

RUTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Student Planner/  
Family Handbook  
2008-2009



This book belongs to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**RMS IMPORTANT DATES**

First Day of Classes	August 26, 2008
Mid-Term Progress Report	September 26, 2008
First Marking Period Ends	October 31, 2008
Mid-Term Progress Report	December 5, 2008
Second Marking Period Ends	January 16, 2009
Mid-Term Progress Report	February 13, 2009
Third Marking Period Ends	March 27, 2009
Mid-Term Progress Reports	May 1, 2009
Fourth Marking Period Ends	June 2, 2009
First Day of ESP	June 3, 2009
ESP Presentation Day	June 12, 2009
Last Day of School	June 15, 2009

**SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR**

September 4-18, 2008

**OPEN HOUSE**

September 11, 2008

**SCHOOL PICTURES**

September 17, 2008

**PARENT CONFERENCES**

October 21-22, 2008

March 19-20, 2009

**TEACHER IN-SERVICE**

August 21-22; August 25, 2008

November 10, 2008

June 16, 2009

**STUDENT VACATION DATES**

December 22, 2008 - January 2, 2009

February 16-20, 2009

April 13-17, 2009

**HOLIDAYS:**

Labor Day	September 1, 2008
Teachers' Convention	October 23-24, 2008
Veterans' Day	November 11, 2008
Thanksgiving Recess	November 26-28, 2008
Martin Luther King, Jr.	January 19, 2009
Memorial Day	May 25, 2009

**RUTLAND CITY  
BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS**6 Church Street  
Rutland, Vermont 05701  
March 2008**PRESIDENT:** Mr. Peter Mello 3 Rachel Drive**CLERK:** Mr. Dick Courcelle 38 Giorgetti Blvd.**COMMISSIONERS**

NAME	HOME	WORK	TERM EXPIRES
<b>Mr. Christopher Book</b> cmchbook@aol.com	165 Grove St. 775-5383	773-6252	2010
<b>Mr. Wayne T. Cooke</b> wcooke@arsu.org	5 Lamontagne Ln 747-4958	747-4958	2011
<b>Mr. Dick Courcelle</b> dsdi@verizon.net	38 Giorgetti Blvd. 775-2167	775-2167	2009
<b>Mrs. Roberta Dress</b> rmdress@comcast.net	1 Callie Way 773-1274	773-1274	2011
<b>Mr. Peter Fagan</b> ltpeterjfagan@aol.com	17 Clinton Ave. 773-7446	773-7446	2011
<b>Mr. Collin Fingon</b> fingoncr@hotmail.com	111 Crescent St. 345-8621	345-8621	2010
<b>Mr. Peter H. Forshay</b> vt4shay@sover.net	21 Birchwood Ave. 773-1592	786-6844	2011
<b>Mrs. Gina Fucci</b> phoenixiam@msn.com	One Irving Heights 775-7763	775-7763	2009
<b>Mrs. Karen Gartner</b> karengart@aol.com	41 North Street Ext. 775-7318	775-7318	2009
<b>Mrs. Cindy Kilic-Murray</b> ckilicmurray@comcast.net	83 Baxter Street 558-5113	558-5113	2010
<b>Mr. Peter Mello</b> peter.mello@castleton.edu	3 Rachel Drive 773-6556	468-1234	2009
<b>Mr. Nicholas Ouelette</b> <i>Student Representative</i> KICNO10@CS.com	13 Rachel Drive Rutland, VT 05701 558-9098		2008-09

Dear Parents and Students:

Welcome to the Rutland Middle School! We look forward to working with you so that your child will have a successful school year. We pride ourselves on the amount of support and variety of opportunities we can offer RMS students. We also hope that you will contact us if you have questions, concerns or suggestions on ways we can improve your child's middle school experience.

The 2008-09 Student Planner/Family Handbook is the best way to learn about all aspects of the Rutland Middle School. I urge you to spend some time reviewing this important book. Once you do you will quickly notice that there are three distinct sections to this book. The first section discusses the many policies, expectations and opportunities that students have at the Rutland Middle School. The second part is a School Year Calendar. This is the 'Student Planner' section. This is where students write down homework assignments and other important dates and deadlines. All of our teachers will expect students to have these books with them everyday so that they can record these important assignments. The last important section, located in the back third of the handbook, is the 'Hallway Passport'. These pages, when approved by the teacher, serve as passes for students when they have legitimate reasons to be out of class.

When in class, students need to keep their copies of the 2008-09 Student Planner/Family Handbook with them at all times. At other times it must be safely locked in assigned lockers. Because it is such an important informational and organizational tool for our students, if a book is lost or misplaced, there is a charge of five dollars (\$5.00) to replace it.

Again, welcome to our school. We look forward to a fruitful and productive year helping our young people grow and mature.

Sincerely,

Wil Cunningham  
Principal, Rutland Middle School

## Rutland Middle School: Team Daily Schedule 2008-2009

	Synergy 7	Evolution 7L	Explorer 8	Omega 8L
7:45-8:00	Teacher Advisory (TA)	TA	TA	TA
<b>Block</b>				
8:03-8:46 (43) 1	Band/Chorus/Orch.	Band/Chorus/Orch.	Band/Chorus/Orch.	Band/Chorus/Orch.
	Enrichment Block	E-Block	E-Block	E-Block
8:49-9:38 (49) 2	CORE	UA	CORE	CORE
9:41-10:30 (49) 3	UA	CORE	CORE	CORE
10:30-10:58 (28) 4A			8 <sup>th</sup> LUNCH	8 <sup>th</sup> LUNCH
11:01-11:50 (49) 4A			CORE	CORE
10:33-11:22 (49) 4B	CORE	CORE		
11:22-11:50 (28) 4B	7 <sup>th</sup> LUNCH	7 <sup>th</sup> LUNCH		
11:53-12:41 (48) 5	CORE	CORE	UA	CORE
12:44-1:32 (48) 6	CORE	CORE	CORE	UA
1:35-2:23 (48) 7	CORE	CORE	CORE	CORE

Core periods refer to times when teams will offer Science, Math, Social Studies, English and World Language or Reading classes.

"UA" refers to the times when the following academics selections will be offered.

Grade 7: P.E., Music, Art, Health, and Family & Consumer Studies or Technology Education.

Grade 8: P.E., Music, Art, Drama, and Family & Consumer Studies or Technology Education.

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**Rutland Middle School**  
**67 Library Avenue**  
**Rutland, VT 05701**

**Phone (802) 773-1960      Fax (802) 773-1914**

**<http://www.rutlandcitypublicschools.com/schools/rms/>**

<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>Ext.</b>
Cunningham, Wil - Principal	223
Olsen, Bill - Assistant Principal	205

<b>TEACHERS</b>	
Adams, Jack - Information Technology	301
Archer, Cathy – Drama (RHS-RMS)	770-1134
Anderson, Jason - Music/8th Grade Chorus	229
Astin, Marisa – Reading; World Language	321
Bachmann, Christina - Science Grade 7 Synergy	303
Bailey, Arianna – World Language	354
Beerworth, John - Physical Education	305
Benoit, Michele - Nurse/Health	309
Bunker, Joshua - Math Grade 8 Explorer	313
Celauro, Sandy - English 8L	231
Clerihew, Ernie - Technical Education	236
Cornwell, David - Social Studies Grade 7 Synergy	308
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Fowler, Daniel - Math 7L Evolution	307
Foley, Laura - English Grade 7L Evolution	315
Geno, Kathleen – Social Studies Gr. 7L Evolution	378
Kirk-Elkin, Tegan - Math Gr. 8L Omega	351
Labate, Rob - Social Studies Gr. 8 Explorer	310
Laird, Mary Beth - Special Ed. 7L Evolution	355
Larson, Sarah - Special Ed. Grade 8 Explorer	232
Lindgren, Ted - Social Studies Gr. 8L Omega	304
MacLeod, Laurie - Math Grade 7 Synergy	318
McKeen, Bianca - Science Grade 8 Explorer	330
O’Connell, Joann - World Language	320

Pringle, Janet - English Grade 8 Explorer	314
Robinson, Deborah - Special Ed. Gr. 8L Omega	302
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Tobin, Debra - Family & Consumer Studies	317
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Trucker, Joanne - Science Grade 8L Omega	319
Weber, Jessica - Chorus Grade 7	425
Whitney, Doug - Science Grade 7L Evolution	379
Wubbenhorst, Cynthia - Special Ed. Gr 7 Synergy	233

<b>NURSES</b>	
Benoit, Michele - Nurse/Health Education	309
McIntosh, Joan - Nurse	227

#### **OFFICE AND STAFF**

Chamberlain, Tom - Grade 8 Counselor	224
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Rafter, Christine - Administrative Secretary	221
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**CUSTODIANS** Brown, Bob; Sadowski, Kevin; Wortman, Gary

## **Rutland Middle School Principles and Expectations**

### **Rejoice**

*We rejoice in our community. We are **REAL**.*

### **Responsibility**

We are honest.

