

LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | 85 MONTAGUE ROAD, LEVERETT, MA 01054  
413-548-9144

LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
Family Handbook  
2023-2024



LES Pinwheels for Peace installation to honor the International Day of Peace, September 21.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Leverett Elementary School Mission Statement

*The Leverett Elementary School community values racial and cultural diversity, social justice, and respect for varied perspectives. We promote the growth of agile, empathetic thinkers and learners who recognize the interconnectedness of individual experiences to the larger world.*

### Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Educational Vision

Our educational vision document describes the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's aspiration – our vision – for elementary and secondary public education and adult basic education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This vision is anchored in our commitment to high-quality teaching and learning in the Commonwealth. We will continue to work with districts, schools, and educators to promote teaching and learning that is antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural; that values and affirms each and every student and their families; and that creates equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved.

This Vision and a catalog of aligned supports can be found here:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/vision/2023-jun-vision-supports.pdf>

### School Improvement Goals 2020-2023\*

#### ***Strategic Objective 1***

**Implement the 'LES Anti-Racism Commitment' policy (see page 34)**

#### ***Strategic Objective 2***

**Ensure a participatory and inclusive school culture for all stakeholders**

#### ***Strategic Objective 3***

**Foster an strong school-wide community identity**

\*The latest draft of the LES School Improvement Plan can be found here:

[LES School Improvement Plan 2020-23](#)

September, 2023

Dear Leverett students, caregivers, and community:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year at Leverett Elementary School! We are delighted to welcome new and returning members to the Leverett Elementary community. The LES handbook contains important information about our school that we hope will help you and your family.

The School Committee strives to help all children in our school develop the skills and personal attributes needed to become confident, compassionate citizens of the world. Our hope is that they will develop into lifelong learners who immerse themselves fully in our multiethnic, multicultural, pluralistic society. We are fully committed to ensuring that adults and children in our school not only treat one another with respect, but appreciate and celebrate different beliefs, learning styles, and points of view.

To achieve this mission, the school committee develops policies to guide the committee and school staff for the administration and continuing improvement of educational programs. The school committee regularly evaluates the effectiveness of policies and their implementation. The school committee employs a superintendent jointly with the Erving Union #28 partner schools to implement its policies. The School Committee adopts a budget that will enable the school to carry out the committee's policies. Finally, the school committee aims to keep the Leverett community informed about the school and to keep the committee and school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public. Our representative to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee ensures that Leverett's needs are represented in decisions about the regional middle school and high school and that our community is informed about happenings at the regional level.

The School Committee welcomes your input and participation. You can learn about the policies that inform this handbook on the [school's website](#). You can attend our meetings and contribute to the public comment period. We meet on the first Monday of each month throughout the school year, at 6:00 p.m. Meeting information is posted on the [town website](#). You can also email us with any questions, concerns, or ideas using the contact information below.

One of the great aspects of LES is its wonderfully close and supportive community. Your input is valuable and your participation in our school is critical. There are many options for voluntary participation, including attending School Committee meetings, organizing events with the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and raising funds with the Leverett Education Foundation (LEF). We look forward to working together with you to ensure a vibrant elementary school community!

Sincerely,  
Jess Rocheleau  
Leverett School Committee Chair



FY24 Leverett Elementary School Staff

**Principal**

Dr. Annie Foley Ruiz

**Office Administrators**

Kate Rice

Nina Eddy

**Nurse**

Leah Hirshberg

**Food Service Team**

Valerie Hudson, Director

Tabatha McLellan

**Custodial Team**

Christopher Cole, Director

Phillip George

**Education Support Professionals**

Carol Allis

Peyton Emery

Debora Fritz

Martha Guillette

Shelly Hicks

Abby Loynd

Kathy Martin

Aliyah Sanders

Peter White

Juniper Wilson

**Social Emotional Health Providers**

Bethany Politylo, Psychologist

Jessica Carlson-Belanger, School  
Adjustment Counselor

**Tier 1 Classroom Teachers**

Amanda Bigwood, Early Childhood A

Jessie Jean-Louis, Early Childhood B

Stella Douglas, Grade 1

Amy Boyden, Grade 2

Angela Regan, Grade 3

Tim Kosuda, Grade 4

Bill Stewart, Grade 5

Chad Odwazny, Grade 6

**Tier 2 Essential Skills Teachers**

Lesley Gray

Christine Paglia Baker

**Tier 3 Special Education Teachers**

Allison Coelho

MK Smith Despres

Aris Etheridge

**Specialist Teachers**

Donna Rivers, Library/Media

Karie Neal, Art

Heidi Renauld, Music

Sadie Graham, Physical Education

Julia Latady, Greenhouse Director

**Related Service Providers**

Liz Cole, Speech and Language Pathologist

Margaret Simmons, Occupational Therapist

Karen Johnston, Physical Therapist



## Opportunities to Participate

There are various ways that caregivers can participate in the decision making and development of Leverett Elementary School.

### *Leverett Elementary School Committee*

The School Committee is an essential component of Leverett Elementary School. Members are elected at the annual Town Meeting held in May. For more information on participation or support of the School Committee please contact [rocheleau@leverettschool.org](mailto:rocheleau@leverettschool.org)

Current Members:

Jess Rocheleau, Chair [rocheleau@leverettschool.org](mailto:rocheleau@leverettschool.org)

Becky Tew, Vice Chair [tew@leverettschool.org](mailto:tew@leverettschool.org)

Jya Plavin, [plavin@leverettschool.org](mailto:plavin@leverettschool.org)

Tilman Wolf, Amherst Pelham Regional Representative, [wolf@leverettschool.org](mailto:wolf@leverettschool.org)

Anne-Elise Olsen, [olsen@leverettschool.org](mailto:olsen@leverettschool.org)

### *Parent Teacher Organization*

The PTO is an essential component of our great education. The PTO works together to generate funds that support field trips and supplemental educational activities. Caregivers can join the PTO at any time, however recruitment officially occurs in early Fall.

