

Sterling Community School

Student Handbook

2019-2020



Sterling Community School
251 Sterling Road
Sterling, CT 06377

Website: www.sterlingschool.org
Twitter: @Sterling_School



*Our mission is to foster a safe and
engaging learning environment.*

Sterling Community School

251 Sterling Road
Sterling, Connecticut 06377

Ph: : (860) 564-2728

Fax: (860) 564-1989

Christopher Scott, Principal
Laura Smith, Clinical Supervisor

Dear Students and Parents:

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Sterling Community School, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Sterling Community School. We hope that the time that you spend here will be both rewarding and enjoyable. It is the goal of the entire faculty and staff to provide you with the best possible educational experience, as well as, to prepare you to meet the challenges of the future.

Your responsibilities while a student at Sterling Community School is varied. Strive to ensure that you get the most out of each class and that you complete all requirements to the best of your ability. If you are struggling with a concept, or need extra help, please talk to your teachers and actively seek their assistance. By setting a good example, working hard, and behaving properly, you are recognizing the seriousness of a good education. This way you are establishing patterns that will remain with you throughout life.

I encourage you to participate in the various activities that take place during your time at Sterling Community School and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. It is our intention not only to provide you with a well-rounded education but also to help guide you to make appropriate decisions throughout your time at Sterling Community School.

This handbook is provided to help you and your parents/guardians better understand the policies and procedures of Sterling Community School. Once you and your parents/guardians have finished reading the handbook, please complete the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment Form. This signed form should be returned to your homeroom teacher.

Please be sure to check out our school website at www.sterlingschool.org frequently for updated information about what is going on at Sterling Community School.

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Sterling Community School, I wish you all a successful school year.

Sincerely,
Mr. Christopher Scott
Principal

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PREFACE

The material covered within this student handbook is intended as a method of communicating to students and parents regarding general district information, rules and procedures and is not intended to either enlarge or diminish any Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Material contained herein may, therefore, be superseded by such Board policy, administrative regulation or negotiated agreement. Any information contained in this handbook is subject to unilateral revision or elimination from time-to-time without notice. Consult the district's website or the individual school's website for any significant changes.

This booklet is written for our students and their parents. It contains required and useful information. Because it cannot be as personal communication as we would like, we address students not directly as "you" but rather as "the student," "students," or "children." Likewise, the term "the student's parent" may refer to the parent, legal guardian, or another person who has agreed to assume responsibility for the student.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with the Board policy. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy that affect portions of this Handbook will be made available to students and parents through newsletters, web pages, and other communications.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY and NON-DISCRIMINATION

Each student is encouraged to develop and achieve individual educational goals. The district will provide every student with equal educational opportunities regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, economic status, marital status, or disability. No student will be excluded on such basis from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities or other school resources. Programs and activities shall be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by law. Christopher Scott, Principal of Sterling Community School, is the designated district compliance officer, who will coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

STERLING COMMUNITY SCHOOL FACULTY AND STAFF

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Gail Lanza, Superintendent/Director of Special Education
Christopher Scott, Principal Laura Smith, Clinical Supervisor/Social Worker

BUSINESS MANAGER

Deana Chrzan

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

Alex Wiegel

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE STAFF

Christine Chandler Jean Congdon Martha Swan Debra Zajac

FACULTY & STAFF

ART

Bailey Partridge

INFORMATIONAL LITERACY

Ashlyn Hart

MUSIC

Emma Lotreck

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Meghann McCoil

BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYST (BCBA)

Traci Jamieson

NURSE

Faith Coderre

READING SPECIALIST

Jill Shamback

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Dr. Kristen Lanzillo

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Cindy Dibble Joseph Musumeci Jena Rogers Jenifer Strimaitis

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

Christine Slater-Cooney

OT/PT

Julie Hill/Ashley Holmberg

TITLE I

Debra Levine Nicolle Belesimo Lori Popinchalk

IA's/PARAPROFESSIONALS

Bethany Anderson	Laura McGregor
Emily Bonner	Lydia Nottage
Diana Ellis	Paula O'Brien
Rebecca Gervais	Sharon Perry
Amanda Grimes	Sheila Savoie
Kristin Grimes	Janine Simmons
Victoria Grimes	Scott Stuyinski
Shannon Johnson	Amy Vaughan
Sarah LaRose	Kristyn Walton
Benjamin Leach	Cameron Walton
Lori Leach	

EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEAM

PRE-SCHOOL

Dawn Darche

KINDERGARTEN

Alyssa Civiello

Cindy Larsen

GRADE 1

Trish Espinosa

Kelly Huhtanen

GRADE 2

Lauren Pelser

Susan Rizer

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEAM

GRADE 3

Michelle Lewin

Christine Medbery

GRADE 4

Toni Bolles

Heather Nickerson

GRADE 5

Kimberly Stinehour

Victoria Stolzman

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM

GRADE 6

Jackie Angelone

Amber Campbell

GRADE 7

Cassandra Mennella

Andrea McKenzie

Brenda Schena

Mark Smolak

GRADE 8

Jennifer Ingalls

Cassandra Mennella

Andrea McKenzie

Mark Smolak

SCHOOL CUSTODIAN

Russell Bonner

SCHOOL HOURS

The instructional school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:55 p.m.

Shortened day instructional hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. Pre-School hours are as follows:

Morning	8:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Afternoon	12:00 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Preschool schedule for shortened days:

NO AFTERNOON SESSION

Preschool schedule for delayed openings:

NO MORNING SESSION

MISSION OF STERLING COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The mission of the Sterling Community School is to foster a safe and engaging learning community of critical thinkers, effective communicators and collaborators, creative problem solvers and imaginative innovators that will persevere to become self-motivated learners who are responsible, compassionate, contributing citizens in our ever-changing society.

VISION OF A STERLING GRADUATE

The Sterling Board of Education is committed to ensuring that every student

- 1) Engages in critical thinking: analysis, evaluation, reasoning, and reflection to build understanding, solve problems, and identify alternative solutions.
- 2) Engages in collaborative work with others to set and achieve common goals.
- 3) Articulates clear thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication
- 4) Transfers problem solving from familiar to unfamiliar situations
- 5) Uses their imagination to think creatively and engage in productive struggle to persevere towards an intended goal
- 6) Uses technology to advance learning
- 7) Reflects on their own learning understanding learning is a life-long process that requires a growth mindset
- 8) Is a caring, compassionate contributor to their school, community, and world

CORE VALUES OF STERLING COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In order to achieve our mission, Sterling Community School holds its core values and beliefs that the following knowledge, skills, habits of mind, partnerships, and opportunities are foundational blocks for a Sterling Graduate:

Hands on Learning 	Growth Mindset 	Engage the Desire to Learn by Personalization and Choice 	Learning is Celebrated 
Research 	Practice 	Positive Relationships and Strong Interpersonal Skills 	Family Involvement in Learning 
Authentic/Real World Experiences 	Perseverance 	Safe, Secure, Respectful, Environment Where Empathy and Compassion are Fostered 	Students are Goal Driven and Possess the Skills to Self-Direct/Self-Advocate 

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Board members are unpaid elected public officials with the responsibility for the governance of the school district. The members of the Sterling Board of Education are:

Chairperson:

Rosalind Choquette

Vice-Chairperson:

Leatrice Shippee

Treasurer:

Dorothy Capobianco

Vice-Treasurer:

Kathryn Fantoli

Members:

Barbara Salisbury

Jon Turban

**List of members will be updated after 2019 election*

In order to perform its duties in an open and public manner and in accordance with state law, the Sterling Board of Education holds regular business meetings on the Third Wednesday of each month at 6:15 PM in the Sterling Community School Community Room (located in the back of the library). Parents, students, and other community members are encouraged to attend.

Meetings of the Board follow a planned and posted agenda. At a certain time in the agenda, the Board chairperson will recognize individuals who want to make a statement, not more than 3 minutes in length, or to express a viewpoint. In addition, if they give advance notice to the Superintendent, individuals with relevant issues for discussion may have such issues placed on a future Board agenda for a more thorough discussion of the topic.

The Board's main purpose is policy setting designed to improve student learning. Board members are interested in the public's opinion on district issues, which can assist them in formulating a policy that reflects community values and expectations.

BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

The Board of Education policies is available on the district's website at www.sterlingschool.org. The policies are subject to modifications by the Board at any time.

AUTOMATED PHONE MESSAGING SYSTEMS

Sterling Community School uses an automated phone messaging system which gives school administrators the ability to easily contact parents/guardians immediately of news that needs to be communicated. Administrators have the ability to send personally prerecorded messages to the entire school community, or they can tailor transmissions to smaller groups when needed. The system allows the District to program up to two numbers for each parent/guardian of a District student (home phone, work phone, cell). Such calls are permitted without prior consent if limited to notice of emergency items. Parental consent will be sought when the messaging system will be used for other informational items.

CANCELLATION/DELAYED OPENING

Announcements, notifications, and school closings because of bad weather, emergencies, or other general announcements are made through an automated phone messaging system and/or on radio stations and TV Channels:

WINY	1350 AM	Putnam
WVIT	Channel 30	Hartford
WTNH	Channel 8	New Haven
WFSB	Channel 3	Hartford

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

If there is a question about a student's classes or work in school, it is best to first contact the person who is closest to the situation. In most cases, this is the teacher. The proper channeling of communication regarding instruction, discipline or learning materials is (1) teacher, (2) principal, (3) superintendent, (4) board of education.

FACILITIES

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are expected to remain in the area in which their activity is scheduled to take place.

After dismissed and unless involved in a teacher/staff supervised activity, students are expected to leave the campus immediately.

VISITORS

Sterling Community School parents and visitors must first report to the main office. Unauthorized persons shall not be permitted in the school building or on school grounds. The Principal is authorized to take appropriate action to prevent such persons from entering the building or from loitering on the grounds. Such persons will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy, conduct, and confidentiality.

PART 2: EXPECTATIONS

ATTENDANCE

Connecticut state law requires parents to make sure that their children between the ages of 5 to 18 attend school regularly. Daily attendance is a key factor in student success, thus any absence from school is an educational loss to the student. These rules are designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make up school work missed due to a legitimate absence.

Absence means an excused absence or an unexcused absence.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school, such as a field trip, for at least half of the regular school day. A student serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion will always be considered absent.

The parent or person having control of a child shall have the option of waiting to send the child to school until the child is six or seven years of age, upon signing an option form at the school district offices.

A child whose total number of absences at any time during the school year is equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days that the student has been enrolled at the school during the school year is considered a “chronically absent child.” The child will be subject to review by the district and/or school attendance team

All children attending district schools must obtain the required immunizations unless they have medical contraindications or religious objections. This obligation may be waived for homeless students.

A student must remain in school until age 18 unless he/she graduates or gets written consent from a parent/guardian on a district-provided form to leave school at age 17.

Absence

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods. When a parent determines that an absence is necessary, parents are requested to contact the school between 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 A.M. on the day of the absence by telephoning the school.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on or before the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student’s return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office.

