

Family Handbook

2010-2011



Morris School

129 West St.

Lenox, MA 01240

413-637-5570

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Morris School Family Handbook! The purpose of this book is to provide a reference for parents and students and answer a variety of questions that may come up as members of our school community. Morris is the only public elementary school serving the town of Lenox. We have about 360 students in grades PK through 5. About 20% of these students attend Morris through the program of School Choice and reside in neighboring towns and school districts. Historically, resident and choice enrollment has allowed us to staff three sections of each grade.

The school information in this handbook is organized into several sections: In the pages that immediately follow, you will find some general information that may answer day to day questions. The next section starting on page 8 deals with our instructional program. Starting on page 16, please read the important section about maintaining a positive, safe, healthy and productive school environment. The final section beginning on page 27 contains important notices from the school and district about parents' rights, district policies, and compliance with state and federal requirements. Parents probably won't refer to this section too often, but we do ask that you review this information as you look through the handbook. This handbook ends with an index that will help you quickly find any information you seek.

We at Morris are proud of our school. It is a true community of learning and a place where we work together to solve problems. If questions remain after reviewing this handbook, please call. We're happy to answer your questions and look forward to working with you to make your child's school experience a fruitful one.

Timothy Lee, Principal

MISSION STATEMENT

The Morris School is committed to providing a wide continuum of opportunities which value individuals, maximize both skills and knowledge, enhance self-esteem, and produce responsible and life-long learners.

GOALS

* To provide the opportunity for all students to develop and communicate the skills and techniques necessary for critical thinking, **responsible** problem solving, and **decision-making**.

* To ensure that each student will acquire **multiple literacy skills** including those necessary to enable them to communicate effectively through written and spoken language.

To provide assistance for each student to acquire the **essential life skills** to be a responsible community member.

* To foster **respect and consideration for self and others** as well as a sense of pride for their school community.

To develop a **partnership with parents** by initiating and maintaining an active cooperative alliance with parents on educational issues, marked by attentiveness to parents' concerns and needs, nonjudgmental support of parents' efforts to nurture their children, and inclusion of parents in the learning process of their children, viewing parents as essential partners in that process.

* To have each school be a physically and emotionally safe environment where students want to be and where they are able to develop a spirit of ownership and a sense of belonging. To develop this **sense of community**, we need to promote self-respect and self-discipline and respect for others in the community, and be sensitive to and tolerant of the differences in each other.

* To ensure that we are providing **equal access and equality of opportunity** for all students in terms of staffing, programs, and resources.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ALL VISITORS MUST STOP AT THE OFFICE

DAILY SCHEDULES

Children who do not ride the school bus should arrive at school no earlier than 8:20. Classes begin at 8:40 and children are dismissed beginning at 3:10.

Kindergarten sessions are as follows:

Extended-day session - 8:40-1:25

Full-day session - 8:40-3:10

TARDINESS AND ABSENTEEISM

Children are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:40. It is the responsibility of the parent and student to see that the student arrives at school on time. We do not count the student tardy if he or she rides the bus and the bus arrives late. In cases of frequent tardiness, the parent will be notified.

When your child is sick or is going to be absent from school, **please call the school by 8:30 a.m.** We try to call parents of all children who are absent in the interests of the safety of the children.

RECESS PERIODS

All children have a fifteen-minute morning recess period and approximately a thirty-five minute recess/lunch period. During inclement weather the children have indoor recess. The paraprofessionals determine whether the children have outdoor play. Please dress your children in appropriate clothing for changes in weather conditions. We use a temperature of 15°F. (either ambient temperature or wind chill temperature) as the determinant as to whether recess will be held outdoors or indoors.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Lunches are served at Morris beginning at 11:55 a.m.

All Lenox Public Schools have a hot lunch program set up under the National School Lunch Program and administered through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education. School lunch menus are announced daily on the local radio stations, posted on the school website, and published in the *Berkshire Eagle*. Students receive menus monthly.

Applications for free and reduced price lunches are sent home with every student during the first week of school. If a family wishes for their children to participate and feels their family income is within the eligibility guidelines, they should send their completed application to the Food Services Director, John Tranfaglia C/O LMMHS via their child's classroom teacher. Parents will be notified of their children's eligibility within ten (10) days.

COLLECTION OF LUNCH MONEY

Please be advised that the Morris School Lunch Program is a pay-ahead system. Each student has a debit system lunch account. Since it is a debit system, deposits need to be made **prior** to purchases. Checks and cash are accepted as payment, and parents are encouraged to pay for at least a week ahead. Debit cards are scanned daily if a student purchases lunch or milk. Account balance statements are sent home with each report card; however, parents may call at any time to check balances. All accounts are reviewed on the 15th of each month and a notice will be sent home for any account with an outstanding balance greater than -\$25. This will alert you that your child will begin receiving the alternate lunch (grilled cheese, milk, and fruit or fruit juice only) in four school days (at a charge of \$2.50) until the negative balance is rectified.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

STUDENT RELEASE PROCEDURE

In emergency situations where it is necessary for your child to leave school during the day, he/she will be excused by the classroom teacher. A parent or an authorized adult must call for the child at the Principal's Office. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, please send a signed note or call the Principal's Office. We cannot release your child otherwise.

ADMISSION AND TRANSFER OF STUDENTS

All children entering the Morris School will register at the Elementary Principal's Office. Before entering, proof of immunization must be presented and reviewed by the school nurse. Pupils will ordinarily be placed with other children of the same grade level but may be placed in another group by the Principal with the approval of the Superintendent.

If you are planning to move from Lenox, please notify the Principal by phone or by note. The school office needs to know your new address, school to be attending, and date of leaving. The Elementary Principal's secretary is in charge of sending school records to your child's new school and needs a parent's signature for permission to do so.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS PARENT CONFERENCE DAYS

Periodically throughout the year, we have early release days for Inservice Workshops. We also have parent conference days usually in December and March/April. These days necessitate an earlier bus schedule. Children are released at about 12:00 noon. The School Calendar includes these days.

NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS DELAYED OPENINGS

The Superintendent of Schools shall determine the necessity for emergency closing or delayed opening of schools due to weather conditions or other emergencies. Announcements concerning such closings are made over local radio stations WBRK (1340 AM, 101.7 FM), WSBS (860 AM) and WBEC (1420 AM, 105.5 FM). No school announcements also appear on some of the "local" television stations at 7:00 a.m. An automated calling system will also be used to let families, staff and community members know that school has been cancelled.

WRITTEN NOTES

Children should bring a note written by parents:

- .. for early dismissal - to be released only to identified authorized persons at the Principal's Office
- .. for going home other than in the usual manner
- .. for going to scout meetings or church school (Blanket permission may be sent for the year)
- .. for excusing child for absence from school for any reason
- .. for tardiness
- .. for requesting special treatment
- .. for allowing someone other than the parent to be temporarily responsible for the child
- .. for changing of residence necessitating leaving the school (Time is needed to prepare transfer records. Parents must sign a release of information form before records are forwarded to the new school).
- .. for exceptions in riding the school bus (See bus regulations)
- .. for going on field trips during class time
 - for participation in extracurricular and intramural programs.

We discourage notes asking that a child stay in at recess because we cannot always provide supervision. We ask that requests for students to stay in at recess be limited to medical situations in which a physician has made the specific request.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

We believe that once children are in school it is better to keep them here in the case of a weather emergency rather than send them home early. In the case of another type of emergency, we would have the closing announced on the radio and make every effort to reach parents by telephone; otherwise, we will hold the students at school.

STUDENTS TAKEN ON VACATION

As is the case each year, we receive questions from parents concerning the assignment of school work during a vacation or family trip that occurs when school is in session. While we find it very difficult for students to miss school time, family trips can also have great educational value. It has become necessary to create the following guidelines should requests be made to have materials, assignments, etc.,

prepared by the school for the child's use during the vacation:

1. the loan of textbooks is permissible
2. special assignments for the child to do while away are not to be given
3. we assume no obligation to grade any assignments presumed to have been done by the child during his/her absence
4. upon return, the burden of making up work missed during the absence is upon the child
5. except for the inevitable losses incurred as a result of the absence from scheduled classes and the failure to make up work missed, the school will not impose any penalty upon child or parent as a consequence of the absence.

FOOD CONCERNS

Because of food excesses, uncertainty of ingredients in baked goods, and diverse religious customs, we request that you not send food in at holiday times; teachers in many grades have food-related activities that relate to events in the curriculum – many times in Pre-School and Kindergarten, less frequent as the children get older. We will, from time to time, have a curriculum-related event, like a quiet reading time, or a math activity in which the teachers may ask for food items. Teachers will take into account food allergies as they plan for the event. *Please do not send in any food or drink for special events without first okaying it with the classroom teacher.* These are always at the teacher's discretion and should be respected as such.

PARTIES IN CLASSROOMS

Parties are held at the discretion of the classroom teacher on a limited basis and do not generally interfere with the instructional program. Our PTO has a monthly celebration during lunchtime for students celebrating birthdays during the month. Please do not send birthday treats to school with your child. **This is extremely important because of food allergies!!**

STUDENT RECORDS

The student record cards of students in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 5 are kept in the Main Office at the Morris School. Parents have the right of access to these records. Access to records is obtained by written request to the Elementary Principal. Release of student information or transfer of records may take place only with the written consent of the parents. The Massachusetts Department of Education [Student Records Regulations](#) and [A Guide for Students and Parents on the Massachusetts Regulations Pertaining to Student Records](#) are included in the Lenox School Committee Policy Manual available in each school.

Massachusetts State Law on Student Records Access for Non-Custodial Parents (General Laws Chapter 71, Section 34 H) specifies process for non-custodial parents requesting the school records of their children (i.e. report cards, discipline notices). Please contact the Principal's office for information regarding this process and the request form that

must be submitted. This request and form must be submitted annually by non-custodial parents.

PARENT-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Parents are encouraged to visit and become active in the schools. Please make prior arrangements with the classroom teachers to set up conferences or classroom visitations. Teachers may be contacted during the regular workday (8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.). Phone calls will not be put through to teachers during instructional time. You may however, leave a voice message for a teacher. Your call will be returned at their earliest convenience.

If you have concerns about your child's learning or social experience at school, please contact your child's teacher. Any changes at home that may affect your child's school performance should be communicated to the classroom teacher as well.

Should any school problem arise concerning your child, please see or call the classroom teacher. By School Committee policy you must do this first. Usually all difficulties can be solved at this level. The Elementary Principal is available to help if the issues cannot be resolved.

