Proposed Changes to AMS Handbook

Proposed Attendance Policy

PART THREE: ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The Auburn Public School District believes that a student's presence, as well as his/her active participation in class, is critical to academic success. Regular school attendance is linked to higher graduation rates and lower drop-out rates. Students need to be in the classroom to benefit from teacher instruction and from interactions and exchanges of ideas with peers. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, Sec. 2 and chapter 76, Sec 4, parents/guardians are responsible for their child's attendance, and that absences may not exceed 7 full-day sessions or 14 half-day sessions in any 6 month period (M.G.L C 76, S1.) A student who is not present for at least half of the day is considered absent (M.G.L C 72, S 8.) Parents do not have the option of keeping a student out of school for other than the excusable reasons. While there is no substitute for the direct instruction that students miss as a result of not being in attendance during the school day, the district understands that sometimes it is necessary for a parent/guardian to take their child out of school due to unavoidable circumstances. The following absences are defined as excused absences:

- · Illness covered by a physician's note
- · COVID-19 absence due to a positive test or mandated quarantine
- Death in the family
- · Observance of religious holidays
- · Mandated court appearances

Extended illness should be reported to the school nurse. Any other absence would be considered unexcused. Extenuating circumstances will be to review by a building administrator. Parents may be required to meet with the building administrator to discuss absences.

Students must be in attendance before 11:10 or dismissed after 11:10 for attendance to count as a full day of school.

The district requires parents/guardians to contact their child's school promptly if their child will be absent. When a student is absent and contact has not been made, the school will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent/guardian. Therefore, it is important that parents/guardians provide their current contact information to ensure the proper notification can be made. If you have a change in address or telephone number, please provide this to the Main Office at your child's school.

*In the event of absence, please contact the school office by phone (508) 832-7722 or email (jcruz@auburn.k12.ma.us or kackley@auburn.k12.ma.us) by 8:00 am.

The district strongly discourages families from planning vacations that conflict with the regular school calendar. Absences due to vacations will be deemed unexcused.

In order for students to be considered as successfully completing their current grade level, they must have <u>no more than 15 unexcused absences for the school year</u>. Written notifications will be sent to parents/guardians at 5 and 10 absences. At that time, a conference will be recommended to plan for the student's improved attendance and academic success.

In some cases, chronic absenteeism may lead to academic failure and retention of the student.

Tardiness

A student is deemed tardy if they miss attendance in their first period class. When a student arrives late for school, regardless of time, he/she is expected to report to the office for a tardy slip. If a student is tardy to a class other than the first block class, the classroom teacher will discipline the student. (A student not in his/her classroom at the start of class is considered tardy.) A student who is tardy for more than 1/2 a class will be considered absent from the class. Students who are tardy to school or class more than 4 times in a trimester will be reported to the Assistant Principal.

Dismissals

A student may be dismissed only when a written request is received from a parent or legal guardian. He/she should bring the note to the office upon arriving at school. The note should include the date and the time of dismissal.

In the event of sudden illness, injury or other extenuating circumstance requiring dismissal during the school day, students can only be dismissed after the parent/guardian has spoken to the nurse and/or main office personnel. If a student contacts his/her parent/guardian via cell phone to request dismissal, we ask that parents/guardians please contact the nurse or the main office before coming to the school. Once at the school, parents/guardians will need to come to the office to sign their child out - this is the best way to ensure the safety of our students.

We understand that with hectic schedules it is sometimes necessary to schedule appointments during school time. We will continue to excuse dismissals of a medical nature as long as documentation of the appointment is supplied to the school. All other dismissals are considered unexcused.

Student attendance is very important. We ask that you make every effort to have your child in school on time and remain in school until 2:15 p.m. This will make it possible for us to ensure that your child is safe and to also guarantee that Auburn Middle School is providing him/her with the best possible education.

Anyone dismissing a student from school will need to present a valid ID and be on the student's list for pick up. Please add anyone to your list as promptly as possible.

