



Pembroke Public Schools
School Committee Policy Manual

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POLICY 5.1: COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The School Committee will cooperate with the judicial system and all authorized representatives of the appropriate agencies in all matters of common interest. However, primary concern must be the protection of the legal and constitutional rights of all of its employees and students.

The policy of the School Committee with respect to "Protection of the Rights and Privacy of Parents and Students" shall not be breached in attempting to cooperate with appropriate officials of the various agencies.

Adopted May 19, 2004



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POLICY 5.3: PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND PRIVACY OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Parents shall have the right to inspect and review any and all official records, files, and data directly related to their children, including all material that is incorporated into each student's cumulative record folder and intended for school use or to be available to parties outside the school or school system, and specifically including, but not necessarily limited to, identifying data, academic work completed, level of achievement (grades, standardized achievement test scores), attendance data, scores on standardized intelligence, aptitude, and psychological tests, health data, family background information, teacher or counselor ratings and observations, and verified reports of serious or recurrent behavior patterns. Where such records or data include information on more than one student, the parents of any student should be entitled to receive, or be informed of, that part of such records or data as pertains to their child.

Amending Student Records

The eligible student or the parent shall have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant written material to the student record.

1. If such student or parent is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the student record, either student or parent shall present the objection in writing and/or have the right to have a conference with the principal or his/her designee to make the objections known.
2. The principal or his/her designee shall within one week after the conference or receipt of the objection, if no conference was requested, render to such student or parent a decision in writing, stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in the favor of the student or parent, the principal or his/her designee shall promptly take such steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

In the event that any decision of a principal or his/her designee regarding any of the provisions contained in 603 CMR 23.00 is not satisfactory in whole or in part to the eligible student or parent, they shall have the right of appeal to the superintendent of schools. Request for such appeal shall be in writing to the superintendent of schools.

The release of personally identifiable records or files or personal information contained therein of students without the written consent of their parents to any individual agency, or other organization other than the following, is prohibited:

1. other school officials, including teachers within the public school system who have legitimate educational interests;



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2. officials of other schools or school systems in which the student intends to enroll, upon condition that the student's parents be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record if desired, and have the opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record;
3. there is written consent from the student's parents specifying records to be released, the reason for such release, and to whom, and with a copy of the records to be released to the student's parents;
4. such information is furnished in compliance with judicial order, or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena, upon condition that the parents are notified of all such orders or subpoenas in advance of the compliance therewith by the school or school district.

Nothing contained in this policy shall preclude authorized representatives of the State or Federal Government from having access to student or other records which may be necessary in connection with an audit and evaluation of the educational programs.

It is understood that, in applicable cases, a non-custodial parent is entitled to same rights as the custodial parent.

This policy is promulgated to insure parent's and student's rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records.

These rights shall be:

1. The rights of the student upon reaching 14 years of age or upon entering the 9th grade, whichever comes first. If a student is under the age of 14 and has not yet entered the 9th grade, these rights shall belong to the student's parent.
2. If a student is from 14 through 17 years of age or has entered the 9th grade, both the student and his/her parent, or either one acting alone, shall exercise these rights.
3. If a student is 18 years of age or older, he/she alone shall exercise these rights. The school district shall have the obligation to obtain consent from the student to continue the student's special education program. The parent will continue to receive written notices and information but will no longer have decision-making authority except as follows:
 - 1) If the parent has sought and received guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the parent retains full decision-making authority. The parent shall not have the authority to override any decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the parent has sought or received guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.
 - 2) The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her parent (or other willing adult), including allowing the parent to co-sign the IEP. Such choice shall be made in the presence of the Team and shall be documented in written form.



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The student's choice shall prevail at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the parent or other adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.

- 3) The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her parent, or other willing adult. Such choice shall be made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and shall be documented in written form and maintained in the student record.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.4: ISSUANCE OF LISTS OF PUPILS PROHIBITED

No lists of pupils, their names or addresses, shall be made available to any individual or organization except as required by Federal or State statute without parent permission.