We take ownership for any action or inaction that breaks our rules.

We are prepared for the school day.

We treat ourselves, others and property with care.

We follow the directions of people responsible for our safety and care.

### **Excellence**

We participate, listen and ask questions.

We celebrate our strengths and the strengths of others.

### **Acceptance**

We interact respectfully with others, including those with whom we have differences. For example, we...

- Actively listen.
- Consider the point of view of others.

We are kind and patient with each other.

We use polite, thoughtful words and actions to resolve our disagreements.

### **Leadership**

We help ourselves and others learn and succeed.

We help others by sharing our skills and talents as equals.

## **Section 2: Academic Information**

**Academic Progress:** Rutland Middle School issues report cards four times during the school year. The grading policy is explained on page 15 of this handbook. Progress reports are also sent to selected students in the middle of each marking period. See 'Important Dates' on the inside of the front cover to find out when marking periods close. Progress reports may be sent at other times during the marking period if children are experiencing problems with their work or to commend them for significant achievements or improvement. Parents may also request progress reports. Contact Mrs. Yakunovich (773-1960 Ext. 222) if you wish to receive these reports.

**Academic Teams:** Rutland Middle School is split into four academic teams. Each team consists of four core curriculum teachers (Science, Math, Social Studies, and English) and a Special Education teacher. This arrangement enables each team to establish a school schedule which will best serve your child's educational needs. Our Reading Teacher and World Language teachers are not directly connected to any one team, thus serving the entire student population. A separate Unified Arts team provides educational opportunities in a wide variety of other areas. For grade 7 students these include art, music, physical education, health and either technology education or family and consumer science. Grade 8 students take five Unified Arts classes, including art, drama, physical education, music and technology education or family and consumer science.

**Academics and Activity Eligibility:** Research has shown that the more one becomes involved with the school, the more success he or she will have academically, socially and behaviorally (see page 27 for a partial list of the co-curricular activities offered at RMS). Students must remember, however, that academics will always be the priority. What follows is a list explaining the minimal academic standards students must maintain in order to participate in any RMS co-curricular activity.

1. A student who passes all of his/her courses in a given marking period is eligible for participation in co-curricular activities for the following marking period.
2. A student who fails one course may retain his/her eligibility by attending three sessions of the tutorial assistance program per week. These programs may be in the form of supervised study hall, after school help, peer tutoring or any other such program approved by the Principal

and/or Athletic Director and parents. The student may continue on the chosen activity as long as he/she attends these sessions.

3. A student who fails two or more courses will be ineligible for participation for the next marking period. An ineligible student may practice provided he/she is getting tutorial assistance each week for each class failed, and is, in the teacher's opinion, giving effort during class time. However, an ineligible student cannot participate in any game, event or performance at any level. The student may regain eligibility at progress report time of the following term provided the student earns no grade below 70 in any class.

4. Fourth term grades, not the final overall grade, will determine eligibility for the first term of the following school year. Students may regain their eligibility for the start of the following year by taking and passing the appropriate course in summer school.

5. An incomplete grade in a course will be considered a failing grade unless excused by the Principal. Excused incompletes must be made up within ten school days. The Principal may grant additional time in certain circumstances.

6. The eligibility of a student transferring to the Rutland Middle School will be determined by the same regulations as a student already enrolled at RMS.

**Attendance Procedures:** The school day begins promptly at 7:45 A.M. and ends at 2:23 P.M. Please note that the school cannot guarantee adult supervision before 7:30 A.M. Students must be in their teacher advisory by 7:45 A.M. for attendance. Students who come to school after 7:45 A.M. must first report to the Main Office and sign in. Students who are late must have a written excuse from their parent or guardian explaining their lateness. Students who are absent from school for a full day or days must report to the Main Office on the day they return to school and present an excuse from the parent/guardian. All written excuses shall give the name of the student, reason for the absence, the date(s) of absence and parent/guardian's signature.

• Excused/Unexcused Absence or Tardiness:

The school reserves the right to determine if an absence is excused or unexcused. Excused absences include validated illness and medical or other appointments that can only be scheduled during the day. All absences or tardiness not explained by a valid note will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absence or tardiness may include, but is not limited to, oversleeping or missing the bus. Please note that, at this age, students need to become responsible for their own

behavior. As a result, tardiness or absence from school because of parental issues (sleeping late, etc.) will generally be considered unexcused. Students will receive consequences for repeated (more than one) unexcused tardiness or absence from school.

Students who are absent more than twenty-five school days may be required to attend Summer Academy to insure that they have sufficient mastery of the subject matter to advance to the next grade. In this event the student and parent can appeal to the attendance review committee to avoid this requirement. This committee consists of the student's counselor, the assistant principal and a representative from the student's academic team. The committee will review the student's attendance record and decide if additional absences by the student are justified. If the student and parent are not satisfied with the review committee's decision, they can appeal to the principal whose decision is final.

- Early Dismissal: Students are expected to be in school for the entire school day. Students who have a legitimate excuse to leave school early must turn in a written note to the Main Office from their parent/guardian giving the date and time of the early dismissal, reason for the early dismissal and the parent/guardian's signature. This note must be turned into the Main Office as soon as students arrive that day or immediately following teacher advisory. In the event of illness at school, a parent/guardian will be notified and must give his or her permission before any student will be dismissed from school. In the case of an emergency when a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency number as designated by the parent/guardian on the emergency card.
- Vacation Absence: Students who are to be absent from school for more than two days and not more than ten days because of a family vacation must obtain a request for absence from the office of the Principal. If the request is granted, the student will be allowed to make up the work. Work will be completed in a reasonable time to be determined by the teacher and student. This request should be made at least ten school days prior to the planned vacation date so teachers can plan for the child's absence. To the greatest degree possible family vacations should be planned for times other than school days.
- School Attendance and Activity Eligibility: Students must arrive at school by 7:45 A.M. in order to participate in after-school activities unless prior arrangements have been made with an administrator at

the Middle School. A doctor's appointment would be considered a reasonable request. If a co-curricular event is held on a Saturday, students must be present at school during the entire day on Friday. This means that unless students have prior approval from the Administration, they may not participate or come watch any activity if they have been absent that day. Students dismissed from class to take part in an activity must turn in all school work due in the classes they will be missing before leaving for the activity unless arrangements have been made with the teacher. Participation in an activity is not a valid excuse for turning work in late.

- **Make-Up Work:** Students will have the same number of days they were absent to make-up missed work. If an absence is unexcused make-up work will receive reduced credit (generally 50%). Students returning to school following an absence have the responsibility to seek out instructors for missed assignments. Extended opportunities to make up work beyond what is outlined above is up to the discretion of the teacher(s).
- **Truancy:** Truancy is defined as an unexcused absence or insufficient excuse for an absence from school or class. The school will notify students who are truant for five days. Further truancies will result in a meeting with parents, the district truancy officer and other community agencies as needed.

**Conferences and Meetings:** If you have a concern or you are simply interested in talking with someone about your child's experience at the Rutland Middle School, there are a number of ways to access the school. Your child's T.A. advisor or members of your child's academic team are your primary initial contacts. You may also contact your child's counselor or the main office. In addition, you can call a particular teacher directly. Each teacher has a "voice mailbox" where parents may leave messages. Teachers will make every effort to return your call within a reasonable amount of time. A complete list of "voice mail" numbers can be found on pages 8-9 in this handbook. Please call the school if you would like to set up a meeting. If parents or students come in without an appointment, school personnel may not be available.

