

WELCOME TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL!!

Dear Students:

Amherst Middle School is an outstanding school. Our school supports an environment that is grounded in respect. Integrity, compassion, commitment, and a positive attitude is the standard for all students and staff. We have staff members who are dedicated to teaching you and to helping you attain your goals. We expect you will take pride in your school and your work and be just as dedicated to achieving your personal best.

In the next several pages you will read all about your school. You will find out about your school day and about the various services we provide. You will read about the different activities we offer. You will also read about our expectations for all your AMS activities; these are our rules and our policies. Please read these pages carefully. They will guide you, both on our campus and off, as you grow academically and personally.

We challenge you to be the best that you can be! The Amherst Middle School staff believes that all students can learn, and that the responsibility for learning is shared by both the students and staff. If you believe in yourself, you can excel in any activity in which you wish to participate. Believe that you can achieve your goals, and you will be successful in life.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bethany Bernasconi
Principal

John Schuttinger
Assistant Principal for Operations

Heather Jennings
Assistant Principal for Student Services

EXPECTATIONS

Staff expects students to:

- Attend school daily; arrive on time to school and class.
- Be willing and prepared to learn; come with an inquiring attitude, appropriate materials, and completed assignments.
- Be respectful of all staff and peers by honoring a teacher's responsibility to teach, and everyone's right to learn.
- Be in charge and responsible for one's own behavior, within the expectation of school rules.
- Be honest, tolerant, and respectful; act and speak appropriately at all times.

Students can expect all staff to:

- Maintain high expectations for themselves and their students.
- Provide students with a safe and orderly school and classroom environment.
- Recognize that students have unique learning styles, and design learning opportunities to accommodate those styles.
- Explain and post classroom rules and expectations.
- Communicate regularly with parents and report on student progress routinely.
- Model learning for students by pursuing their own professional development.

ARRIVAL

School starts at 7:30 A.M. and ends at 2:24 P.M. Students who are driven to school should arrive no earlier than 7 A.M. and can be dropped off at the main entrance. Students arriving by bus will be dropped off at the Souhegan High School bus loop and will walk to the Middle School property.

Delayed Opening & No-School Procedures

In the event of inclement weather, it is possible that a two hour delayed opening will be announced. This means school will start two hours after the regular starting time. Please do not phone the superintendent, principal, or school-bus director concerning these announcements. SAU#39 uses Nixle to communicate with the community, parents, students and staff.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in school is a critical component for a student's educational success. Furthermore, state law requires that all students attend school (unless in an approved home schooled situation).

Attendance Team

The attendance team at Amherst Middle School is made up of administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, school psychologists, and the school resource officer. The purpose of this team is to review patterns regarding individual student attendance and to work collaboratively with parents/guardians to ensure success for all students. Attendance and school achievement are linked and chronic absenteeism, especially truancy, can lead to a student's detachment from school. In order for students to be most successful, it is our belief that they need to be in school and on time every day. If support is needed regarding your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to call a member of the attendance team.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive in advance of the start of school. You will be considered tardy if you are not in your first period class prior to 7:30 AM. It is important to note morning traffic can be overwhelming between 7:15 A.M. and 7:30 A.M. and can result in delays. If you are late to school, you must present a note to the front office from a parent/guardian explaining the reasons for your tardiness. If you do not present a note to the front office, it will be considered an unexcused tardy and the office will issue you a note to be signed by your parents. Upon the

third unexcused tardy, a letter will be sent home noting your tardiness. Any subsequent unexcused tardiness will result in an administrative detention. Upon 10 tardy arrivals, excused or unexcused, a letter will be sent home from Administration noting the excessive tardiness. We ask parents and guardians to support us in making sure your child arrives promptly each day.

Excused Absences

Illness, recovery from an accident, required court attendance, medical and dental appointments, death in the immediate family, observation or celebration of a religious holiday, and such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law.

Any absence that has not been excused for any of these reasons will be considered an unexcused absence.

Absence

When you are absent from school, parents are asked to call the office in the morning (673-8944) or email (ams@spride.com) by 8 A.M., stating the reason for your absence along with the date of the absence. The school will call home if we do not receive a call. Amherst School District Policy JH—Attendance. Absenteeism and Truancy can be found in its entirety on the SAU 39/Amherst School Board website at <http://www.spride.com/policyamherst.aspx>.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

Early Dismissal

Dismissal from school is initiated by presenting a signed note from a parent/guardian to the front office. The note should include the date and time for your dismissal. Additionally, students who are being dismissed early should present their early dismissal note to the supervising teacher at the time of dismissal. Unless other arrangements are made, parents must sign-out their child in the front office.