In the event that your child is absent, tardy, or being dismissed early, please contact the school at (860) 564-2728. The office staff will be available for calls at 7:30 a.m. If you call at an earlier time, the phone number above has voice mail. **Please note that in the event of an absence, a phone call with no written follow-up will automatically be coded as an unexcused absence per state law.**

Excused Absence

A student's absence from school shall be considered "excused" only if written documentation of the reason for such absence has been submitted within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. For absences, one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered "excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials, including a signed written note or email from the parent's email address.
- B. Students receive an excused absence for the tenth absences and all absences thereafter, when they are absent from school for the following reasons:
 - 1. Student illness, verified by a licensed medical professional, regardless of the length of the absence.
 - 2. Students observance of a religious holiday.
 - 3. Death in the student's family or other emergencies beyond the control of the student's family.
 - 4. A mandated court appearance. (Documentation required)
 - 5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by the district other than the one the student attends.
 - 6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administration and in accordance with the Connecticut State Department of Education guidelines.
 - 7. Additional 10 days for children of military service members.

A phone call with no written follow-up will automatically be coded as an unexcused absence. The responsibility for any makeup of work lies with the student, not the teacher.

Make-up Work

Unless a student has an extended illness, all makeup privileges must be completed within 5 days after the student returns to school. The student is responsible for obtaining and completing make-up work within this timeframe.

Unexcused Absence

Unexcused absences are those which do not fall under any of the excused absences.

Absences which are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from the definition.

Although the school will maintain records and keep parents informed within the limit of its capability, parents and students are expected to keep accurate attendance records and compare them to report cards when issued. Parents are also encouraged to contact the teachers and administrators to get help in verifying attendance and attendance records at any time during the year.

Students taking part in after-school activities must be in attendance a minimum of four (4) hours. Exceptions to this policy may be made by the administration only with advance notice.

Students may not participate in after school activities if they are suspended. Exceptions must be approved by the administration.

Chronic Absenteeism

A student whose total number of absences at any time during the school year is equal to or greater than percent of the total number of days that such student has been enrolled at school during the school year is considered to be a "chronically absent child." Such a student will be subject to review by the attendance review team and the chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan developed by the State Department of Education.

Parental Verification of Absence, Tardiness, and Early Dismissal

Every attempt should be made to confine necessary appointments to after school, weekends and vacation periods.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on or before the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the excuse directly to the office.

In the event that your child is absent, tardy, or being dismissed early, please contact the school at (860) 564-2728. The office staff will be available for calls at 7:30 a.m. If you call at an earlier time, the phone number above has voice mail. **Please note that in the event of an absence, a phone call with no written follow-up will automatically be coded as an unexcused absence per state law.**

In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office by **9:00 A.M.** Please consider the academic instruction your child will not receive before requesting an early dismissal.

Leaving School Grounds/Release of Students from School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator and the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the school office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian.

Tardiness

Students who are not in their homeroom by 8:00 A.M. are considered tardy. Any student who arrives at school after 8:00 A.M. must report directly to the office. A student discovered on school grounds who has not signed in at the office will also be considered tardy. A student who is repeatedly tardy may be considered truant. All tardy arrivals will be considered unexcused unless accompanied by a doctor's note for illness and be signed by a parent.

*Students are late to school if they are not in their homeroom by 8:00 A.M. If students arrive late, they must report to the office and sign in.

Truancy

Truancy is defined by statute as absence(s) from school without the knowledge or approval of parents/guardians and/or school officials. A student age five to eighteen** inclusive with 4 (four) unexcused absences in one month or 10 (ten) unexcused absences in a school year will be considered truant.

Parents have the responsibility to assist school officials in remedying and preventing truancy. School staff is mandated by the state to report excessive absences or patterns of concern.

Information about truancy will also be posted in the annual district report cards required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Vacations

School policy strongly encourages the scheduling of family vacations and trips during times which coincide with school vacations. Student absences for reasons of a family vacation or trip that takes place when school is in session may be considered "unexcused absences," in light of SBE guidelines.

Behavior Expectations regarding physical contact

Students are expected to refrain from all physical contact that is potentially unsafe or distracting to the educational process. Unacceptable behavior includes "horsing around," just fooling around, poking, pushing, tripping, and/or jostling one another. Students must also refrain from overt acts of affection. Violence will result in teacher/team and/or administrative consequences.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is a proactive, team-based framework for creating and sustaining safe and effective schools. The goals of PBIS are to increase student academic performance, decrease problem behavior, increase safety, and establish a positive school climate through research-based strategies and systems.

The school-wide PBIS framework at Sterling Community School includes differentiated programs for grades K-4 and grades 5-8. These programs include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create a positive school environment.

PBIS methods are research-based and are proven to significantly reduce the occurrence of problem behaviors. The key is to focus on prevention by consistently acknowledging positive, appropriate behaviors while using preventative strategies for problem behavior when it occurs.

The primary components of an effective school-wide PBIS system involve:

- Clearly defining and teaching a set of behavioral expectations.
- Consistently acknowledging and rewarding appropriate behavior.
- Proactively preventing problematic behavior.
- Effectively using behavioral data to assess progress.

An important piece of the PBIS framework is creating a set of 3-5 behavior expectations/positive rules that are well known to all affiliated with our school. These behavior expectations are explicitly taught for all locations in a student's school day: the classroom, hallways, café, bathroom, recess, assemblies, and the bus. As part of our system to catch students being good, all staff and faculty distribute colored tickets for each program to acknowledge students who demonstrate positive behaviors throughout the day in all areas.

Check-in/Check-out (CICO)

The PBIS initiatives help to improve the culture and climate by teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors. The majority of students in any given school will not need support beyond Tier 1. However, for the students who require behavior intervention support beyond the support of Tier 1 implementation, there is Tier 2. CICO can give students the extra support they need and allow them to meet their set behavioral goals that can lead them back to Tier 1. CICO is a program that is customized to reflect behaviors that need additional focus. This program promotes specific feedback on these behaviors throughout the day to support students to meet their individual goals. As students in Tier2 meet their goal, their goal is increased until they are able to meet the Tier 1 criteria.

The PBIS team created acronyms to help define and communicate the behavior expectations. The PBIS framework at SCS has two differentiated programs across grade levels. STARRS (Students That Are Respectful, Responsible and Safe) supports grades K-4 and EPIC (Engaged, Prepared, Independent, Collaborative) supports grades 5-8.

STARRS – Grades K-4

Students That Are Respectful, Responsible and Safe

When children begin school and as their foundation is formed through the elementary grades, behavioral expectations are established that seek to build a common understanding of fundamental expectations for success at school. Here at Sterling Community School, we shine the light on Respect, Responsibility, and Safety with our STARRS program. Students are specifically taught the expectations for these behaviors in all settings throughout the school day. Students are acknowledged with specific praise statements regarding their behaviors and accompanying STARR tickets. Students save tickets in their classrooms and use them for bi-weekly incentive activities.

EPIC – Grades 5-8

In addition to the expectation that our students have learned to be STARRS (respectful, responsible and safe), beginning in 5th-grade students are acknowledged for being EPIC. Students in grades 5-8 are recognized for being Engaged, Prepared, Independent and Collaborative within the classroom and throughout the day. Students are acknowledged with specific praise statements and accompanying EPIC tickets. Students use tickets for bi-weekly incentive activities.

As our programs develop, the PBIS core team is working hard to expand our incentive activities to include ideas and suggestions generated from student feedback about what motivates them to learn.

A student who violates the district's code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. Sterling Community School's disciplinary actions may include using one or more discipline management techniques, such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and expulsion. Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to an including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

DISCIPLINE

A student who violates the district's code of conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action through Restorative Justice practices. Restorative justice seeks to increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead youth to engage in delinquent behavior, and build on strengths in each young person.

The District will make every reasonable effort to correct student misbehavior through school-based resources at the lowest possible level and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school environment and avoid negative behavior.

Strategies may include but are not limited to, conferences which restore the relationships between staff, students and parents/guardians; youth court, mediation, use of study, guidance, or other intervention-related teams; enrollment in a program teaching positive social behavior or anger management; and participation in a restorative justice program.

Disciplinary measures will be appropriate for the offense. Consequences such as detention, removal from class, removal to an alternative education program, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion may be assigned depending upon the seriousness of the infraction.

In addition, when a student violates the law that student may be referred to legal authorities for prosecution. Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct, which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and violates publicized board of education policy even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Detention

A student may be detained outside of school hours for not more than one hour on one or more days for violation of the code of conduct. The detention shall not begin, however, until the students' parents have been notified of the reasons for the detention and can make arrangements for the student's transportation on the day(s) of the detention.

Suspension

A teacher may remove a student from a class when the student deliberately causes a serious disruption of the teaching and learning process within the classroom. School administrators will determine, using state guidelines, whether the suspension will be in-school or out-of-school.

The administration may suspend a student for the infraction of school rules. A suspension is defined as an exclusion from school privileges for not more than ten (10) consecutive days, provided such exclusion shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which suspension was imposed.

Students in preschool through grade 2, inclusive, may only receive in-school suspensions, unless, after an informal hearing, the administration determines that an out-of-school suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the students conduct on school grounds is of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons.

However, no student shall be suspended without an informal hearing before the building principal or his/her designee at which time the student shall be informed of the reasons for the disciplinary action and given an opportunity to explain the situation unless circumstances surrounding the incident require immediate removal. In such an instance, the informal hearing will be held during the suspension.

Suspension from school will result in loss of extracurricular and social privileges during the period of suspension.

For any student suspended for the first time and who has never been expelled, the administration may shorten the length of or waive the suspension period if the student successfully completes an administration-specified program and meets any other administration-required conditions, which shall not incur an expense to the student or his/her parents.

Expulsion

A teacher may remove a student from class when the student deliberately causes serious disruption to the teaching and

learning process within the classroom.

Prior to an expulsion hearing, parents will be given notice of at least five (5) business days before such hearing. It will contain information about the legal rights of the student and parent and information concerning legal services that are provided free of charge or at a reduced rate that are available locally and how to access such services shall be provided to the student and his/her parent or guardian. An attorney or other advocates may represent any student subject to expulsion proceedings. The parent/guardian of the student has the right to have the expulsion hearing postponed for up to one week to allow time to obtain representation, except that if an emergency exists, such hearings shall be held as soon as possible after the expulsion as possible.

The Board of Education may expel a student in grades 3 through 12 inclusive, from school privileges if, after a full hearing, the Board finds that the student's conduct endangers person(s), property or the educational process or is in violation of a publicized Board policy. Students who have been expelled for the first time may be eligible for an alternative educational program, as defined in accordance with the State Board of Education standards.

Expulsion from school will result in the loss of all extracurricular and social privileges during the period of expulsion.

For any student expelled for the first time and who has never been suspended, the Board of Education may shorten the length of or waive the expulsion period if the student successfully completes a Board specified program and meets any other conditions required by the Board. Such a Board specified program does not require the student or the parent/guardian of the student to pay for participation in the program.

Students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive are subject to mandatory expulsion for the possession and/or use of weapons, including martial arts weapons, or other dangerous instruments in any school building, on school grounds, in any school vehicle, or at any school-sponsored activity for a calendar year. A student in grades kindergarten through grade 12 inclusive, who offers illegal drugs for sale or distribution on or off school grounds is also cause for expulsion for a calendar year. The Board may modify the expulsion period on a case-by-case basis.

Whenever a student is expelled, a notice of the expulsion and the conduct for which the student was expelled will be included on the student's cumulative education records. The record will be expunged if the student graduates from high school and the expulsion was not for weapon possession and/or for the sale or distribution of illegal drugs.

If students expulsion is shortened or the expulsion period waived based upon the fact that the student was expelled for the first time, has never been suspended and successfully completed a Board specified program and/or met other conditions required by the Board, the notice of expulsion will be expunged from the cumulative educational record if the student graduates from high school or, if the Board so chooses, at the time the student completes the Board specified program and meets other Board required conditions.