Current Attendance Policy

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*In the event of absence, please contact the school office (508) 832-7722 at AMS by 8:00 am. If the school is not notified, the nurse will call home or work to verify your child's absence.

Parents are expected to call the school in the event of his/her child's absence.

The middle school Administration strongly discourages families from planning vacations that conflict with the regular school calendar. Absences due to vacations will be deemed unexcused.

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Anyone dismissing a student from school will need to present a valid ID and be on the student's list for pick up. Please add anyone to your list when your student returns the forms they bring home during the first week of school.

Proposed Discipline Policy

PART SEVEN: DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Auburn Middle School is committed to maintaining safe, participatory, and productive learning environments. In order to maximize learning time and promote positive behaviors, every school must establish systems of support for students' social/emotional and behavioral needs. This includes maintaining and communicating high expectations, creating consistent and predictable classroom routines, providing consistent supervision, teaching social/emotional competencies, and fostering positive relationships among all members of the school community. These principles will guide the application of educational equity, inclusion, cultural competence, and culturally responsive teaching to the classroom and the culture of the school.

Our commitment to restorative practices aim to prevent inappropriate student behavior but also provide specific strategies for creating a welcoming, caring, respectful, and identity-safe space for authentic student engagement and learning. We are dedicated to a proactive, positive, and instructional approach to behavior. If behavior incidents arise that threaten student and staff safety or severely disrupt the educational process the response should minimize the impact of the incident, repair harm, and address the needs underlying student behaviors. All disciplinary responses will be applied respectfully, fairly, consistently, and protect students' rights to instructional time whenever possible. Suspensions and expulsions will be used only as a disciplinary measure of last resort to minimize the amount of time that students spend out of the classroom.

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, the principal, or his/her designee, shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense. The principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning and shall attempt to avoid long term suspension as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. These alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

As it is impossible for any set of rules to make specific reference to all offenses, the principal has the discretion to interpret the following rules and to extend their application in a manner consistent with their intent. The principal has a legal duty to protect the safety of the student and staff personnel and to maintain good order. Therefore, the principal and those designated by him reserve the right to take such actions as may be necessary to accomplish these ends.

The following is a list of possible interventions that may be used to correct student behavior. The behavior matrix identifies behaviors and potential consequences based the nature of the infraction.

Classroom Responses May Include:

- Conference with student
- Teacher detention family notified
- Conference with student and family
- Referral to school counselor
- Repeated classroom infractions for the same behavior may result in an Office Referral or loss of classroom privileges

School-Based Responses May Include:

- Conference with student and family
- Referral to school counselor
- Restorative practices
- Education
- Office detention
- Saturday detention
- Community/school service
- Loss of school privileges
- Probation from athletic teams (per MIAA regulations) or clubs/activities (per group charter/constitution)
- Social suspension (student prohibited from participating in or attending athletic/extracurricular activities and school events)

In-School Suspension:

- Family is notified, along with school counselor and support staff
- Student is removed from their daily schedule (may range from one class period to multiple school days)
- Student reports to the main office to check in with administration & turns in all personal electronic devices to staff
- Student works in a predetermined building space and is monitored by staff
- Student will have access to their schoolwork and curriculum (Massachusetts General Law)
- Student will continue to receive services per their IEP/504, as appropriate
- Student may also engage in reflective/restorative practices and/or preventative education during this time
- Student will eat lunch in the ISS space
- Student and their family may be required to attend a re-entry meeting at the culmination of their suspension and a safety/support plan may be implemented as needed

Short-Term Out-of-School Suspension:

- Family is notified, along with school counselor and support staff
- Student is removed from school building (duration determined after discipline hearing, but may range from 1-10 days)
- Student is prohibited from accessing school grounds or school-sponsored activities for the duration of the suspension
- Student will have access to their schoolwork and curriculum via Schoology or email (Massachusetts General Law)
- Student will continue to receive services per their IEP/504, as appropriate
- Student may be required to engage in reflective/restorative practices and/or preventative education before returning to school
- Student and their family will be required to attend a re-entry meeting at the culmination of the suspension and a safety/support plan will be implemented as appropriate