Late to Class

You will be considered tardy to class if you arrive beyond the designated start time for the class. At the first infraction, students will be issued a verbal warning. Additional tardiness to class will be subject to consequences deemed appropriate by the classroom teacher. Habitual tardiness to class will be referred to the office.

ACADEMICS

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity means that students do their own work, both in class and at home. It is called plagiarism if credit is not given when other sources are utilized. This means you cannot simply copy from a text or website without citing the source. It also means that you cannot simply rewrite someone else's work and claim it as your own work. Consequences will be determined at the teacher's discretion.

Computer Use

Your use of the computer should be to support your academic work. Every student must have on file a signed computer/internet agreement form. By signing it you have stated that you are willing to abide by the rules and guidelines set forth in that document. If you misuse a computer the privilege of use may be taken away for a period of time in addition to any applicable discipline.

Homework

As a general rule, students can expect homework per subject each night. The goal of homework is to give you an opportunity to practice using the concepts learned in class. It also gives you the time to do research and/or examine a topic in greater detail. Team teachers try to coordinate long term assignments and testing dates so that students are not overwhelmed.

Make-Up Work

If you have been absent or are missing work, it is your responsibility to make up the work missed or to ask for extra help. Teachers are available for extra help after school. Please check with your teacher to coordinate after school extra help sessions. If you have been absent, you will be given time (generally two (2) nights for each day absent) to make up the work missed. Homework may be requested by contacting the student's teacher before 10 A.M. on the second consecutive day of absence. Parents may pick up your work at the office. If you receive an Incomplete on your report card, you have two weeks to make-up the work.

Textbooks, Equipment and Supplies

You must cover your textbook to prevent it from being damaged. Place your name and homeroom number on the inside of the front cover so that it may be returned to you if lost. We ask that you take good care of books and equipment. If you lose or damage any books or equipment beyond normal wear, you will have to pay to replace or repair the item. In the event a book is recovered, any money collected for replacing that book will be returned to you.

Withdrawal

There are important procedures that must be followed if you are withdrawing from AMS. Contact the school as soon as you know, for more information.

STUDENT SERVICES

Counseling and Guidance

Counselors are available to assist you with personal, social, and academic issues. Counseling groups focus on shared concerns, and provide a support network to students. Classroom guidance lessons help students acquire skills in the area of self-awareness, communication, stress management, and conflict resolution. Counselors also consult with parents and teachers and assist in orientation of new students. You may see your counselor by stopping at the counselor's office to schedule an appointment.

Health Services

A nurse is in attendance for the school day. If you become ill or are injured, obtain permission from your teachers and report to the nurse. If necessary, your parent/guardian will be notified and you may be sent home. You will not be sent home unless arrangements have been made with a parent/guardian or the person designated on your emergency form.

- Medication Policy: Students may not "self-medicate!" All prescription drugs, as well as over-the-counter medications, must be administered by appropriate school personnel (with specific permissions). Please contact the school nurse for more information regarding dispensing of any medications. Never share any substances such as Tylenol with other students! Serious consequences will result.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

Officer Michael Knox, a veteran of the Amherst Police Department, is our SRO, and he serves in a collaborative effort with the school, community, and the police. His role includes interaction with students and staff, providing services to the school community in the general areas of information and communication. He is an educational resource in areas specific to school safety, criminal justice, and police science.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Electronic Devices

If bringing an electronic to device to school, it must be turned off between 7:30 and 2:24 P.M. Exceptions may be made for educational purposes. If any unauthorized electronic device is seen and/or used during school hours it will be taken away and returned at the end of the day; if it is seen and/or used during school hours a second time a parent will be required to pick it up from the office. **No photographs may be taken at any time during the school day or at school dances.**

Student Appearance

We believe student dress affects school climate, academic performance, and school safety. Students tend to view school more seriously if they dress as if their profession were academics. Dress and grooming are the responsibility of the student and his/her parents and should be appropriate for the educational environment and the age of the student. Clothing should not be disruptive to the teaching/learning process.