Expelled students, under age 16, will be offered an individualized learning plan as part of alternative education. Students between ages 16 and 18 who are expelled, even for conduct that endangers others, will be offered an alternative educational opportunity if it is the student's first expulsion (PA 16-147)

A district student who has committed an expellable offense who seeks to return to a District school after having been in a juvenile detention center, the Connecticut Juvenile Training School or any other residential placement for one year or more, in lieu of expulsion from the District, shall be permitted to return to the appropriate school setting within the District. Further, the District will not expel the student from any additional time for the offense(s).

BULLYING

Bullying of a student by another student is prohibited. Such behavior is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed to another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property,
- B. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,

- C. creates a hostile environment at school for such students,
- D. infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, oral, or electronic communication or physical act or gesture-based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics. (The student against whom the activity is directed must be attending school in the same district as the students engaged in the activity.)

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Physical violence and attacks
- 2. Verbal taunts, name-calling, and put-downs including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put-downs
- 3. Threats and intimidation
- 4. Extortion or stealing of money and/or possessions
- 5. exclusion from peer groups within the school
- 6. The misuse of electronic communications for the purpose of bullying, harassing, or sexually harassing other students within the school or out of school (“cyberbullying”)
- 7. Targeting of a student based on the student’s actual or perceived “differentiating” characteristics such as race; color; religion; ancestry; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity or expression; socioeconomic or academic status; physical appearance; or mental physical, developmental, or sensory disability.

Any student(s) who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- 1. creates a hostile environment at school for the victims,
- 2. infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- 3. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school, are subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion and/or referral to law enforcement.

Students and/or their parents may file a written report of conduct they consider bullying. Students may also make an informal complaint of conduct that they consider to be bullying by verbal report to any school employee, who will promptly reduce the complaint to writing and forward it to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and action. (The District/School needs to place in the student handbook the process by which students may make formal, informal and/or anonymous complaints.) The complaint procedure is also posted on the District’s website and the school website.

Students and parents are permitted to make anonymous reports of bullying. Parent written reports and student anonymous reports will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist but no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Laura Smith, Clinical Supervisor, is our Safe School Climate Specialist and is responsible for taking a bullying report and investigating the complaint. Parents of students involved in a verified act of bullying will be invited to attend at least one meeting at school. Safe School Climate Specialists are required to receive mental health first aid training.

Bullying behavior by any student in the Sterling Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school. “Bullying” means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:

- A. Causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student’s property,
- B. Places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property,
- C. Creates a hostile environment at school for such student,
- D. Infringes on the rights of such student at school, or
- E. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture-based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or physical, mental, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

Students who engage in any act of bullying, on school grounds at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education, and outside of the school setting if such bullying:

- A. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim,
- B. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school, or
- C. Substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Students and/or parents may file verbal or written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees. Any report of suspected bullying behavior or teen dating violence will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying and/or teen dating violence are verified, prompt disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process. Board policy and regulation #5131.911 set forth this prohibition and the related procedures in detail, and are available to students and their parents/guardians upon request.

CYBERBULLYING

The District's computer network and the Internet, and the personal electronic devices of students, whether accessed on-campus or off-campus, during or after school hours, may not be used for the purpose of harassment. All forms of harassment over the Internet, commonly known as cyberbullying, are unacceptable, a violation of District policy and of the District's acceptable computer use policy and procedures. Cyberbullying means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to, such misuses of technology as harassing, teasing, intimidating, threatening, or terrorizing another person by sending or posting inappropriate and hurtful email messages, instant messages, text message, digital pictures or images, or website postings, including blogs. It is also recognized that the author (poster or sender) of the inappropriate material may be disguised or logged on as someone else.

Students and community members who believe they have been the victims of such misuses of technology as described, should not erase the offending material from the system. A copy of the material should be printed and brought to the attention of the Safe School Climate Specialist or the Principal. All reports of cyberbullying will be investigated by the Safe School Climate Specialist.

In situations in which the cyberbullying originated from a non-school computer, but brought to the attention of school officials, any disciplinary action shall be based upon whether the conduct is determined to be severely disruptive of the educational process so that it markedly interrupts or severely impedes the day-to-day operation of the school. Also, such conduct must be violative of a publicized school policy. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, threats, or making a threat off school grounds, to kill or hurt a teacher or student.

Disciplinary action may include loss of computer privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion. A communicated threat or a hate crime will be reported to the police.

Students will be provided instruction about appropriate online behavior.

HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and comfortable in school. No one else's behavior should ever make children feel afraid or embarrassed because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or any disability they may have. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop.

Harassment, hazing, teasing, bullying, or abuse of students or staff will not be tolerated. Any student who engages in an act that injures, degrades or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interferes with a student's opportunity to obtain an education shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Parents are urged to speak with their children about appropriate responses to teasing, harassment, or bullying. If any student is harassed or sees harassment happening to someone else, they should report the behavior directly to a teacher or the Principal. All allegations will be fully investigated and addressed, and appropriate disciplinary action is taken, where necessary.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The District wants all students to learn in an environment free from all forms of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is against state and federal laws. It is unwelcome sexual attention from peers, teachers, staff or anyone with whom the victim may interact. Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should report the alleged misconduct immediately to his/her teacher, social worker, administrator, school nurse or any responsible individual with whom the student feels comfortable, either informally or through the filing of a formal complaint.

The district will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee.

A complaint alleging sexual harassment by a student or staff member may be presented by a student and/ or parent in a conference with the Principal. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the student code of conduct in the event a sexual harassment complaint is verified

DRESS CODE POLICY

The goal at Sterling Community School is to have students feel comfortable without causing distractions to the learning process. Students are encouraged to dress in clothing appropriate to the school situation. In order to maintain a proper and healthful educational atmosphere, students must be suitably dressed. Cleanliness of body and dress is important to the individual and to those who share common space. In addition, student clothing or hair should not be hazardous in various school activities such as a shop, laboratories, athletics, and physical education. Grooming and dress that prevent the student from doing his/her best work because of blocked vision or restricted movement, or that exposes the student to accidents must be avoided. Restrictions on freedom of expression may be applied whenever the mode of dress is unsafe, disruptive, or contrary to law.

The following are examples of attire that is prohibited in school:

1. Coats, jackets or other attire normally worn as outerwear.
2. Head coverings of any kind, including, but not limited to, scarves, bandannas, masks, kerchiefs, athletic headbands, hats, caps or hoods, unless it is religious attire.
3. Footwear which marks/damage floors or is a safety hazard, or backless footwear.
4. Sunglasses (unless required by a doctor's order).
5. Spiked or studded bracelets, oversized or multi-finger rings, belts or any other article of attire with spikes or studs attached.
6. Attire or accessories which portray disruptive writing or pictures.
7. Attire or accessories which depict logos or emblems that encourage the use of drugs, tobacco products, or alcoholic beverages.
8. Attire which can, at times, for some students, create a hostile school environment. (i.e., gang-related attire, clothing with sexually harassing comments or symbols).
9. Shirts and/or blouses that reveal the abdomen, chest or undergarments, or tank tops.
10. See-through clothing.
11. Shorts, miniskirts, or pants that reveal the navel, upper thigh or undergarments.

ASSEMBLIES

There are times when classes, grades, teams or the entire school may gather for assembly programs. These programs are arranged to bring information or entertainment to the student community. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standards as in the classroom.

BUS CONDUCT

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from

school which endangers persons or property or violates Board policy or administrative regulation.

CORRIDOR BEHAVIOR

Sterling Community School students are Respectful, Responsible and Safe. In order to ensure student safety and that of others, students will follow hallway expectations - students will keep to the right when passing in the corridors, walk, move at a reasonable pace, not obstruct the passage of others, and use the doors on the right-hand side. Students in the hallway during class time require a pass.

FIELD TRIPS/EDUCATIONAL FIELD STUDY EXPERIENCES

Field study experiences may be scheduled to be used as springboards or culminating activities for units presented in the classroom or to provide “hands-on” experiences. In addition, these opportunities introduce students to new learning experiences through participation and observation of such activities like exhibits, dramatic presentations, civic protocols, and other timely events. While on field trips, students are responsible for adhering to all school rules and Board of Education policies and regulations which includes full school attendance on the day of a field trip.

Students who have academic/behavioral difficulty in other classes may be denied permission to attend a field trip. This is at the discretion of the administration.

Students who are unable to attend a field trip will be expected to be in attendance and participate in all regularly scheduled academic activities.

OUT OF SCHOOL MISCONDUCT

Students are subject to discipline, up to and including suspension and expulsion for misconduct which is seriously disruptive of the educational process and is a violation of a publicized board policy, even if such conduct occurs off-school property and during non-school time.

Examples of off-school conduct that may result in such discipline include but are not limited to:

1. Sale, possession, use, or distribution of dangerous weapons, including martial arts weapons;
2. Use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs;
3. Violent conduct;
4. Making of a bomb threat;
5. Threatening to harm or kill another student or member of the staff; where any such activity has a reasonable likelihood of threatening the health, safety or welfare of school property, individuals thereon, and/or the educational process.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The right to inspect desks, lockers and other equipment assigned to students may be exercised by school officials to safeguard students, their property and school property. A school administrator may search a student’s locker or desk under the following conditions:

- There is a reason to believe that the student’s desk or locker contains contraband material.
- The probable presence of contraband material presents a serious threat to the maintenance of discipline, order, safety and health in school.

This document serves as advance notice that the Board of Education policy allows desks and lockers to be inspected if the administration has reason to believe that materials injurious to the best interests of students and the school are contained therein.

Under special circumstances, school officials may search students, particularly if there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses illegal matters, such as a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs.

The District may use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used on lockers and vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. Drug-sniffing dogs will not be used to sniff students. A locker, a vehicle, or an item in the classroom to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

SMOKING

Students shall not smoke or use tobacco products, e-cigarettes or vapor product devices on school property or at any school-related or school-sanctioned activity, on or off school property, as provided by state and federal law. Students found using, attempting to use, or in possession of these products will face disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Sterling Community School prohibits the manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol or controlled substances on school grounds or during school activities. Any student in violation of this will be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with board policy. Substance abuse or distribution of drugs and/or drug paraphernalia including alcohol may indicate serious underlying problems. Every effort will be made to offer student assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment to private or community agencies and aftercare support.

DANGEROUS WEAPONS AND INSTRUMENTS

Weapons, real or fake, including those sold in toy or department stores are never permitted at Sterling Community School. Any object used to cause injury will be considered a weapon. Violators will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with board policy.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY (CHEATING/PLAGIARISM)

All forms of cheating and plagiarism, including by electronic means, are not acceptable. The misrepresenting by students of homework, classwork, tests, reports, or other assignments as if they were entirely their own work shall be considered forms of cheating and/or plagiarism. Consequences of cheating and/or plagiarism shall be academic in nature unless repeated incidents require disciplinary action. Consequences for cheating are in accordance with board policy and take into account the grade level of the student and the severity of the misrepresentation.

PART 3: ACADEMIC INFORMATION

CLASS PLACEMENT

Class placement decisions are made by the school Principal in consultation with faculty. Due to the complex nature of placing students to best meet their academic, social, and emotional needs, student placements will not be determined based on parent requests.

HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to help students become self-directed, independent learners and is related to the educational progress of the student. A reasonable amount of study and preparation is necessary for the scholastic growth of students. The amount of preparation and complexity of homework assignments should increase as children progress through the grades. Homework assignments will be given to reinforce and augment the lessons taught in class.