For more information on participation or support of the PTO effort please contact [lespto@leverettschool.org](mailto:lespto@leverettschool.org)

Current Members:

Kate Martineau, President

Andrew Parker-Renga, Treasurer

### *LES School Council*

The School Council is a group of caregivers, educators, and community members that work to draft the School Improvement Plan. Using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Planning for Success process (found here <https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) this team develops a three year accountability plan based on the community vision for our school. Recruitment for this committee will begin in early Fall. For more information on participation please contact [foleyruiz@leverettschool.org](mailto:foleyruiz@leverettschool.org)

Current Members:

Annie Foley Ruiz, Chair

Philip Grandin, Parent

Karie Neal, Teacher Representative

Amy Boyden, Teacher Representative

## Erving School Union #28

In 1901, the towns of Erving, Leverett, New Salem and Wendell voted to form a superintendency union. The town of Shutesbury was voted into the union in 1902, thus forming the current Erving School Union #28 District. The five towns came together in the early 1900s for cost-sharing purposes, which continue to strongly tie its four elementary (PK-Grade 6) school districts together. These districts include Erving Elementary School, Leverett Elementary School, Shutesbury Elementary School and the Swift River School (which reaps the cost-saving benefits of being a small regional school for the towns of New Salem and Wendell). Each district is autonomous and elects its own school committee which oversees the educational program for its elementary school. Together, the Union #28 communities share the cost and oversight of the superintendent and central office.

Erving School Union #28 is composed of the school districts of Erving, Leverett, Shutesbury, and New Salem/Wendell (Swift River School). Find out more about Erving School Union#28 at [www.union28.org](http://www.union28.org)

*Erving School Union #28 staff include the following:*

Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent

[culkeen@erving.com](mailto:culkeen@erving.com)

Pam Rogers, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent,

[rogers@erving.com](mailto:rogers@erving.com)

Emilee Rybczyk, Accounts Payable Coordinator

[rybczyk@erving.com](mailto:rybczyk@erving.com)

Corrina Wiselo, Director of Student Support

[wiselo@erving.com](mailto:wiselo@erving.com)

Lindsay Rodriguez, Curriculum Coordinator

[rodriguez@erving.com](mailto:rodriguez@erving.com)

Jennifer Spofford, Support Services Coordinator

[spofford@erving.com](mailto:spofford@erving.com)

Gillian Budine, Community Network for Children Coordinator

[budine@erving.com](mailto:budine@erving.com)

Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations

[sheridan@erving.com](mailto:sheridan@erving.com)

Jessalyn Zaykoski, Payroll/Human Resources Coordinator

[zaykoski@erving.com](mailto:zaykoski@erving.com)

FY24 School Calendar

**CONFERENCES**  
**November 8, 9, 14, 15**  
**Dismissal 12:45 p.m.**

ERVING SCHOOL UNION #28  
 ACADEMIC CALENDAR  
 2023-2024  
 LEVERETT ELEMENTARY  
 SCHOOL

**CONFERENCES**  
**March 27, 28 & April 2, 3**  
**Dismissal 12:45 p.m.**

School hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri— 8:15 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.

Every Wednesday—School hours 8:15 a.m.- 12:45 p.m.

**AUGUST 2023 (2)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

28 Staff Begins  
 30 First Day of School

**SEPTEMBER 2023 (20)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

4 Labor Day—No School

**OCTOBER 2023 (20)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

6 Curriculum Day No School for Students  
 9 Indigenous Peoples Day—No School

**NOVEMBER 2023 (18)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

10 Veterans Day Observed—No School  
 8, 9, 14, 15—Conferences—Dismissal 12:45 p.m.  
 22-24 Thanksgiving Recess—No School

**DECEMBER 2023 (16)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

22 Early Release Day Dismissal 11:30 a.m.  
 25-29 Holiday Recess—No School

**JANUARY 2024 (21)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

1 New Year's Day—No School  
 2 Return to School  
 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No School

**FEBRUARY 2024 (16)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

19-23 Winter Recess—No School

**MARCH 2024 (20)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

22 Curriculum Day—No School for Students  
 27, 28 Conferences—Dismissal 12:45 p.m.

**APRIL 2024 (17)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

15-19 Spring Recess—No School  
 2, 3 Conferences—Dismissal 12:45 p.m.

**MAY 2024 (22)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

27 Memorial Day—No School

**JUNE 2024 (8)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

12 Last day of school—Early Release for Students Dismissal 11:30  
 13-20 5 additional days for inclement weather  
 19 Juneteenth Holiday—No School (if school is still in session)  
 Voted by SC 4-3-23

## Attendance

School opens at 8:15 a.m. Students arriving to their classrooms after 8:25 will be marked tardy. On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday the school day ends at 2:50 p.m. School day ends at 12:45 p.m. every Wednesday to allow for staff Professional Development and staff collaboration.

**No student will be allowed into the building before 8:15 a.m.**

**TARDINESS IS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.** Missing even minutes of school is detrimental to a student's academic development. Students who arrive at school late should come to the Main Office to sign in. Office staff will direct students to their classrooms, escorting younger students when appropriate.

Regular attendance in school is essential for each student's academic progress. **If your child will be absent from school, please call or email the office by 9:00 (548-9144) to let us know.** In the event that we do not receive notification, you will be contacted by the school Nurse or Principal.

Please see the [Attendance Policy](#) at the end of this document for more information regarding attendance regulations.

## Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

### *Riding the School Bus*

Five Star Bus of Hadley provides bussing for LES. The routes, stops, and approximate pick-up times are emailed to families in late August. If you have any questions about your child's bus route or timing, please call the Main Office.

Leverett Elementary School has formal responsibility for students once they are on a school bus. It is important for caregivers to work together with the bus drivers to ensure the safety of their children at bus stops before the school bus arrives and when children are dropped off.

### **Students who ride the bus must:**

- Follow the instructions of the bus driver at all times
- Keep the bus aisle clear of backpacks, bodies and body parts (legs and feet) at all times
- Remain seated "bottom to bottom, back to back"
- Stay clear of the bus windows
- Limit conversations to people sitting in the same row of seats, where they can be heard using a normal tone of voice
- Refrain from eating any food on the bus
- Remain seated until the driver has brought the bus to a full stop
- Refrain from using any kind of electronic devices
- Refrain from aggressive behavior, verbal or physical

**Any infraction of the above may result in disciplinary action up to and including loss of bus riding privileges if it is determined that a student is endangering safety or disrespectful of bus guidelines.** Please call the Principal with questions or concerns about the bus.

Please note that state law requires prior approval from the Principal before any caregiver rides a school bus. **Additionally, bus drivers are not allowed to leave Early Childhood-aged children at their bus stop without a caregiver or older sibling present. The bus driver will**

**return the child to school if there is no one to meet an Early Childhood-aged student.**

Always ensure that the school has up-to-date emergency contact information for your family. In the case that a school bus is involved in a traffic accident, all riders will be taken to the hospital if caregivers can not be reached.

### *Arrival by Car*

#### **On Time Drop-Off:**

**Students may be dropped off between 8:15 and 8:25. All students should remain in their cars until 8:15. Students arriving after 8:25 need to sign in as tardy at the front office. Please make every effort to have your child at school by 8:25.**

- **Early Childhood Students and their siblings are dropped off at the North Entrance.** Caregivers of Early Childhood students should park **along the front of the building** and walk their children to the North Entrance. Upper grade siblings can enter the North entrance and go to their classrooms.
- **Grades 1 - 6 Students** should enter through the Main Entrance. Caregivers can park **along the front of the building** to let their children out of the car. Please let children out of the door closest to the school for safety.

### *Dismissal by Car*

#### **2:50/12:45 Pickup**

**Early Childhood Students and their Siblings** should use the North Entrance for dismissal. Caregivers with students in Early Childhood should park and walk to the Early Childhood classrooms near North Entrance to pick up their children. Older siblings will wait at the North Entrance door until parents arrive to pick them up.

**Grades 1 - 6 Students** will be dismissed from the Main Entrance. Caregivers can park along the front of the building or in the side lot until their children are dismissed. An LES staff person will always monitor the departure of students.

**All caregivers driving should pay extra special attention to the other cars and children around during arrival and departure.**

**According to M.G.L. C 90 section 16B, no driver shall cause or allow the engine of any motor vehicle to idle unnecessarily on school grounds.**

#### **Changes to Regular Dismissal Plans**

*If you are picking up your regularly-bussed child **at the end of the school day**, please:*

- Send your child's teacher [a note](#) on the day you'll be picking him/her up.
- If you regularly pick up your child on a given day, send a blanket note for the year. It will be kept in the Main Office and communicated to the staff supervisor.

*If someone other than a known caregiver is picking up your child **at the end of the school day**, please:*

- Send [a note](#) to the teacher or call the school with the full name of the person picking up

your child.

- The office will inform the supervising teacher of the arrangement.
- The supervising teacher will be with the children at the pick up area and may require identification before dismissing any child.
- Your child will only be permitted to leave when we have identified the person to whom you have given written permission.
- If an emergency arises, you may call the school and speak with the secretary, nurse or Principal and authorize an emergency designee to pick up your child.

*If your child is taking the bus home with a friend, they **must** bring [a note](#) for the afternoon bus driver.*

### *Bicycles*

Children in grades 3 through 6 may ride bikes to school. They must wear properly fitted helmets as per state law. If a bike rider arrives at school without a helmet, the student will not be permitted to ride the bike home. Once at school, bikes must be parked in the rack by the gymnasium and may not be ridden at any time during the day. Bike riders should leave school immediately after the buses leave.

### *Walking*

Children walking to and from school should take extra care on Leverett roads, as these roads do not accommodate walkers well. Walkers should walk against, not with, the traffic. At dismissal, walkers may leave school only after the buses have left. Walkers must also leave school immediately after school is out.

### Early Dismissal

**Be sure to send a note or call the school before 10:30 a.m. on any days that the dismissal plan changes!**

If you are picking up your child **before the end of the school day**, please:

- Call the school to let them know you are coming. Office staff will let the classroom teacher know to expect you.
- Come to the Main Office to sign out your child.

If someone other than a known caregiver is picking up your child **before the end of the school day**, please:

- Send a note to the teacher or call the school with the full name of the person picking up your child.
- The office will inform the supervising teacher of the arrangement.
- The person designated to pick up your child should show identification at the Main Office.
- Your child will only be permitted to leave when we have identified the person to whom you have given written permission.

### *Release of a Sick Child*

If your child is sick and caregiver cannot be reached your child will only be released to one of

the two alternates you listed on your child's Emergency Form after checking in at the health office and showing identification.

If your child is sick and neither you as known caregivers nor your designated alternates can come to pick them up, we will not release your child to anyone until you have called the school and designated someone. Your designee should check in at the main office and show identification.