Dress Code Guidelines

Undergarments should not be visible. Shorts and skorts need to have at least a 3 1/2 inch inseam. The length of skirts and dresses should fall at mid-thigh.

The following are prohibited:

- Excessively tight clothing.
- See-through clothing, halter/tube tops, clothing (short shirts or low cut pants/shorts) that allows the bare mid-section to be seen while standing or sitting
- Spaghetti strap tops and low cut shirts
- Any clothing that covers any part of the head (hats, hoods, bandanas, etc.), backpacks, and sunglasses, except in designated areas.
- Clothing with profane language, gestures, or messages
- Pictures, symbols, writing that highlight alcohol, tobacco, weapons, or any other illegal substances.
- “Double meanings,” such as concert tee shirts depicting illegal or anti-social behavior.

Parents are urged to assist in monitoring the clothing that students wear to school. A student will be asked to leave class and change if his/her attire is considered unacceptable. If the student does not have appropriate clothes to change into, the student will remain in the office until a parent brings acceptable clothing. The enforcement of the above dress code is at the discretion/interpretation of the school administration. Repeated dress code violations will result in an office detention.

Personal Property

It is not wise to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. They may be lost or stolen. Make sure your name is on anything valuable so that it may be identified and returned to you if stolen or lost.

Forgotten Items

If your parents bring in an item, your name will be written on the Message Screens located outside the main office and on the first and second floors of the core building. To limit disruptions to the classroom, you will not be called to the office. It is your responsibility to check the Message Screen for your name.

Messages for Students

We understand there are circumstances which require getting a message to your child during the school day. Because students are not allowed to have cell phones on during the day, it is important to call the main office prior to 1:00 PM in order to ensure that the message is delivered. Student names will be posted on the electronic message boards in the school building rather than be called out of class. Please make every effort to arrange play-dates and pick-up plans prior to the start of the school day.

Bicycle/Skateboard/Rollerblade Safety

Skateboards, roller blades, and other wheeled vehicles are allowed on school property only after 4:15 PM. For safety reasons, they are never allowed on the walkways, near entrances, stairs and/or handrails. If you choose to ride your bike to school, please do so carefully. Register your bicycle with the police department and wear a helmet. We encourage you to follow safe bicycling rules. Do not ride double or wear a portable listening device while riding. Upon entering and exiting the school grounds, we ask that you walk your vehicle to and from the bike rack. Secure your bike with a lock.

Lost and Found

We encourage parents and students to label all personal property. Lost and found is in the cafeteria; valuable items are kept in the office. The lost and found will be sorted and donated several times during the year.

Schoolyard Rules (Lunch Recess)

- Games involving physical contact are not permitted.
- Students may not leave playground area without permission.
- At the sound of the whistle, students should quickly move to the designated door for entrance to the building.

Student Council

Student government at AMS consists of elected officers and representatives from each grade and homeroom. Officers are elected following a campaign and student elections. The council sponsors a range of activities.

Student Visitors

Student visitors are not allowed to spend the day at AMS.

Telephone Use

The phones in the front office are business phones and are to be used only in an emergency. Cell phones may not be used to call a parent during the school day. If you need to use a phone, ask your teacher for a pass to the office.

Important Reminders

- Passes and classroom sign out/in are always required when leaving the classroom while class is in session.
- Please remember that all students remaining in or outside of the building after school hours must be participating in a supervised activity.

BUS POLICY

When riding the bus it is important to remember that the driver is in charge at all times.

NOTE: Cameras are on the buses and may be used to monitor student behavior.

- Report to your pick-up points on time.
- Remain well back from the road (approximately 10 feet) while waiting for your bus.
- Enter the bus in an orderly fashion, go directly to a seat, and remain seated until your destination is reached.
- Keep your hands and arms inside the bus.
- Use the Emergency exit for Emergencies only.
- Ride your assigned bus and go on and off of your bus at your assigned stops. You require a bus pass with permission from the school principal to get on/off at a different stop.
- Follow the outlined procedure below for crossing a street off of the bus:
 - Leave the bus and walk about ten feet up the highway from the bus.
 - Look both ways to be sure all cars have stopped.
 - Cross the street in front of the bus.

Do not:

- Litter or deface the school bus.
- Shout, roughhouse, or act in any manner that would jeopardize the safety of others.