**Continuum of Services Team:** RMS has created a teaching team specifically to support students who are having difficulty, academically or behaviorally, in a particular classroom environment. This team is called "Team 7/8." They develop individual plans to help these students

achieve greater success in their mainstream classroom.

**Counseling:** Our counseling staff includes three full-time counselors. Mr. Chamberlain is our eighth grade counselor; Ms. Nalette is our seventh grade counselor and Ms. Kirchoff works with students in both grades and on the 7/8 Team. All three counselors provide support to all students throughout their educational experience. Support may include individual and/or group counseling, mediation, consultation with parent(s) and/or teachers, and collaborations with community based agencies, as requested by families. Counselors also have program (Smokey House, student registration, Career Exploration and Life Skills classes, etc.) and assessment responsibilities. Students may be referred to our counseling staff by teachers, parents, peers, or seek help themselves. Please contact any of our counselors if you would like more information about our counseling program.

**Enriched Studies Program (ESP):** The ESP Program offers students a variety of in-depth learning experiences over a seven-day period at the end of the school year. The program is designed to allow teachers and students time to focus on a particular topic during an extended (two hours plus) block of time. Community service, extended field trips and special presentations are examples of the activities that take place during ESP. The ESP experience culminates with a morning of presentations to display final products.

**Grading Policy:** In core academic classes students are graded on a percent system. The grading system is:

A+	97 & above	C+	77-79
A	93-96	C	73-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
		F	0-59

In Unified Arts (UA) classes, teachers report on a student's progress in meeting proficiency in state/ national standards. Three scores indicate the degree of student mastery:

- 1 = Not Yet Proficient
- 2 = Working Toward Proficiency
- 3 = Proficient

By averaging all scores on student progress in each standard, teachers arrive at a final grade ranging from 1 to 3. In order to pass a UA class, a student must achieve an average score of 1.7.

**Home-School Compact:** The purpose of this compact is to encourage student achievement and promote a positive and effective partnership between the home and school. The document describes the basic expectations for school personnel and families who have children attending Rutland Middle School. At the start of seventh grade, each student will receive a copy of this compact to take home, review with parents or guardians, sign and return. The team leader and Principal then sign the compact. The school and home both keep a copy of the compact. Please call the Rutland Middle School Main Office if you need a copy of the Home-School Compact or would like to discuss it further.

**Homework:** Homework is assigned daily, including specific subject assignments, as well as interdisciplinary activities assigned by your child's academic team. Long-term assignments, which require research and independent work, are also expected. Students can expect to complete one to one-and-a-half hours of homework each evening. Homework is an essential part of your child's education. Parents can encourage and support good study habits by providing a quiet, well-lighted study area and establishing a commonly understood homework time each evening.

**Honor Roll:** The community recognizes academic excellence by publishing an honor roll each marking period. To achieve honor roll status, a student's cumulative grade average in all courses for the term must fall within the following ranges:

- High Honors     All grades 90% or above
  - Honors             Average of 87 or better with no grade below 80%
- Students with incomplete grades are not eligible for the honor roll.

**Library:** The library is dedicated to serving you. A library paraeducator is available to help students from 7:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. each school day. Students may borrow books for a two-week period and/or three back issues of magazines for one week. Library materials may be renewed at any time. Please respect these materials and the rights of others to conduct research quietly when in the library.

**Promotion & Retention:** Most students take five "core" courses each year at RMS. Core courses at RMS include math, science, social studies, language arts and either French, Spanish, or reading. In addition, students take five Unified Arts (UA) courses throughout the year. In order to pass the UA unit, students must pass three of the five offerings. In order to be promoted to the next grade, students must pass five of the six core courses/ UA unit. Students who fail two or three of these courses are generally required to complete Summer Academy coursework in order to be promoted to the next grade. Students who fail four to six core courses/ UA unit will generally be retained in their present grade. Individual circumstances (such as the student's age and developmental readiness for more difficult work) may, in rare cases, allow for some latitude in this procedure. The decision to promote or retain a student rests ultimately with school personnel.

**School Safety Box:** We recognize that there are times when students want to communicate a concern, but do not feel comfortable discussing it directly with an adult, and/or want their concern to remain anonymous. The School Safety Box is located on the first floor next to the door to the main office and is accessible for use by all students. A student may put a note of concern in the safety box regarding the safety of students and/or adults at RMS. The note may be signed or unsigned. A member of the counseling team checks the Safety Box twice daily. Each note of concern will be reviewed and addressed confidentially to ensure the safety of all students/adults at our school.

**Standardized Assessments:** The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) is given annually in October to all Rutland Middle School students to help the school understand how well it is fulfilling standardized learning expectations. They also help individual students understand how well they are doing in meeting the state educational standards. In addition, a varied and comprehensive assessment program helps the school evaluate its own programs, revise and improve

curriculum and instructional methods, establish more comprehensive professional development programs for our faculty and staff and help us select texts and other instructional materials. Individual assessment results for RMS students are sent to families over the winter and reviewed with the faculty and students throughout the year. In addition, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students now take the NECAP Science Test in May to assess their progress in grades 5-8 in meeting science standards.

#### **Student Records:**

It is the Policy of the Rutland City School District:

1. To inform, at least annually, parents and eligible students of their rights under this policy and the regulations, which implement the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as described in the administrative procedures related to student records.
2. To respond promptly to parents and eligible students to reasonable requests to review, inspect, and request correction of education records.
3. Not to disclose personally identifiable information from a student's education record without written parental or eligible student consent, except as allowed by law.
4. To disclose designated directory information concerning students and former students without the prior consent of the parent or eligible student and without any record of any disclosure, pursuant to the administrative procedures relates to student records.
5. To maintain a record of all disclosures of part(s) of educational records as and to the extent required by law. Parents and eligible students may inspect and review that record.
6. To forward a student's educational record to any other school in which the pupil enrolls, transfers, or attends, on a part or full-time basis, upon request by the other school or the parent or eligible student.
7. To disclose personally identifiable information to school officials with legitimate educational interests without prior consent of the parents or eligible student.
8. To protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in educational records at the collection, storage, disclosure and destruction stages, and to keep educational records in safe and secure locations.
9. Not to provide parents or eligible students copies of standardized test questions or answers, and/or copies of copyrighted materials which contain personally identifiable information, in order to protect test

integrity and to avoid copyright infringement. Where necessary and appropriate, copies of such materials may be provided to qualified evaluators working on behalf of the parents and/or students.

**Summer Academy:** The RMS Summer Academy is a six-week program that offers students the chance to take coursework that will better prepare them for the following school year. Summer Academy is also available to help students prepare for the October NECAP assessment. For many students, Summer Academy is required if they wish to be promoted to the next grade. See Promotion and Retention (page 17) for more information.

**Teacher Advisories (TA):** Each student at Rutland Middle School will have a teacher advisor with whom he or she will meet every morning between 7:45-8:00 A.M. The goal of teacher advisories is to have every student feel that he or she is well known by an adult in the building. Teacher Advisors are attached to academic teams to help with this effort. The adult running the TA has a special responsibility for that child's academic and personal welfare. Teacher Advisors monitor the child's academic progress, participate in programs with the child and help connect the child's family with the school.

### **Section 3: Student Behavior Guidelines**

**Rutland Middle School Discipline Philosophy:** Rutland Middle School promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect. We create and contribute to a positive learning environment. We recognize and respond to the basic needs of all members of the school community, including the need to be:

- Safe
- Accepted
- Successful
- Validated for our efforts
- Given choices in directing our lives
- Provided learning opportunities matched with our abilities, interests and talents.

To achieve this, we establish and maintain clear and consistent expectations. All members of our school community have an awareness of our expectations for behavior and encourage a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and service to others.

**Bullying:** A student is being bullied or targeted when exposed repeatedly to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more other students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and/or being intentionally excluded. Bullying implies an imbalance in power or strength in which one child is targeted by others. Students should report allegations of bullying to any teacher, guidance counselor or administrator. Disciplinary consequences will be assigned in cases where bullying is substantiated.