TRANSPORTATION

Free bus transportation is provided to all Kindergarten through Grade Five students living more than one and one-half miles from their school. Bus stops are located within easy walking distance of their homes. Transportation may be furnished for shorter distances if, in the opinion of the School Committee, the area is unreasonably hazardous relative to the age of the child concerned. Elementary bus routes are published on the Morris School Website: www.lenoxps.org/morris/index.php the week before school starts each year. Paper copies can be obtained by calling the school office.

School buses are used to take children on field trips and to other school functions.

Parents who bring their children to school should arrive no earlier than 8:20 a.m. and be dropped at the small circle by the Preschool entrance. If you are dropping a student for an early morning activity, you may use the main circle until 8:15 a.m.

Our bus policy allows each student to have two regular consistent drop-off points. Students will not be allowed to ride on a different bus from their regular one or be dropped off at any other stop for any social purpose. If a child needs to go to a different stop, it is the parent's responsibility to have the child picked up at school.

When Kindergarten children are being dropped off on the 1:25 bus run, we ask that a parent or other adult be present at the bus stop to wave off the driver. If an adult is not present, the driver will proceed on the route, notify the bus company and school, and take the child to the High School where the

parent may pick up the child. The bus schedule is very tight and when the buses finish dropping off Kindergartners, they go right to the high school for their next route. We will make every effort to contact a parent in this circumstance.

PARENT PICK-UPS AT 3:10 P.M.

If you wish to pick up your child at the end of the day, we ask that you follow these procedures:

- Students in **Grades K-1 (and older brothers or sisters)** will be brought to the Preschool entrance by the small circle; parents should park around the circle and wait for the children to arrive from their classrooms. If students have not yet arrived at the door for pick-up we ask that parents carefully circle until the student is brought out.
- Students in **Grades 2-5** will be brought to the playground doors at the back of the building; parents should form a line of cars by those doors (being careful to leave plenty of room to loop around) and children will be dismissed as each car pulls up to the door. At certain times of the year, classes may be outside for gym or other activities and we ask that you not approach the playground doors until 3:10 p.m.

We are interested in safe departures from the school property; please drive carefully as cars may be backing out of parking spots and children may be crossing the parking lot.

BICYCLE AND WALKING SAFETY

Children are expected to walk on the sidewalks, cross at the protected crossings, and never walk in the road.

Children may ride bicycles to school with parental approval. There are bicycle racks at school where bicycles should be locked. Children should not ride their bicycles on the playground.

ASSIGNMENT TO CLASSES

KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE AGE

Children must be five years of age on or before September 1 to enter Kindergarten.

In assigning students to classes, the elementary principal will normally consider a variety of issues to ensure that each child will have a successful school year. Examples of such issues include but are not limited to the following: a fair distribution of sexes, specific health needs, special needs services required, inter-personal relationships, learning styles, and academic and social needs. The principal will place heavy priority on teacher recommendations.

Parents who have information that may be relevant when assignments are being made are asked to contact the elementary principal. Parent information should be submitted in writing to the elementary principal by May 1 of each school year.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

The Lenox School Committee has a policy on the promotion and retention of elementary students. Key sections are reprinted here.

Determination of a child's retention should be made following careful evaluations and conferences involving the principal, teacher(s), and parents. It is generally agreed that the earlier the retention, the more effective it is. Ordinarily, a child shall be promoted if he/she shows sufficient physical, social, emotional and intellectual maturity so that he/she can be expected to have a successful experience at the next grade level. If retention is considered, the best interests and long-range welfare of the child shall be prime consideration.

The elementary principal shall be responsible for making the final decision on retention based on consultations with school personnel and a careful weighing of teacher and parental recommendations. Under Chapter 766 regulations, the principal shall determine if a referral for a core evaluation is appropriate whenever a child is in substantial risk of non-promotion.

The possibility of retention must be made known to them [parents] well in advance -- no later than the end of the second marking period.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

MORRIS PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The Morris Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the local parent group, has as its main purpose to act as a dynamic support group dedicated to a high quality of education in the Lenox Public Schools. The Morris PTO sponsors informational programs and funds special projects. PTO funds are mainly raised through one large fund-raising project. Some ongoing projects include Kindergarten Parents Reception, Reading Is Fundamental, Yearbook, Children's Book Fair, Morris Library helpers, Ski Night, April Fools Road Race, and the Thanksgiving Feast. The PTO has also given generous financial support to the Library, to the faculty and staff, has supported numerous artistic performances and events, and has put money and time into each of the school playgrounds.

The PTO is actively looking for parents to participate in their activities. If you would like to be a part of this group enhancing the education of the children in Lenox, please contact one of the PTO representatives.

MORRIS SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 established School Councils in each school in the Commonwealth. The Morris School School Council

normally has 9 members (4 parents, 3 teachers, 1 community representative, and the elementary principal). The Council meets at least five times a school year to assist the principal in (1) adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards, (2) identifying the educational needs of students attending the school, (3) reviewing the annual school building budget, and (4) formulating a **school improvement plan**. Whenever there is an opening on the Council, parents will be notified and may express an interest to be a member. All School Council meetings are posted at the Town Hall and are open to the public.

PARENT RESOURCE CENTER

The Morris School has a Parent Resource Center in the Library. Materials are available in the PRC on a variety of issues including parenting, siblings, health topics, discipline, special needs, and much more. All materials are available to be borrowed.

PARENT SURVEY

We conduct an annual survey of parents to determine your level of satisfaction with your child's education and general procedures at the school. We do this in early May and release the results to the school community in June. Your input is important.

VOLUNTEERS

The Morris School has a Volunteer Coordinator who works with parents and other community members who wish to volunteer in the schools. The Volunteer Coordinator may conduct training, discusses confidentiality, and makes connections with volunteers and teachers.

If any parent feels he/she would like to help with classroom activities, accompany children on field trips, help with parties or special projects, etc., please contact the school office. All volunteers are required to submit to a CORI background check.

PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

The Morris School employs a number of paraprofessional support staff who supervise the cafeteria and playground in addition to their clerical duties. These support people play a very important role in keeping our students safe and insuring that school policies regarding behavior are maintained.

In addition, we have a behavioral intervention assistant who works with students who have been disruptive in the classroom, have consistently violated school rules, or who have been aggressive with other students or staff. Students are referred to the behavior intervention assistant by school personnel.

MORRIS SCHOOL WEBSITE

Up-to-date information about events, school lunch menus, important meetings and student accomplishments can be

found at www.lenoxps.org/morris/index.php. Mrs. Jezak maintains the site.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year we offer a variety of before or after school activities for children in grades 2-5. These include music, art, athletic, computer, foreign language, science and service club programs and change according to student need and staff availability. Check for notices sent home concerning before and after school programs in the fall. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school for programs held before or after regular school hours.

FIELD TRIPS

Classes are taken on field trips when it is felt that such an experience would benefit the class and enrich the instructional program. Parental permission is always sought when a trip is being planned. Parents are often asked to accompany the classes. Blanket permission slips are sent home in the fall for all walking trips in Lenox. If children are bussed from one public school to another in Lenox for a special program we do not send home permission slips.

ASSEMBLIES AND CONCERTS

We try to provide several assemblies or concerts each year for our students. These programs come from various sources such as the Berkshire Theater Festival, The Tanglewood Institute and Young Audiences. The Lenox School Department and the Lenox PTO select and fund these programs.

MORNING MEETINGS

We hold Morning Meeting Assemblies for all students once a month on Wednesday morning. At this time we discuss good citizenship and courtesy topics, allow individual students or small groups to perform. Some Morning Meetings are reserved for in school performances of our Chorus and Band ensembles.

GIFTS

Gift exchanges between teachers and students are discouraged. There may be "grab bags" during the holiday season in some classrooms.

PARTY INVITATIONS

We ask that children or parents do not distribute invitations to birthday or other parties at school in order to remain sensitive to children not invited to the party. Invitations

brought to school for distribution will be returned to the child or parent by the class teacher.

OUTSTANDING CHARGES OR BOOKS

A child who has outstanding lunch charges, school or library books not returned, or other financial obligations unfulfilled shall not be issued his/her final report card until these obligations have been met.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual student and group pictures are taken in October or November. Parents have a variety of options of the size packages they may wish to purchase.

YEARBOOK

A group of interested students and parents work on a yearbook available to students and staff for a low fee at the end of each school year. Students will not be denied a yearbook because of an inability to pay this fee. Parents may inquire in confidence with the principal if this is the case.

PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

The Principal issues a newsletter monthly. The newsletter highlights upcoming events, recognizes outstanding performances, and pays tribute to those who have helped contribute to our youngsters' education. If you have a contribution to the newsletter, it should be turned in to the Principal's secretary. All parents are encouraged to access this newsletter electronically by signing up for electronic distribution or by simply visiting the Morris School website: www.lenoxps.org/morris/index.php

EMERGENCY DRILLS AND PROCEDURES

Fire and school evacuation drills are held on a regular basis. Emergency bus evacuation drills are held during the fall and spring. The school makes every effort to assure students that these are practice situations. Parents should also speak with their children about the occurrence of these drills and let the school know if your children need special preparation from school personnel because of their sensitivity to such situations.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found boxes are located in specified areas at the school. Your child may check with the teacher or paraprofessionals for any lost articles. All coats, hats, gloves, and boots should be labeled with your child's name. Parents may also come and check for missing items.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Elementary grade classes at the Morris School are organized in accordance with a philosophy which recognizes the student as the focal point in the learning process. Primary objectives are to help the child establish and retain identity as an individual within the classroom environment and progress at his/her own rate.

A core curriculum for reading/language arts, math, social studies and science aligns with instructional frameworks developed by the state Department of Education. Morris is transitioning towards a model of instruction known as Response to Intervention or RTI. The model assumes that students will move through a continuum of skills but when they are unable to progress, a different intensity of instruction (intervention) is required.

NCLB REPORT CARD

As a school receiving public funds, Morris is subject to the testing and reporting requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Parents are encouraged to review the school's **NCLB Report Card** at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu>. Hard copies of this report shall be provided upon request.

GENERAL

The **Kindergarten** experience is a very important step in the life of your child. An initial objective in Kindergarten is to ease the transition of five-year-old youngsters from home to school life. Socially, your child is provided with opportunities for interaction in both large and small groups. The specialists in Art, Music, Gym, Library, and Computer further enhance the kindergarten program. Throughout the school year the children participate in a variety of readiness activities in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics to prepare them for successful experiences in Grade 1 and beyond.