Long-Term Out-of-School Suspension:

- Family is notified, along with school counselor and support staff
- Student is removed from school building (duration determined after discipline hearing, will be more than 10 days)
- Student is prohibited from accessing school grounds or school-sponsored activities for the duration of the suspension
- Student will receive an Educational Services Plan to provide support them for the duration of the suspension (Massachusetts General Law)
- Student will continue to receive services per their IEP/504, as appropriate
- Student may be required to engage in reflective/restorative practices and/or preventative education before returning to school
- Student and their family will be required to attend a re-entry meeting at the culmination of the suspension and a safety/support plan will be implemented as appropriate

Exclusion or Expulsion:

- Family is notified, along with school counselor and support staff
- Student is excluded/expelled from school building
- Student is prohibited from accessing school grounds or school-sponsored activities for the duration of the exclusion/expulsion
- Student will receive an Educational Services Plan (Massachusetts General Law)

Progressive Discipline

Conduct expectations are based on a system of progressive discipline, meaning that administration has the discretion to increase penalties in the cases of second and subsequent offenses. In determining the level of consequence, the assistant principal and principal will consider all relevant factors, including but not limited to the following:

- The student's previous disciplinary record,
- The severity of disruption of the educational process,
- The degree of danger to self, others, and the school in general,
- The degree to which the student is willing to change his/her inappropriate behavior

AMS Discipline Matrix: 2023-2024

Behavior	Classroom Response	School Based Response	In-School Suspension	Short Term Out of School Suspension	Long Term Out of School Suspension	Exclusion or Expulsion
Academic Dishonesty/ Plagiarism	\	√				
Tobacco & non-THC Vapes		✓	✓			
Possession						
Use on School Grounds		√	√	✓		
Distribution		√	√	✓	√	
Assault of Student or Staff				✓	√	✓
Destruction of School Property		√	✓	✓		
Discrimination	✓	✓	√	✓	✓	✓
Disrespect of/Inappropriate Language Toward Student or Staff Non- Aggressive	√	✓				
Aggressive	✓	√	✓	✓		
Disruption of School		✓	√	✓	√	✓

Assembly						
Alcohol & Controlled or Illegal Substances Possession			√	√	√	√
Use on School Grounds			✓	✓	✓	✓
Distribution			√	√	√	✓
Dress Code Violation		√				
Fighting/Physical Aggression				√	√	√
Forgery		✓	✓			
Gambling		√	✓			
Inappropriate Physical Contact/Excessive Horseplay	√	√	✓	√		
Inappropriate Sexual Conduct		✓	✓	✓	✓	√
Insubordination	✓	✓	✓			
Malicious Harassment, Bullying or Hazing		√	√	√	√	√
Phone/Personal Tech Use Violation	✓	✓				
Possession of an		√	✓	√	√	✓

Incendiary Device or Combustibles					
Possession of a Toy Weapon	√	✓	√	✓	✓
Possession of a Dangerous Weapon				✓	✓
Recording Students or Staff Without Their Consent	√	√	√		
Theft	✓	√	✓		
Threat/Intimidation (Verbal or Electronic)	✓	✓	√	√	✓
Threat to School Community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Truancy/Leaving School Grounds Without Permission	✓	✓			
Unauthorized Sale of Items	√				
Violation of Acceptable Use Policy	✓				

Current Discipline Policy

PART SEVEN: DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Code of Conduct

As it is impossible for any set of rules to make specific reference to all offenses, the principal has the discretion to interpret the following rules and to extend their application in a manner consistent with their intent. The principal has a legal duty to protect the safety of the student and staff personnel and to maintain good order. Therefore, the principal and those designated by him reserve the right to take such actions as may be necessary to accomplish these ends.