Adopted May 19, 2004



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POLICY 5.5: ATTENDANCE AND SCHOOL ADMISSION

Students residing in the Town of Pembroke shall attend the Pembroke School System. With written permission of parents and/or guardian and approval of the Superintendent of Schools, high school seniors who move at any time during the second semester of the senior year may finish the year without payment of tuition.

- a) General policy regarding residency requirements and school admission for students new to the Pembroke School District requires a transfer card which shall contain the following information: name, age, grade in school, street address and number.
- b) Residency requirements for students not residing with the natural parent:

A legally notarized statement must be provided signed by the natural parent or certified legal guardian explaining the reasons why the change in residence has occurred and the expressed desire of said parent/guardian to transfer the responsibilities of guardianship specific to those adults with whom the child is to live.

A legally notarized statement from the adults with whom the student is to live certifying that they are bona fide residents of Pembroke, and that they willingly accept full responsibility for the care and direction of the young person being given into their charge. They are to file this statement with the understanding that they are to be held fully responsible for the conduct and well-being of said student in all aspects of the student's participation in the school programs of this School District.

- c) Students placed in a home located with Pembroke by a state agency should provide the school with a copy of all contracts and other written documentation between the state agency and the foster parents.
- d) Immunization Law: No child shall, except as hereinafter provided, be admitted to school except upon presentation of a physician's certificate that the child has been successfully immunized against any communicable disease as may be specified by the Department of Public Health and State regulation.

- c) Transcript of student's record.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.7: MANDATORY ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is mandated in State Law and is recognized as beneficial for all students beyond the mandated age of attendance desirous of attending. The School Committee, therefore, exercises its responsibility in enforcing and encouraging attendance at school by the following regulations:

Personal illness is the usual reason for absence from school; however, student absence for other reasons may occasionally be permitted upon the request of parents or legal guardians, subject to the following regulations:

REGULATIONS

1. When absence from school becomes necessary, parents should notify the school as soon as possible.
2. The School administration should make every effort to insure attendance by careful daily scrutiny of attendance records.
3. Upon returning to school after an absence, a student is required to present a note of explanation from the home stating the reason for the absence.
4. No student who has been absent or suspended (in or out of school) from school is to participate or attend any school activity, function, semi-formal, prom or athletic event during the day or evening of his/her absence or suspension. Students who are suspended are not eligible to participate in school events from the beginning of the suspension through the last full day of suspension. Exceptions may be made as deemed appropriate by the building principal. For additional information, please refer to the student handbook in the respective school.
5. In accordance with provisions of the mandated attendance law, continued absence from school for any reason, or especially absence from school due to truancy, shall be referred to the supervisor or attendance for his attention.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.8: PUPIL TRUANCY

Regular attendance is an essential component of the learning process. All students are required to comply with the school attendance regulations. For a complete text of those regulations, students and parents are advised to refer to the Student Handbook.

Any student who fails to attend school regularly will attend a parent conference with the Principal to show just cause for excessive absences.

The School Principal shall contact the attendance officer when there is reason to believe that the absence of a student is without parental permission. Such contact shall not be made by other members of the staff, professional or non-professional, without authorization of the building principal. It is not within the domain of teacher, secretary, or other staff member to contact the attendance officer, parent, or other individual (s) relative to student absence.

Adopted May 19, 2004



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POLICY 5.9: SCHOOL CHOICE

Students residing outside the Pembroke School district may attend the district school upon the approval of the School Committee and payment of tuition provided that the Pembroke School Committee has not voted prior to June 1, after a public hearing, to neither participate in School Choice nor permit enrollment of non-resident students.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.10: ATTENDANCE WITHIN PRESCRIBED DISTRICTS

The Pembroke School committee is responsible for establishing elementary school attendance areas. Except as provided for below, students are required to attend the school which lies within the elementary attendance area in which they reside.

A student whose residence changes from one attendance area to another after March 15 during the school year may finish the year at the school in which he or she began the school year. Also, subject to providing appropriate documentation such as a Purchase and Sales Agreement or a lease, a student who will be moving into a residence located in a particular school attendance area during the course of the year may begin the school year in that school. In both cases, a written request is to be submitted to the Superintendent, and parents are responsible for providing transportation to and from school.