If you misbehave on the bus, the driver will inform you, and a Bus Safety Report will be sent to Administration. Generally, if it is a minor infraction, the first time you receive a report you will be warned about your behavior. The second time your bus riding privileges are suspended. In addition, the AMS student discipline policy will be followed and school consequences will apply to behaviors at the school bus stop and on the bus.

Bus Policy, continued

Below are examples of inappropriate behaviors that may result in a loss of bus privileges from 2-10 days**:

- Throwing objects on, at, or out of the bus (2—10 days).
- Smoking (10).
- Spitting at someone or something (2—10).
- Possession of illegal substances or alcohol (10).
- Unauthorized use of the emergency exit (10).
- Damaging the bus and or equipment (2—10 plus damages).
- Using inappropriate language, gestures, fighting or acts of physical/verbal aggression (2—10).
- Failing to follow the driver's directives (2—5).
- Sticking hands, head, and feet out of the bus windows (2—10).
- Leaving the bus at the wrong destination (2).
- Riding an unassigned bus (2).
- Students standing or moving about the bus while the bus is in motion (2).
- Any other action creating a safety hazard (1—2).

** Remember: These misbehaviors are potentially subject to other administrative action, based upon the AMS discipline policy.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR & DISCIPLINE

*AMS has the Courage to Care
Respect is extended to everyone and everything*

The goal of our educational program is to encourage independence, responsibility, and self-discipline. A respectful, safe and orderly atmosphere is essential for this learning to take place. A clear set of rules/expectations provide the framework for teaching and learning while ensuring the personal welfare of students.

Respect – for others, for one’s self, and for the rules is the key foundational ingredient to building this type of atmosphere in our school.

Respectful Behavior Defined: AMS School Rules

- Students are expected to accept and respect diversity.
- Students are expected to arrive at school on time and to be in each class on time.
- Students are expected to stay on school grounds once they arrive at school until they leave after school.
- Students are expected to follow the directions given by staff.
- Students are expected to behave; there is no pushing, shoving, hitting, or any other unprivileged touching, even in “fun;” no shooting elastics or any other projectile; no spitting.
- Students are expected to leave all non-school items at home, such as laser pointers, silly string, electronic games, etc.
- Students are expected to turn off all electronic devices at the start of school. They must remain off and out of sight until the school day ends.
- Students are expected to refrain from taking anything that does not belong to them. Stealing will not be tolerated.
- Students are expected to treat the school building and property with care; there is no defacing property or vandalism of any kind.
- Students are not allowed to fight.
- Students are not allowed to have cigarettes, alcohol, or any drug in their possession at any time. This includes, but is not limited to, paraphernalia such as lighters, papers, and pipes.
- Students are not allowed to have any item or look-alike that can be used as a weapon. This includes, but is not limited to chains, knives, razors, firearms of any kind, swords, and matches.

Classroom Behavior & Discipline

Each team will explain its specific expectations. In the event that you do not meet these expectations, the following is a general procedure that teachers will follow in dealing with some misbehavior:

- Your teacher will speak with you about the misbehavior and remind you what is expected. This is a warning and you should make every effort to improve your behavior.
- If your behavior continues to be a problem in class, then your parents will be informed of the misbehavior and consequences. A teacher will issue a lunch detention or an after school detention.
- Any continued misbehavior beyond the second detention will be referred to the administration. The consequences for continued misbehavior in the classroom may range from after-school detention to suspension from school depending on the seriousness of the issue.

Consequences for Misbehavior

Teacher Detention: This may be given during lunch or it may be assigned after school. Teachers will notify parents of the detention. If an after school detention is issued the teacher will give the parents/guardian a 24-hour notice.

Corrective Action Plan for Students (CAPS)

For more serious infractions, or when a student repeatedly violates reasonable classroom/school rules, it may be necessary to remove a student from the general population. In this case the student will be assigned to a separate room with direct supervision. Students will be expected to complete all assigned school work for the day(s) missed. Should work not be completed or if CAPS rules are not followed, the student will be required to spend additional days in CAPS. A student who proves to be unable or unwilling to cooperate with the CAPS process and who appears to be progressing towards a physical interaction/altercation due to demonstrated increased levels of aggression, either verbal or physical, will be removed from the school grounds by the parents. This removal will be at the discretion of the administrative team. The student also may be required to meet with guidance, participate in mediation, write an apology, make restitution, or fulfill any other appropriate tasks as directed by the administration. Students are not eligible to participate in any school-sponsored activities from the time of referral to the CAPS program until return to regular classes.