We expect every staff member to be treated with respect and dignity just as the student should receive the respect of the staff. It is imperative that the teacher be in charge of the class. Anything less would lead to a poor educational opportunity for all. A show of disrespect toward a staff member or insubordination on the part of the student will not be tolerated.

The Auburn Public Schools' Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and the district is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In addition, this plan is intended to promote tolerance and respect for differences and to reaffirm the commitment of the citizens of our school community to basic human tights and dignity. Our plan has been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, it meets the requirements of M.G.L. c.71, § 370 and is modeled after the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Plan for dealing with bullying behaviors in our schools. The plan includes strategies for identifying, reporting and responding to bullying behaviors. The complete plan can be found on our website at www.auburn.k12.ma.us in the 'parents' tab located in the top navigation bar. A hard copy can be requested from the school. Questions should be directed to the building principal.

Students must be allowed to learn and teachers must be allowed to teach. If a student interferes with this process, he/she is considered to have a discipline problem, and measures will be taken to correct the situation.

STUDENTS ARE REMINDED THAT ALL STAFF MEMBERS ARE EMPOWERED TO ENFORCE ALL SCHOOL RULES AND REGULATIONS. TEACHERS MAY CHOOSE THE OPTION OF ASSIGNING THEIR OWN PERSONAL DETENTIONS TO BE SERVED AFTER SCHOOL IF A STUDENT VIOLATES A SCHOOL OR CLASS RULE; BUT MAY CHOOSE OFFICE REFERRAL INSTEAD. THE RULES THAT FOLLOW ARE MEANT TO FOSTER A SAFE, NURTURING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT. VIOLATION OF THE MANAGEMENT CODE IS CONSIDERED A DISRUPTION OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. FOR ANY VIOLATIONS OF MASSACHUSETTS STATE LAWS, POLICE MAY BE NOTIFIED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.

The word "in school suspension" means a student will be kept in school separated from the general population all day. He/she will be required to finish work assigned by the teachers in order to obtain an "Exit Ticket".

The word "detention" means a student will be kept in school during free time or after school.

The word "suspension" is the occasion whereby a student is not allowed in school, on school property, or at any school sponsored activity during. The principal, or his/her designee, sets the duration of a suspension is considered an unexcused absence.

The word "**expulsion**" as defined is the occasion whereby a student has been permanently banned from school, including school property and any school – sponsored activity for a period of (1) one year. After (1) one year, a student may apply for rescission of the expulsion.

The word "exclusion" as defined is the non-admission, omission or keeping out of a school activity.

In accordance with state law and current educational best practices, Auburn Middle School will make every effort to discipline students in a manner that enables them to continue the education process with as little disruption as possible. Therefore, we will always attempt to avoid out of school suspensions and exclusion from school / school activities.

However, in cases where a student's presence in school creates a dangerous or consistently disruptive environment for other students, the above described consequences must be utilized.

General Infractions

<u>Tardy (to school)</u> Students are allowed 3 <u>excused</u> (parental notification to school) tardies per trimester. When a student accumulates more than (3) tardies per trimester, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action.

Failure to Report to Main Office (Tardy to School, Disciplinary Referral) will be subject to disciplinary action.

<u>Tardy</u> (to class) Individual teachers will set penalty

<u>Misconduct</u> (Class, Assembly, Cafeteria, Corridors, or on AMS Campus or other Auburn Public School Event)

- 1st Office Referral Minimum 1 detention
- 2nd Office Referral up to 2 detentions
- 3rd Office Referral up to 3 detentions and parent conference with contract

Class Cut (Class, Homeroom, Study Hall or Teacher Detention, Leaving Assigned Area)

- 1st Offense Minimum 1 detention
- 2nd Offense up to 2 detentions
- 3rd Offense up to 3 detentions and parent conference with contract

<u>Truancy</u> (Cutting 3 or more classes per day or leaving campus during school day)