### Weather-related Delayed Openings or School Closings

If it becomes necessary to call off school, delay opening, or have an early dismissal due to inclement weather, the decision will be made by the Superintendent, Jennifer Culkeen. Sometimes the weather makes a sudden, drastic change. This can require a last-minute decision to close or delay the opening of school or even have an early dismissal of school. Be aware of this possibility. Make sure that your contact information on file with the school is correct so that you are contacted through our automated phone/email system. The following stations announce Leverett School closings, delays or early dismissals.

WHAI Greenfield 98.3 FM

WHMP Northampton 99.3 FM

WRNX Amherst 100.9 FM

WAHL Orange 99.9 FM

WGGB-TV Channel 40

WRSI Greenfield 93.9 FM

WPNI Amherst 1430 AM

WPVQ South Deerfield 95.3 FM

WJDF Orange 97.3 FM

WWLP-TV Channel 22

**Please note that Leverett is part of School Union #28. School closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal announcements are made as "School Union #28" or "Erving Union # 28", usually not as Leverett School.**

In the event that the Superintendent decides on an early closing due to an approaching storm, the school will use the emergency communication system for the Town of Leverett, CodeRed. We rely on the information you give us on the emergency form completed in the fall. **Please notify us of any changes in phone numbers and/or emergency contacts as soon as possible.**

### Emergency Procedures

As part of our safety preparedness, the school holds regular safety drills. Staff members work with the students to help them learn to respond to different scenarios. This is done in a supportive way designed to keep anxiety at a minimum. There are many drills each year to practice safe responses to different scenarios. One drill each year may include practice evacuating the children to another close-by location. In such a case, children are always closely supervised and away from the school building for as little time as possible.

The school maintains a plan to respond to such natural disasters as earthquake, tornado, or other natural disasters that require movement of students within the school building or removal of students from the school building. As part of that plan, it may be necessary to transport children away from the school. In such a case, caregivers will be notified as soon as possible through the emergency communication system for the Town of Leverett, Code Red. You will receive a phone, email, and text message giving you information on where to meet your child(ren).



In the event of a major emergency during school hours, students and school personnel will remain under the supervision of school authorities in the school building. School will be evacuated only if conditions will not allow the use of the school building.

**If you are at the school while a drill is in progress, please follow the directions of staff and safety personnel. Do not attempt to connect with your child during a safety drill unless asked to do so. In an emergency, please do NOT attempt to drive to the school as Montague Road is likely to be closed in order to accommodate emergency vehicles and personnel.**

Emergency Numbers

<u>EMERGENCY, FIRE, POLICE</u>	<u>911</u>
<u>Shelburne Dispatch</u>	<u>413-625-8200</u>
<u>Poison Center</u>	<u>1-800-222-1222</u>

Town of Leverett

<u>Margie McGinnis, Town Administrator</u>	<u>413-548-9699</u>
<u>Lisa Stratford, Town Clerk</u>	<u>413-548-9400</u>
<u>Highway Department</u>	<u>413-548-9400</u>
<u>Town Library</u>	<u>413-548-9220</u>

Erving School Union #28

<u>Superintendent's Office</u>	<u>413-423-3337</u>
<u>Director of Student Support Services</u>	<u>978-910-1478</u>
<u>Five Star Bus</u>	<u>413-530-0105 or 413-789-4789 ext.40</u>

## Special 911 Instructions

If you are unable to speak you can access 911 using the following steps:

- Dial 911.
  
- Once the call is answered, indicate your need by pressing the appropriate number on your phone.
  - IF YOU NEED POLICE, PRESS 1.
  - IF YOU NEED FIRE, PRESS 2.
  - IF YOU NEED AN AMBULANCE, PRESS 3.
  
- The 911 Dispatcher may ask questions that require a yes or no for answers.
  - PRESS 4 FOR YES.
  - PRESS 5 FOR NO.

## The Friday Post and Electronic Notifications

Every Friday, our school newsletter, THE FRIDAY POST, is published electronically. In addition to school news, it contains other community opportunities, non-school events, and issues to be announced and shared with the community. We will share articles and announcements if they are consistent with the guidelines developed by the School Committee and if space permits. Please call the LES Front Office for details about submissions to the Friday Post.

In addition to THE FRIDAY POST, there is a great deal of information on the school website. We will be sending home regular electronic alerts about upcoming events, so **please be sure that we have your current email information on file.**

## Food

Under the Universal School Meals Program, breakfast and lunch are available for all students free of charge. Breakfast is available in the cafeteria from 8:15 - 8:30 daily. Students may choose to bring lunch from home. Your child's classroom teacher will give you information about the snack routine for the class. All school lunch menus are available at the Main Office and will be sent home monthly. **While we make every effort to stick to the menu, school lunch choices are subject to change as necessary.**

**LES School Menu can be found here: [LES Monthly School Lunch Menu](#)**

Learn more about the National School Lunch Program here:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/nslp.html>

## School Visitors

Visitors to Leverett Elementary School should come to the Main Office upon their arrival. All visitors must sign in and wear a Visitor Pass during their time at LES. Visitors must sign out and return their Pass upon leaving. All visitors are expected to follow the appropriate behavior for the Leverett Elementary community. Visitors who do not engage in safe and respectful behavior will be asked to leave. **We retain the right to deny access to the building at any time.**

## Lost and Found

In June, dozens and dozens of good shirts, coats, and other clothing items left at school are often donated. We encourage caregivers and students to make sure names or initials are marked in outer layers of clothing, especially sweatshirts and jackets. We make every effort to return things to their owners when the item has the child's name written on it. Any unclaimed items in the Lost and Found at the end of the school year will be donated.

## Toys at School

In general, it is not necessary to bring toys from home to school. We have well-stocked equipment sheds on both playgrounds, and classrooms are fully equipped with developmentally appropriate games. Toys and other similar items brought to school should be kept in backpacks. The school cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage of any personal items.