A primary goal of the instructional program in **grades one to five** is the teaching of basic skills, particularly where reading, language arts, and mathematics are concerned. However, an equally important aim is to teach the learning processes as well as content, so that children can become more effective problem solvers and independent thinkers. Science and social studies are particularly effective vehicles for developing these capabilities. In the interest of the child's total development, experiences are provided to promote physical maturation and foster creative expression. Toward these ends, specialists in art, music, and physical education teach all classes on a regular basis to supplement those activities presented by the classroom teacher. Handwriting is taught by all classroom teachers.

READING

Reading instruction at Morris School encompasses the five areas of reading outlined by the National Reading Panel. Children in grades K-2 acquire phonemic awareness and phonics skills sequentially and systematically through Wilson Foundations, a research-based, multi-sensory phonics program. Through small group reading instruction, children in grades K-2 are taught word-solving techniques, how to key in to interesting words, and how to monitor and apply comprehension and meta-cognitive strategies as they read. In grades 3-5, children engage in vocabulary and word study activities that emphasize common roots, prefixes, and suffixes. Students in these grades continue to work on comprehension strategies using both novels and texts that enhance content area instruction.

TITLE I READING/LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

We offer a Title I Reading Program to supplement our regular Reading program in Grades 1-3. This program gives additional reading instruction to children who may have had a difficult time learning to read fluently or who may benefit from additional face-to-face instruction in reading. We use Reading Assistants within the regular classroom and children are selected by ranking all children based on scores on Reading tests, teacher recommendations, and history of reading difficulty. In Grades 4-5, students are selected using similar criteria as above but may be additionally assessed using a writing sample given at the end of Grade 3. Results of the MCAS tests, when available, are also used to determine eligibility and specific needs.

VOCABULARY

In Grades 2-5 we teach a separate Vocabulary program, **Wordly Wise**. This program exposes children to a graded list of vocabulary words. We strive to foster an enjoyment of words and language that will continue well past Grade 5. This program supplements vocabulary instruction that may come from reading books or be specific to a science, social studies, or math lesson.

WRITING/SPELLING

The Lenox writing program emphasizes the process of writing from Grade 1 on. Children are actively engaged in pre-writing, first drafts, feedback, re-writing, teacher conferences, and ultimately final drafts. Children write from experience, practicing different forms of communication from journal writing, stories, friendly letters, business letters, and poetry to report writing, and a given topic may take from one to four weeks to be completely developed by a child.

It is not at all uncommon for children to use “invented spelling” in the early grades; this allows children to be writers before they have developed the formal conventions of spelling. Our formal spelling program starts in Grade 1 using a program developed by our first grade teachers. This program emphasizes the words and word forms most commonly used in children's writing. Grades 2-5 use the McDougal-Littell Spelling series. Spelling is also emphasized throughout the rewriting and conference processes in the writing program.

MATHEMATICS

Our goal in Mathematics is to produce mathematically-powerful thinkers and problem-solvers who are confident and feel comfortable using math in their daily lives. From Kindergarten to Grade 2 we use the manipulative-based **MathLand** program. The goals of the program are to involve students in projects and investigations that link concepts and ideas from several areas of mathematics including Number Relations, Data Analysis, Patterns and Functions, Measurement, Geometry, Logic and Algebra, and Probability and Statistics. In grades 3-5 we use the **Scott-Forseman Addison-Wesley** math program. During the 2009-2010 school year, Morris math teachers of grades 3-5 received substantial training in the use of three dimensional models (manipulatives) to enrich their text based instruction and reach a wider range of math learners. Our math program is consistent with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards that were first issued in 1990 (subsequently revised) and the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks in the 2000 revision.

SOCIAL STUDIES/SCIENCE

Instruction in both social studies and science attempts to achieve a balance between factual information and conceptual understanding. Children are expected to participate in "hands-on" projects as well as to use text materials in their exploration of the expanding world. Both areas are currently under review to assess the curriculum fit with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in *History and Social Science* and *Science and Technology*.

The social studies program leads from a study of Myself and Others, Customs Around the World, national celebrations, and European exploration in the primary grades, to Native Americans, Shakers, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and Westward Expansion in Grade 3, Early Civilizations, Ancient, and Medieval Civilizations in Grade 4, to United States History (early exploration to 1815) in Grade 5. Throughout the grades, an emphasis is placed on discussing men and women who have been key figures in United States history.

The science program tries to build conceptual skills through a balanced curriculum with units taught from three major areas - biological, physical, and earth & space science. Emphasis is placed on hands-on discovery. We do units on the Five Senses, Health/Nutrition, Plants, Weather and Seasons, Metamorphosis, Bees, Balls and Ramps, Magnetism, Sound, Dinosaurs, Solutions, Energy, the Human Body, the Solar System, Ecology, Changes of State, Insects, Trees, Birds, Whales, Pond Life, Endangered Animals, Geology, Electric Currents, and Micro Gardening in various grades. Individual teachers may add other units of study to supplement this list.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Health education takes place in all grades from PreK through Grade 5 and is incorporated into the curriculum in a variety of ways, depending on grade level. Some units are taught using The Great Body Shop curriculum; others are presented by the classroom teacher, guest speakers, or consultants who come to school to speak with our children at assembly programs or in individual classrooms. Major topics addressed in the health education curriculum include: Health & Disease, Substance Use, Misuse, and Abuse, Emotional/Mental Health/Affective Education, Safety and First Aid, Personal Safety - Child/Sexual Abuse, Physical Growth & Development, Environmental Health, Consumer Health, Community Health, and Healthful Lifestyles. The Morris health curriculum will undergo a review and revision during the 2010-2011 school year.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The Morris School offers basic foreign language instruction in both Spanish and French. Students in grades K-3 have twice weekly classes in Spanish and in grades 4-5 students switch to twice weekly instruction in French. Instruction in both languages is conversation based and focuses on developing a very basic recognition and of sounds and words to enable simple communication.

ART

Each class has art instruction once a week under the direction of the art teacher. The art program provides an exposure to a variety of art media. Students are expected to explore various art forms applying their own level of creativity and imagination to each project or task. The emphasis is on the process of their involvement with various art media. The classroom teachers and the art teacher often integrate art projects into the regular instructional program. We hold an Art Show in the spring with each student's artwork on display throughout the Morris School.

MUSIC/INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Singing, rhythm, theory, and music appreciation are taught once a week to each class by the music teacher. Music instruction at Morris aligns with state guidelines and is based largely on the instructional philosophies of Orff and Kodaly. Each class includes several opportunities to experience and make music through listening, movement, instruments, and voice.

Students are given access to instruments from kindergarten on but may choose to select an instrument in fourth grade. Fourth grade and fifth grade are instructional years with band instruments and fifth grade band students perform as an ensemble twice during the year. There is a fee for instrument rental but students will not be denied participation in band due to an inability to pay. Parents may inquire in confidence with the principal if this is the case. Students in grade two and up may also choose to participate in chorus ensemble, a group that meets before school and performs for the community during the school year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The children in Grades K-5 have physical education twice a week. These classes are taught by our physical education teacher(s). The program offers each child a chance to learn fundamental fitness concepts, to participate in physical activities, and to improve cardio-vascular endurance; to learn social skills in cooperative and competitive settings; to develop an enjoyment of participation in sport, fitness, cooperative, and recreational activities; and to develop basic sport and recreational skills. The program is designed for children to develop strength, endurance, speed, coordination, flexibility, poise, balance, and a good sense of equilibrium.

LIBRARY

The Morris School is fortunate to have both a wonderful, completely automated library and a complementary relationship with the **Lenox Library** on Main Street. The children's librarian from the Lenox Library visits the Morris Library and works with our Library Assistant. Classes visit the library weekly to select books, hear stories, and receive instruction in proper use of the library and reference materials. **Starting with the 2009 school year**, library time also will be considered a time for students to receive extra help, complete assessments, conference with teachers, and complete independent research.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTION

Instruction in computer technology is given to children from first grade on. Morris School is well equipped with technology learning tools managed by a computer and technology teacher. The 24 unit computer lab was recently upgraded and now may host as many as 24 students for a 45 minute computer learning class. The goal of the technology program is two-fold: first and foremost, to enhance and support the classroom curriculum via educational software, and second, to provide students with instruction in the use of educational technology toward independent use. All student access to internet resources is closely supervised and all online content is filtered for security.

An integral part of the technology program is the ethical and appropriate use of the computer in school, at home, and in interaction with others. Parents are urged to monitor their children's use of the computer at home, to install devices that ensure their children's safety and shield them from material which may be harmful to themselves or others.

ENRICHMENT

Students at Morris are fortunate to receive the support of an enrichment teacher. Enrichment allows students to deepen their knowledge on subjects taught in the classroom and allows for exploration of new topics. Our enrichment teacher also coordinates Morris participation in Destination Imagination competition.

HOME TUTORING

Parents who expect their child will be absent for an extended time due to illness or an accident should contact the elementary principal about home tutoring.

HOMEWORK

It is sound educational practice to develop good study habits by encouraging children to take upon themselves school-assigned responsibilities at home at an early age. It is equally important to make each school-assigned home responsibility an effective part of the child's learning program.

Homework should be:

- .. an outgrowth of and preparation for class activities
- .. an opportunity to build work habits
- .. a vehicle to develop and reinforce skill
- .. a child's responsibility

Parents often wonder whether they should help their children with homework. Children should be encouraged to begin an assignment and to complete as much of it alone as possible. But assignments which seemed clear in the classroom may reveal hidden difficulties once the child is on his/her own. Herein lies another value of homework: anything a parent can do to explain, discuss, or remove confusion will reinforce your support of learning.

The amount of time a child spends on homework will vary considerably. Some children work fast, others slowly; some are conscientious, others less so; some do their homework at free moments during school time, others do not; some budget their time so that long-term assignments are painless, even fun - others wait until the last minute and cause family chaos.

When assignments are made, teachers will consider the total amount of homework for which the child is responsible.

From Kindergarten through Grade Two teachers assign homework as conditions warrant. In Grades Three through Five homework is assigned on a routine basis. Some assignments are given nightly and others are of a long-term nature. The following is a general estimate of time allotment for homework:

Grade Three - 30 min./day **Grade Four** - 45 min./day **Grade Five** -60 min./day

When homework is assigned, deadlines are expected to be met; however, latitude for extension must remain with the teacher in consideration of extenuating circumstances. Consequences for incomplete homework assignments are left to the teacher's discretion.

The students should receive feedback on assignments, be it by teacher correction, student correction, discussion, etc.

