Students 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]