**Drugs and Alcohol:** It is the policy of the Rutland Public Schools that no student shall knowingly possess, use, sell, give or otherwise be under the influence of alcohol or of any drug prohibited by law on any property under the control of the school and at any school sponsored activity away from or within the school and shall comply with all training and co-curricular policies. "Drug" means any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana or any other controlled substance as defined by state or federal regulation or statute. More information about the district's Substance Abuse Policy and Procedures begins on pages 44.

**False Alarms/Bomb Threats:** It is against the law to pull an alarm box, or tamper with the alarm system. There are serious school consequences and criminal penalties for those who may engage in this activity. A copy of this (Policy #7491) is available in the principal's office.

**Fighting:** We have few, if any, fights at Rutland Middle School. There will be severe consequences (including suspension and police involvement) for those who choose to physically harm or attempt to harm others.

**Firearms, Weapons, & Fireworks:** Students may not possess or use firearms, weapons, knives, ammunition, explosives, fireworks, cap guns, starter pistols or any potentially dangerous devices or substances of any kind on school property, including school buses. A copy of the School District Policy on Weapons (Policy #7490) is available in the principal's office.

**Gambling:** We do not gamble at Rutland Middle School.

**Gum Chewing/Candy:** This year, a collaborative group of Student Council members and teachers recommended a change in the guidelines on gum chewing and candy. At the classroom teacher's discretion, students may have the privilege to chew gum or eat candy. As recognized by the Student Council, with privilege comes responsibility. If at some point in the year this benefit is abused due to littering, the school administration reserves the right to return to a "no gum" policy.

**Hall Passes:** Any student who needs to use the restroom must request permission from his/ her teacher, then sign out on the log at the doorway of each classroom. If a student needs to leave class for any other reason, he/ she must bring along this planner, signed by the appropriate teacher. Students may lose the pass privilege if they are consistently in the halls without a planner.

**Harassment and Intimidation:** Harassment and intimidation are behaviors that make a student feel uncomfortable or unsafe. These can take many forms including

- Physical
- Verbal
- Non-verbal

Some examples of harassment or intimidation include calling someone obscene names, passing 'inappropriate' notes or pictures, staring, invading someone's personal space, unwelcome touching of any kind, demanding money, using an expressed or implied threat or physically threatening another student. It is considered harassment if the person feeling uncomfortable or unsafe perceives it as harassment. It does not matter what the harasser intended, if the victim is feeling uncomfortable. More information about the district's Harassment Policy and Procedures begins on page 34.

**Hazing:** Hazing means any act committed by a person, whether individually or with others, against a student in connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any group associated with RMS; and which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of humiliating, intimidating or demeaning the student or endangering the mental or physical health of a student. Hazing also includes soliciting, directing, aiding, or otherwise participating actively or passively in the

above acts. Hazing may occur on or off school grounds. A copy of the school district policy on Hazing (Policy #7493) is available in the principal's office.

**Leaving School Grounds:** Parents expect students to be in school throughout the entire school day. Therefore, students may not leave the building without written permission from their parents (or other parental contact) and a dismissal slip from the office.

**Plagiarism/Cheating:** Academic integrity is a basic value of Rutland Middle School. As stated in our Expectations Statement, "We are honest; we are prepared for the school day." Research, scholarship and teaching are possible only in an environment characterized by honesty and mutual trust. Academic integrity requires that one's work be one's own. Because of the impact violations of academic integrity have on the climate of the school, they will be taken with the utmost seriousness.

There are several ways in which academic integrity can be violated. These include cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of data, stealing examinations, forging grade reports and selling, loaning or distributing materials for the purpose of cheating.

When any of the above violations occur, the student or students will be given a zero (0) for the work which will be averaged in with the other grades and receive one day of in-school suspension. Parents will also be notified. Repeated violations will require additional action as deemed appropriate by the Administration.

**Public Displays of Affection:** Schools, like adult work places, are not appropriate locations for physical expressions of affection. Students may be disciplined and parents contacted in the event of such incidents.

**Theft/Vandalism:** At RMS, we treat ourselves, others and property with care. Incidents of theft or vandalism will result in disciplinary consequences, financial compensation (if applicable) and may include police involvement.

**Threats:** In order to maintain a safe environment for its students, employees and others who use school buildings, grounds and facilities, and in order to maintain all school buildings, grounds and other facilities in a safe and useable condition, the Rutland City Schools will treat any oral or written threat or threatening action by a student directed against school personnel and/or against other student(s), and/or against the

school property and/or people using school property, as a serious offense.

In addition, restitution will be sought where the threat results in expense to the school, school personnel, or other students. A copy of the school district policy on Threats (Policy #7492) is available in the principal's office.

**Tobacco Use:** No one (adult or student) is permitted to smoke, use chewing tobacco or possess tobacco products on school property. Students who violate this rule will be subject to suspension. All school-sponsored trips are included in this policy

In addition, it is a civil violation for a person under the age of 18 to possess or purchase tobacco products. Violations of this statute can result in fines and a delay in the issuing of a driver's license.

### Procedures

**Intervention Options Prior to Referral to the Main Office:** When behavior issues arise, the student will be given an opportunity to work out the problem with the teacher or team through the following options:

- Reminder/ Warning by staff
- Praise/ Acknowledge/ Encourage
- Validate good choices
- Time to make appropriate choice
- Consider point of view
- Conference to discuss rules and expectations
- Offer of peer mediation
- Offer of counselor appointment
- In-class time-out
- Verbal and/or written plan
- Parent contact
- Parent conference

**Continued Rule Violation:** If a student consistently makes poor behavioral choices that are disruptive to learning process or violates the guidelines and policies of the middle school, the following consequences may be imposed. The nature of the infraction will dictate the school's response.

- Time-out
- Teacher/ Team/ Administrative detention
- Referral to the planning room

- In-School / Out-of-School suspension
- Referral to the Superintendent of Schools
- Referral to the Rutland Police Department for Safe School Ticketing
- Referral to an alternative education setting
- Recommendation to the Superintendent and Board of School Commissioners for Exclusion.

**Detention:** Teachers or administrators will assign detention whenever student conduct warrants such a response. Administrative detentions can be after school (2:30-3:30 PM) or, in certain circumstances, in the morning (7:15-7:45 AM) or during lunch/ recess. A teacher may also require a student to remain after school if the student needs extra help. Detention will begin promptly at 2:30 PM and end at the teacher's discretion. Students who report late to detention will complete the missed time the next day. An assigned detention is mandatory and takes priority over any other school-related function.

**Planning Room:** Students who are disrupting the education of other students to a degree that it is clearly inhibiting the learning environment will be sent to the planning room to process their behaviors, in writing and verbally, with a trained staff person. They may also create a plan to enable them to return to the classroom and be successful. Students referred to the planning room twice in one day will remain there for the balance of that day. While in the planning room, students will learn skills regarding their behaviors and how their behaviors impact other individuals as well as themselves. If in the planning room for an extended period of time, the student will receive all academic subjects and intensive help in social skills from the staff person. For some students, work with the Continuum of Services Team replaces the Planning Room as a method of learning how to be successful in the classroom.

**In-School Suspension:** In-School Suspension (I.S.S.) begins at 7:45 AM and ends at 3:00 PM. Students who report late to I.S.S. will make up the missed time after school or the next day. Students will be given the academic work of the classes they are missing for that day. Students should be prepared to work and have all material they may need to get their work done. Students are expected to work quietly. The administration or a student's academic team can assign a student to In-School Suspension. In-School Suspension assigned by an administrator

will be served in the planning room under the supervision of the Planning Room Coordinator. The Planning Room Coordinator is available to assist with work and discuss with students why they are there and how they can make better behavioral decisions in the future. In-School Suspension assigned by the academic team will be served in designated team areas under the supervision of that team's teachers. Students assigned In-School Suspension who are on an Individualized Educational Plan will continue to receive special education services. In the event of an In-School Suspension, a student may not participate in a co-curricular activity that day.