PARENTS AND HOMEWORK

Parents can help begin to train and develop independence and responsibility in their child or children concerning homework by:

- .. providing a specific place to do homework that is quiet, has enough work space, and has proper light for good vision
- .. supervising and scheduling specific time for homework to be done
- .. asking to see completed homework
- .. being sure your child brings his/her homework and books back to school each morning
- .. informing the teacher when your child does not understand assignments or cannot do the work
- .. showing interest in your child's homework and other school experiences
- .. talking with, listening to, and doing things with your child
- .. avoiding comparing your child with other children
- .. letting your child know you care about his/her success
- .. informing the school that another language other than English is spoken at home

REPORT CARDS/CONFERENCES

Report cards are sent home three times a year. Parent-teacher conferences are held on a school-wide basis twice a year with the classroom teachers (usually December and March/April). These conferences are by appointment. Notices are sent home well in advance of the conferences. Good communication between parents and teachers by means of conferences and reports is essential in understanding the children's needs and their progress in school.

The marks that appear on your child's report card vary depending on the grade level of the child.

E - Exceptional achievement

S - Satisfactory

SS - Successful with Support

I - Improvement since last report

N - Needs to improve

U - Unsatisfactory

NA - Not Applicable at this time

The following are among the criteria used to select the appropriate mark:

1. The progress your child has made from the beginning of the fall term to the first report and from each report thereafter.
2. The potential ability your child has for academic development.
3. The achievement your child has shown in relation to his/her grade level.
4. The work habits and attitude your child has demonstrated.

Comment sheets will often be inserted with the report card indicating specific areas of the curriculum studied during the marking period. The teacher may also feel it is necessary to give you further explanation of your child's progress.

TESTING PROGRAM

Several group testing programs are administered at the Morris School. They are designed to provide information about the proficiency of children in critical academic areas and to indicate potential academic achievement and aptitude. The results of these tests provide a continuing record of each child's academic progress in comparison with national norms. They are also an aid to your child's teacher in diagnosing individual strengths and weaknesses. Any parent who wishes specific information about a child's test results may make an appointment with the Elementary Principal.

The **MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System)** tests are given according to the following schedule:

Grades 3/4/5 - English Language Arts - Reading (April), Mathematics (May)

Grade 4 - English Language Arts - Composition (April)

Grade 5: Science and Technology, History and Social Science (May)

The MCAS tests are designed to measure what the students know and are able to do and are matched to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. All students are required to take these tests. The school also uses MCAS results to measure the effectiveness of its programs.

First graders are given an informal **Developmental Reading Assessment** to assess competence in word recognition and basic comprehension skills. These are used in determining which students might need additional reading help in the Title I program and to monitor progress toward developing literacy.

Second, third and fourth graders are given a reading comprehension test, **Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)** to help determine which students might need additional help through the Title I program.

Students in all grades may be given periodic assessments using the **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (Dibels)** or **AIMSweb assessment probes** of reading and math fluency. These are timed assessments that can be compared to national norms. They give teachers great information about student progress towards academic goals.

GUIDANCE PROGRAM

The elementary guidance program is implemented by a master's level child development specialist/family therapist. The program is shaped to promote self-esteem, coping and problem solving skills, and positive social interaction for youngsters in grades K-5. The thrust of the guidance program is both preventive and proactive: It is well known that children who feel good about themselves, know how to make and keep friends, and have confidence in their own ability to deal with stress, are at low risk for drug and alcohol abuse, delinquent behavior, depression, and aggression. By supporting our students in their attempts to address difficulties as they occur, and encouraging a positive approach to social and emotional issues, we are enabling the children's ability to make healthy decisions for themselves as they grow older.

Utilizing a systemic, developmental approach, guidance services available to students, parents, and staff take several forms:

..A classroom program for grades K-3 that helps students develop a sound sense of self, respect for and tolerance of others, and a sense of belonging and responsibility to their community.

..FRIENDS groups, for students needing to strengthen their social skills, expand their circle of friends, or develop a sense of belonging within our school community.

..Individual and family sessions for students and parents experiencing stress (at home or school) that impacts on the children's school performance, academically, socially or behaviorally.

..Parents Groups for mothers and fathers wishing to discuss the development and behavior of children in various grades.

..Conferencing and consultation with teachers and parents regardless of whether their students/children are in counseling.

..Crisis intervention in situations requiring rapid resolution, referral, or mediation.

The guidance program is one that is always evolving, based on developmentally appropriate concepts and activities for the students and current understandings of what supports positive social and emotional growth for children. Parents are encouraged to contact the guidance counselor with concerns or requests of service for their children.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Recognizing that individual differences exist among children, the Lenox Public Schools offer a number of special services to its students designed to help them fulfill their individual potential. All of these services come under the guidelines of **Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the federal IDEA (2004), The Massachusetts Board of Education**, (the implementing regulations of these laws being 34 CFR, MGL 71c 71B.) Included among these services are screening, evaluation, special education instruction, and services related to the child's identified need. Related services include speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling.

Individual educational plans (IEPs) are provided for children with special needs.

SCREENING

Early Childhood (children ages three and four) and Kindergarten entry screening (children age five) take place each Spring to ascertain the presence of special educational needs and to provide teachers with information about each child so they can plan for each child individually. Beginning with a parent questionnaire, screening covers a physical examination, vision and hearing testing, speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, discrimination and memory, and other mental abilities.

Early Childhood screening is optional on the part of the parent. Kindergarten entry screening is required for all children entering Kindergarten. In each case parents may discuss the results of the screening with the appropriate school personnel.

For most children, the screening is one of the first experiences they may have in the school setting. The teachers involved in the screening take into account shyness or reticence to take part in their assessment of the child's development. Most children enjoy the screening process.

Following screening a recommendation is sometimes made for evaluation. At this point parents are always contacted and become part of the decision-making team to determine if further evaluation should be made.

SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

If a child is in need of special education services, an appropriate combination of classroom instruction and specialized help is developed. The goal of such help is always to enable a child to progress to the upper limits of his/her ability in the least restrictive environment. Special education takes place in one of our three resource rooms or directly in the classrooms. Programs are designed to help children who may have physical handicaps, intellectual limitations, specific learning disabilities, developmental and emotional disabilities, sensory, neurological, communication disorders or other health concerns that may prevent the child from making effective progress in the regular education program.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

Children who do not learn early in life to express themselves well, to understand and to be understood, are seriously hampered. The special needs program provides corrective speech instruction by a master's level licensed speech language pathologist. The program helps children who have difficulties in the areas of articulation, language, rhythm, and voice. After diagnosis, appropriate therapy is prescribed. Instruction, treatment, and drill take place in an individual or small group setting.

COUNSELING AND EVALUATION SERVICES

The elementary school is served by two school adjustment counselors who are master's level social workers. They are part of the Special Needs Evaluation Team and when appropriate, the Morris Support Team. Their role is to assess referred students' individual social/emotional needs through observation and interviews with teachers, parents and children, and make recommendations that are practical for teachers and parents to follow, as well as to provide necessary counseling services.

Counseling takes place in an individual, group, or family setting. The purpose of this counseling is to help children resolve personal conflicts that affect their adjustment to school and to improve their interpersonal skills around communication and problem-solving.

It is often supportive and helpful for students to bring a classmate to counseling sessions. Parents whose children may accompany a student in group counseling sessions beyond two visits will be notified and permission for extended group participation will be requested.

SERVICES THROUGH SECTION 504

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Lenox Public Schools affirm that no qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity sponsored by the Lenox Public Schools. Any inquires regarding this policy should be directed to Cynthia Dinan - Director of Student Services, 129 West St., Lenox, MA 01240 or call 413-637-5517.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Special Needs Department operates two half-day **Preschool programs** at the Morris School for children ages three and four. Both programs are integrated; that is, they serve both children who have been identified as having special needs as well as "typical" peer role models. Children identified as having special needs are guaranteed service; there are a limited number of openings available for typical peers each year.

Preschool programs are provided under the guidelines of Chapter 766 (Special Education Services), the federal IDEA (2004) its implementing regulations being 34 CFR 300, MGL c71B, and the Massachusetts Board of Education regulations at 603 CMR, 28.00.

LENOX SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)

Our local Parent Advisory Council was formed in 1987 and is comprised of parents who have or have had a child or children needing special education or Title I services. Meetings are held monthly and parents are encouraged to attend. Please call the Special Education Office (637-5571) for meeting dates.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR A SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE SCHOOL

IMPORTANT: TREE NUT, PEANUT, and OTHER SERIOUS FOOD ALLERGIES

Some students who attend Morris have **life-threatening** tree nut/peanut allergies. For these students, ingestion of any form of tree nut/peanut substance is potentially fatal. In addition, the risk of coming into contact with a desk or other surface that came in contact with nut products could create a life-threatening reaction.

For these reasons, parents may be asked to avoid any and all snacks containing nuts if the potential for an allergic reaction exists in a Morris classroom. This may include daily snacks and foods for field trips, birthdays and classroom projects. Due to the obvious safety concerns, the school requires adherence to this request without exception, meaning that a child bringing nut containing snacks into an allergy-risk classroom will not be permitted to open or consume the snack.

The Morris cafeteria does not serve or use any tree nut or peanut product as part of our lunch program. Parents are welcome to send nut butters in your child's lunch even if your child's classroom has an identified allergy risk. In the cafeteria there are nut free tables and students with nut products in their lunch are not be permitted to sit at those tables.

The school nurse should be advised of any food allergies that a student may have. Parents are asked to make the nurse aware of these and any other serious concerns prior to the student's attendance at Morris. School Health Services promote the health of students through prevention, case-finding, early intervention and remediation of specific problems, provision of direct services for students with special needs, and provision of health counseling to promote an optimal level of wellness for students and staff.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

School Health Services promote the health of students through prevention, screening, early intervention, and remediation of specific problems. Health services provides direct services for students with special needs and provides health counseling to promote an optimal level of wellness for students and staff.

SCHOOL NURSING SERVICES

A registered nurse is available at the Morris School to provide the following services: Care of students/staff when they are ill or injured; mandatory screenings which include vision and hearing, height and weight, and postural screening (5th grade); periodic all-school head lice screenings, conducted as needed; communicable disease control; immunization control; maintenance of health records; physical assessment and physical examinations; medication administration; health counseling; collaboration regarding pertinent health issues with faculty, staff and other health professionals; environmental health; health agency referrals; specialized health care plans for children with special health care needs.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

According to Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations as outlined in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Law, physical examinations and immunization records are required upon entering preschool, kindergarten and all new admissions. Physical examinations are also required in grade 4. Parents have the option of having their child's Pre-Kindergarten or Grade 4 physicals done at the school by our school physician.