Permission for a student to transfer to an elementary school other than that within the assigned attendance area may also be granted by the Superintendent of Schools when in his or her judgment the following conditions apply:

1. To support a family where there are multiple siblings expected to attend more than one elementary school because of educational program needs and because of attendance requirements.
2. Where unique family circumstances exist and an alternative placement is warranted.
3. Where the health or safety of a student is at risk.

In all cases, a written request from the parent or guardian of the student stating the reasons for such a transfer shall be submitted to the Superintendent of School's office at least three weeks prior to the start of school or the requested date of transfer.

The Superintendent shall consider class size and appropriate class placement in making the final decision. In all cases the parents shall be responsible for providing transportation for the student who is being transferred due to the parent request. Said transfer is for the remainder of the student's enrollment in elementary school unless revoked by the Superintendent due to a change in circumstances under which the transfer was granted. Should there be a change in circumstances during the time when multiple



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siblings are enrolled in the out of district school, they will be permitted to complete their elementary school years in the school at which they are enrolled and attending.

Decisions of the Superintendent shall be final and not subject to appeal.

Adopted May 2, 2006



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POLICY 5.11: ATTENDANCE AND AGE MAJORITY

Any student reaching the age of 18 may apply for age majority status. Age majority allows the student to be recognized by the school as an adult so that he/she may be accorded the privileges of an adult signing of attendance records to include dismissal notes, requesting records, and/or other similar activities. The student must have any dismissals, tardiness and absences approved by the administration. Students with age majority are expected to call themselves in sick as early as possible on the day absent.

The administration will take corrective measures if the age majority student is using this status to abuse the rules and regulations of the school which have been set up to instill consistency and a sense of orderliness in the school.

The school reserves the right to inform the parent/guardian of the use of age majority for each tardy, dismissal or absence.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.14: STUDENT DRESS

There is no special code of dress required for students in the public schools. It is expected the students and their parents will attempt to insure that students present a neat and orderly appearance in all respects.

When a particularly extreme form of dress contributes in any way to disruption of the school, to the drawing of attention of the students from their studies or contributes to noticeable and boisterous conduct, the student shall be temporarily suspended from attendance, pending an interview with the parents of the pupil.

Adopted May 19, 2004



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POLICY 5.15: INTERVIEW BY POLICE DURING SCHOOL HOURS

1. Whenever possible, the interviewing of students in connection with investigations by the Police Department should be conducted away from the school and out of school hours.
2. When, in the opinion of the Police Department, it becomes necessary to interview students at the school during school hours, parents of the students shall be advised by the school administrator that such an interview is contemplated and that the parent may attend the interview if he/she so desires.
3. Students being interviewed by the police are to be granted full constitutional protection by being advised by the police officer of his full rights and responsibilities under the existing law in the presence of an administrator.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.17: EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

State law provides the following:

"Every child shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he/she actually resides subject to the provisions of Chapter 76. No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin." M.G.L.76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.18: TEACHING ABOUT DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Drug abuse, including the illegal and inappropriate use of alcohol, is a society problem. The Pembroke School Committee recognizes its responsibility to educate students in this area and to formulate policies which will assist school administrators and teachers with problems arising from the misuse of drugs.

The Superintendent shall recommend guidelines to the school committee for drug education and the handling of drug abuse in accordance with the guidelines of the State Department of Education Drug Advisory Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent and his/her staff to review these guidelines periodically and to present recommendations to the Committee.

The Committee and school department employees shall cooperate with other community agencies concerned with drug abuse.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.19: FACULTY ADVISORS FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES

All student activity groups such as associations, classes, clubs, and teams shall function on when they are under the jurisdiction of a faculty advisor or coach and approved by the administration.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.20: MARRIED AND/OR PREGNANT STUDENTS

The Pembroke School Committee affirms the importance of all Pembroke students obtaining a high school education and a diploma of graduation to prepare for productive lives in a democratic society. The committee affirms the right of students to obtain a free and appropriate public education and is therefore committed to aiding and encouraging young people who may be married and/or pregnant in the continuation of their education within the limits of reasonable safeguards for both the students and for the school.