- 1st Offense up to 3 detentions
- 2nd Offense up to 1 day in school suspension
- 3rd Offense up to 3 day in school suspension and parent conference with contract

Forgery (Notes, Passes, Personal Identification, or Refusal to Identify Oneself to Staff)

- 1st Offense up to 3 detentions
- g2nd Offense up to 1 day suspension
- 3rd Offense up to 3 day suspension and parent conference with contract

School Damage (unintentional) - Clean up and repair or replace

Removal from class due to disruptive behavior – 1 detention (pending teacher referral may result in more)

Loitering in Bathroom Areas (Congregating in bathroom for purposes unrelated to use of bathroom facilities)

- 1st Offense 1 detentions
- 2nd Offense up to 2 detentions
- 3rd Offense up to 3 detentions and parent conference with contract

Consuming Food and/or Beverage Outside of the Cafeteria

- 1st Office Referral Minimum 1 detention
- 2nd Office Referral up to 2 detentions
- 3rd Office Referral up to 3 detentions and parent conference with contract

Smoking, Tobacco Use, Possession or Distribution of Tobacco Products

(In building, On field trips, During outdoor class, At school sponsored activities, Or on Auburn Middle School grounds)

- 1st Offense 3 day suspension
- 2nd Offense 5 day suspension
- 3rd Offense 10 day suspension and parent conference

*Possession of E-cigarettes (Hookah or Shisha pens) or any other paraphernalia is prohibited at Auburn Middle School building and grounds as is any device that produces smoke or vapor.

Cut Teacher Detention

- 1st Offense 1 detention
- 2nd Offense up to 2 detentions
- 3rd Offense up to 3 detentions and parent meeting with contract

Electronic Devices

(Examples include but not limited to: Cell Phones, Cameras, etc.) - 1 detention per offense

The use of electronic devices is prohibited during school hours. Texting, sexting, or any unauthorized electronic communication is strictly prohibited and can be a suspendable event. Displaying the device in plain view shall be construed as use and confiscated by teacher. The device will be held in the office and returned to a parent. Auburn Middle School is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Students attending Auburn Middle School cannot be photographed by an electronic device or camera without the expressed written consent of the student's parents. Faculty members or school employees at Auburn Middle School cannot be photographed by an electronic device or camera without their written consent. Transmitting an image of an Auburn Middle School faculty member or student via the internet can be consequenced by an in-school suspension or out of school suspension depending upon the severity or occurrences. Administrators at Auburn Middle School may confiscate any electronic device if there is reason to believe that it contains evidence of a crime. Parents/Guardians as well as law enforcement will/may be contacted.

<u>Gambling</u> (Students are reminded that any unsanctioned game of chance involving an exchange of money/property shall be considered inappropriate behavior. Since gambling is regulated by law, and is a violation of the statutes of the Commonwealth, it cannot be condoned in a public educational institution.) Students should be aware of the following consequences if they have been found guilty of gambling:

- 1st Offense up to 1 day suspension 2nd Offense up to 3 day suspension
- 3rd Offense up to 5 day suspension with parent meeting and contract

Disrespect to Staff/Insubordination

- 1st Offense up to 3 day suspension
- 2nd Offense up to 5 day suspension
- 3rd Offense up to 10 day suspension with parent meeting and contract

Vandalism, Destruction of School or Another Student's Property

Each Offense: Up to a 3 day suspension with restitution and parent conference

Theft

- 1st Offense up to 1 day suspension
- 2nd Offense up to 3 day suspension
- 3rd Offense up to 5 day suspension with parent meeting and contract

Fighting

1st Offense: Up to a 3 day suspension and parent conference
 2nd Offense: Up to 5 day suspension and parent conference
 3rd Offense: Up to 10 day suspension and parent conference

Excessive Horseplay/Endangerment to Others

Each Offense: Minimum 1 day suspension and parent conference

*THE FOLLOWING INFRACTIONS WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION AND COULD LEAD TO EXCLUSION DEPENDING ON FREQUENCY, SEVERITY, AND INTENT.