Parent involvement should be kept to a minimum: Parents should help facilitate homework, however; studies show minimal gains or even negative effects when parents try to solve content problems. See how you can help by following the parents' guide to homework.

Students' Guide to Homework

- Record assignments in agenda (grades 4-8)
- Place materials you need to bring home into your backpack
- Stick to your homework routine
- Try your best
- Have Parent/Guardian review work and initial agenda
- Pack your backpack in the evening to be organized and ready for the next day.

Remember – Make homework your top priority.

Parents' Guide to Homework

- Make homework a priority

- Have a regularly scheduled time and place to do homework
- Have supplies on hand
- Encourage, motivate, and prompt your child
- Limit TV or video games until homework is complete
- Discuss assignments with your child
- Initial his/her agenda every night (grades 5-8)
- Encourage your child to place homework back in his/her backpack

GRADING SYSTEM

Standards-Based Grading

Sterling Community School utilizes a standards-based system of instruction, grading, and academic reporting that is based on students demonstrating an understanding of the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn as they progress through their education. In a school that uses a standards-based approach to education, teachers utilize concisely written descriptions of what students are expected to know and are able to do at a specific stage of their education in order to determine the goals of a lesson and what to teach students so they achieve the learning expectations. The general goal of standards-based learning is to ensure that students are acquiring the knowledge and skills that are deemed to be essential to success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. Standards-based learning is common in American elementary schools, but it is becoming more widely used in middle and secondary schools. When using a standards-based approach to assessment, students are considered proficient on an assessment once they have demonstrated that they have learned the knowledge and skills described in the expected standards. The students may need to retake a test several times or redo an assignment, or they may need additional help from the teacher in order to become proficient in a standard. In standards-based schools, educators will use a variety of instructional and assessment methods to determine whether students have met the expected standards and to determine their grade

Benchmark and Interim Assessments

All students participate in Benchmark assessments three times per school year. Benchmarks help educators to determine a student's academic ability. The results of the benchmark assessments help teachers to plan instruction for their students. Additionally, students participate in Interim Assessments throughout the year. These assessments also allow teachers to track the progress of individual students and to identify students that may be in need of differentiated instruction.

PARENT PORTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM AND REPORT CARDS

The Board of Education has enhanced its student information system to include a web-based parent portal application through our Student Information System (SIS) PowerSchool. The parent portal will allow a parent/guardian of students to access student records via a secure website. A parent/guardian will be able to view attendance, homework assignments, and grades. All parents have access to PowerSchool Parent Portal. Additionally, there is a mobile app that can be downloaded to your phone via your phone's app store. Your child's teacher will record your child's academic progress using the PowerSchool grading system. Please check the portal regularly. Report cards are issued to students 3 times a year. Report cards will be emailed to parents at the end of each Trimester. If you have any questions regarding your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher. If you do not have access to the portal, or if you have any difficulty signing on to the portal, please contact the Principal.

HONOR ROLL

- High Honors- Must have a combination of 3's and 4's on fully taught concepts, with a minimum of twenty 4's for the trimester.
- Honors- No grade less than a 3 on fully taught concepts for the trimester, with a minimum of ten 4's for the trimester.
- Honorable Mention- No more than three 2s on fully taught concepts for the trimester.

*Students who meet the Honor Roll criteria will be recognized at the end of each trimester.

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Students' academic records are reviewed to determine scholastic eligibility for the National Junior Honor Society. Eligibility is based on the following:

Scholarship- 1) No grade less than a 3 on fully taught concepts

2) 3 Trimesters of grades must be considered

Service-This involves voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, done without compensation.

Leadership-Student leaders are those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, and idea contributors. Leadership experiences can be drawn from school or community activities while working with or for others.

Character-The student of good character is cooperative; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and generally, maintains a clean disciplinary record.

Citizenship-The student who demonstrates citizenship understands the importance of civic engagement; has high regard for freedom and justice; respects the U.S. form of government (a representative democracy); respects the law for all citizens at the local, state, and federal levels; and demonstrates mature participation and responsibility in activities such as scouting, community organizations, or school clubs.

*With the exception of the scholarship section, this criterion was adopted from the National Junior Honor Society website (<https://www.njhs.us/students/membership/how-to-become-a-member>)

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY PROCESS/PROCEDURES

- 1) At the end of the second trimester, the administration creates an initial list of students (grades 6-8) that qualify for NJHS.
- 2) This list is shared with the faculty council in grades 6 through 8.
- 3) The faculty council collaboratively reviews the list to determine which students meet the NJHS criteria.
- 4) Once the lists of students being recommended by the Faculty Council are created, they are shared with the administration for a final review.
- 5) Students that meet the criteria are then invited to join the National Junior Honor Society via a letter.

Members are expected to maintain an appropriate academic status to remain a member of the National Junior Honor Society.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parents are encouraged to become partners in their child's educational success. Conferences with teachers may be held at any time during the school year. Parents and students, as well as teachers, counselors or administrators, may initiate a conference.

A parent or student may arrange a conference with an individual member of the school staff or a group conference with school staff members. Conferences are held during school hours but every effort will be made to accommodate parent schedules.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATION

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school-based on communication and interactions. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of their educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the District's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in campus parent organizations, attendance at Board of Education meetings and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged. Please check out the school calendar for PTO meetings. The Sterling Board of Education meets every third Wednesday of each month in the Sterling Community School community room. Any changes in the Board of Education meeting schedule will be posted on our school website.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

The Sterling Community School PTO is a vital link between the school, community and the parents it serves. Its aim is to support the school and coordinate efforts of parents/guardians to develop a closer relationship between home and school. Thus, parents are urged to join and take an active part in the Sterling Community School PTO. Please check out the school calendar for PTO meeting dates.

PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT

Student promotion is dependent on each student's mastery and acquisition of basic learning objectives. Normally, students will progress annually from grade to grade. Students who master objectives at an exceptional rate may be considered for acceleration to another grade or class. Students who fail to master basic learning objectives at a normal rate will be considered for retention. Retention and acceleration decisions are the responsibility of the teaching staff and principal, after prior notification and discussion with parents. The final decision rests with the school administration.

Students must demonstrate the attainment of the basic skills based on the district's assessment program. A failure to attain these skills may necessitate involvement in additional courses, special help programs, summer school, retesting, etc.

STUDENT SUCCESS PLANNING (SSP - Grades 6, 7, and 8)

The Student Success Plan is an individualized, student-driven, plan developed to address a student's needs and interests helping the student stay connected in school and to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. The SSP begins in sixth grade, continues through twelfth grade and includes three core areas: Academic Development, Career Development; and Social, Emotional, and Physical Development.

TESTING

Students in grades 3 through 8 participate in state assessments and interim assessments.

PART 4: STUDENT INFORMATION

COMPUTER ONLINE SERVICES AND USE

The Sterling Board of Education (Board) provides its students and staff access to a multitude of technology resources. Access to information and communication technologies (ICT) is considered a privilege and not a right. ICT resources consist of any technology and/or devices that access or convey information, software applications, Internet resources and Internet environments; including cloud-based solutions.

These resources provide opportunities to enhance learning and improve communication within our community and with the global community beyond the local campus. The advantages of having access to these resources are viewed by the Board as far greater than any potential downside. However, with the privilege of access is the responsibility of students, teachers, staff and the public to exercise appropriate personal responsibility in their use of these resources. The policies of the Board are intended to promote the most effective, safe, productive, and instructional sound uses of networked information and communication tools. The District also makes a good faith effort to protect its students from exposure to Internet materials that are harmful or explicit. The District maintains a system of Internet content filtering devices and software controls that meet federal standards established in the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

Digital Citizen

The District uses information and technology in safe, legal, and responsible ways. It is incumbent upon all members of the school community to use technology ethically, constructively, and with respect for the work of others. Independent and appropriate use of information and communication technologies is predicated upon responsible and ethical conduct. Therefore, a responsible digital citizen, whether staff, student or volunteer, is one who:

- Respects One's Self. Users will select online names that are appropriate and honest about one's identity and will consider the information and images that are posted online. Users will communicate and interact with others in respectful ways.
- Respects Others. Users will refrain from using technologies to bully, tease or harass other people. Users will not access or use hate-based or sexually explicit materials nor will they disparage others.

- Protects One's Self and Others. Users will protect themselves and others by reporting abuse and not forwarding inappropriate materials or communications. Users will adhere to the age requirements and guidelines of all websites. Users will protect personal information and respect the privacy of others' information.
- Respects Intellectual Property. Users will suitably cite any and all use of websites, books, media, etc.
- Protects Intellectual Property. Users will request to use the software and media others produce. Respect will be shown for intellect and creativity by asking permission, giving credit and observing the law.
- Respects Classroom Guidelines. Users will follow all guidelines set by teachers regarding the use of electronic devices. Users will respect teachers by keeping all communication school-related.

Expectations

Responsible use of technology resources provided by the Board is expected to be ethical, respectful, academically honest, and supportive of the school's mission. Each computer user (staff and students) will be required to read the responsible use policy and to sign the responsible use agreement. Each computer user has the responsibility to respect every other person in our community and on the Internet. Digital storage and electronic devices used for school purposes will be treated as extensions of the physical school space. Administrators, or their designees, may review files and communications (including electronic mail) to ensure that users are using the system in accordance with Board policy. Users should not expect that files stored on servers or disks will be private.

Some activities are expressly prohibited by law. Users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. The following guidelines are intended to clarify expectations for conduct, but they should not be construed as all-inclusive. Given the nature of emerging technologies, it is impossible to anticipate or prevent all problems that may occur.

- The use of electronic devices should be consistent with the Board's educational objectives, mission, and curriculum.
- Transmission of any material in violation of any local, federal and state laws is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to copyrighted material, licensed material and threatening or obscene material.
- Intentional or unintentional use of computing resources to access or process, proxy sites, pornographic material, explicit text or files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the network is strictly prohibited.
- Software and/or services may not be installed or downloaded on school devices without prior approval of the Superintendent or designee.
- Use of computing resources for commercial activities, product advertisement or religious or political lobbying is prohibited.
- Users may be held personally and financially responsible for malicious or intentional damage done to network software, data, user accounts, hardware and/or unauthorized costs incurred.
- Files stored on district-managed networks are the property of the school district and, as such, may be inspected at any time and should not be considered private.
- Materials published for electronic publication must be for educational purposes. School administrators, teachers, and staff may monitor these materials to ensure compliance with content standards.

Communications via ICT resources are often public in nature and general school rules and communication apply. It is expected that users will at all times comply with District standards and will act in a responsible and legal manner in accordance with District standards as well as with federal and state laws.

It is important that all users and parents understand that the District, as the owner of the ICT resources, reserves the right to monitor and review the use of ICT resources. Such monitoring or review will be limited and done, as needed to ensure that the systems are being used for District-related educational purposes. Therefore, all users must be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these ICT resources.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND GAMES (Radios, CD Players, Cell-Phones)

The use of personal electronic equipment including but not limited to CD players, MP3 players, recorders, laser pointers, beepers, camcorders, DVD players, cell phones, and other electronic equipment is prohibited during the instructional day. The instructional day starts at the time you enter the building and ends when you exit the building at the end of the day. Unless otherwise banned under this policy, all electronic devices should be kept in the student's locker during the instructional day unless, (a) the Principal grants permission for use, (b) use of the device is provided in a student's IEP, or (c) the electronic device is needed in an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff or other individuals. For purposes of this policy, "instructional day" refers to student school hours (8:00-2:55).