**Toy weapons and sharp instruments of any kind are not permitted at school and will be confiscated by the Principal. Caregivers must come to the school to retrieve these types of items.**

## HEALTH INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

### School Nurse

Leah Hirshberg, RN, MSN, is the Leverett Elementary School Nurse. The school nurse provides health services to children and families at the Leverett School. The school nurse, along with other school personnel, responds to medical emergencies at the school. The school nurse is responsible for carrying out state-mandated health regulations, referring students in need of medical and dental care, and consulting with staff in assessing an individual student's needs.

The school nurse serves as a liaison among caregivers, physicians, social service agencies and school, and is available to families to assist them in making social service agency contacts. The school nurse may also serve as a Special Education Team member in assisting families of children who have medical disabilities.

### State Immunization Law

All Massachusetts students must be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox, and Hepatitis B. In addition, preschoolers must be immunized against Hib. A physician's certificate that includes immunization dates (month and year) is the required evidence of immunization and must be received before your child starts school.

The school nurse will review your child's immunization record. If the minimum requirements are not met, your child may be excluded from school until a physician's certificate is given to the school. State law allows immunization requirements to be waived for religious or medical reasons only. Please contact the school nurse if you have questions. Learn more about MA law on immunization of students here:

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter76/Section15>

### Physical Examinations

During elementary school years, Massachusetts state law requires initial and periodic physical examinations to be on file in your child's health record. All new students and students entering preschool, kindergarten and fourth grade must have a physical examination on file within one month of beginning the school year. These physicals must be done within one year prior or 30 days after school entry.

Providers may record their findings on their own forms, or may use this [Physical Exam Form](#) (paper copies are available in the nurse's office). Please call our school nurse if you need assistance in enrolling in health insurance or finding a pediatrician.

State health regulations also state that all children entering preschool or kindergarten show evidence of a lead test.

### Medication Procedures

State law says that children may not take medication at school unless we have a signed medication order form and a signed parental consent form for each medication your child takes. In addition, students being followed by a doctor for asthma or seizures and students with prescribed epinephrine must have on file an action plan completed by the student's medical provider. Medication order, parental consent, and action plan forms are available on the school

website or in the nurse's office. Medical providers may also choose to complete their own medication order and action plan forms.

For your child's safety and the safety of all school children, all medications must stay in the nurse's office unless the nurse determines otherwise.

All medications need to be transported to and from the nurse's office by an adult, and must be brought to school in their original, pharmacy labeled containers. Only a thirty day supply of medication will be accepted at any time. We will not give your child their first dose of a new medication at school in case of a possible adverse reaction. Please give your child the first dose of any new medication while they are at home.

Certain over-the-counter medications, including Tylenol and Advil, are available in the school health office. For students to receive these medications, signed consent is required from the parent/guardian each school year. These medications will be administered by the school nurse only. If your child uses any of these medications on a regular basis, you will be asked to supply the medication from home.

If your child requires an over-the-counter medication that is not stocked in the school health office, all guidelines regarding prescription medications apply. Your child must have on file both doctor's order and parental consent forms, and the medication must be delivered by an adult in its original packaging.

### Emergency Information Form

Each year, families should complete a new [Emergency Information Form](#). This is the form to which we refer if your child becomes sick or has an accident at school. **It is the most important piece of information we keep about your child. For your child's safety, please complete and return this form before the first day of school. Please notify the school immediately if a change occurs during the year.**

### Emergency Transportation Procedures

In case of illness or an injury that is not urgent, the caregiver or caregiver's designee will be responsible for transportation of the child.

In medical emergencies, the child will be transported via ambulance. The child's caregiver will be notified as soon as possible.

### Accident Insurance

Students are automatically covered by accident insurance during school hours for the school year. There is a maximum \$2000 limit, and this insurance pays for the bills that your insurance policy will not cover. This insurance applies only to school-related accidents. However, additional insurance can be purchased. Please contact the school if you would like information on purchasing additional insurance coverage.

### Illness Guidelines/Communicable Diseases

Certain symptoms and illnesses require your child to be excluded from school for a period of time to prevent transmission to other people. Below are some general illness guidelines. Please call the school nurse if you are in doubt about sending your child to school.

**Fever:** Students with a temperature of or higher than 100 degrees F may not attend school until the student feels better and has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

**Vomiting:** A child with vomiting should be kept home if vomiting has occurred in the past 24 hours, if they are feeling unwell, or if they are not able to keep down food and liquid.

**Diarrhea:** Students with diarrhea should stay home if they are feeling ill or have had 3 or more instances of diarrhea or any stool accidents in the past 24 hours.

**Colds and Coughs:** Your child may attend school if they are fever free and feeling well, but should stay home if they have a severe cough, excessive nasal drainage, or are not feeling well enough to attend the school day.

**Strep Throat:** Your child with strep throat may return to school when they have been on antibiotics for at least 12 hours, feel well, and are fever free.

**Pink Eye or Conjunctivitis:** If your child's eye is red with thick or colored discharge, contact your healthcare provider. Medication may be required. Please contact the school nurse to discuss school attendance. Ability to attend school is dependent on factors such as your child's age and amount of drainage.

**Rashes:** A rash may be a sign of contagious illness. If your child has a widespread rash or it is associated with a fever, please contact your healthcare provider and acquire a medical note indicating when it is okay for your child to return to school.

**Headaches/Stomach Aches:** Your child should be kept home if they are feeling too ill to participate in normal activities.

Communicable diseases must be reported to the school, and may require temporary school exclusion. Please contact the school if your child has been diagnosed with coronavirus, Hib disease, chicken pox, measles, whooping cough (pertussis), meningitis, hepatitis, or any other contagious illness. If there is an outbreak of an illness that has an available immunization, any child who has not received said immunization, due to medical or religious exemption, may be excluded from school for a period of time after consultation with the MA Department of Public Health and/or the local board of health.