External Suspension

Suspension is issued when a student violates rules set in place for the safety and well-being of themselves and others.

- If a student is issued external suspension; parents will be notified by phone and sent a follow-up letter. Parents will be notified as to the reason for the

suspension, the length of the suspension, and the date of return to school. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed work during the suspension.

- Students are not eligible to participate in any school-sponsored activities from the time of referral until the student returns to regular classes, nor are they allowed to be on any SAU school property during the suspension.
- In all cases, students will be afforded Due Process, and there are procedures for an appeal to the Superintendent and to the Amherst School Board. Certain procedures and/or restrictions regarding suspension/expulsion may apply under the IDEA regulations for students with specific special needs.
- Contact the school if you have any questions.

Discipline Guidelines

Listed are some common rule infractions handled by the Administration and the range of consequences set down by the District. This list is not intended to be all inclusive nor does it limit the scope of discipline. In all cases, the consequences for misbehavior will depend on the severity of the action and will be at the discretion of the administration. In addition to detention, CAPS placement, external school suspension or other disciplinary action, the administration may involve law enforcement officials as necessary. The administration may involve law enforcement officials as required in the memorandum of understanding between the Amherst School District and the Amherst Police Department.

Any Action, which imperils the safety or well-being of others

- ✓ Minimum of one (1) detention

Repeated disciplinary referral to the office

- ✓ Cumulative detentions to possible CAPS placement or external suspension

Cell Phone Use

First Offense: Phone to office: student retrieves phone at end of school day

Second Offense: Phone to office: parent must retrieve phone

Failure to attend assigned detentions

- ✓ One (1) additional detention for each failure to attend: repeated failure will result in CAPS placement

Being referred to the administration from an after school office detention for misbehavior

- ✓ Minimum of one (1) additional day detention; CAPS placement may be warranted

Insubordination/lying or disrespect

- ✓ Minimum of one (1) detention; CAPS placement may be issued depending on the circumstances, severity, or frequency

Cafeteria/recess misbehavior (minor)

- ✓ 1—2 weeks cafeteria clean-up during recess

Cutting class

- ✓ One detention for each class skipped up to five; CAPS placement may be warranted

Truancy

First Offense: minimum five (5) office detentions.

- ✓ All Additional Offenses: minimum ten (10) office detentions/each offense

Discipline Guidelines, continued

Bullying and harassment, which include but is not limited to insults, taunts, challenges, name calling, sexual comments or innuendo, hate language, racial slurs and/or epithets (see RSA 193:F)

- ✓ Meeting with an Administrator upon any complaint
- ✓ If applicable, the student will be issued a warning or detention(s) based on the severity of the allegations;
- ✓ If the action continues, notification of the Superintendent of Schools, Amherst Police Department and detention(s) or CAPS placement.

Throwing of any object(s)

- ✓ One (1) day detention or CAPS placement

Throwing objects with intent to injure

- ✓ Minimum one to three (1 - 3) days CAPS placement or external suspension

Altercation, either verbal or physical, requiring administrative intervention

- ✓ Detention, CAPS placement, or external suspension depending upon severity

Fighting

- ✓ Minimum one to three (1-3) days CAPS placement or external suspension and police notification

Assault, defined as unprivileged physical contact of any type (RSA 631:2-a)

- ✓ Minimum one to three (1-3) days CAPS placement or external suspension

Assault with injury

- ✓ Minimum one to three (1-3) days CAPS placement or external suspension; notification of Amherst Police and Superintendent of Schools

Sexual contact

- ✓ Minimum one to three (1-3) days CAPS placement or external suspension

Student striking a teacher

- ✓ Minimum two (2) weeks external suspension and police notification

Theft, defacing, "tagging" or damage to, or destroying school, teacher or student property

- ✓ Restitution, police notification and one to three days CAPS placement or external suspension

Discipline Guidelines, continued

Gambling

One (1) day CAPS placement

Smoking, or possession of, or having tobacco on school grounds

- ✓ Minimum three (3) days CAPS placement and police notification
- ✓ Notification to Amherst Police Department
- ✓ Parent(s) and student required to meet with School Resource Officer
- ✓ Parent(s) and student required to meet with a school counselor upon student's return to school

All of the above conditions are to be met before student is allowed to return to the classroom.