Students should be storing electronic devices in lockers or backpacks upon entering the building unless otherwise approved by the Principal under regulations developed by the Superintendent. In no case will personal communication devices with an unfiltered connection to the Internet be permitted for use on school grounds nor will the transmission of texts or images be permitted.

Electronic devices not stored properly will be collected by teachers, or other personnel, and turned into the main office. The Principal will determine whether to return the electronic device at the end of the day to be taken home by the student or whether the parent will be contacted to pick up the item.

Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Specifically, any student using a cell phone or other electronic device in any manner that disrupts the educational environment, including using the device to cheat, signal others, or otherwise violate student conduct rules or violates confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual (i.e. the taking, storing, disseminating, transferring or sharing of texts or images, whether by electronic transfer or other means including but not limited to texting and emailing) will be disciplined.

No recording, video or audio, or photographs may be taken in school unless it is part of a lesson and all appropriate privacy protections, such as FERPA, are honored.

The sending, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, emails or other material of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form on cell phones or other electronic devices is prohibited in the school setting.

PROPERTY, LOCKERS, AND EQUIPMENT NOTICE AND MISUSE

It is the policy of the Board to hold students responsible for any loss of or damage to the property of the school under the jurisdiction of the Board when the loss or damage occurs through the fault of the student.

Any student damaging or defacing school property will be financially liable for restoring the property regardless of the condition of the property at the time of the destructive act, in addition to any other discipline as determined by board policy including arrest or civil prosecution as deemed appropriate.

In addition, anyone who witnesses such an act and fails to report it to the proper authorities may be considered as having contributed to that action. Such charges for the damaged property will be exactly those which the school must incur to repair the damage.

All equipment assigned to students is the property of the school, loaned to students for their convenience during the school year and should be kept in good order and not abused.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by district policy. Parents will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Students may not bring in locks from home for assigned lockers. Only students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are provided lockers with locks. All students are warned not to bring large sums of money or valuables to school; liability for these items remains with the student.

TEXTBOOK, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library books or other educational materials.

PART 5: SCHOOL SERVICES

TRANSPORTATION

School transportation privileges are extended to students conditioned upon their satisfactory behavior on the bus. Unsatisfactory student behavior on the bus shall result in possible suspension of transportation services or such other disciplinary action that is appropriate for misconduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

No student shall be picked up or let off the school bus at any stop other than their regular stop, without the expressed written permission of parents/guardians and approval by the Principal. Permanent changes in a drop off location need to be formally requested by completing the **Long-Term Bus Schedule Change Form**. This form is available on the school website or through contacting the school office.

The following rules shall apply to student conduct on school transportation:

1. Passengers shall follow the driver's directions at all times.
2. Passengers shall board and leave the bus in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest their home.
3. Passengers shall not stand while the bus is in motion.
4. Passengers shall keep books, instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle of the bus.
5. Passengers shall not deface the bus and/or its equipment.
6. Passengers shall not extend head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window nor hold any object out of the window nor throw objects within or out of the bus.
7. Passengers shall not smoke or use any form of tobacco.
8. Passengers shall not eat on the bus.
9. Usual classroom conduct shall be observed. Unruly conduct, including the use of obscene language, will subject the passenger to disciplinary action.
10. Upon leaving the bus, the passenger will wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the bus.
11. Students must ride the bus to which they are assigned.

The following procedures shall be followed when a discipline concern arises on a bus serving a regular route or an extracurricular activity:

1. A conference involving the principal, the student passenger, the driver, and the parent(s) maybe required.
2. The principal may suspend the student's bus-riding privileges. If such a suspension occurs, the parents will be notified prior to the time the suspension takes effect.
3. In the case of serious misconduct that endangers the safety of other passengers or the driver, the driver shall have the authority to remove the student and call for law enforcement assistance. The principal and parents shall be notified of the situation as soon as possible. The student shall not be provided bus service again until a conference involving all persons listed above has been held.

BUS PICK UP AND DROP OFF

Students should be at their bus stop 5 minutes prior to scheduled bus arrival. No student shall be picked up or let off the bus at any stop other than their regular stop without written permission from a parent/ guardian and approved by the administration due to safety and security. In the case when multiple students are dropped off at one location, an approved adult must be present to receive each student.

Students in pre-kindergarten through third grade must be greeted at the assigned bus stop by a parent or guardian. Students will be returned to school in the event that a parent/guardian is not present at the assigned bus stop and phone contact cannot be made with a responsible adult. The office will call the student's parent or guardian to notify them that their child is

being returned to the school. School personnel will make their best judgment as to the course of action necessary to protect the student's safety.

Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives mandated training in their use.

Parent Pick-Up Procedures for Grades Pre-K/K

- Pre-K parent pickup time is 10:45 AM and 2:55 PM.
- Kindergarten parent pickup time is 2:55 PM for a full day or 12:40 PM for a half-day of school. The designated pickup location is the side entrance of the Kindergarten wing as indicated by signage.
- Parents/Guardians may request a child to be placed on the parent pickup list by sending a note with the date, time, and the name of the person picking up the child to the main office by 9:00 AM. We will not be taking phone calls. Parents/guardians must send in a written note.
- Parents/guardians must contact the main office, in advance of dismissal time, to inform the main office that someone from the child's authorized pick up list is picking up the child.
- Pre-K/K families utilizing parent pickup will proceed to the designated parent pickup car line, indicated with traffic signs.
- Once in line parent/guardians/authorized adults should wait in line until they are greeted by staff to sign their child out from school. Once the parent/guardian/authorized adult has signed the child out and the staff has confirmed their identity, the staff member will release the child to the adult's car.
- Anyone picking up a child shall present their photo identification in order for the child or children to be released to the vehicle. Parents/Guardians/Authorized adults shall bring their identification with them to parent pick up even if you have previously been to parent pickup.
- Students are called to the kindergarten wing to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms parent pickup and students wait for their names to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- Sterling Community School staff will not buckle or secure students in the vehicle. The parent or guardian shall be responsible for properly restraining the child or children into their vehicle.
- Sterling Community School staff is on duty to assist families with the dismissal process, please note that no student will be dismissed to a vehicle without confirming the identity of the authorized adult. Parents do not need to leave their vehicles for parent pick up. The children are brought directly to the vehicle by staff; there is no need for parents to park and exit their vehicles unless to assist a child in a seat belt/car seat.
- For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

Parent Pick-Up Procedures for Grades 1-8

- Parent pickup time is 2:55 PM for a full day or 12:40 PM for a half-day of school. The designated pickup location is the main entrance as indicated by signage.
- Parents/Guardians may request a child to be placed on the parent pickup list by sending a note with the date, time, and the name of the person picking up the child to the main office by 9 AM.
- Parents/guardians must contact the main office, in advance of dismissal time, to inform the main office that someone from the child's authorized pick up list is picking up the child.
- Grades 1-8 families utilizing parent pickup will proceed to the designated parent pickup car line, indicated with traffic signs. Once in line parent/guardians/authorized adults should wait in line until there are greeted by staff to sign their child out from school. Once the parent/guardian/authorized adult has signed the child out and the staff has confirmed their identity, the staff member will release the child to the adult's car. Anyone picking up a child shall present their photo identification in order for the child or children to be released to the vehicle. Parents/Guardians/Authorized adults shall bring their

identification with them to parent pick-up even if you have previously been to parent pickup. Remember that the grades 1-8 parent pick up car line is at the main entrance of the building.

- Grade 1-8 students that have a PK/K sibling are called to the kindergarten wing to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms the family for parent pickup and students wait to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- Students are called to the Library to assemble into their families in anticipation of parent pickup. Staff on duty confirms parent pickup and students wait for their names to be called to proceed to the parent pickup car line for dismissal.
- Sterling Community School staff will not buckle or secure students in the adult's vehicle. The parent or guardian shall be responsible for properly restraining the child or children into their vehicle in accordance with state law.
- Remember for grade 1-8 students that have a PK/K sibling they will meet their younger sibling for parent pick up in the PK/K-line.
- The Sterling Community School Staff is on duty to assist families with the dismissal process, please note that no student will be dismissed to a vehicle without confirming the identity of the authorized adult. Parents do not need to leave their vehicles for parent pick up. The children are brought directly to the vehicle by staff; there is no need for parents to park and exit their vehicles unless to assist a child in a seat belt/car seat.
- For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

Parent/Student Drop Off – General Information

Sterling Community School allows families to drop off students for the school day between 7:45 and 8:00 AM. After 8:00 AM the student is tardy and must report to the main office with a parent to check-in their child. Parents should use visitor parking when bringing in their child.

Families with siblings in Pre-K/K shall drop off all their children at the Pre-K/K drop off location.

For both arrival and pick up, motor vehicle operators shall adhere to all traffic signage and arrival and dismissal procedures.

Parent Drop Off Procedure for Pre-K/K Students

- 1) The Pre-K/K student drop off location is at the side entrance of the kindergarten wing of the school. Students arriving for school prior to 8:00 AM shall enter through the kindergarten wing side entrance and report to the following designated waiting area:
 - a. Pre-K/K – Library
- 2) Parent/Guardian shall pull up in their car to the designated drop off location and wait to be greeted by the staff. The designated drop off location is indicated with traffic signs.
- 3) Staff members greet and escort students from their parents' vehicles; therefore, parents no longer need to leave their vehicles or park them for student drop off.
- 4) Sterling Community School staff is on duty to assist students arriving at school prior to 8:00 AM.

Parent Drop Off Procedure for Grades 1-8

- 1) The Grade 1-8 student drop off location is at the main entrance of the building. Students arriving for school prior to 8:00 AM shall enter through the main entrance and report to the following designated waiting areas:
 1. Grades 1-5 – Cafeteria
 2. Grades 6-8 – Gymnasium
- 2) Parent/Guardian shall pull up in their car to the designated drop off location and wait to be greeted by the staff. The designated drop off location is indicated with traffic signs.
- 3) Staff members greet and escort students from their parent's vehicle; therefore, parents no longer need to leave

their vehicle or park the vehicle for student drop off

- 4) Sterling Community School staff is on duty to assist students arriving at school prior to 8:00 AM.

BICYCLE RIDERS/WALKERS

Due to unsafe conditions along Sterling Road (Route 14), students are not permitted to walk or ride a bicycle to school unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMPLAINTS/PROCEDURES

All complaints concerning school transportation safety are to be made to the Transportation Director. A written record of all complaints will be maintained, and an investigation of the allegations will take place.

CAFETERIA/FOOD PROGRAM/WATER BOTTLES

Rules of cleanliness are to be observed at all times. Misconduct in the cafeteria may result in disciplinary action in accordance with board policy.

Food Program

The District participates in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Breakfast is available for free to all students daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. If at any time, a parent or guardian anticipates a problem with paying for meals, he/she shall be encouraged to contact the Principal as soon as possible for assistance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children. In order to qualify, families must meet the eligibility criteria. Applications can be filed at any time during the summer or school year and new applications may be filed if there is a change in household income or in the number of household members. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced-price lunch is completed and approved.

All applications for free and reduced-price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Program.

Food Service Charge

To facilitate payment in advance for school meals, the Board has established a payment program whereby parents or guardians may pay for meals in advance either by cash or check or through www.myschoolbucks.com. There will be a \$2.49 processing fee charged per deposit through the MySchoolbucks program when paying by credit card. This processing fee is determined by MySchoolbucks. There is no charge when payment is made using cash or personal check. For more information about payment methods or if you have any questions, please contact Heather Plourde, Director of Food Services at hplourde@eastconn.org.