Before admission, all students must submit proof of immunization to be reviewed by the school nurse who will authorize admission. Except as specifically provided for by law, children, not successfully immunized, are to be excluded from school in accordance with Chapter 76, Section 15 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The school nurse will make recommendations for exclusion to the Elementary Principal.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL

Children who have indications of communicable disease should remain at home until fully recovered. The family physician should issue a note stating that the child may return to school. To keep health records up-to-date, it is important that the nature of the illness be stated.

ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS POLICIES

School is for students who are well. Please do not send your child to school if he or she has any sign of illness.

In case of illness, the school makes necessary arrangements for the sick child to return home. Normally, the school cannot provide transportation for students who are ill or injured. Please identify on the Emergency Information Card the person(s) who will call for your child if he/she is ill or has had an accident. We require the emergency information cards so that we have on file the directions you want followed in the event your child has to return home due to illness or accident during the school day.

Please let the school nurse know if your child is ill. If possible, also include information about the diagnosis and expected period of absence from school.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

The *Authorization for Medications To Be Taken During School Hours* is required in order for students to receive medications at school. This applies to non-prescription as well as prescription medications. Both a parent's signature and the prescribing physician's signature are required. Please contact the School Nurse if your child needs medications.

The medication must be sent in a prescription bottle and should not be sent to school with the child. It should be brought personally by the parent to the School Nurse.

MEDICAL NOTES

When a child has been ill or injured and has returned to school, we expect the child to participate fully in school activities both in and out of the classroom. Exceptions to this policy may only be made with a specific dated medical note giving the reason why the child should not take part and giving the specific length of time the note should be in effect. All notes should be written by the parent, guardian, or physician. We expect children to go out for all recesses unless excused by a specific medical note.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR A SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE SCHOOL: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct for Morris Elementary, adapted for our age group from district policy, is constructed around the following statement of student rights:

At Morris School all students have a right to attend school and learn in a safe and ordered setting. Students may not behave in such a way that keeps school-mates, class-mates, or themselves from enjoying this right.

To preserve the right of safe and unfettered learning, members of the school community assume specific roles:

The **Student** should strive to Respect Others, Respect Themselves, and Respect the Learning Environment.

The **Classroom Teacher** is the key person in developing and enforcing guidelines for appropriate behavior in the school setting and working (privately or in classroom discussion groups) with students and parents to act on consequences as necessary.

The **Head Teacher**, in the absence of the principal, assists school personnel in determining consequences for serious violations of student conduct.

Each **Parent** has a vital role to play in the entire process of encouraging acceptable behavior from his/her children and participating in consequences in cooperation with the classroom teacher and other school personnel.

The **Principal** confers with students, teachers, and parents and tries to make decisions that will help the students develop responsible and respectful behavior.

The **Guidance Counselor** helps respond to inappropriate student behaviors. S/he supports all staff, students, and parents by providing group instruction about friendships, dealing with emotions, and other issues. The Guidance Counselor assists in the development and implementation of behavior plans.

The **School Intervention Assistant** assists teachers, other paraprofessionals, specialists, and the principal when a child's behavior is out of compliance with school rules and expectations. She does her work in the classrooms, on the

playgrounds, in the cafeteria and in a room designated for in-school suspension. The intervention assistant provides activities that help students de-escalate, learn about appropriate social behavior and choices, and models appropriate responses to school rules and regulations.

MISBEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES

There will be times when consequences for violations of the rules will be necessary. Consequences are in direct relation to the infraction; teachers and parents should involve the student as appropriate in decision-making regarding fair and instructive use of these consequences. The goal of consequences is two-fold: to reduce or eliminate recurrence of the behavior and to teach the student why the behavior is not appropriate in our school setting.

The following are examples of elementary school misbehavior. It is impossible to give a response here for every conceivable infraction. We deal with each situation individually and try to respond appropriately using a range of consequences.

Changing behavior patterns of a misbehaving child sometimes takes a long period of time. The teacher or other adults who have direct contact with the child will continue to encourage the child's efforts to improve.

1. Procedures for Extreme Behavior (Classroom, School Building, Playground)

Examples of extreme behavior problems which may occur at school are:

- A child leaving school premises without permission.
- A child physically harming or threatening a staff member or student..
- A child destroying or using school property improperly.
- A child swearing in the presence of others.

If such action occurs, the adult in charge will notify the Principal or Head Teacher. The child will be separated from other students and/or removed from the area. During the course of the day, the Principal or Head Teacher will confer with the child, contact the child's parents, and will work toward resolving the problem, including assigning an appropriate consequence from the continuum of consequences. The problem and its resolution will be discussed by the Principal and/or Head Teacher, the parent, and the child before the child returns to class. The adult initially involved with the misbehavior will write up a disciplinary slip or incident report.

2. Procedures for Serious Misbehavior

Examples of very serious behavior problems are:

- A child being habitually tardy to school.
- A child disrupting the classroom or instruction.
- A child making fun of another student (Bullying)
- A child playing dangerously on the playground.

The adult in charge will react to an instance of very serious misbehavior, reinforce the rules, and determine an appropriate consequence. If necessary, the adult in charge will notify the Head Teacher and/or Principal. A discipline notice will be sent home and the adult and student will work together to establish a consequence. Depending on the situation, the staff will meet to determine if the behavior warrants referral for other services or outside supports.

3. Suspension Procedures

A student may be suspended by the Principal or his designee when the student: (a) poses a threat to the physical well-being of himself or any other student or staff member; (b) is causing and may continue to cause substantial interference with the educational process; (c) intentionally causes or attempts to cause substantial damage to school property or private property or steals or attempts to steal school property of substantial value; (d) knowingly possesses or transmits any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object on school grounds or at a school function; (e) knowingly possesses, uses, transmits, or is under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind; (f) repeatedly and/or intentionally defies the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, or administrators; (g) repeatedly and/or willfully violates the accepted rules and regulations of the Morris School.

In rare cases a teacher may encounter a child who is upset for any number of reasons and who is seriously disrupting a classroom. The only solution may be to have the child leave the classroom environment and stay at home for a short period of time or in school under close supervision. The responsibility for sending a child home for gross misbehavior,

including classroom and building disruption, rests with the Principal. The decision is made after consultation with the classroom teacher, Head Teacher, and Special Needs personnel if the child is receiving special help.

In-School Suspension may be deemed an appropriate temporary action for a child who is seriously disrupting the educational setting or consistently misbehaving in any school area. The intent of In-School Suspension is to minimize out-of-school suspensions while maintaining a continuing program for students. Students will be required to perform schoolwork while in In-School Suspension. Such work will be assigned by the appropriate classroom and/or resource room teachers. The teacher or other adult in charge will initiate the procedure by consulting with the Head Teacher and the Principal. The parent will be informed of the decision for in-school suspension. The in-school suspension typically will be for a one to three day period.

The decision for a longer suspension, dependent on the nature and severity of the misbehavior, will be the duty of the Principal after consulting with the parents, all personnel directly involved with the child, and the Superintendent of Schools, if necessary. The Principal will determine the length of the suspension, will arrange for homework assignments, and will determine how the child will return to school.

4. Exclusion or Expulsion Procedures

Exclusion or expulsion is defined as that formal action voted by the School Committee, acting upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, which excludes a student from regular classroom instruction for any period of time exceeding ten (10) school days. To impose expulsion, the School Committee must find that: (a) the continued presence of the child in school would endanger the physical safety of others or cause substantial interference with the right of others to pursue an education; or, (b) the student violated school regulations as defined in the reasons for suspension at least three (3) times during one (1) school year and that each violation was serious enough, in the absence of other violations, to warrant suspension.

Expulsion or exclusion is a very serious disciplinary measure. It can be imposed only by the School Committee and only after the student has had full procedural protection.

BULLYING and HARASSMENT POLICY

Chapter 71, Section 37H of Massachusetts General Law now requires public schools to establish policies and practices to expressly prohibit acts of bullying in school. The law also requires schools to establish a prevention and intervention plan that shall be included in school publications such as student handbooks. At the writing of this handbook, Lenox's policy on Bullying awaits School Committee approval. (see below) In the interim, the school will make every effort to comply with the statute and all parents with concerns or questions about bullying or suspected bullying incidents should contact the principal.

Morris School is committed to maintain a school and work environment free of harassment and/or bullying based on, but not limited to: appearance, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or handicap. Morris School expects all employees and members of the school community to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner with concern for their fellow employees and students.

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation, or bullying disrupts a student's ability to learn. **Bullying is defined** as repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological, or physical, which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behavior which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. It includes behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion, or extortion, any gesture or written, verbal, or physical act that has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students.

Harassment and/or bullying in any form will not be tolerated. Harassment includes unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender or racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation or handicapped individuals or groups.

Behavior prohibited as bullying and/or harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Abusing the dignity of an individual through insulting or degrading conduct or remarks, including remarks made to others about the individual;

2. Suggestions, demands, or threats that are used as a basis for academic employment, or other decisions affecting a student or employee;
3. Retaliation against an individual for complaining about the behavior described above;
4. Conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the individual's work; or
5. Conduct that has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BULLYING, HAZING, & HARASSMENT POLICY
PREVENTION and INTERVENTION PLAN
(August 2010 DRAFT)

I. POLICY

A. It is the policy of the Lenox Public Schools to provide a learning and working atmosphere for students, employees and visitors free from bullying, hazing, harassment, and intimidation. These terms are collectively referenced as "harassment". Such action may occur on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, genetics, disability, or for any other reason.

B. It is the responsibility of every employee, student and parent to recognize acts of harassment and take every action necessary to ensure that the applicable policies and procedures of this school district are implemented.

C. It is a violation of this policy for any administrator, teacher or other employee, or any student to engage in or condone harassment in school or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of harassment. All employees are mandated to report all cases of harassment, as required by this policy and state law.

D. This policy is not designed or intended to limit the school's authority to take disciplinary action or take remedial action when such harassment occurs out of school but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to or materially and substantially interferes with an employee's work, personal life, a student's school work, or participation in school-related opportunities or activities. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs. Reports of cyber-bullying by electronic or other means, occurring in or out of school, will be reviewed and, when a nexus to work or school exists, will result in discipline. Parents of students alleged to have engaged in cyber-harassment will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words or images subject to the complaint will be reviewed. A student disciplined for cyber-bullying will not be re-admitted to the regular school program until his or her parent(s) attend such meeting.

E. Any employee or student who believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment has the right to file a complaint and to receive prompt and appropriate handling of the complaint. Further, all reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the confidentiality and protect the privacy of all parties, but proper enforcement of this policy may require disclosure of any or all information received.