Possession or under the influence of any illegal substance (alcohol or drugs) or "look-alikes" portrayed as illegal:

- ✓ Minimum three (3) days CAPS placement or external suspension
- ✓ Notification to Amherst Police Department
- ✓ Parent(s) and student required to meet with School Resource Officer
- ✓ Parent(s) and student required to meet with a school counselor upon student's return to school

All of the above conditions are to be met before student is allowed to return to the classroom.

Pulling a false fire alarm, police alarm, making a false 911 call to police or making a bomb threat:

- ✓ Minimum three (3) days external suspension and police notification and restitution when applicable

Arson

- ✓ Restitution, minimum five (5) days external suspension and police notification

Gross misconduct or neglect or refusal to follow established rules of the school

- ✓ Minimum ten (10) days suspension, or student may be expelled

Discipline Guidelines, continued

Threatening the safety of oneself or others, regardless of intent (RSA 631-4)

- ✓ In all cases involving threats to the safety of self or others, before the student will be allowed to return to school, the District requires that appropriate medical personnel conduct, at parental expense, a lethality assessment or interview with the student. The purpose of this interview is to determine that the student poses no reasonable, continued threat to the school community or to self
- ✓ One to three (1- 3) days CAPS placement or external suspension
- ✓ Notification of incident to Chief of Amherst Police Department and Superintendent of Schools

Possession of a firearm on school property

- ✓ Student will be expelled

Possession of a look-alike firearm on school property

- ✓ Minimum one (1) day CAPS placement or external suspension Possession of a weapon other than a firearm, or implement that may be used as a weapon
- ✓ Minimum one (1) day CAPS placement or external suspension and police notification

Suspension/Expulsion (RSA 193:13)

A student may be suspended or expelled for an act of theft, destruction or violence as defined in RSA 193:D and RSA 193:B as well as for gross misconduct or neglect or refusal to follow the reasonable rules of the school as stated in RSA 193:13. A student shall be expelled by the board if the violation involves bringing or possessing a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code in a safe school zone as defined in RSA 193:D:1 without written authorization from the superintendent to modify the expulsion requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Searches

Law permits schools to exercise reasonable suspicions in order to commence a search, a lesser standard than required by police. Lockers, persons, and property may be subject to search if there is a reasonable cause for that search.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have any questions or concerns. This entire document can be located on the Web at www.sprise.com/ams

**AMHERST MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE LAWS
INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) & SECTION 504
CHILDFIND NOTICE**

Amherst School District has a duty to locate, evaluate and identify any child residing in the District who qualifies for Special Education and/or related aids, accommodations, and services.

Children eligible for special education under IDEA may include those children with disabilities who have an intellectual disability, autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, visual impairment, or developmental delay and who, because of such an impairment, need special education services. Children eligible under Section 504 for special education and/or related aids, accommodations and services may include those children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If you suspect your child has a disability and may need special education and/or aids, accommodations, and services, or if you would like additional information, please contact the Director of Special Instructional Services, Renea Sparks, at 673-2690, extension 113.

PARENT RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 504/TITLE II

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 provides rights for persons who, because of a disability, need or are believed to need special instruction or related services. You have the following rights:

- The right to be informed of your rights in this document.
- The right to be notified about the decisions about your child's identification, evaluation, and accommodations.
- The right to have decisions regarding your child's evaluation and program/placement based upon a variety of information sources, and made by persons familiar with the student, the evaluation data, and the program/placement options. The right to have your child reevaluated periodically, to the extent necessary, including before any significant changes are made to your child's educational program.
- The right to have your child receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. It also includes the right to have the school district make appropriate accommodations, modifications, or provide related aids and services necessary to allow your child an equal opportunity to

participate in school and school-related activities and to benefit from his or her educational program.

- The right to review relevant school records relating to your child. If in order to access the records, you need to obtain a copy of them, said copies will be made available at a reasonable cost, unless the fee will effectively deny you access to the records.
- The right to request changes related to the educational program of your child as it is affected by his/her disability.
- The right to request an impartial hearing to be conducted by a person who is not an employee of the district, related to the district decisions or actions regarding students under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding identification, evaluation, and educational program/placement. You and the student may take part in the hearing and have your attorney represent you at your expense. Hearing requests must be made to the Director of Special Instructional Services, P.O. Box 849, 1 School Street, Amherst, NH 03031. If your concern regards your child's eligibility under IDEA, your request for a hearing should be made to the NH Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, Concord, NH.
- The right to file a local grievance through local grievance procedures regarding any alleged violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act/Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Grievance procedures can be found in your School District's Policy KED.
- The right to file a complaint at any time with the Office for Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Education, 8th floor, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 021093921.