MySchoolbucks Program

Sterling Community School has a computerized system that allows parents to deposit money into their child's individual account, it is called "MySchoolbucks" and can be located at our school's website <http://sterlingschool.org>. Deposits made in cash or by check will be made available for access the day of deposit. No change will be returned unless requested in writing by a parent/guardian. Each student is issued a Personal Identification Number (PIN). This number remains the same while your child is a student at Sterling Community School. All students have an established account. Although you are not required to make advance payments, we do encourage you to do so. It helps to keep our lunch lines moving smoothly and quickly, allowing your child more time to eat their lunch. If you wish to pay in advance, please choose from the following options:

- "MySchoolbucks"
The Simple Way to Pay for School Meals...
myschoolbucks.com
- View account balances and meal purchases
 - Schedule automatic payments
 - Make payments anytime, anywhere from our mobile app

Sign up for your FREE account in 4 easy steps!

Step 1: Go to www.MySchoolBucks.com and register for a free account.

Step 2: You will receive a confirmation email with a link to activate your account.

Step 3: Add your students using their school name and student ID. You will need to select EASTCONN Educational Services first to locate your student’s school.

Step 4: Make a payment to your students’ accounts with your credit/debit card or electronic check. A program fee of \$2.49 will apply. You will have the opportunity to review any fees and cancel if you choose before you are charged.

- If you have any questions, contact MySchoolbucks directly:
- parentsupport@myschoolbucks.com
 - 1-855-832-5226
 - Visit myschoolbucks.com and click on Help/FAQs

Download the FREE app today!

Online Payments @ MySchoolbucks.com

Advance Payment Option
Meals may be purchased in advance. This money will go into your child’s “general” account for lunch, and/or a la carte items. You need only send in one (1) deposit per family, however, you must specify how much money is to go into each child’s individual account. Please make checks payable to the “ EASTCONN Food Services.”

BREAKFAST PRICES	LUNCH PRICES	
This year, breakfast will be free of charge to all students.	Regular Price @ \$3.00 (Reduced Price @ \$0.40)	Milk (8 oz.) \$0.60 (when purchased separately)

If you have any questions, please contact Heather Plourde, Director of Food Services at hplourde@eastconn.org.

Water bottles

Students will be permitted to carry a water bottle to classes throughout the day. Only non-glass water bottles with a closing cap filled with water will be allowed in the classroom. Gatorade, Powerade, vitamin-enhanced water, flavored water, and juices will be allowed for consumption in the cafeteria only. Students are expected to be Responsible, Respectful and Safe while in possession of their water bottle throughout the day.

Any student who is unable to meet these standards will be addressed on an individual basis.

Wellness

It is the intent of the Board of Education that schools take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. Sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur.

In addition, due to the numerous and varying food allergies of students, we are no longer able to have food items sent into school for birthday celebrations. Thank you in advance for helping keep the students at Sterling Community School healthy and safe.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

The District utilizes computer technology to broaden instruction and to prepare students for a computerized society. The use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher’s supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding the appropriate use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and parents should be aware that email communications, using district computers, are not private and may be monitored by staff. Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property, or at a District-sponsored activity unless the posting is approved by a teacher. The District will not be liable for information posted by students on social media websites, such as Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, YouTube, etc. when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment.

The District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such material.

Federal law requires the district to place filtering devices on school computers to block entry to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, harmful or inappropriate for students as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act and as determined by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

The Board of Education is committed to aiding students and staff in creating a 21st Century learning environment. Therefore students (plus staff) will be permitted to access the District's wireless network with their personal devices during the school day. With teacher approval, students may use their own devices to access the Internet and collaborate with other students.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Student wellness, including good nutrition and physical activity, is promoted through the District's educational program, school activities, and meal programs. Federal and state standards will be met pertaining to all foods and beverages available for sale to students. A sequential program of physical education is provided, in addition to time in the elementary school day for supervised recess.

Health Services

The Nurse's office is designed to provide care to students who become ill or are injured while in school.

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Vision and hearing tests are administered to students in grades K, 1, 3, 4 and 5. The postural screening will be done in grades 5 and 7 for female students and grade 8 or 9 for male students. The results are provided to the parents.

Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up. It is likewise important that parents notify the (school nurse) in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The (school nurse) is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

Administration of Medication

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the (school nurse). Special forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the (school nurse). All medication must be in the original container with proper labels.

In cases in which a student is able to self-administer medication, the parents or guardians must submit a signed statement that the medication must be taken during the school day and the student is capable of administering the medication. The statement must be accompanied by a physician, dentist or advanced practice registered nurse's statement indicating the necessity and naming the medication, the strength, and the prescribed dosage. It must specify the schedule on which it is to be taken and the details of administration. Such statements must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

A student with asthma or an allergic condition may carry an inhaler or an EpiPen or similar device in school at all times if he/she is under the care of a physician, physician assistant or advanced practical nurse and such practitioner certifies in writing that the child needs to keep an asthmatic inhaler or EpiPen at all times to ensure prompt treatment of the child's asthma or allergic condition and to protect the child against serious harm or death. Written authorization of the parent/guardian is required.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified school employee" may administer epinephrine in a cartridge injector for the purpose of emergency first aid to students who experience allergic reactions but were not previously known to have serious allergies and therefore do not have prior written authorization of a parent/guardian or qualified medical professional for the administration of epinephrine. Parents/guardians may submit in writing to the school nurse and school medical advisor that epinephrine shall not be administered to his/her child.

A school nurse, or in the absence of the nurse, a "qualified/school employee" may administer anti-epileptic medication to a

specific student with a medically diagnosed epileptic condition that requires prompt treatment in accordance with the student's individual seizure action plan. Written parental permission and written order from a physician is required.

A student with diabetes may test his/her own blood glucose levels if the student has written permission from his/her parents/guardian and a written order from a Connecticut licensed physician. The time or place of such testing shall not be restricted.

A school nurse or the principal will select a qualified school employee to, under certain conditions, give a glycogen injection to a student with diabetes who may require prompt treatment to protect him/her from serious harm or death. Written parental permission and written orders from a physician is required.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Communicable/Infectious Diseases

Students with any medical condition which within the school setting may expose others to disease or contagious and infectious conditions may be excluded from school and referred for medical diagnosis and treatment. Additional information concerning this may be obtained from the school nurse.

Before a child may return to school after an absence due to such condition, parents and students may be required to submit medical evidence that their child has recovered sufficiently to prevent exposing others.

Defibrillators in schools (AED'S)/Sudden Cardiac Arrest

Our school has (2) two automatic external defibrillator (AED), and all bus drivers and multiple school personnel trained in AED operation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The (AED) and trained personnel will be available during the school's normal operational hours, at school-sponsored athletic events and practices on school grounds and at school-sponsored events not taking place during normal school operational hours.

Disabilities

The school district will not discriminate on the basis of disability as required under ADA, IDEA and Section 504 and C.G.S. 10-76a and any similar law or provision.

Emergency Medical Treatment

Parents are asked each year to complete an emergency information form for use by the school in the event of a medical emergency.

Health Records

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut "Health Assessment and Record Form." These records are accessible to certified staff working with the child and school health aides if permission is granted by the nurse or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent where a student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

A diabetic student may test his/her own blood glucose level per the written order of a physician or advanced practice nurse stating the need and the capacity of the student to conduct self-testing. Such self-testing shall be done in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Education.

Homebound

Home instruction is available to students who are unable to attend school for medical and/or mental health reasons for a period of two weeks or longer as diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or the Planning and Placement Team. Home instruction may also be provided for those students who have been excluded from regular school attendance for disciplinary reasons.

Homeless Students

Homeless students, as defined by federal and state legislation, will have all programs, services, and transportation that other

students enjoy and may continue to attend the school of origin. The local liaison for homeless children is the school social worker. The District has reviewed its existing policies and regulations to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth. Homeless children and youths are defined as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence”. Homeless children have the right to attend the school of origin “to the extent feasible,” unless doing so is contrary to the request of such student’s parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

Immunizations

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent as appropriate must be provided. The required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Pertussis, Measles, Mumps, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chickenpox), Meningococcal, Pneumococcal, Rubella, Influenza and Haemophilus Influenzae Type B.* Parents or guardians of any children unable to have the mandated immunizations prior to initial school entry and the boosters as required in the later grades may have the immunizations, on the recommendation of the Board of Education, be paid by the town.

Parents/guardians wanting their children to be excused from immunizations if such immunizations are contrary to the religious beliefs of the child or of his/her parent/guardian must request such exemption in writing to the superintendent. The request must be officially acknowledged by any of the following: notary public, judge, clerk/deputy clerk of a court, town clerk, justice of the peace, attorney or school nurse. Such requests must be made before the initial entry into the school system and prior to entering grade 7.

In addition to the required immunizations for initial entry into school for kindergarten, regular and special education preschool programs, additional immunizations are required for entry into seventh grade and for entry into eight grade and ninth or tenth grade. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records.

For further information regarding immunizations contact our school nurse.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7) and in grade 9 (or 10). All students in grades K and grades 1, 3, 4, 5 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse or school health aide. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K, 1, 3, 4, and 5. The postural screening will be conducted for all female students in grades 5 and 7 and for male students in grades 8 or 9. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district’s homeless liaison.

PART 6: CO-CURRICULAR INFORMATION

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics

Athletics are considered an integral part of the school’s educational program. Whether participation is on the intramural, interscholastic, or class level, students have an opportunity to acquire qualities of fitness, self-discipline, and cooperation.

Student-athletes may not participate in any intramural or interscholastic activity unless the student-athlete and his/her parent/guardian complete the concussion education plan and sign the informed consent form.

The concussion education plan may consist of written materials, online training or videos, or in-person training. The consent form includes a summary of the school/district’s concussion education plan and applicable school board concussion policies.

Student interscholastic activities shall be governed by the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) regulations. Eligibility for participation is determined by ability and scholarship and is governed by state law as well as the regulations of the CIAC. (Consider listing here the district’s eligibility requirements)

Any student-athlete who has not reported to the school by noon will not be permitted to practice or play that afternoon or evening. Exceptions to this rule will be considered only if the player’s parent explains the unusual circumstances to the principal

or designee. **

INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS PHYSICALS

Sports physicals are required for participation in interscholastic sports. All medical and athletic release forms must be completed by a licensed physician and returned to the Athletic Director prior to the start of the athletic season. Additionally, specific forms related to topics such as cardiac arrest and concussion management may be required to be completed by parents.

Sports Offered*

- Girls and Boys Varsity and Jr. Varsity Soccer
- Girls and Boys Varsity and Jr. Varsity Basketball
- Varsity Cheerleading
- Girls and Boys Varsity Track & Field

****Please note that sports participation may require a pay-to-play fee.***

Sterling Community School is a charter member of the Southeastern Connecticut Middle School Athletic Conference.

School-sponsored events

School-sponsored events are open only to Sterling Community School students. Students attending a school-sponsored event, or activity, will not be permitted to leave the building and then re-enter. Once they leave the building, they must leave school grounds. There will be a dismissal procedure for students who attend a school-sponsored event. Any Parent/Guardian/Authorized adult will need to show identification. Students are expected to be picked up by an authorized adult promptly at the end of the event, or activity.

Admission costs and other pertinent instructions for school-sponsored events and/or activities will be announced prior to the event and/or activity. All school rules apply during these events or activities. Students are expected to dress appropriately.