### Vision, Hearing, BMI, & Postural Screenings

The school nurse conducts state mandated vision screenings throughout the year for students in preschool through fifth grade, hearing screenings for students in preschool through third grade, and postural screenings for students in fifth and sixth grade. Parents/guardians will be notified only if there is any concern about your child's results, in which case a referral to a specialist will be suggested.

The state's Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening mandate requires that elementary schools collect height & weight measurements of all students in grades 1 and 4. The results of this screen are sent to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health as a combined number. Individual BMI results are always kept confidential.

For children to be excluded from mandated screenings, a request must be made in writing by a

parent/guardian, and proof that your child's primary care provider has conducted the screenings must be provided before the end of the school year.

### Medical Excuses

If a child is well enough to attend school, they will be expected to participate in all classes, including physical education and recess. However, if your child has sustained a physical injury that may be exacerbated by physical activity, please write a note and your child will be excused for that day only. If your child is expected to be out of Physical Education or recess for more than a day, a written note from a medical provider is required.

### Head Lice

If your child has an active head lice infestation, please inform the school nurse and ensure that your child is treated before attending school. The nurse is available to provide guidance and resources on lice treatment.

Students with signs and symptoms of head lice infestation at school will be sent to the school nurse for assessment. If a student is diagnosed with an active infestation, a parent/guardian will be notified and instructed on proper treatment. The student may stay in school for the remainder of the school day, but must be appropriately treated before returning to school the following day. Students should check in with the school nurse at the beginning of the following school day.

If a case of head lice is confirmed, siblings of the child with head lice will be checked by the school nurse. Classroom head lice notifications are not distributed for individual cases of head lice. In instances of multiple head lice cases, notifications may be distributed as deemed appropriate by the school nurse.

Broad head lice screening is not done in school, as these programs have not been proven to have any effect on the incidence of head lice in the school setting over time.

### Management of Life Threatening Allergies

If your child has a history of a severe allergic reaction, please contact the school nurse so an individual health care plan can be developed to ensure the safety of your child while at school. This plan will include necessary interventions to reduce exposure to allergens to the best of our ability (knowing that we can only be allergen-safe, not allergen-free) and to ensure that established procedures are followed to treat allergic reactions. Please also provide the school nurse with an allergy action plan completed by the medical provider, as well as doctor order and parent consent medication forms for epinephrine. Leverett Elementary School is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, and no student will be discriminated against or excluded from school activities based on their life-threatening allergy.

### Head Injuries

Because of the risks associated with head injuries, any child who sustains a head injury must be seen by the school nurse. If a concussion is suspected, the nurse will notify the caregiver and recommend that they follow up with the child's primary care provider. Depending on the severity of the injury, the child may be sent home to be monitored by the caregiver for symptoms of a concussion. A note and concussion treatment plan from a medical provider are required for students to return to school after a confirmed concussion.



## ACADEMIC INFORMATION

### Curricular Resources

As a public school in the state of Massachusetts Leverett Elementary School is accountable to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) for all instruction. MA DESE provides curricular frameworks from which learning content must be derived. Curricular Frameworks for each content area can be found here:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>

In order to meet DESE requirements for curricular content, LES utilizes many teacher-designed lessons and units in addition to the following curricula:

[Into Reading](#)

[Scholastic Book Room](#)

[Everyday Mathematics](#)

[Bridges in Mathematics](#)

[FOSS Science](#)

[Mystery Science](#)

[History Unerased](#)

[Open Social Studies](#)

[Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards](#)

[PATHS/Emoji Social Emotional Programs](#)

[Choose Love](#)

### Report Cards

Report cards will be sent home twice a year: mid-winter and on the last day of school. Report cards reflect your child's progress towards the grade level standards as determined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

### Caregiver Conferences

Caregiver Conferences are held twice a year (mid-Autumn and mid-Spring, see the calendar for exact dates). This is an opportunity for the teacher to share information with caregivers about their child's progress. It is also a good time for caregivers to ask questions and to share any concerns they may have about their child's school experience. If you have particular concerns about your child's progress or well-being in school at other points in the year, contact the classroom teacher. **It is important that information is shared in a timely manner, rather than waiting for the scheduled conference dates. Communication between caregivers and teachers is essential to success in school for students.**

### Assessment

Educators at LES use many different forms of formative and summative assessment to document student progress and to align instruction with student learning. Assessments include observations of student performance, conferences with students and families, end of unit curriculum assessments, DIAL 4, Amplify mCLASS, Universal Screeners for Mathematics, and

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

### *Amplify mCLASS*

The comprehensive mCLASS system includes efficient DIBELS 8th Edition's one-minute measures, a built-in dyslexia screener, intervention strategies, and robust reports. Learn more about mCLASS here: <https://amplify.com/programs/mclass/>

### *Universal Screeners for Number Sense*

The screeners are quick assessments that help to identify skills and concepts that indicate readiness for grade level content, as well as identify students who would benefit from additional support. Learn more about USNS here: <https://forefront.education/solutions/usns-project/>

### *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (DIAL 4)*

Kindergarten-aged students are assessed with the DIAL 4 upon entering their Kindergarten year. DIAL 4 assesses for Language, Self-Help, Social, and Conceptual Skills.

### *Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)*

Students educated with Massachusetts public funds are required by federal laws and the 1993 Massachusetts Education Reform Law, state law M. G. L. Chapter 69, section 1I, to participate in statewide testing. MCAS tests are administered each spring for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. In addition, students in grade 5 are required to participate in the Science MCAS.