The Director of Special Instructional Services is the 504 Coordinator/Title II
Compliance Officer

Meg Beauchamp, 603-673-2690, ext. 113

SECTION 504/TITLE II PROCEDURES REGARDING IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION, AND PLACEMENT are available on the SAU/Amherst School District website, at the SAU 39 and Amherst Middle School offices, and published annually in the local newspaper.

- School District staff members will be familiar with the Section 504 referral form and the process utilized in addressing a 504 referral. A 504 referral can be made by parents, students, staff, or other personnel. The referral should be made in writing. If a parent requests a 504 referral, they will be provided with assistance.
- Upon receipt of the referral the Building 504 Coordinator (Deb Tumas) will schedule a 504 team meeting, send written notice of the 504 team meeting in advance to parents and other members of the team, enclose a copy of the "Parent/Student Rights under Section 504/Title II" with the meeting notice.
- At the 504 team meeting, the student's eligibility under Section 504 will be considered by review of all available evaluation data. Under Section 504, a qualified individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If the team determines that additional information is necessary to determine eligibility, they will obtain consent to conduct additional evaluations from the parent/adult student. An additional eligibility meeting will be scheduled. ➤ Parents will be provided with a copy of the "Parent/Student Rights under Section 504/Title II" again at the conclusion of the eligibility meeting. The notice states that the parent has a right to an impartial hearing for parental disagreements with regard to identification, evaluation, and program/placements of students under Section 504 and Title II. The notice also states that the parent/student has a right to utilize the grievance procedure (Policy KED).
- If the team determines that the student is eligible under Section 504, the team will proceed to develop the student's 504 Plan.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Amherst Middle School does not practice discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age. This policy is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1978, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

Grievance Procedures to address alleged violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 are contained in the Amherst School District Policy KED. Grievance procedures to address alleged violations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 are set forth in Amherst School District Policy ACA.

Policies KED and ACA are available in their entirety on the SAU 39/Amherst School Board website at <http://www.sprise.com/policyamherst.aspx>, the Amherst Middle School website, and at the SAU and Amherst Middle School offices.

HARASSMENT POLICY

It is the policy of the Amherst School District that its students have an educational setting that is safe, secure, peaceful, and free from student harassment, also known as bullying. The Amherst School District will not tolerate unlawful harassment of any type and conduct that constitutes bullying and cyberbullying as defined herein. Any person violating this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Student misconduct that constitutes harassment or bullying under the Public Safety and Violence Prevention Policy (Policy JICK) may constitute harassment on the basis of race; color, national origin, sex or disability. In situations where the bullying may constitute sexual harassment, the requirements of Policy ACA, Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence, must also be met. Where the bullying may constitute harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability, the requirements of Policy KED, Grievance Procedure for Alleged Discrimination, shall be followed.

Amherst School District Policies JICK, ACA, and KED can be found in their entirety on the SAU 39/Amherst School Board website at <http://www.sprise.com/policyamherst.aspx>

BULLYING DEFINED

Bullying is hereby defined as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

1. Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil's property
2. Causes emotional distress to a pupil
3. Interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities
4. Creates a hostile educational environment
5. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school

Bullying shall also include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the pupil's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

Cyberbullying is defined as any conduct defined as —bullying in this policy that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices. For purposes of this policy, any references to the term bullying shall include cyberbullying.

Electronic Devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

School Property means all real property and all physical plant and equipment used for school purposes, including public or private school buses or vans.

Sexual Harassment

Bullying may constitute sexual harassment in which case it shall be subject to and be handled in accordance with the School District's Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy (ACA).

Consequences

Refer to NH RSA 193:F. A student violating the Harassment Policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action; including suspension and expulsion.

Training

The Superintendent or his/her designee may develop age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning, substance, and application of this Policy with staff and students in order to minimize the occurrence of bullying, and for staff to effectively respond to any such incidents.

Recording on School Buses

Pursuant to RSA 570-A:2, notice is hereby given that the School Board authorizes audio recording to be made in conjunction with video recordings of the interior of school buses while students are being transported to and from school or school activities. A sign informing the occupants of school buses that such recording may occur shall be posted on all buses.