Fireworks (Possession, Use, or Sale)

Each Offense: Minimum 1 day suspension and parent conference up to an expulsion

Pulling Fire Alarms or Tampering with Fire Equipment (Alarm Covers, Extinguishers, etc.)

Each Offense: Minimum 5 day suspension (reported to the Auburn Police Department)

Setting Fires

Each Offense Minimum 10 day suspension (also reported to the Auburn Fire Department) and may lead to expulsion if charged with felony.

<u>Bomb Threats</u> (No student shall communicate or cause to communicate any information in any form whatsoever that a bomb or any type of explosive device is located in or on any building or property under the control of the Auburn Public Schools or is at any sponsored event, including but not limited to transportation provided by the Auburn Public Schools either directly or by contracted services.)

Each Offense: Minimum 10 day suspension and expulsion hearing

Assault On Student

- 1st Offense: Minimum 5 day suspension and parent conference up to an expulsion, if charged with a felony.
- 2nd Offense: Minimum 10 day suspension up to an expulsion, if charged with a felony.

Assault (On School Personnel, Verbal or Physical)

Each Offense: minimum 5 day suspension up to exclusion.

Weapons (Possession of any object that could be used to injure another.)

Each Offense Minimum 10 day suspension and parent conference up to an expulsion hearing

<u>Discrimination</u> (Incidents against others for their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, etc.)

1st Offense: Up to a 3 day suspension and parent conference

2nd Offense: Up to 5 day suspension and parent conference

3rd Offense: Up to 10 day suspension and parent conference

<u>Harassment</u> (Oral, written, graphic, electronic, or physical conduct on school property or at school-related activities relating to an individual's actual or perceived race, color, National origin, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability, that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the middle school's programs or activities by creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating, or offensive educational or work environment. Typically a pattern of behavior constitutes harassment, however a single event, depending on severity, may create a hostile environment.)

1st Offense Minimum 1 day suspension and parent conference

2nd Offense Minimum 3 day suspension and parent conference

3rd Offense Minimum 5 day suspension and parent conference

<u>Hazing</u> (Any activities viewed as initiation or rite of passage, which is potentially dangerous or abusive, will not be tolerated)

Each Offense Minimum 1 day suspension and parent conference

<u>Bullying</u> (Any overt act by a student or groups of students against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school sponsored activity, which acts are repeated against the same student over time.)

1st Offense: Up to 3 day suspension and parent conference

2nd Offense: Up to 5 day suspension and parent conference

3rd Offense: Up to 10 day suspension and parent conference

Inappropriate use of iPad/Email

At the discretion of the administration appropriate consequences will be imposed for each infraction. Consequences could range from a warning to loss of privilege to suspension depending on the severity of the action

<u>Substance Abuse of Alcohol/Illegal Drugs</u> (Possession, being under the influence, sale or distribution of illegal, prescription or over the counter medications at school or at school-related activities)

Each Offense: Minimum 10 day suspension and expulsion hearing with principal

Behavior expectations in the cafeteria and at lunch

- Students are to wait in line for the purchase of food and beverages and not cut in front of others.
- All food must be eaten at tables.
- Good Manners should be used at all times.
- Students are not permitted to leave the cafeteria for lunch.
- Students are expected to take trays, dishes, bottles and papers to the disposal and recycling bins and to leave their tables clean of any trash or debris.
- Students are to remain in the cafeteria until dismissed by the administrator or teacher in charge.
- Violation of cafeteria policy will result in detention or suspension.

<u>General Disruption of School Assembly</u> Any activity that disrupts school including, but not limited to, any verbal or written abuse of student, teacher, administrator, or other school personnel, and is not listed on the Student Management Code may be punished with detentions, out-of school suspension up to expulsion at the discretion of the principal or his designee.