Students with disabilities and ELL students must participate in all MCAS testing scheduled for their grades regardless of the program and services they are receiving, with the exception of EL students who are in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools (i.e., students first enrolled after the March SIMS submission), for whom ELA testing is optional; and students taking the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) who must take alternate assessments in the grades and subjects required for students in that grade. In addition, all EL students are required to participate in the ACCESS for ELLs tests, regardless of the English language services they receive, to comply with federal and state laws. The MCAS-Alt is available for students with significant disabilities who, due to the nature and severity of their disabilities, are unable to participate in the standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations. The IEP or 504 plan must state whether a student requires an alternate assessment and if so, in which subject(s).

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993, state law, [G.L. c. 69, § 1D](#), requires that all students who are seeking to earn a high school diploma, including students educated at public expense in educational collaboratives and approved and unapproved private special education schools within and outside the state, must meet the [Competency Determination \(CD\) standard](#), in addition to meeting all local graduation requirements. Students may fulfill the CD requirements through the standard MCAS tests or by submitting an MCAS competency portfolio. Students who do not pass the MCAS tests in grade 10 may take retests according to these [participation guidelines](#) in grades 11 and 12 and beyond.

### Instructional Supports

Any child may need additional support in school. When a teacher believes that a student is demonstrating a need for additional academic, social, emotional, behavioral, or physical support,

the teacher will first provide additional interventions in the general classroom setting. Strategies may include accommodations such as new teaching strategies or different ways a child can express what has been learned. The teacher may change the way the classroom is set up or may arrange for extra help from other school professionals. These supports or changes in the classroom are known as instructional supports or accommodations. A list of general classroom supports can be found in the Erving Union #28 District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), available here: [☰ Union #28 DCAP](#)

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

According to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), a multi-tiered system of support is “a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision making.”

The current MTSS model in Massachusetts (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/blueprint.pdf>) has been refined from previous versions. For example, this blueprint more explicitly focuses on equitable access and universal design for learning (UDL) and fully integrates social emotional and behavioral supports with academic supports (Lane, Oakes, Cantwell, & Royer, 2016). The three-tiered model is used to identify children who may benefit from additional support or further differentiation of instruction within the general classroom setting (Tier 1). A student who continues to require extra support beyond interventions at Tier 1 may be referred to the Child Study Team. This team of educators will examine evidence of the concern and construct a plan for progress monitoring of supports, which may include short-term intensive instruction from Essential Skills teachers (Tier 2).

### Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning is a framework for instructional design that allows for multiple venues of representation, engagement, and action/expression of knowledge. This framework is used to guide the design of individual lessons as well as larger units. Using the UDL model facilitates student engagement in their own learning as it teaches students the skill of choosing how to access lesson information, as well as how to demonstrate mastery of that information.

Learn more about Universal Design for Learning here:

<https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

Universal Design for Learning is a model that is promoted by the state of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to ensure inclusive classroom environments. Learn more about MA DESE expectations for inclusive practices here:

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/guidebook/overview.html>

### Section 504 Accommodations

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. In order to fulfill obligations under Section 504, Leverett Elementary School has the responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability shall knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices of the school system. UNDER SECTION 504, Leverett Elementary School has the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and, if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services or access accommodations. If the caregiver disagrees with the

determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer.

### Eligibility for Special Education Services (IEP)

The goal of special education is to provide learning strategies and methods in ways that will help children maintain appropriate progress in curricula areas. In Massachusetts, the special education system is based on the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), in combination with the state's special education law (MGL c. 71B). Before a determination can be made as to whether or not a student is eligible for special education, an evaluation of the student's educational strengths and needs must occur.

In cases where instructional support and/or accommodations on Tiers 1 and 2 have not been successful for a student, a comprehensive education evaluation may be necessary. In order for an evaluation of a child to proceed, parents/guardians must give written consent for specific assessments to be conducted. Caregivers have the right to request an evaluation. A Special Education Team is formed to consider the results of the core evaluation. Caregivers, the Principal, and the child's current teacher are always members of the team. The other members are determined by the specific assessments required.

The following assessments are done as part of the initial evaluation process:

- assessment of educational status, history and school progress,
- assessment by a teacher who recently had or currently has the child in a classroom,
- assessment by specialists in areas related to a child's suspected need for special education.

Other assessments which may be conducted based on need or caregiver request, are:

- health assessment
- psychological assessment
- assessment by a nurse, social worker, guidance or adjustment counselor
- assessment by an occupational therapist
- assessment by an audiologist
- assessment by a neurologist or other specialists.

In order for the student to receive specially designed instruction described in an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), the team must identify a disability and determine that the student needs specially designed instruction and/or related services in order to make effective progress in school.

Following the completion of assessments, the results are shared with the Team members (including caregivers). If a disability is identified by the Team and specially designed instruction is required, an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will be developed to include specific educational objectives the Team would like the child to attain in the coming year. The plan is written by the Team, including the caregivers, who may accept or reject the plan as written, request an independent evaluation, or meet again with some of the Team members for more discussion.

### Director of Student Support

The Director of Student Support Services for Union 28, Corrina Wisclo, oversees the Special Education programs in each Union 28 school. She may be contacted at 413-423-3331. The Principal of the Leverett Elementary School receives requests for special education screenings and schedules assessments and evaluation meetings. The Principal works with the Director of Student Support Services to develop and supervise special education services. Questions about Special Education can be directed to either Dr. Annie Foley Ruiz or Corrina Wisclo.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Nature-based Learning

Leverett Elementary School sits on a gorgeous campus that abuts a large recreational field, as well as many hiking trails. Classes utilize the outdoors in many ways, including outdoor lessons, snack, and recess. **Children are expected to go outside with their class and should be dressed appropriately for outdoor weather.** We highly recommend students dress in layers to enable effective participation in outdoor activities during different temperatures. The Principal will make recommendations for outdoor activities according to the Child Care Weather Watch (<https://www.c-uphd.org/documents/wellness/weatherwatch.pdf>) recommendations.