PART 7: LEGAL NOTICES

AIDS CURRICULUM

It is the policy of the Board of Education to provide during the school day, planned, ongoing, systematic instruction on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Parents who wish to have their child excused from such instruction shall communicate this request to the principal.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ensures support for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are provided free and appropriate education (FAPE) and are accommodated and employed without discrimination related to their disabilities.

It is the intent of the District to provide a free and appropriate public education to each Section 504/ADA qualified and eligible student with a disability within its jurisdiction, as defined in 28 CFR, Parts 35 and 36, of the Amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II, and Title III.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (both students and staff members) by school districts receiving federal assistance of any kind for any program or activity. Districts may not discriminate against any person with a disability, regardless of whether the program or activity in which that person is involved receives federal funding directly.

All individuals who are disabled or “handicapped” are protected under Section 504. However, individuals who have been determined to be “handicapped” under Section 504 may not be considered disabled under IDEA. IDEA, which can be viewed as a subcategory of Section 504, provides for special programming or placement, while Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with handicaps. Under IDEA, students are qualified for services under 13 IDEA disabling conditions; specially designed individual education programs are planned for each student by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams. Under Section 504, students with “handicaps” are entitled to special accommodations to ensure that they can participate in and benefit from

public education and programs, and a 504-accommodation plan is designed for each student according to individual needs.

Section 504 is not an aspect of special education, but is, rather, a responsibility of the comprehensive general public education system. Unlike an eligibility system based on clinic categories of disabilities, Section 504 works on a more functional premise.

Under 504 [29 U.S.C. & § 706(8)] a person is considered to have a disability if that person:

1. has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities.
2. has a record of such an impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment

While Section 504 provides a means for preventing discrimination against students with disabilities, this does not mean that 504 plans must focus on the disabling condition or on addressing the disability directly. Rather, 504 plans offer a means for focusing on students' strengths, for capitalizing on what students bring to the instruction process - not on what they lack.

Students with disabilities, pursuant to Section 504 and/or ADA will be provided a free appropriate public education which may include, but is not limited to, providing a structured learning environment; repeating and simplifying instructions about in-class and homework assignments; supplemented verbal instructions with visual instructions; adjusting class schedules, modifying test delivery; computer-assisted instructions; using modified textbooks and tailoring homework assignments.

Should you have any questions regarding Section 504, please contact either your child's school principal or the Section 504 Coordinator for the Sterling School District.

CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

All school employees, including teachers, superintendents, principals, coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics, paraprofessionals and other professional school staff including guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm or sexual assault by a school employee to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families Services. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receives training in their use, as required by state law.

Reporting of child abuse, neglect and sexual assault by a school employee is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse, neglect or a sexual assault a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries which are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment or neglect is also considered child abuse.

The Board of Education will post in each school the telephone number of the Department of Children and Families' child abuse hotline, Careline, and the Internet web address that provides information about the Careline in a conspicuous location frequented by students. Such posting shall be in various languages appropriate for the students enrolled in the school.

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The District collaborates with state and local child welfare agencies to ensure school stability for children in foster care. A child in foster care will remain in his/her school of origin if it is determined to be in the child's best interest. Transportation will be arranged as required. The school's clinical supervisor is the District's Liaison for Homeless Students.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

Printed materials may be distributed to parents by students as a means of communication. All requests from groups or individuals to have students distribute materials to the community, with the exception of school-connected organizations, will be referred to the office of the superintendent to determine whether the request complies with board policy.

The Principal or his/her designee may approve such distribution providing:

1. The material is related to the school, community, local recreational or civic activity.
2. The material does not relate to any religious belief or activity or promote private gain.
3. The material does not promote any outside governmental political party, candidate or position.

4. The material does not promote organizations.
5. The material does not advocate a position regarding a referendum question.

Materials that have religious content may be made available to students during non-instructional time. The District has the right to impose neutral time, place and manner restrictions on the dissemination of religious materials to ensure that students are aware that the materials are not endorsed or sponsored by the District.

Publications prepared by or for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by the principal, sponsor or teacher. Such items include school posters, brochures, school newspaper, and yearbook.

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Students deserve a respectful learning environment in which their cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity is valued and contributes to successful academic outcomes. The school learning and work environment are enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives, and the very presence of diverse participants.

FEES

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided without charge to students. A student is expected, however, to provide his or her own supplies of pencils, erasers, and notebooks. The student may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

1. The materials for a class project that the student will keep.
2. Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
3. Voluntary purchases of pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
4. Student accident insurance.
5. Fees for damaged library books and school-owned equipment.
6. Pay-for-Play sports

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students will not be denied the opportunity to participate in any class or school-sponsored activity because of an inability to pay for material fees, transportation costs, admission prices, or any other related expenses. Any student who needs financial assistance for school activities should contact the school social worker or administrator to request confidential help.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Fire drills are held monthly as required by state law. Students must follow the exit directions posted in each classroom. A crisis response drill will be substituted for one of the required monthly school fire drills every three months. Such crisis response drills will incorporate the basic protocols of lockdown, evacuation, and shelter-in-place responses.

Students are expected to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. When the emergency evacuation alarm sounds, students are to proceed along the posted exit routes in a quick, quiet, and calm manner. Students should not return to the building until the return signal is given.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for students with food allergies and to support parents regarding food allergy management. A plan based upon guidelines promulgated by the State Department of Education will be implemented for each student for the management of students with life-threatening food allergies and glycogen storage disease.

Substitutions to the regular meal provided by the school will be made for students who are unable to eat school meals because of their disabilities when that need is certified in writing by a physician. Meal services will be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the disabled student. An Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an Emergency Care Plan (ECP) shall be developed and implemented for students identified with food allergies. Such students may also be eligible for accommodations and services under Section 504 and special education law.

FUND-RAISING

Student clubs or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. A Fundraising Request Form must be completed and submitted to the Principal at least

one month before the event. Except as approved by the Principal, fund-raising is not permitted on school property.

Any food items sold as part of any fund-raising activity must meet the nutritional standards published by the Connecticut Department of Education. Beverages or foods not allowed for sale during regular school hours may be sold provided (1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, (2) the sale is at the location of such an event, and (3) the food or beverage is not sold from a vending machine or school store.

All online fundraising activities are subject to administrative approval prior to the posting of any such fundraising solicitation.

GREEN CLEANING PROGRAMS

Sterling Community School adheres to green cleaning protocols. Please refrain from bringing any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize, or disinfect into the school.

INSURANCE

School insurance is made available to families through a specific program. Information will be available on the Sterling Community School website at the beginning of each academic year. While the program is not mandatory, it is suggested that parents take advantage of the opportunity to provide adequate protection for their children while in school. Any such arrangement is contractual between the parent and insurance carriers and the Sterling Community School assumes no liability from disputes arising from such a contract.

LOST AND FOUND

Any articles which are found in the school or on school grounds should be turned in at the main office. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Loss or suspected theft of personal or school property should be reported to the main office. Whenever practical, items brought to school should have a name placed on them to assure a return to the rightful owner.

MIGRANT STUDENTS

The district has a program to address the needs of migrant students. A full range of services will be provided to migrant students, including applicable Title I programs, special education, language programs, counseling programs, and specials classes. Parents/guardians of migrant students will be involved in and regularly consulted about the development, implementation, operation, and evaluation of the migrant program.

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP)

Federal legislation requires schools selected to participate in this national testing program to notify parents of children who will be taking the test of their right to exclude their child. Parents also have the right to inspect all NAEP data, questions, and assessment instruments.

ON-CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

Students at Sterling Community School will be informed of the availability of (1) vocational, technical and technological education and training of technical high schools and (2) agricultural sciences and technology education at regional agricultural science and technology education centers. Full access for the recruitment of students by technical high schools, regional agricultural science, and technology education center, magnet schools, charter schools will be provided.

PESTICIDE APPLICATION

Only certified pesticide applicators shall be used in schools for any non-emergency pesticide use in school buildings or on school grounds. Pesticide applications are limited to non-school hours and when activities are not taking place. Areas to receive pesticide application will be posted and a written record of all pesticide applications will be maintained for five years. Parents/guardians and staff who want to receive advanced notice of all pesticide use will be listed on a registry and such notice will be provided as required by law. Parents/guardians who want to be notified prior to pesticide applications inside their child(ren)'s school assignment area may contact the superintendent.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO RELEASE

The staff at Sterling School uses children's photographs and videos as a means of acknowledging the child's efforts and recognizing excellent programs. The school has published children's photographs in yearbooks and the school website. These

are only some of the ways we have used photos in constructive, positive ways.

If a parent/guardian does not want their child to be photographed for school use, school website use or for media purposes, the school office must be alerted in writing.

Photos of individual and classroom groups are taken annually, which may be purchased by parents/guardians, but they are not obligated to do so.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

All students enrolled in an elementary school shall have included in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total. This requirement may be altered by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for a child requiring special education and related services.

This daily period of physical activity for elementary school students can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities.

Students may not be required by school employees to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the school day. This restriction does not apply to brief periods of respite/time-outs, referrals to a building administrator, or for safety reasons.

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

All students in elementary school shall have in the regular school day, time devoted to physical exercise, of not less than twenty minutes in total, unless altered for a student by a Planning and Placement Team for a child requiring special education. Such physical exercise can be a combination of planned physical education classes, recess, and/or teacher-directed classroom activities. The period of physical activity will not be taken away from an elementary student as a form of punishment. In addition, students in all grades, K-12, cannot be assigned physical activity as a form of punishment.

School employees may not prevent a student in elementary school from participating in recess or in other sustained opportunities for physical activity during classroom learning as a form of discipline.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG USE

In conformity with state statute, the Sterling Board of Education prohibits all school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any students enrolled within the school system. For purposes of this policy, the term “recommend” shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child use psychotropic drugs. However, school health or mental health personnel including school nurses, the District’s Medical advisor, school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors may recommend that a student be evaluated by appropriate personnel and may consult with the medical practitioner regarding such use.

The Board recognizes that the refusal of a parent or other person having control of a child to administer or consent to the administration of any psychotropic drug to the child shall not, in and of itself, constitute grounds for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to take such child into custody or for any court of competent jurisdiction to order that such child be taken into custody the department, unless such refusal causes such child to be neglected or abused, as defined in C.G.S. 46b-120.

SAFETY/ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Remain alert to and promptly report safety hazards, such as intruders on campus.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of staff who are overseeing the welfare of students.

SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES

The school district recognizes the value of certain ceremonies and observances in promoting patriotism and good citizenship among the students. Therefore, activities in schools commemorating national holidays such as Memorial Day, Thanksgiving and President’s Day are encouraged. Sterling Community School reminds students, faculty, and administration of the variety of

religious beliefs, and all are urged to be conscious of and respect the sensitivities of others.

Activities related to a religious holiday or theme will be planned to ensure that the activity is not devotional and that students of all faiths can join without feeling that they are betraying their own beliefs. Therefore,

1. school and class plays shall not be overly religious, and church-like scenery will be avoided;
2. religious music shall not entirely dominate the selection of music; and
3. program notes and illustrations shall not be religious or sectarian.

Students shall be given the option to be excused from participating in those parts of a program or curriculum involving a religious theme that conflicts with their own religious beliefs. If a parent or student has any questions regarding the use of religious music, artwork and/or symbols in a particular course/activity, the Building Principal should be contacted.