**Suspension:** In accordance with the policies of the Rutland City Public Schools, students may be suspended for infractions which are serious and which cannot be adequately addressed by other disciplinary consequences. Suspension refers to the temporary removal of a student from the regular school program. The Principal will determine the length of a suspension. During the suspension period, a student may not participate in or attend any co-curricular activities or collect or complete any schoolwork. In some cases the loss of co-curricular privileges may extend beyond the suspension period. After the suspension period, returning students will be allowed to make up the work missed under the following conditions. First, students must initiate the request to make up missed work with each teacher. If the request is made, in an appropriate and respectful fashion, teachers will accommodate it at their convenience. This will be done in a reasonable period of time. Students will be expected to give up their own time, before and/or after school to catch up. Students who do not keep appointments or make a legitimate effort to catch up will lose this opportunity.

**Expulsion:** Vermont State Law provides that a student may be expelled for the remainder of the academic year for misconduct on school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity. In addition, the Superintendent or Principal may immediately remove from school a student who poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an on-going threat of disrupting the academic process of the school or a student who brings a weapon to school. A student may also be expelled in accordance with procedures adopted by the Rutland City School Board. The student or parent or guardian of a student may appeal a suspension or expulsion by giving notice of appeal to the Principal. The appeal shall be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Rutland City School Board. The filing of an appeal shall not automatically stay the

imposition of the suspension or expulsion.

#### **Section 4: School Services/General Information**

**Accidents:** Any student who has an accident at school resulting in an injury must report to the health office for an evaluation. The person witnessing the accident, as well as the school nurse, must file an accident report. Parents will be notified.

**Assemblies:** A variety of educational experiences are presented best in an assembly. We hope these events will be interesting, informational and fun. We are on our best behavior at these events. Specific behavioral guidelines for such events are discussed at the start of the school year.

**Backpacks:** The fast rate of physical growth and changes in posture in adolescents can result in health risks for students who wear backpacks that are too heavy or worn in an inappropriate manner. Additionally, backpacks contribute to crowded hallways and classrooms. For these reasons, we ask that students not wear backpacks while in school. They will store packs in assigned lockers when they arrive at school and use them as they leave at the end of the day.

**Building & Grounds:** We are fortunate to have a fine custodial staff that worked hard to prepare the building and grounds for your return. Please do your part to help them. They will certainly appreciate your help. Refrain from throwing paper or other trash items on the floor. Please help pick up when you see trash in the building. Students and their parents will be required to pay for damage to the building or grounds if the damage is a result of vandalism or inappropriate behavior.

**Bus Rules and Regulations:** The Rutland City School District furnishes transportation to those whose health or distance from the school make the service essential. Riding these buses is a privilege and may be withdrawn if the student does not comply with the rules and regulations set forth by the District. In these cases, the parents/legal guardians become responsible for seeing that their children get to and from school safely. Suspension of bus riding privileges does not excuse a student from compulsory school attendance.

The following school bus expectations ensure a safe and comfortable ride for all:

1. We observe the same conduct as in the classroom.
2. We are courteous, using respectful language and normal conversational tones.
3. We refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
4. We keep the bus clean.
5. We cooperate with the driver's instructions.
6. We remain in our seats for the entire ride.
7. We keep hands, head and feet in the bus at all times.
8. We treat ourselves, others and the bus with care.

Students who do not meet these expectations while waiting to board, or while riding or departing from buses, are subject to disciplinary action. The administration will make every effort to investigate each reported incident and take one of the following actions:

1. Assign a warning of the loss of the bus riding privilege.
2. Assign a temporary suspension (generally 5 days) from this privilege.
3. Assign a loss of this privilege for the balance of the school year.

Students may also be required to meet with bus drivers before regaining the bus riding privilege. Suspensions of the bus privilege can be carried over if there is not sufficient time remaining in the current year.

**Cafeteria:** The cafeteria provides an area to have a pleasant lunch with friends. Please follow these simple expectations when having lunch.

1. We throw trash away and keep our immediate area clean.
2. We speak in normal conversational tones.
3. We treat ourselves, others and property/ food with care.
4. We follow the directions of people responsible for our safety and care, waiting for permission to be dismissed.
5. We follow the directions of people responsible for our safety and care, sitting in seats assigned to us.

**Change of Address:** Please inform the main office of any address or phone number changes. This will help us maintain good communications and get in touch with you if the need arises.

**Co-Curricular Activities:** School organizations and activities are designed to provide students an opportunity to participate in an area they find enjoyable and worthwhile. Rutland Middle School offers a wide variety of activities including the following: Technology Club, Geo-Bee,

Jazz Ensemble, Math Counts, Memory Book, Young Writers, Student Council, Drama Club, MiddleTones, Art Club, Peer Mediation, Rock Climbing Club and Ski & Snowboard Program.

Sports opportunities include

Fall: Girls' & Boys' Soccer, Cross Country, and Girls' Field Hockey;  
Winter: Girls' & Boys' Basketball, Cheerleading, Wrestling, and Alpine Skiing;  
Spring: Boys' Baseball, Girls' Softball, Girls' & Boys' Track, and Girls' & Boys' Lacrosse.

**Dances:** School dances are held periodically for Rutland Middle School students only. Students and parents/guardians must sign a Dance Contract prior to students being allowed to attend. Students must also complete all academic and disciplinary responsibilities to attend school dances.

**Dress Code:** Student apparel should be neat, clean and suitable for school activities. Students should choose clothing that will not disrupt the education process. Attire or footwear that is deemed by school personnel to be disruptive, excessively exposing, viewed as harassing or representing a safety or health hazard to the wearer or others is not allowed. Such attire would include, but is not limited to: mesh shirts, crop tops, halter tops, tank tops, short shorts or skirts, boxer shorts, bedroom slippers or pajama bottoms, excessively ripped or torn clothing, and T-shirts which promote drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sex or obscene language. No hats or headgear of any kind (including bandannas) may be worn except for specially announced occasions. No undergarments may be showing at any time. Student midriffs must be completely covered at all times. Teachers may require students to change their dress, if they believe it may distract students from the learning experience.

**Electronics:** In order to create a positive learning environment and to minimize distractions, the following, among others as determined by school administrators, are not allowed during the school day: beepers, cellular phones, laser pen lights, tape recorders, electronic games, cameras, personal CD players and iPods. These items must be placed in lockers when a student arrives at school and remain there until the end of the school day. Students in possession of such items during the school day will have them confiscated. Palm pilots and electronic organizers may be used to record school or classroom information only.

**Emergency Card:** All students must have an emergency card on file in

school, listing name, address and phone number(s) and an email address where parent(s) can be reached (home and work). We also require a second name, address and phone number of a relative or friend who will assume responsibility for the student if we are unable to reach a parent.

**Field Trips:** Field trips enhance and reinforce the learning experience for students. Such trips require students to be on their best behavior since they represent themselves, their team, school, and, in some instances, the State of Vermont. In order to help students understand the expectations for field trips, the following school behavioral criteria have been established. To be eligible for field trips, students must have fewer than:

- 4 unexcused absences in the previous 42 school days;
- 4 unexcused tardies in the previous 42 school days if students have not completed consequences for such tardiness (please see Attendance Procedures on page 12 for more information about unexcused and excused tardiness and absence);
- Any combination of 5 team or office detentions in the previous 42 school days;
- A failing average in any two graded courses over the previous 42 school days;
- Team or administrative assignments to In-School Suspension are consequences for serious, inappropriate behavior. Suspension of the field trip privilege will be considered on a case-by-case basis for students who have been assigned to In-School Suspension;
- Students who have received a Safe Schools ticket or two out-of-school suspension assignments are eliminated from field trip consideration;
- Team or administrative concerns about a student's impact on the health and safety of him/herself and/or other participants will also be considered when deciding whether a student can attend a field trip;

Students may appeal the loss of field trip privileges to their respective team 42 school days after losing the privilege. In some cases the team, upon review of the student's academic and behavioral record, may renew this privilege. This decision will largely depend upon the student's recent academic effort and improved behavior while at school. Students who do not attend school-sponsored field trips will receive an alternative educational experience at school on the day(s) of the field trip.