F. The Building Principal/Designee shall be responsible for assisting employees and students seeking guidance or support in addressing matters relating to any form of harassment.

G. If an Independent Education Program (IEP) indicates that a child has a disability which affects "social skills development" or the child is "vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of the child's disability" the IEP shall address the skills/proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to these issues.

II. HARASSMENT DEFINITIONS

"Bullying" means repeated unwelcome written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim (i)causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victims property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at the school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of school.

The behavior must interfere with an employee's ability to perform his or her duties or with a student's academic performance or ability to learn, or interfere with a student's ability to participate in or benefit from services, activities or privileges:

That are being offered through the school district; ordering any education program or activity; or During any educational program or activity; or While on the school equipment or property, in school vehicles, on school buses, at designated school bus stops, at school sponsored activities, at school sanctioned events.

“Cyber-bullying” means, bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted to whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communication. Cyber-bullying shall also include (i) the creation of web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creator or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of communicating to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the clauses (i) to (v) inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber bullying may occur through the use of data, telephone, or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network or any public education institute.

As used in this Section, “electronic communication” also means any communication through an electronic device including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer or pager.

C. **“Hostile Environment”** means, a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule and/or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the condition of student’s education.

D. **“Hazing”** means any conduct or method of initiation, even if consented to, into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person.

Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

E. **Involvement:** If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school informed of the bullying or retaliation shall contact law enforcement consistent with the provisions of state law.

GUIDELINES FOR INVESTIGATING HARASSMENT CLAIMS

In school systems, harassment may take many forms and cross many lines. The situation may be an instance of student to student, student to staff member, staff member to student, or staff member to staff member. Guidelines for dealing with any charge of harassment are as follows:

By law, harassment is defined by the victim’s perception in combination with objective standards or expectations. What one person may consider acceptable behavior may be viewed as harassment by another person. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of both parties, it is important that the victim or a principal or designee to whom a complaint was made or reported make it clear to the harasser that the behavior is objectionable.

In all charges of harassment, the victim should describe in writing the specifics of the complaint to ensure that the subsequent investigation is focused on the relevant facts. Oral and anonymous complaints will be reviewed but are inherently difficult to investigate and may not be procedurally fair; as a result no disciplinary action shall be taken on anonymous complaints unless verified by clear and convincing evidence. All other complaints will be reviewed based on a preponderance of evidence standard. The *Harassment Reporting Form* (Appendix A) needs to be completed. Reporting forms are available to all students and staff at each school as well as online on the Lenox Public School website.

Any school employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is an instigator/participant or a target of harassment, bullying, or intimidation shall immediately report it to the Principal/Designee; each school shall document any prohibited incidents of harassment, intimidation, hazing, bullying or cyber-bullying and the resulting consequences, including discipline and referrals, to the Superintendent's office as they occur. The **Harassment Reporting Form** shall be completed.

A good faith report from a staff member renders the staff member immune from discipline for making a report and is considered to have been made in the course of the staff member's employment for purposes of M.G.L.c.258. As a result, the school district shall indemnify staff members from any cause of action arising out of a good faith report of harassment or the district's subsequent actions or inaction in connection thereto.

In a situation involving a charge of **student to student** harassment that is reported to a staff member other than an administrator, the staff member must inform the Building Principal. The student must also complete the **Harassment Reporting Form**.

In a situation involving a charge of **staff member to student harassment**, it should be brought to the attention of any staff member, and the staff member shall notify the Building Principal immediately. The **Harassment Reporting Form** must be completed.

In a situation involving a charge of **student to staff member harassment**, the staff member shall notify the Building Principal.

In a situation involving a charge of **staff member to staff member harassment**, the staff member shall notify the Building Principal.

If the alleged harasser is the person responsible for conducting an investigation, the Superintendent or School Committee shall designate an alternative Harassment Coordinator.

IV. PROTOCOL FOR INVESTIGATING HARASSMENT

Once a charge of harassment has been made, including charges of mental, sexual, emotional, or physical harassment as well as threats to a person's safety, property or position in the school or work environment, the following course of action shall be taken.

1. The Building Principal/Designee shall promptly investigate the charge through discussions with the individual(s) involved. The outcome needs to be documented in the **Investigator's Report Form**. (Appendix B)

In situations involving allegations **against a staff member**, he/she should be informed of his/her rights to have a third party present at the time of the discussion.

In situations involving allegations against one **student to another student**, the Principal/Designee should engage the appropriate classroom or special subject area teachers. Parents of both sides of this charge will be informed of the situation and invited to participation resolution discussions. It is important that the situation be resolved as confidentially and as quickly as the circumstances permit. The **Investigator's Report Form** specifies the outcome.

If the harasser and victim are willing to discuss the matter indicated in the **Investigator's Report Form**, in the presence of the Principal/Designee, a supportive faculty member and/or parent should be included in the discussion. During the discussion the offending behavior should be described by the victim and the administration, a request for a change in -- behavior should be made, and a promise should be made that the described behavior will stop. If the circumstances' do not permit a fact to face meeting, the administration will present the victim's position. Follow-up verification procedures will be explained. Failure to comply after resolution meeting will result in appropriate discipline outlined in the **Student Handbook** and listed on the **Bullying Rubric** (Appendix C) and determined by the Building Principal. The matter shall be documented in the **Investigator's Report Form**.

If after a Resolution Meeting with the involved parties, the Building Principal/Designee determines that further, more formal investigation or additional disciplinary action must be taken the following could occur.

In instances involving **student to student or student to staff member** harassment, the student may be subject to discipline including but not limited to counseling, suspension, and appropriate cases expulsion. Please refer to Appendix C for the full range of disciplinary actions that may be used by the school administration.

In instances involving a **staff member to student** and **staff member to staff member** harassment, findings will be to the Superintendent of Schools for further action. Personnel action may also be initiated at this point, up to and including discharge consistent with the applicable law and collective bargaining agreement.

V. GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY PLANS

In an effort to provide the victim with learning and working atmosphere where the victim feels safe, and to prevent the re-occurrence of bullying, a victim's *Safety Plan Form* will be developed to ensure these basic rights can be achieved. This Safety plan will provide clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's need for protection. The Safety Plan can include change of schedule, locker, lunch period, counseling, teacher notification, and a daily check in person. The Building Principal/Designee will complete the *Safety Plan Form* and share it with the victim, his/her parent(s) and appropriate school personnel in an efficient time frame. (Refer to Appendix D.)

VI. NOTIFICATION TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Building Principal shall determine when acts of harassment need to be reported to local law enforcement. School officials will coordinate with the Lenox Police Department to identify a police liaison for harassment cases.

VII. RETALIATION AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited. Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

In a situation that relational and false accusations in any form against any person who has made or filed a complaint relating to harassment are forbidden. If either action occurs, it could be considered grounds for dismissal of staff personnel and/or removal from the educational setting for a student and a referral to law enforcement may be made.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

Reports of harassment should be kept completely confidential, consistent with necessary investigation procedures and legal restraints on the dissemination of information about students with the goal of protecting the victim and stopping the behavior. This is in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

IX. SCHOOL-HOME PARTNERSHIP

Parents share in the responsibility to (i) reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan; (ii) learn the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) reinforce proper online safety and cyber-bullying.

Parents will be informed about each school's bullying prevention and intervention plan and trainings.

X. PREVENTION & TRAINING

The professional development of staff and training for students is a critical part of this policy. All staff and students will receive annual trainings on this policy.

Ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members, including educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors and paraprofessionals, will be offered annually.

The content of professional development for this policy shall include, but not be limited to, (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

Each school shall provide age-appropriate instruction at each grade level on bullying prevention annually.

Each school shall update their bullying prevention and intervention plans biennially, in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents, and guardians.

For further information about these guidelines or help with harassment problems or any other form of harassment, consult a member of the administration.

LEGAL REFERENCES

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 703

Title IX of the 1972 U.S. Civil Rights Act.

Chapter 151B, Massachusetts General Laws

M.G.L. Chapter 76 § 5

M.G.L. Chapter 269 § 17, 18, 19

M.G.L. Chapter 71, §370, 82, 84 93

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

Mass Student Records Laws and Regulations

Senate 2404 Bill: An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools

CODE OF CONDUCT

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORAL SITUATIONS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

1. A child who misbehaves on the playground may be assigned any of a number of consequences depending on the individual circumstances. They may include separation from the other students to losing recess privileges to assisting the paraprofessionals as a playground monitor. Consequences for a child who is involved in continuous minor infractions of playground rules will be determined by the paraprofessional on duty in consultation with the Head Teacher.
2. A child who makes repeated aggressive or insulting comments towards another child (bullies) will be lose a privilege and will be directed to meet with the interventionist, guidance counselor or principal. During this meeting the appropriate staff member will inform the child of the nature of the infraction and discuss the impact of such behavior on the recipient of the comments. The child will be asked to process their behavior in writing or verbally and may be asked to write an apology or offer a face to face apology for their conduct. The parent will be contacted and informed of the behavior and intervention. The child and parent will be advised of subsequent consequences should the behavior be repeated.
3. A child who writes on walls, desks, or floors will clean all markings with soap and water.
4. A child who throws papers or food on floors or on the playground will pick up the area. Consequences will be assigned by the adult on duty.
5. A child who destroys a school book or workbook will be charged an appropriate replacement amount.
6. A child who takes or damages another person's property will make restitution. The decision for consequences for a child who continually takes the belongings of others will be made by the classroom teacher in consultation with the parent.
7. A child who is disruptive in the classroom will be disciplined by the classroom teacher dependent on the teacher's judgment of the severity of the disruption. The child may be sent to the office for a short time until the teacher and child may confer alone.
8. A child who continually violates school rules, especially those regarding the rights and property of others and those relating to the safety of other students or school personnel may lose the privilege of attending a school event or class field trip. The final decision rests with the Principal, normally after consultation with the Head Teacher, classroom teacher, and parents.
9. A child who refuses to complete an assigned task in the classroom may be kept in at recess or after school to finish the work if the teacher feels it is in the best interest of the child. Additional work may be assigned as a consequence for incomplete or untimely assignments. The teacher will call the parent in advance so that transportation

can be provided. (Advance notice will vary according to availability of parent transportation and time needed to make arrangements).

10. A child who willfully breaks or damages school property will pay for the cost of repair or replacement. When this occurs in the classroom, the decision for consequences will be made by the teacher and/or the Principal or Head Teacher. Otherwise, the decision will be made by the Principal.