An opportunity will be provided at the beginning of each school day for students to observe an appropriate period of silent meditation and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Participation in these activities is voluntary. Nonparticipants are expected to maintain order and decorum appropriate to the school environment.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

The school has a School Governance Council (SGC) comprised of parents, teachers and community members elected by their peers. The SGC serves in an advisory capacity and is responsible to assist the school administration regarding achievement data and school improvement plans, budget development, hiring of school administrators, and fostering a partnership to improve student learning.

SCHOOL SECURITY AND SAFETY

The District has developed and maintains an emergency disaster preparedness and response plan for implementation as needed ("School Security and Safety Plan"). The plan is based upon the standards promulgated by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Development and implementation of the plan includes collaboration with local and state emergency responders, (law enforcement, fire department, emergency rescue squads, and local public health administrators). The plan, representing an all-hazards approach, utilizes the four recognized phases of crisis management: (1) mitigation/prevention, (2) preparedness, (3) response, (4) recovery.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students in grades K-8 will be involved in a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches students age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and how to report it. Parents/guardians may permit their child to opt-out of the awareness program or any part of it by notifying the school in writing of such a request.

SPECIAL NETWORKING SITES

Students may not access social media sites using District equipment, while on District property or at District-sponsored activities unless the posting is approved by a District representative/teacher/staff member. Social media websites are websites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter.

The District will not be liable for information/comments posted by students on social media websites when the student is not engaged in District activities and not using District equipment. For safety purposes, the district employs both Internet filters and firewalls.

The School District reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store at any time and without prior notice any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access and any and all information transmitted or received in connection with such usage. All such information files shall be and remain the property of the School District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such materials.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The District utilizes the Scientifically Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) process which combines systematic assessment, decision-making and a multi-tiered delivery model to improve educational and behavioral outcomes for all students. Academic and behavioral support and targeted interventions will be provided for students who are not making academic progress at expected levels in the general curriculum. When students are experiencing difficulty with academics or behavior, every effort is

made to provide support to help the child succeed within the regular classroom setting through the Scientifically Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) process.

For students in need of Special Education programs, a planning and placement team (PPT) is designed to provide communication and decision-making at the school level concerning the effective use of available resources. The team is also responsible for follow-up and periodic review of all students presently in Special Education and special services programs.

Any child identified as possibly needing special education and/or related services must be referred to a special education Planning & Placement Team for evaluation (PPT). The PPT will determine whether special education services are required. Parents must give their consent before any evaluation can be done or any services can begin. An Individualized Education Plan, based upon the diagnostic findings of the evaluation study will be developed by the PPT, with parental involvement. Parents will be informed regarding the use of scientific, research-based interventions. Parents have the right to have the school paraprofessional assigned to their child, if any, attend and participate in PPT meetings.

SPECIAL SERVICES

The Special Services Department at Sterling Community School is a diverse program that addresses the academic, social, and emotional needs of students who have a wide range of abilities and challenges. As a department, we strive to support each student's unique needs to ensure that they achieve their highest potential at Sterling Community School and are prepared to become lifelong learners.

As a department, we firmly believe in professional development and model lifelong learning by continuing to learn best practice procedures thereby improving our current practices and procedures in order to achieve our common goal of student success.

We demonstrate our philosophy by displaying mutual respect, professional collaboration, and working as members of a team within the school community. We encourage the collaborative efforts of special educators, general educators, administration, community agencies, and parents in addressing the diverse needs of our students in the general education environment. By doing so, we are able to better serve all students.

Department Goals

Students will:

1. Be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment;
2. Become involved in the school community and actively participate in and positively contribute to the learning environment;
3. Access any and all resources and opportunities to ensure a positive educational experience within Sterling Community School;
4. Acquire knowledge of transition supports and services to ensure access to appropriate post-secondary educational or vocational opportunities;
5. Acquire skills, knowledge, and experience in order to reach their potential and to achieve their short term and long-term goals; and
6. Acquire skills to live as independently as possible and positively contribute to their community and greater society.

What is an Individualized Educational Plan?

An IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) is required for every student who is identified for receiving specialized instruction i.e. special education services. An IEP, which details specific educational goals, objectives, and modifications within general education, is developed at a PPT (Planning & Placement Meeting). At the meeting, the educational team, family, administrator, student and potentially others (see the required list below) make specific recommendations. This is a brief summary of the IEP process in order to provide you, as a general education teacher, with an idea of what the process is and what might be expected from you.

According to IDEA (2004 Reauthorization of the improvement Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), the IEP team must consist of the following people:

- Parents;
- At least one general education teacher;
- At least one special education teacher or where appropriate, at least one special education provider for the student;
- A representative of the L.E.A. (Local Educational Agency district/town);

- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results (this can be one of the above members);

At the discretion of the parent or L.E.A., other individuals with expertise including related service personnel (e.g. occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech & language pathologist), and the student with the disability may be included in these meetings.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS - DUE PROCESS

A student or parent who has a complaint should first bring the matter to the appropriate teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the Principal should be requested within ten calendar days of the event or events causing the complaint. If the outcome of the conference with the principal is not satisfactory, a conference with the Superintendent or designee can be requested within ten calendar days following the conference with the Principal. If the outcome of this conference is not satisfactory, the student or parent may appear before the Board of Education, in accordance with Board policy.

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Connecticut legislation, PA 16-189, by 1 An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy, as amended by PA 17-200, restricts how student information may be used by (1) entities that contract to provide educational software and electronic storage of student records (“contractors”) and (2) operators of websites, online services or mobile applications (i.e., apps). The Board of Education will notify students and parents electronically within five (5) days of executing a contract with such contractors. Student information will be deleted by operators of websites, online services, or mobile apps upon student, parent, guardian or board of education request. Such operators may not create student profiles for use in targeted advertising and for purposes unrelated to school. Parents and students will be notified of data breaches. Students and parents/guardians will be notified no later than two business days upon notice of a breach of security by a contractor to the Board of Education.

STUDENT RECORDS

A student’s school records are confidential and are protected by federal and state law from unauthorized inspection or use. A cumulative record is maintained for each student from the time the student enters the district until the student withdraws or graduates. This record moves with the student from school to school.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights.

The Principal is the custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon completion of a written request form. The record’s custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

Parents of a minor or of a student who is a dependent for tax purposes, the student (if 18 or older), and school officials with legitimate educational interests are the only persons who have general access to a student’s records. “School officials with legitimate educational interests” include any employee such as an administrator, teacher, support staff, Board of Education member, attorney, agents, or facilities with which the district contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants, who are:

1. Working with the student;
2. Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students with disabilities under IDEA or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504;
3. Compiling statistical data; or
4. Investigating or evaluating programs.

Certain other officials from various governmental agencies may have limited access to the records. Parental consent is required to release the records to anyone else. When the student reaches 18 years of age, only the student has the right to consent to release of records.

The parent’s or student’s right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records, such as teachers’ personal notes on a student that is shared only with a substitute teacher and

records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the district, do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

A student over 18 and parents of minor students may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights. If the district refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, parents and the student are not allowed to contest a student's grade in a course through this process. Parents or the student have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with the law regarding student records. The district's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

Copies of student records are available at a cost of **50 cents** per page, payable in advance. Parents may be denied copies of a student's records (1) after the student reaches age 18 and is no longer a dependent for tax purposes; (2) when the student is attending an institution of post-secondary education; (3) if the parent fails to follow proper procedures and pay the copying charge; or (4) when the district is given a copy of a court order terminating the parental rights. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, upon written request of the parent, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge.

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it unless the parent objects to the release of any or all directory information about the child. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days after the issuance of this handbook. Directory information includes a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, grade levels, photograph, e-mail address, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received in school, and most recent previous school attended.

The District may release to the Parent Teacher Organization the names, addresses, telephone number and grade levels of students (unless the District is informed by September 15 of the school year that designation of such directory information has been refused as to a particular student) provided such information is to be used by the PTO for its own school activities or school business.

The District, when a student moves to a new school system or charter school, will send the student's records to the new district or charter school within ten business days of receiving written notice of the move from the new district. Unless the parents/guardians of the student authorize the record transfer in writing, the sending district is required to send a notice when the records are sent to the new district.

Parents and eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be addressed to the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 5400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202-4605.

The district's HIPAA Privacy Officer is Gail Lanza.

SURVEYS/STUDENT PRIVACY

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex attitudes or behaviors;
4. illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. income; or
8. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or the student's parents.

In addition, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey that is to be administered by a school to a student, prior to its use. Parents will be notified at least two weeks in advance of any survey that will be given to their children.

Parents will be notified of any non-emergency, invasive physical examination that is required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school and which is not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of students.

TITLE I PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents of a child in a Title 1 funded program will receive a copy of the district's parental and family engagement involvement policy, including provisions of an annual meeting and involvement of parents in the planning, review, and implementation of Title 1 programs.

TUTORING

Teachers may not teach privately (tutor) students of the school in which he/she teaches. This does not apply to a teacher of homebound children employed by the Board of Education.

VIDEO RECORDING

SCHOOL BUSES/SCHOOL CAMPUS (for School Security Purposes)

The district has installed video recording equipment on school buses to monitor school transportation and discipline. Videotaping will be done randomly during the school year; students will not be notified when a recording device has been installed and in use on their bus. Tapes will be viewed by the administration. Students violating bus conduct rules will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken. Videotapes shall be treated as protected student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Video equipment is used to enhance the safety and security of all individuals. It is also used to monitor student behavior in common areas or campus. The principal or his/her designee will review the tapes routinely and document student's misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with board policy. Any student, staff member, or visitor to the school is prohibited from tampering with or damaging the school's video surveillance equipment.

WEBSITES

School web pages must contain material that reflects on educational purposes. School web pages are not to be used for personal, commercial or political purposes; and are considered a publication of the Board of Education. The Principal or his/her designee will approve all material posted on the school's web page. Students maintaining personal web pages may be subject to disciplinary action for the content of such sites under certain conditions. The District/School is committed to ensuring accessibility of its website(s) for parents, students and members of the community with disabilities.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

If a student needs to withdraw from school during the school year, the student's parent/guardian must complete a withdrawal form and obtain all necessary signatures. All books, materials, athletic equipment and other equipment loaned by the school must be returned or paid for by the student or his/her parents/guardians.

Student Name: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

*Please read, sign, detach and return this page by September 6, 2019.

STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read and understood all policies and practices contained in the 2019/2020 Sterling Community School Student/Parent Handbook and consent to the responsibilities outlined in the District's Student Code of Conduct. I also understand and agree that my child, _____, shall be held accountable for the behavior and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct at school and school-sponsored and school-related activities, including school-sponsored travel, and for any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location. I understand that any student who violates the Student Code of Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including referral for criminal prosecution for violations of law.

Student's signature

Date

Parent/Guardian(s) signature

Date

PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO OPT-OUT

The Sterling Board of Education retains the absolute right and permission to copyright and use, reuse and publish portraits, pictures, or videotapes of my child or in which my child may be included, in whole or in part, without restrictions as to changes or alterations in a composite of photograph/video. The photograph/videotapes are used by the Sterling School System and no fees are collected or profits made from these photographs/videotapes.

If you wish to opt-out from having your child photographed or video recorded, you will need to sign below.

I **DO NOT** want my child to be photographed or video recorded.

Parent/Guardian(s) signature

Date

COMPUTER USAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Computer On-Line Services and Use Policy. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I recognize it is impossible for the district to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission for my child to access the Internet. I certify that the information contained on this form is correct. I understand that any violation of the school's policy or regulations by my child may result in loss of access and/ or disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the administration.

Parent/Guardian(s) signature

Date