Some field trips require financial planning long before the event. To help raise funds for such events, students are expected to

participate in team fundraising activities, which occur throughout the year. Teams will inform students of the required amount of participation. Students who do not participate in these activities are permitted to go on the trip but will not share in the fundraised money. Please note that students who raise funds and/or make deposits for field trips then become ineligible risk losing some or all of the money they have contributed.

**Fire Drills:** Law requires regularly scheduled fire drills. When the evacuation signal sounds, we leave the building immediately in a quiet and orderly manner, according to the teacher's directions. The teacher will take attendance once students have arrived at their safe location.

**Guest Teachers:** When a regular teacher is absent, the school will employ a guest teacher. We expect the teaching/learning process to continue uninterrupted, helping ourselves and others learn and succeed. We also expect the guest teachers to be treated with the same respect and courtesy given the regular classroom teacher.

**Gymnasium:** When in the Keefe Gym or the RIS Gym, we wear athletic shoes that will not mark the floor. We do not use the gymnasium without a supervisor present.

**Health Screening:** Students will be screened for various health concerns during the school year such as hearing, vision, blood pressure, height and weight. Parents will be notified if any further follow-up is advised.

**Immunization Requirements:** Vermont Law 18 USA Chapter 21, Sub Chapter 4 states: "No person may enroll as a student in a Vermont school, regardless of whether the student has been enrolled in the school during a previous school year, unless the appropriate school official has received a record or certificate of immunization issued by a licensed physician or health clinic that the person has received required immunization appropriate to age as specified by the Vermont Department of Health." Student health records will be checked for proper immunization and parents will be notified if immunizations are required. Failure to be properly immunized may result in exclusion from school. Please notify the health office with a written statement from a physician or clinic, of any vaccine received (i.e. tetanus vaccine).

**Internet:** We are pleased to offer the Internet computer network system as a resource and research tool for our students. The smooth operation of

this system requires the proper conduct of its users who must follow guidelines explained in the Internet Acceptable Use Contract. At the start of the school year students and parents will receive a copy of this contract to review and sign. Signing the Acceptable Use Contract will allow students to access the Internet network systems, under appropriate supervision, while at school. Please contact the main office if you have any questions about this contract.

**Lockers:** Students will be assigned lockers at the beginning of the school year. Students can also buy locks from the school at the start of the year. Privately purchased locks which are not approved by school personnel are not allowed. Students are reminded that lockers remain school property at all times and are simply on loan. The Administration reserves the right to inspect lockers at any time, without prior notification. (See page 43 for Search Procedure). Lockers are provided for convenience, not to insure student privacy. The school will not be responsible for items lost or stolen from lockers.

**Lost and Found:** Students who find articles are asked to bring them to the main office where they may be claimed by the owner. Items not claimed by the end of the year will be given to a community service agency.

**Medication Policy:** Students who need to take any medication during school hours must present to the health office a written order for the medication from a physician and a written note from the parent. This applies to all medication, prescription and non-prescription, including aspirin and acetaminophen. Medication permission forms are available in the health office. It is more desirable for medication to be administered in the home. However, any pupil who is required to take medication during the regular school day must comply with the following:

1. Written orders from a physician detailing the name of the drug, dosage, time interval medication is to be taken. Copies of this request will be sent to the pupil's teacher, the nurses' office and the counselor.
2. Written permission from the parent or guardian of the pupil directed to the nurse requesting that the School District comply with the physician's order.
3. Medication must be brought to school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician.
4. A locked cabinet is provided for the storage of medication.
5. The nurse and/or designee shall be available to dispense all

medications to students safely.

6. Unless a physician states otherwise, all medications, both prescription and non-prescription, will be stored in the Health Office.

Students in possession of medication in school or while at a school function without this specific permission may fall under the school district's Substance Abuse policy. (See page 44)

Students who need to carry prescription medication to self-administer (such as inhalers), must comply with the prescription medication policy. The physician can indicate the need to carry this medication on the written order.

**Parent Collaborative:** This important group is dedicated to promoting the health and well being of the students at the Rutland Middle School. An Academic Fair, Coffee House and Parent-Teen Dialogue Night are just some of the annual activities organized by the Collaborative. Watch for notifications of meetings in the school newsletter, F.Y.I. so you can become a part of this vital support group.

**Rest Rooms:** We treat property with care; therefore, students should do their part to keep the rest rooms neat and clean. All who use the facilities will appreciate it.

**School Closings:** In the event it is necessary to close for the day, due to inclement weather or other emergency reasons, listen to radio stations WSYB/Z97, WJJR, or WJEN, or check television Channel 20, or call 773-1960 (#8) for the School Closing Announcement.

**School Resource Officer (S.R.O.):** School Resource Officer Lorman is assigned to work with students attending the Rutland Middle and Intermediate Schools. Officer Lorman focuses on developing rapport with students, presenting information to students on various crime prevention subjects, providing law enforcement resource assistance to school personnel, parents and students, and identifying and counseling young people. Through these activities the S.R.O. helps students, parents and educators develop a better understanding of the role of the law enforcement officer, thus creating a more positive concept of our legal and judicial system.

**School Store:** The RMS Student Council manages The School Store. It is located between the boys' and girls' restrooms by the Cafeteria and offers affordable, quality school supplies. The School Store is generally open at

lunchtime during special dates during the school year.

**Skateboards/ In-Line Skates/ Bicycles/ Scooters/ "Heelys"**

These items may be stored in bike racks or lockers when students arrive at school and remain there until the end of the day. They are not to be used in the building or grounds at any time.

**Student Insurance:** The school offers insurance to students for accidents and mishaps that occur during the school year. Parents need to fill out the insurance forms and return them directly to the insurer. Students participating in interscholastic athletics, intramurals and selected other co-curricular activities are required to have insurance coverage whether it is through the school or not.

**Telephones:** Permission may be granted for student use of phones by respective teams for short, school-related matters. Parents and guardians can leave phone messages for their children which will be posted for student pickup outside the main office on the message board.

**Textbooks/School Materials:** Textbooks and a variety of other school materials are loaned to students throughout the school year. We treat property with care. Students are responsible for these borrowed materials and must pay the replacement costs if borrowed materials are lost or badly damaged. Students who do not pay the school for lost or damaged materials will not participate in any co-curricular activities until payment is made.

**Valuables:** Please do not bring large sums of money or valuables to school. If on a rare occasion, it is necessary to do so, please bring them to the office and request that they be placed in the school vault. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items that are not placed directly under its care.

**Visitors:** Parents and visitors are always welcome at the Rutland Middle School. In order to maintain an appropriate school environment, student visits must be arranged at least two days in advance of the visit. When entering the school all visitors must report to the Main Office and sign in. At that time they will receive a visitor pass that they must wear throughout their visit. The secretary will then contact the appropriate school personnel of your arrival. Please note that for safety and to maintain orderly learning atmosphere visitors without an appointment

must get this pass before speaking with a teacher.

## **Section 5: Policies and Procedures**

### **Policies Statement**

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are subject to the comprehensive policies adopted by the Rutland City School Board, set out in the Rutland City School District Policy Manual. Therefore, the policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to change, revision or amendment by the Rutland City School Board, with or without direct notice to students. Please refer to the Policy Manual for the most current version. It is available for inspection at the Office of the Superintendent of the Rutland Public Schools.

### **Annual Notification of Designation of Directory Information and Right of Refusal:**

Schools in the Rutland City Public School District may disclose designated directory information on students and eligible students without the prior consent of the parent of eligible students, and without any records of such disclosure. The following types of personally identifiable information have been designated directory information:

- Student's name, address, date of birth, dates of enrollment;
- Parent or legal custodian's name and address;
- Student's grade level classification;
- Student's participation in recognized school activities and sports;
- Weight and height of member of athletic teams; and
- Student's diplomas, certificates, awards and honors received.

Disclosure may include such personally identifiable information contained or reflected in photographs.

If you are an eligible student and are currently attending Rutland City Public Schools, or if you are the parent of a student currently attending Rutland City Public Schools, you have a right to refuse to permit the designation of any or all of these types of information as directory information concerning your child by providing written notice of your refusal, listing the type(s) of information which you refuse to have so designated, to the principal of the school your child attends on or before the opening day of the school year.