DISCIPLINING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

An underlying principle of Chapter 766 is that a student who has been found by an evaluation team to have special needs and whose program is described in an Individualized Educational Plan must be treated in a manner that most resembles his/her peers who do not have special needs while at the same time considering his/her unique programming needs. The following procedure must be followed with respect to the suspension (including in-school suspension) of any child on an Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.):

- a. The I.E.P. for every special needs student will indicate whether the student is expected to meet the regular discipline code or if a modification is required. If a modified discipline code is required, it will be written into the I.E.P.
- b. The Principal will notify the Director of Special Education of the suspendable offense of a special needs student and a record will be maintained of such notifications.
- c. When it is known that the suspension(s) of a special needs student will accumulate to 10 days in a school year, a review of the I.E.P. will be held to determine the appropriateness of the student's placement or program. The TEAM will make a finding as to the relationship between the student's misconduct and his/her handicapping condition, special education placement, and/or implementation of the I.E.P., and either:
 1. design a modified program for the student, or
 2. write an amendment to provide for the delivery of special education services during the suspension and any needed modification of the I.E.P. relative to discipline code expectations.
- d. The Director of Special Needs shall notify the Department of Education as required by state policy.

DUE PROCESS

The school will follow definite procedures ("due process") in providing a protection of rights in the event the student is disciplined for violation of school rules. For any discipline short of suspension, due process consists of notifying the student of the violation (usually verbal) and affording the student an opportunity to respond before the measure is employed. If being detained after school is part of the disciplinary action, the student is entitled to a verbal or written notice of the violation and an opportunity to respond before detention is assigned. A 24-hour notice of detention will be given when there is a problem of transportation or safety.

Due process for any type of suspension includes verbal or written notification to the student and parent of charges, and the opportunity for the student to present her/his side of the story. Notice of the reason for suspension and an opportunity to present her/his side of the story will occur before being asked to leave school grounds, except when a student presents an immediate threat to school officials, another student, or her/himself, or clearly endangers the school environment. In this case, the notice and opportunity to speak will be provided within 48 hours (excluding weekends, holidays, or school vacations.)

The procedure prior to an expulsion or exclusion is more elaborate than those preceding a suspension. The additional protection provided a student in an expulsion case includes having an attorney present at the hearing (at the student's expense), confronting all witnesses, and complainants, and conducting the hearing before the School Committee.

PROCEDURE FOR PARENTAL COMMUNICATION/APEAL WITH SCHOOL PERSONNEL CONCERNING A DISCIPLINE PROBLEM

A parent who is concerned about disciplinary action taken against his/her child should follow this procedure:

(1) Contact the school and ***Speak with the staff member directly involved*** in making the decision for corrective action. Parents may contact staff members during the regular workday (8:30 am-3:15 pm for grades PreK-5). If a staff member is unable to take a telephone call, the call will be returned within 24 hours (i.e., by the next school day).

(2) If a parent contacts an administrator about a disciplinary problem, the administrator will check that the parent has first discussed the issue with the staff member involved. If the staff member has not been contacted, the administrator will inform the staff member about the call and ask the staff member to make contact with the parent.

(3) If this approach does not lead to resolution of the problem, an administrator may be asked to mediate.

(4) The proper channeling of concerns from parents is as follows:

- a. Teacher or other staff member
- b. Principal
- c. Superintendent
- d. School Committee

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR BUS AND PLAYGROUND

SCHOOL BUS

Students should:

- .. be on time at the designated bus stop.
- .. take care not to damage the property (lawn, shrubs, trees, house, etc.) at the bus stop.
- .. stay off the road while waiting for the bus, wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before approaching it, and refrain from crowding or pushing while boarding.
- .. have written permission to leave the bus other than at home or school.
- .. help look after the safety of small children.
- .. **follow instructions of the bus driver.**
- .. be courteous and respectful to the bus driver and other students.
- .. use acceptable language on the bus.
- .. sit in the bus seat while the bus is in motion and refrain from changing seats.
- .. respect the rights and property of others (clothing, books, lunches; bus seats, windows, etc.).
- .. refrain from opening and closing windows and emergency doors.
- .. refrain from eating or throwing food and wrappings on the bus or out of the bus windows.
- .. allow other students to pass in the aisle without interference.
- .. enter and leave the bus at designated stops in an orderly manner

The bus driver shall write up incidents of school bus misbehavior and give a copy directly to the student and follow it with a copy to the Principal. The Principal shall discuss the infraction with the student and his parents. If the Principal feels, after conferring with a representative of the bus company, that bus privileges for this child should be suspended for a period of time, he will make this decision and inform the bus contractor and the parent. The bus driver at no time shall put a child off the bus. He/she is obligated to transport the child either to his home or to school and then refer the incident to the Principal immediately.

PLAYGROUND RULES

Children must:

- .. **include all children in games or other activities.**
- .. **use the playground equipment with care and safety toward other children.**
- .. **play fairly in all game activities without hurting or harming any person.**
- .. use the playground for fun and enjoyment.
- .. keep the playground free of food and papers.
- .. put all playground equipment away in the shed

- .. share the use of playground equipment and play areas with fellow students.
- .. **report any disorderly conduct or emergency situations to the teacher paraprofessional at once.**
- .. play only in designated areas of the playground.
- .. be helpful and courteous to the paraprofessionals at all times.
- .. refrain from sharing snacks (for allergy and dietary reasons).

- .. use only whiffle balls, rubber balls, and plastic bats.
- .. **not engage in violent or aggressive play (i.e., wrestling or king-of-the-hill type activity)**
- .. ask permission to retrieve any balls that go out of the playground.

- .. not throw rocks, wood chips, or snow.
- .. reenter the building from the playground only with the specific permission of the paraprofessional on duty.
- .. not bring items such as Game Boys, iPods, or other headset gear to recess.
- .. **immediately and respectfully follow directions and guidelines from the adults on duty.**

Students have two recess periods a day when we use the playground and the adjoining athletic fields. Recess periods are supervised by paraprofessional and other staff. Students are expected to comply with the directions of recess supervisors and students who are unable to follow adult directions may have to sit out a portion of the recess.

Team sports have at times been problematic when arguments over teams, rules, or even what game to play consumes all the players and requires adult intervention. There have been times when team sports have suspended due to these issues. Currently team sports are allowed during recess but students are expected to play team sports aware of the following conditions:

1. Teams should be fair and decided quickly.
2. Rules should be followed.
3. Disagreements should be respectful and all players should be aware that name calling or insults following disagreements may cause the recess supervisor to end the game for that day.
4. Players are asked to inform a recess supervisor if they intend to play a team sport. All players should be aware that the recess supervisor may end a game at any time if play becomes unsafe, if teams refuse to let all students play, or if field conditions do not allow for team play. Arguing with the supervisor about this decision may lead to a loss of team play privilege.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Morris School has the ability to enhance our educational system via the use of technology and the Internet. Our goal in providing this service to teachers and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication on a global scale. However, with this educational opportunity also comes responsibility on the part of the school district, educators, parents, and students alike.

Policy Guidelines

Morris School supports each family's right to decide whether or not their child will be permitted access to the Internet while at school. Thus, only children who have an annual signed parent/guardian consent form will be allowed access.

Classroom use of the Internet by a teacher for group instruction is allowed without written parental permission. An example of this activity would be a teacher using the Internet as a classroom instructional tool for a group presentation. All such web sites are pre-approved and pre-screened by the teacher for appropriate content and educational value and serve to enhance curriculum content.

The majority of Internet use at Morris School is teacher-directed and consists of pre-approved and pre-screened book marked Internet web sites that pertain to the curriculum at hand.

Students may only access the Internet when their teacher or other responsible school personnel have given them direct permission.

While students are on the Internet, they will be monitored directly by a teacher or other responsible school personnel.

Children are not permitted to use the Internet during indoor recess or when they are with non-school groups using the building (example: Girl Scouts, C.C.D...etc.)

Content filtering software has been installed to prevent access to offensive, inappropriate, illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, controversial, or dangerous information on the Internet. However, please be aware that such filtering is not 100 percent effective. There is always the possibility that a student may accidentally access inappropriate material. In the event of the above, students must inform their parents, a teacher, or other school personnel immediately.

If an Internet search is needed, students may only search the Internet under direct teacher/staff supervision preferably using child-safe search engines.

All students (grades 1 through 5) will receive training concerning Internet safety rules and cyber bullying. This training will occur within the technology lab and be reinforced within individual classrooms.

Students will be instructed to never give out personal information about others or themselves such as their name, password, address, telephone number, location of school, or any other personal information when they are on the Internet.

Students should not respond to any online messages that are mean, or in any way make them feel uncomfortable. If students receive a message that makes them uncomfortable, they should tell their teachers and parents immediately

Morris School does not grant e-mail privileges to students. If students have an e-mail account at home, they are not permitted to use it at school. Students are not allowed to send or receive personal e-mail at Morris School.

Participation in chat rooms or social networking sites is not allowed at Morris School.

Students are not allowed to participate in or register for any on-line contest while at school unless they have their parents and teacher's permission.

Student safety, privacy, and the legal right to intellectual ownership are paramount. It is Morris School's policy that student names, photos, video clips, or other personal identifying information will not be allowed on the Morris Web site unless written parental and student consent have been obtained.

Morris School does allow anonymous postings of the following items on the Morris website; student art work, written work, a group podcast, and other media that does not specifically identify the student. The posting of such anonymous content enriches the school environment for students, parents and the community at large. Parents/guardians and students always maintain the right to prohibit such anonymous postings. All such prohibitions should be directed to the Principal in writing.

Students must ask teacher permission before downloading files from the Internet.

All projects involving collaboration on the Internet with other school systems, educators, or professionals will be conducted only with parental permission. All projects will be fully identified as to educational purpose, content, and duration.

Students will obey all copyright laws regarding material retrieved online

School administrators have the right to review system use and communications to maintain system integrity and to ensure that students are using the network and Internet responsibly.

The district cannot be held accountable for information that is retrieved via the Internet by unsupervised students outside of the school setting. Thus, it is **strongly** recommended that filtering software be installed at home and direct parental supervision be present at all times when children are using the Internet at home or at a friend's house.

Students will be good online citizens and conduct themselves in a way that does not hurt other people or is against the law.

All children will be informed of their responsibility for ethical and proper behavior in the use of all technology resources. Students not adhering to the code of conduct will be informed of the loss of network and Internet privileges.

MORE GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE A SAFE AND ORDERLY SCHOOL

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

There is a School Committee Policy regarding animals in the classrooms which must be followed before any animals are allowed in classrooms. If your son/daughter wishes to have an animal brought into school for instructional purposes, he/she should ask the classroom teacher several days in advance so that all procedures may be carried out in accordance with the policy. Procedures may include screening of student health profiles and notification of other classroom parents.