Bullying as Abuse and Criminal Conduct

Under certain circumstances, bullying may constitute abuse under RS 169-C, the Child Abuse Reporting Act, or a crime. In such situations, employees shall comply with provisions of the School District's Policy concerning the Safe School Zones Law and the law. Violations of the Safe School Zones Act involving an act of theft, destruction or violence will be reported to police in accordance with that law.

Immunity

A school employee, or employee of a company under contract with the School District, who has reported violations of bullying to the Principal, or the Principal's designee, shall be immune from any cause of action which may arise from the failure to remedy the reported incident in accordance with this law.

Weapons Policy

Weapons or replicas of weapons must never be brought to school or onto school grounds. Anyone found to be in possession of a weapon or replica of a weapon will be issued an extensive out-of-school suspension or expulsion. Threatening the safety of another student or teacher with a weapon or replica of a weapon will result in a severe disciplinary action. RSA 193:13, II, III also address this issue:

RSA 193:13 II: Any pupil may be expelled from school by the local school board for gross misconduct or for an act of theft, destruction, or violence as defined in RSA 193:D:1, or for possession of a pellet or BB gun or rifle and the pupil shall not attend school until restored by the local school board. Any expulsion shall be subject to review if requested prior to the start of each school year and further, any parent or guardian has the right to appeal an expulsion by the local school board to the New Hampshire Board of Education.

RSA 193:13 III: Any pupil who knowingly possesses a weapon in a safe school zone as defined in RSA 193: D: 1 without written authorization from the superintendent or designee shall be expelled from school by the local school board. Any expulsion shall be subject to review if requested prior to the start of each school year and further, any parent or guardian has the right to appeal any such expulsion by the local school board to the State Board of Education.

Safe School Zone (RSA 193: D)

It is the School District's policy that all school buildings, premises, bus stops and associated areas shall be safe environments for students, free of danger posed by the presence of weapons or conduct that threatens harm by means of weapons or objects used as weapons. It is the school district's policy that the provisions of RSA 193: D will be carried out in all respects. Under the statute, a student may be suspended or expelled for acts of theft, destruction or violence occurring on school property, bus stops and routes and at school-sponsored events regardless of the age of the student, for homicide, assault (simple, second degree); sexual assault; criminal mischief; possession or sale of firearms or weapons; arson; burglary; robbery; theft; sale or possession of a controlled drug, or "look-alike" substances portrayed as illegal substances.

Drug Free School Zone (RSA 193: B)

Makes it unlawful for any person to manufacture, sell, prescribe, administer, dispense, or possess with intent to sell, dispense, or compound any controlled drug or its analog, within a drug-free school zone at any time of the year. Drug-free School Zone means an area inclusive of any property used for school purposes, whether or not owned by the school within 1000 feet of school property, or within or immediately adjacent to school busses.

Due Process in a Safe School /Drug Free School Zone

The School Board requires that the student body be annually notified of school rules including RSA 193: B, the drug free school statute; 193: D, (known as the safe school zone law); and 193:13, the law governing suspension and expulsion from school. The administration conducts a series of team-level "Town Meetings" throughout the school year to discuss all aspects of student expectations and conduct. The purpose of these meetings is to be proactive and educate the student body around respect and the school disciplinary policy. Students are offered steps to take to prevent incidents from occurring, ways to report them if they do, and given examples of behaviors to avoid.

Equality and Sexual Harassment (Title IX)

The Amherst School District will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment. All students have the right to equal opportunity in an atmosphere that is free of sexual harassment.

PUBLIC NOTICE

From time-to-time, school officials are asked to make public or to provide information about students, such as class lists, team rosters, lists of graduates, award winners, and honors recipients. New Hampshire law (RSA 189:1-e) permits the release of what is called "Directory Information" consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Souhegan Cooperative School districts hereby notify parents of the types of information designated as "Directory Information." Items of Directory Information, which is information not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed, includes: name and address of student; field of study; weight and height of athletes; most recent previous school attended; date and place of birth; participation in officially recognized activities and sports date of attendance, degrees, and awards.

Parents can send a written request to the Superintendent of Schools SAU 39 to remove all or part of the "Directory Information" on their child (children) that they do not wish to be made available to the public.

Adam Steel, Superintendent
SAU 39-Brick School
PO Box 849
Amherst, New Hampshire 03031