**Harassment:** Harassment means unlawful conduct which constitutes a

form of discrimination. It means verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct based on a person's race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation or disability and which has the purpose or effect of substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a person's educational or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. This policy involves conduct and/or incident(s) that occur on school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity, or misconduct not on school property, on a school bus or at a school-sponsored activity where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated. It is the policy of the Rutland Public Schools to prohibit any conduct that would constitute harassment as defined by the EEOC or other federal or state law.

#### 1. Types of Harassment

**Sexual harassment** is a form of unlawful misconduct that undermines the integrity of both the employment relationship and the learning environment. All school community personnel must be allowed to work, teach, and study in an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtures. Sexual harassment does not refer to occasional compliments. It refers to offensive and inappropriate sexual behavior within the total framework of the school community environment.

Examples of other forms of prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to:

**Verbal:** Sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, threats, unwelcome sexual flirtations, persistent requests for dates, degrading words used to describe an individual, other verbal comments of a sexual nature and graphic commentaries about an individual's body.

**Non-Verbal:** Sexually suggestive or offensive objects or pictures, written comments, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures.

**Physical:** Unwanted physical contact, which may include touching, pinching or brushing the body, coerced sexual intercourse and assault.

Other forms of harassment include:

**Racial and Color:** Racial or color harassment can include unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's race or color, such as nicknames emphasizing stereotypes, racial slurs, comments on manner of speaking and negative references to racial customs.

**Religious (Creed):** Harassment on the basis of religion or creed is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the

characteristics of a person's religion or creed, such as derogatory comments regarding surnames, religious tradition, religious slurs or graffiti.

National Origin: Harassment on the basis of national origin is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's national origin, such as negative comments regarding surnames, manner of speaking, customs, language or ethnic slurs.

Marital Status: Harassment on the basis of marital status is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's marital status, such as comments regarding pregnancy or being an unwed mother or father.

Disability: Disability harassment includes harassment based on a person's disabling mental or physical condition and includes any unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's disabling condition, such as imitating manner of speech or movement or interference with necessary equipment.

Sex: Harassment on the basis of sex is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's gender.

Sexual Orientation: Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation is unwelcome verbal, written or physical conduct, directed at the characteristics of a person's sexual orientation, such as negative name-calling and imitating mannerisms.

## 2. Reporting Student Harassment

Student reporting: Any student who believes that s/he has been harassed under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute harassment, should promptly report the conduct to Ellie McGarry, Director of Special Education, or Robert Bliss, Assistant Superintendent (hereinafter "Designated Employee") or any other school employee.

School employee reporting: Any school employee who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute harassment shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a Designated Employee. Any school employee who overhears or directly receives information about conduct that might constitute harassment shall immediately report the information to a Designated Employee. If one of the Designated Employees is the person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the complaint shall be immediately filed with the other Designated Employee or the Superintendent.

Other reporting: Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute student harassment under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a Designated Employee.

Documentation of the report: If the complaint is oral, the Designated Employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a harassment complaint form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, and the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses.

False Complaint: Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding harassment may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of harassment when the person has a good faith belief that harassment occurred or is occurring.

## 3. Procedures Following a Report

Notification: Upon receipt of a complaint of harassment the Designated Employee shall immediately inform the Superintendent of the complaint. In addition, the Designated Employee shall immediately provide a copy of this harassment policy to the complainant and accused individual. If either the complainant or the accused individual is under the age of 18, his or her parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be: 1.) promptly notified that a complaint of harassment has been filed and provided with a copy of this policy; 2.) notified if an alternative dispute resolution method will be offered and, if it occurs, of the outcome of any such attempt; and 3.) notified in writing of the results of the complaint investigation. All notification letters shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. A Superintendent may seek waiver of confidentiality rights of the accused in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that harassment or other misconduct occurred.

Investigation: Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families ("DCF") or the police, the Superintendent shall, no later than one school day after the filing of a complaint with the Designated Employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations. The Superintendent shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the Superintendent from assigning him/herself or

the Designated Employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.

No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the Designated Employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the Superintendent. The report shall include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes harassment. When the initial determination concludes that an accused student has engaged in harassment, the Superintendent shall use his or her discretion to decide the appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the Designated Employee shall report such conduct to the Superintendent for action in accordance with relevant school policies.

All levels of internal review of the investigator's initial determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the District, be completed within 30 calendar days after the review is requested.

Action on a substantiated complaint: If, after investigation, the school finds that the alleged conduct occurred and that it constitutes harassment, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the harassment and prevent any recurrence of harassment. Such action may include warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee.

Alternative dispute resolution: At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. The following should be considered before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods: (1) the nature of the accusations, (2) the age of the complainant and the accused individual, (3) the agreement of the complainant, and (4) other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual. If an alternative dispute resolution is either not appropriate or is unsuccessful, the Superintendent shall initiate or cause to be initiated an investigation of the allegations in accordance with the time lines established in this policy.

Appeal: A person determined to be in violation of this policy and subjected to disciplinary action under it may appeal the determination and/or the disciplinary action(s) taken in the same manner as other disciplinary actions, in accordance with the District's discipline policy, applicable statutes, or collective bargaining agreements.

Independent Review: A complainant may request an independent review if s/he: 1.) believes that the school did not correctly analyze the complaint and failed to conduct an investigation of the incident because the school believed the alleged conduct did not constitute possible harassment, 2.) is dissatisfied with the final determination following an investigation as to whether harassment occurred, or 3.) believes that although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem. The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the Superintendent. Upon such request, the Superintendent shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 565(f), and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that s/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation. Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing: 1.) as to the sufficiency of the school's investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and 2.) of recommendations of any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Commissioner. The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies 11 that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by the District. The District may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

Retaliation: It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated.

#### 4. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the District's obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.

The Superintendent shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the District in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

#### 5. Reporting to Other Agencies

When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. §4911 et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. §6901 et seq.

If a harassment complaint is made in a public school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under the State Board of Education Rules for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Commissioner.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude anyone from reporting any incidents and/or conduct that may be considered a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

#### 6. Alternative Complaint Process

In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission  
14-16 Baldwin Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301  
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice) (877) 294-9200 (tty)  
(802) 828-2481 (fax)  
Email: [human.rights@state.vt.us](mailto:human.rights@state.vt.us)

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office  
U. S. Department of Education  
33 Arch Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02110-1491  
(617) 289-0111 (voice)  
(877) 521-2172 (tdd)  
(617) 289-0150 (fax)  
Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

#### Interrogation By Law Officials

1. School employees are not the agents of law enforcement officials. Search and/or seizure by law enforcement officials on school property may occur when a warrant or other legal basis exists authorizing such search and/or seizure.
2. A student in school may not be interrogated by any authority without the knowledge of the school administrator and knowledge and permission of parent or guardian, unless the interview or interrogation is part of a child abuse or neglect investigation conducted by the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services in accordance with Chapter 49 of Title 33 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.
3. Any interrogation by non-school personnel must be conducted in private with the Principal or his or her designee present.
4. A student may not be released to the custody of persons other than the parent of legal guardian, unless placed under arrest by legal authority.
5. If a student is removed from the school by legal authority, the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) should be notified of this action by school officials as soon as possible.
6. No questioning by non-school personnel of a student under the age of eighteen who may be accused of an offense shall occur unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) have been notified and have been given the opportunity to be present at the time of the questioning. Questioning may, however, take place without notification of parents if such questioning is required due to an emergency or urgent potential danger to life, or property, as determined by the Principal, and reasonable efforts to notify the student's parents are unsuccessful.

### **Non-Discrimination On The Basis Of Disability 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American With Disabilities Act**

It is the intent of the Rutland City Public Schools that the School Commissioners and their employees will not discriminate against any intended beneficiaries of statutory protection on the basis of disability including race, color, creed, age, religion, sex and marital status, in the admission and access to, or treatment and employment in, any activities including vocational education, policies, procedures and practices, as and to the extent provided by law including Title IX, Title VI, 504, and ADA.

Rutland City Public Schools recognizes its responsibility to identify students who are qualified persons with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American With Disabilities Act, and to provide them regular and/or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet their individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students.