The Superintendent of Schools shall set forth regulations and guiding principles pertaining to married and/or pregnant students' attendance in the public schools.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.22: STUDENTS AS MESSENGERS

While the use of students as messengers within the school may be desirable from an operational efficiency perspective, the School Committee prohibits the use of students as messengers which would require them to leave the school grounds under any circumstances.

Adopted May 19, 2004



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POLICY 5.23: MOMENT OF SILENCE

The statute, M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 1A reads as follows:

"At the commencement of the first class of each day in all public schools the teacher in charge of the room in which each such class is held shall announce that a period of silence not to exceed one minute in duration shall be observed for personal thoughts, and during any such period silence shall be maintained and no activities engaged in."

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.24: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

An American flag shall be displayed in each assembly hall or other room in each such school house where the opening exercises on each school day are held. Students are to be provided with the opportunity to join in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance if they so choose.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.25: SCHOOL DAY

The hours during which the schools will be open and classes held will be determined by the Superintendent in keeping with State laws and Time and Learning Regulations.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.26: SCHOOL YEAR / SCHOOL CALENDAR

The public school year for the ensuing year will be prepared by the Superintendent and submitted to the School Committee for approval in early spring of each year. The number of days or instructional hours scheduled for the school year will be determined in accordance with the standards set by the Massachusetts Board of Education.

For the information of staff, students and parents, the calendar will set forth the days schools will be in session, as well as holidays and vacation periods.

Adopted June 13, 2005



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POLICY 5.27: SCHOOL CENSUS

State law makes the following provisions regarding the enumeration of school age children in the system:

"The School Committee shall ascertain and record the names, ages and such other information as may be required by the Department of Education, of all minors residing therein between five and sixteen, and of all minors over 16 who do not meet the requirements for the completion of the sixth grade of the public schools in Pembroke. The School Committee shall also ascertain the number of pupils, regardless of age, whose parents or guardians are residents of the town and who are enrolled for full-time attendance, in kindergarten and grades up to and including grade twelve, in public and vocational schools and classes in the Commonwealth and non-public schools anywhere..."

Further:

"The Superintendent of Schools shall file annually one or before the date prescribed by law with the Commissioner of Education, on forms provided by the Department of Education, a sworn statement reporting the number of minor children whose parents or guardians were residents of the town and who were enrolled on the preceding January 1st for full-time attendance in the following schools and classes, respectively, including kindergarten and grades one through twelve pupils in vocational or other schools and classes elsewhere in the Commonwealth which are supported by public funds and pupils in non-public schools anywhere.

Before filing said statement, the Superintendent shall submit it to the Chairperson of the School Committee.

M.G.L. Chapter 72, Section 2 and 2A

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.28: STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Students leaving school before the end of the school year are expected to satisfy all obligations in accordance with the procedure as follows:

The student's parent must contact the school office.

The student obtains a sign-out card.

The student returns all books and school property

The student satisfies all financial obligations.

The Pembroke School District will then furnish a transfer card with a copy sent to the Office of the Superintendent of the receiving community. Additional pupil information will be furnished upon request by the parent, guardian or the new school. Students should also refer to the appropriate Student Handbook for their school for further details.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.50: ABSENTEE MAKEUP OF ASSIGNMENTS

Students who are legitimately absent from school, as defined in the respective student handbooks, for a short period of time may make-up work missed. It is the responsibility of the student to see the teacher involved upon return to school and to obtain the necessary information concerning incomplete work.

All make up work is expected to be completed in a timely manner in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Student Handbook for each school. Parents of students who will be absent for a prolonged period of more than four days should contact the school and request that makeup work be provided for the student by the classroom teacher.

Adopted June 13, 2006



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POLICY 5.60: INTERROGATIONS AND STUDENT LOCKER SEARCHES

School lockers are the property of the school department. The right of inspection of students' school lockers is inherent in the authority granted to School Committee members and administrators. This authority may be exercised as needed in the interest of safeguarding children and school property.

Adopted June 13, 2006