DRESS CODE

We do not have a specific dress code policy. The school does not deem a particular mode of dress inappropriate unless it is felt to be offensive to another child or adult at school (i.e. clothing that is disruptively provocative, displays sexually suggestive images/messages or messages considered to be inappropriate, hateful or biased.) Clothing that causes a disruption to the learning process or endangers the child's or some other person's health, welfare, or safety will also be prohibited in the school setting. Students are asked to remove hats upon entering the building.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

In accordance with The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, and Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 119, the Morris School reports all cases of suspected child maltreatment to the Department of Children and Families.

TOYS, TOY WEAPONS AND KNIVES, ELECTRONIC DEVICES, MONEY AND VALUABLES TAKEN TO SCHOOL

Some items are simply not appropriate for school. While we recognize that children may be eager to share a new toy or electronic device with friends, these items can create significant interruption of the learning process.

We do not allow ipods, mp3 players or expensive cameras without specific permission. We cannot assume responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur. TekDecks, wacky bands, pokemon cards, bionicles, electronic equipment, and other objects identified by the Principal as disruptive to learning or inappropriate for school grounds may be confiscated and brought to the principal's office where parents may pick them up. Any item that is or resembles a weapon will be confiscated immediately (toy guns, swords, or pocket knives etc.)

We ask that children not bring large amounts of money or other valuable objects to school. We cannot assume responsibility for any damage or loss that may occur. When children bring money to school we ask that parents place the money in an envelope, include a note inside stating the reason for the money being sent, and include both the child's name and the teacher's name on the envelope.

CELL PHONES

We ask that students not bring cell phones to school. If a student is observed using a cell phone during the school day they will be asked to turn it off and put it away. If the student is observed a second time using a cell phone or if the student refuses to comply with adult directions regarding cell phone use, the device will be confiscated and may be picked up in person by the student's parent or guardian.

TELEPHONE USE

Students may not call home for non-emergency matters during the school day. Student calls home from classrooms for forgotten instruments, assignments, and sports equipment have become excessive and have begun to interrupt learning time in our classrooms. Additionally, when parents deliver these forgotten items, students may be prevented from feeling natural consequences and may be more likely to forget the item again next time. We strongly request that after-school arrangements be communicated to the classroom teacher with a note prior to the start of the school day. Teachers will be

asked not to let students make phone calls from the classrooms under any circumstances. If teachers deem the matter urgent, students will be sent to the office to make a call.

SCHOOL MATERIALS AND PROPERTY

The School Committee through its professional staff has identified appropriate materials to achieve its educational objectives at each grade level. These materials are provided by the Lenox Public School System. Since the books and supplies are provided at public expense, it is expected that the children will be responsible for replacement of any materials that are lost or damaged beyond the reasonable ability to use the book or material during another school year.

Reimbursement is also expected in the event of damage to buildings, furniture, or equipment caused by misconduct or an act which a given child would reasonably be expected to avoid.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit the school and their children's classrooms; but, as a courtesy to the teacher and to be certain that your visit will coincide with an activity that you would like to see, we ask that you contact the teacher in advance.

All visitors to the school must enter through the main entrance and report to the main office to sign in and obtain a visitor's badge.

From time to time, we receive requests to allow other visitors who may be school-age children, cousins, or friends from out of town to spend a day or even a week with us. We feel that this creates a burdensome responsibility for the elementary staff members and the administration. Therefore, we do not typically grant such requests.

BUILDING EVACUATION and OTHER EMERGENCY RESPONSE

To prepare for safe responses to unforeseen events, the Morris School follows a set of emergency response and crisis plans have been developed for a variety of situations.

Building Evacuation: From time to time the building is evacuated either for a practice drill or for an actual emergency. Students should become familiar with the evacuation instructions that are posted in every classroom. The signal for evacuating the building is a loud alarm that is used only for this purpose.

Site Evacuation: If the building is evacuated and conditions require that students be moved off site, buses will be mobilized and students will be transported to the gym at LMMHS. The emergency all call system will be used to contact parents and advise them as to pick-up directions and next steps.

Lock-down: Morris students practice this procedure to prepare for any situation (like a dangerous or threatening individual in the school) that would indicate a safety risk to students. During a lock-down students move to a secure part of their classroom and the door is locked.

Crisis and Tragic Loss: Morris school has a set of procedures in place to respond to the emotional needs of its students and staff in the event of a student death, parent death, death of a staff member, suicide, or another community crisis. The plan identifies a crisis team of administrators, counselors, and local support agencies who work together to assist affected community members through a difficult time.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND OTHER DISTRICT POLICIES

The Lenox School Committee Policy Manual contains a number of policies which have direct pertinence to parents of elementary school students. Copies of the School Committee Policy Manual are located in each of the schools and at the Superintendent's Office and you are welcome to read these and other policies that are of particular interest to you.

The following policies specifically pertain at this level. Several of these are mentioned earlier in this handbook:

1. Animals in the Classroom (Policy IKJ)
2. Bus Stop Supervision (Policy EDCB)
3. Chapter 622 - "An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in the Public Schools" (Form JAA) **
4. Elementary Students: Assignment to Classes (Policy JBCCB)
5. Emergency Drills (Reg. EBBC)
6. Evaluation (Policy GBI)
7. Field Trips and Excursions (Policy IFCB)
8. Fund-Raising (Policy JKB)
9. Grade 1 Entrance Age (Policy JBBA)
10. Head Teacher Job Description (GBBAL)
11. Home or Hospital Tutoring (Reg. IDDC)
12. Instructional Program (Goals and Objectives) (Policy IB)
13. Kindergarten Entrance Age (Policy JBB)
14. Manuscript and Cursive Writing (Policy IDAA)
15. Non-Resident Students (Policy JBCB)
16. Parent-School Communication and Resolution of Public Complaints (Policy IHAD)
17. Policy for Determining Eligibility for Free Meals and Reduced Price Meals (Policy EEA)
18. Procedures for Reporting Instances of Child Abuse/Neglect (Policy LDAG)
19. Promotion and Retention of Elementary Students (Policy IHE)
20. Regulations Pertaining to Physical Education (Exhibit IDA)
21. Selection of Instructional Materials (Policy IFA)
22. Smoking in School Buildings and Non-School Work Sites (Employees and Visitors) (Policy EBK)
23. Statement of Assurance of Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Policy BAA)**
24. Student Conduct (Policy JCD/Reg. JCD)
25. Student Photographs (Policy JHF)
26. Student Records (Policy JR)
27. Student Transportation (Policy ED)
28. Student Transportation - Conduct on School Buses (Policy EDCB)
29. Title IX and Massachusetts 622 (Policy LDD)**
30. Transportation for Athletic or Extra-Curricular Activities and Events (Use of Private Vehicles) (Policy EDAE)

** Items starred are printed in the September or October issues of the Principal's Newsletter.

PESTICIDE POLICY

Lenox Public Schools prohibits the use of pesticides indoors while students are on the property (ant traps are an exception to this policy and may be used according to the manufacturer's directions for use.) In addition, Lenox Public Schools must notify, in writing, students and their parents/legal guardians, and employees at least two work days before pesticides are used outdoors at school. Schools, which utilize pesticides inside the building must be closed for a minimum of five days both during and immediately after application. A *Notice of Pesticide Use*, which will be provided by the pesticide manufacturer, must be posted on the school bulletin board at least two days before pesticides will be used and for at least 72 hours following their use. Any questions with regard to pesticides use should be directed to your principal and or superintendent of schools (MGL 132B, 6C-6I.)

HUMAN SEXUALITY INSTRUCTION

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Lenox School Committee has adopted a policy on the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the Morris School, prior to any instruction involving human sexual education, we will send home a notice to all parents of students in the relevant grade level indicating when instruction will take place and noting a parent or guardian's right to review instructional materials.

Under Massachusetts law and School Committee policy, a parent may exempt his/her child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues. To receive an exemption, simply send a letter to the principal requesting an exemption for your child. No student who is exempted from this portion of the curriculum will be penalized. Teachers may provide an alternative assignment to students who are exempted. Parent resources are available in the library for those wishing to either augment or conduct the classes on their own with their children.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

In accordance with the *McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act*, the Morris School will follow the following guidelines:

- Homeless students have a right to either remain in their school of origin or to attend school where they are temporarily residing;
- Students who choose to remain in their school of origin have the right to remain there until the end of the school year in which they get permanent housing;
- Students who choose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them;
- If a homeless student arrives without records, the school district's designated Homeless Education Liaison must assist the family and contact the previously attended school system to obtain the required records;
- If a homeless student continues to live in the area served by the district in which the school of origin is located, that district must provide or arrange transportation; and if the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the district of origin and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND – NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS/NCLB AYP STATUS

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, the Lenox Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

The Morris School is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for you child's teacher, please contact Timothy Lee at 637-5522 x8.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: AYP ACCOUNTABILITY STATUS

From performance on the spring 2010 MCAS tests, Morris school was identified for "improvement year one" in mathematics for the 2010-2011 school year. This status requires that the school take certain steps to improve the performance of our students in the area of mathematics. Among the steps are:

1. The federal Title I grant must reserve a minimum of 10% in professional development in the area of mathematics instruction and remediation.
2. The School Improvement Plan developed by the Morris School Council must include discussion and action steps related to improving the performance of students mathematics.
3. The School District must provide assistance that through support of initiatives and participation in improvement planning.

Questions about this AYP status in mathematics or the steps that the school is taking may be directed to Timothy Lee, Principal, Morris School.

MANDATORY ASBESTOS NOTICE (AHERA)

This notification is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act [“AHERA”], 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substance Control Act. Asbestos Management Plans have been developed and are available for the following buildings currently in use by the Lenox Public Schools:

1. Morris Elementary School, 129 West Street, Lenox, MA 01240
2. LMMHS, 197 East Street, Lenox, MA 01240
3. District Office, 6 Walker Street, Lenox, MA 01240

These plans are available and accessible to the public for review at these locations.

Mr Jeffrey Ano at LMMHS, 197 East Street, Lenox, MA 01240 [413-637-5560] has been designated as the District’s Designated Person under AHERA. A 3-Year Asbestos Re-inspection Report was recently completed and is available for review as part of the Asbestos Management Plan. No other asbestos-related activities are currently planned or in progress for the upcoming school year

FUND RAISING

Community and parent groups, as well as school personnel wishing to raise funds for school programs, are asked to consult with the elementary principal. There is a School Committee policy which must be followed to prevent undue solicitation of the community.