The following position has been designated as the Section 504/ADA Coordinator for Rutland City Public Schools:

Director of Support Services  
6 Church Street  
Rutland, VT 05701  
(802) 773-1917

Revised and Approved: November 23, 1993

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Act, Annual Notification**

Notice and Consent/OPT-OUT for Specific Activities: *The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)*, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, requires the Rutland City Public Schools to notify you and obtain consent or allow you to opt your child out of participating in certain school activities. These activities include a student survey, analysis or evaluation that concerns one or more of the following eight areas (“protected information surveys”):

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;

4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

This requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure or use of student information for marketing purposes (“marketing surveys”), and certain physical examinations and screenings.

If the Rutland City School District during this school year does become involved in conducting a survey, collecting and using information for marketing purposes, or administering certain protected physical examinations where it is legally required, the District will obtain the appropriate consent and/or opt-out for the protected information and marketing surveys. If undertaken, and if you wish, you may review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any of the surveys.

A copy of the school’s policy regarding the PPRA is available from the Office of the Superintendent of the Rutland City Public Schools (RPS district policy #7697 in accordance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Act).

### **Search and Seizure**

Desks, lockers, textbooks and other materials or supplies loaned by the school to students remain the property of the school, and may be opened by school employees for cleaning maintenance or emergencies. When prohibited items are found in the course of routine cleaning or maintenance, or in the case of emergency, they will be confiscated and a report will be made to the Principal who will determine whether further investigation is warranted. School property may also be searched if school personnel have reasonable suspicion to believe that a law or school policy is being violated. Student searches may be conducted if there is reasonable cause to believe that a breach of school policy or law is being committed. A student search will be conducted by a school employee and, whenever possible, in the presence of another school

employee. A copy of the complete Search and Seizure Policy is available in the principal's office.

### **Substance Abuse Policy and Procedure**

Students who are experiencing problems with alcohol and/or drugs are in need of assistance. The type of assistance need may vary, however, the School System is committed to providing the most appropriate response to each individual. The actions set forth below will be considered routine disciplinary measures for each category. However, consequences may vary depending on the individual circumstances at the same time. In incidents where extreme violations occur, school officials in favor of stronger disciplinary measures may waive the specified actions. In the event of a crisis or unmanageable situation, the student will be transported to the Rutland Regional Medial Center by a rescue vehicle, and his/her parents/guardian will be notified as soon as reasonably possible. Law enforcement officials will be called if necessary. Similarly, school officials may consider lesser penalties or alternative measures in situations that may warrant a change in a routine policy.

#### **A. Students in possession of drug paraphernalia**

##### First Offense

1. When students are found in possession of drug paraphernalia, it will be confiscated.
2. Students may be suspended for up to 3 days.
3. Parents will be notified.
4. The student and parents will meet with appropriate school officials for a conference within 48 hours/or two school days.
5. Evaluation, counseling, and/or drug education may be recommended.

Repeated offenses will be handled at the discretion of the administrator.

#### **B. Students under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs**

##### First Offense

1. An administrator will be notified unless medical emergency exists, in which case the nurse will be notified.
2. The nurse will examine the student, the parents will be notified, and the student will be sent home for the remainder of the day and will be suspended for up to three (3) days.
3. Consultation with parents/guardian and the student, emphasizing

available counseling services, will be conducted within 48 hours or two school days.

4. Student may also be required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of alcohol/drug education and counseling or be suspended for five (5) days.

##### Second Offense

1. An administrator will be notified unless a medical emergency exists, in which case the nurse will be notified.
2. The nurse will examine the student, the parents will be notified, and the student will be sent home for the remainder of the day.
3. The student will be suspended for 3-5 days.
4. Before returning to school, the student and parents are required to have a conference with the appropriate school personnel.
5. While suspended, the student will seek and receive an evaluation by an appropriate agency or a substance abuse counselor of his/her choice. A written copy of the evaluation will be sent to the school officials, including the counselor's findings and recommendations for the student.

##### Third Offense

Student will be suspended for ten (10) days and recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year.

#### **C. Students in possession of alcohol and/or drugs (including prescription and non-prescription medication. Procedures will vary depending on the substance in possession).**

##### First Offense

1. Parent/guardian will be notified by an administrator depending on the type of substance. The student may be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. The Police may be notified of the incident.
3. Student may be suspended for up to three (3) days.
4. Before returning to school, the student and parents are required to have a conference with the appropriate school personnel.
5. Student may be required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of alcohol/drug education and counseling depending on the nature of the substance.

##### Second Offense

1. Parent/guardian will be notified by an Administrator and the student will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. The Police may be notified of the incident.
3. Student may be suspended up to 5 days.

4. While suspended, the student may be required to seek and receive an evaluation by an appropriate agency or a substance abuse counselor of his/her choice. A written copy of the evaluation will be sent to the School Officials, including the counselor's findings and recommendations for the student. This will depend on the type of medication in the student's possession.

#### Third Offense

Student may be suspended for up to ten (10) days and be recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year.

### **D. Students selling or furnishing alcohol and/or drugs**

#### First Offense

1. Parent/guardian will be notified immediately by an Administrator. The student will be removed from school for the remainder of the day.
2. The Police will be notified of the incident.
3. Consultation with Administrator, parents/guardian, and the student, emphasizing available counseling services to be conducted within 48 hours or two school days.
4. Student will be suspended for five (5) days.
5. Student will be required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) hours of alcohol/drug education and counseling.

#### Second Offense

1. Parents will be notified immediately and the student will be suspended for the (10) school days with the recommendation for suspension for the remainder of the school year.
2. Police shall be notified of the incident.

**Outside Referrals:** Students, staff, and parents will be given information, when necessary, about outside agencies and encouraged to take advantage of their services and programs. The Rutland Public School System has made arrangements to work cooperatively with Rutland Mental Health in assisting students who have alcohol and/or drug related problems. The outside referral process shall be made by appropriate administrative personnel with input as necessary from guidance counselors, school nurses, teaching staff, etc. Students are encouraged to voluntarily request assistance or counseling if they have a substance abuse issue. Students who ask for help will not receive a consequence. It is the intent of the School System to provide students experiencing alcohol and/or drug problems with all possible assistance and support.

**Substance Use/Abuse & Athletics:** With the support of the findings of the Vermont State Medical Society, the Athletic Department at R.M.S. firmly believes that the use of chemical substances is detrimental to an individual's health. Therefore, the possession, use or sale of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited. The consequences for violation of this policy shall be:

1. At the first incident as a member of an athletic team or activity in the fall, winter, or spring of an academic year, a suspension from competition and practice for two weeks.
2. At the second incident as a member of an athletic team or activity in the fall, winter, spring of the same academic year, the immediate suspension for the season.
3. Any infraction will mean the automatic loss of any team award in that sport or activity for that season.
4. To be ineligible in one activity is to be ineligible in all athletics for that particular season.
5. At each incident the student's parent/guardians will be notified of the situation by the Athletic Director following a meeting of the student, Principal, Athletic Director, and the Coach/Advisor. A written report of this meeting will be filed in the office of the Athletic Director and School Administrator, and a copy will be sent to the student's parents/guardians.

### **Safe Schools Ordinance**

On February 28, 1995, the City of Rutland Board of Alderman passed Ordinance Number 187. Following is a condensed version of the ordinance and its purpose. A complete copy may be obtained at City Hall or from our Main Office.

"The people of the City of Rutland find it necessary to prevent disruption of the educational process by prohibiting individuals who have no educational purpose, who disrupt, or may disrupt the educational process from entering or remaining upon school premises during school hours. Further the safety and welfare of the public within school premises must be protected. To this end, every school in the City of Rutland will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized use of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

It is important to point out that "school premises" means any building, public or private which is used primarily for educational purposes, the land upon which it is situated, and any (public) property within five hundred (500) feet of the land upon which the building is

situated.

As part of the ordinance, a schedule of fines and waiver fees has been established and is available in the principal's office.

Vermont State Law currently establishes that parents are, or can be, responsible for up to \$1,000.00 in fines or fees incurred by their children. It is, therefore, extremely important that everyone become familiar with the particulars of this ordinance.”