It is recommended that students have an extra set of clothes and shoes in case of accidents. **All articles of outerwear should be labeled with the owner's name or initials.**

Note: Children who want to play in the snow while outdoors are required to wear boots and snow pants. Flip-flops and loose sandals are not safe footwear for running and climbing activities.

### Greenhouse-Garden Program

Our seasonal, hands-on Greenhouse program invites students to participate at the school greenhouse and gardens during recess and some collaborative instructional time. This program focuses on creating an awareness and respect of the many life cycles that exist in the natural world (plants, insects, soils) with an emphasis on the many roles that plants have in our daily lives. In addition to learning basic gardening skills, students also participate in hands-on art related activities. Literature and literacy experiences are also incorporated into the program. Imaginative play and fantasy are developed in farm and 'land-before-time' "gardens."

### Early Childhood Program

LES Early Childhood is a full-day program following the same hours as the other LES classrooms. The program consists of two mixed-age classes of children ages 3.6 (3 years and six months) to age 6. Kindergarten aged students, who are 5 years old on September 1 of the school year, are free. Children aged 3.6 - 5 are tuition-based on a sliding scale.

The Leverett Elementary Early Childhood Program takes place in two sunny, spacious classrooms in the North Wing and outdoor play area at the Leverett Elementary School. Our program uses a Reggio Emilia inspired approach focused on exploration, play, and developmentally appropriate learning activities. Our multi-age program values children in early childhood as agents of their own world and seeks to support their empathy and compassion for others. We emphasize values of social justice and equity as we seek to empower our students to make the world a better place for everyone.

Leverett Elementary Early Childhood Program utilizes relational experiences to build students' social and academic understandings. Our goal for our students is that they learn to engage in the learning process both as learners and teachers. Our students develop skills to cooperate together, share, take turns, listen to each other, and share their own thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. Children ages 3.6 - 6 build social skills through activities such as block building, dramatic play, art projects, writing, reading books, listening to music, math games, solving puzzles, making "creations," engaging in multiple types of sensory play, just to name a few. Additionally, LES

Early Childhood students participate in group meetings to observe their world, count, and sing songs together. Students develop a sharp eye for observing and describing the world around them. Our students use riding toys and go outdoors as often as possible to play, climb, run, dig, and explore our outdoor environment.

We are proudly a member of the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. Learn more about this alliance here: <https://www.reggioalliance.org/>

### The Union #28 Community Network for Children (CNC) Program

The Community Network for Children, founded in 2009, is funded by Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant funds through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. We support initiatives to create programs that address the needs of families and early education and care professionals with young children living in Erving, Wendell, New Salem, Shutesbury and Leverett. We strive to collaborate with existing human service agencies to further fulfill these needs. If you live in one of the five towns and have a young child 0-8 years of age, then your family can benefit the Community Network for Children. If you are expecting a baby or have a newborn and live in one of the 5 towns, please contact us to be put on our mailing list and receive a Welcome baby gift bag!

CNC Tales & Tunes and Playgroups are held in Shutesbury, Leverett, Erving, Wendell, and New Salem. StoryWalks, Parent Support Groups and other parenting information sessions are held throughout the year.

The Community Network for Children Office is located at: Swift River School 201 Wendell Road, New Salem, MA 01355 Voice: (413) 422-0170

More information can also be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/erving.com/cncprogram/home>

Or search Facebook for **Community Network for Children**

Contact CNC for current schedule and programs 413-422-0170 call/text.

### Specialist Programs

#### *Art*

LES students have art lessons with Karie Neal 1-2 times a week. The program is a hands-on studio art approach to visual art instruction. The children are exposed to a wide variety of materials. They are presented with opportunities that encourage exploration and experimentation. They draw and paint, make prints, sculpture, ceramics and crafts. Students are introduced to the major elements of visual art: line, color, texture, form, shape, contrast and value. They use these elements to make unique and self-satisfying works of art.

#### *Music*

LES students have music classes with Heidi Renauld once a week. The elementary music

curriculum is based on the words of Carl Orff which are “Tell me, I forget; Show me, I remember; Involve me, I understand.” Students experience many forms of music including singing, playing instruments, reading music, dance/movement to music and composing at grade



level. Students are exposed to a wide variety of musical genres, from a multitude of cultures to help with a global appreciation of music. The intent of the elementary music curriculum is to develop students who are quality listeners and creative, cooperative communicators who are willing to listen openly to the world throughout their lives.

### *Physical Education*

LES students have Physical Education classes with Coach Sadie Graham 1-2 times a week. Students play active games where every student in the class has a chance to fit in and feel successful. Games taught require cooperation and teamwork. Skills such as attending, following directions and respecting one another are reinforced. The intended outcome is an appreciation for physical activity that will benefit children throughout their lives.

### *Library Media*

Students have access to a beautiful school library with many text and digital resources available. All LES classes have one structured Library Media class a week where they receive instruction on finding and using materials for research and pleasure reading.

## BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

### Behavioral Expectations

Every member of the Leverett Elementary School community is expected to behave in a respectful manner that supports our community. Staff, students, and visitors are expected to behave in ways that acknowledge and honor the experiences of others. When conflicts arise, members of our community are expected to engage in non-violent, compassionate means of problem solving and repair. We strive to uphold a community with honest, open communication and unconditional positive regard for all members.

### Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviors

Every effort is made to create an environment where students feel their needs can be met without engaging in negative behaviors. When negative behavior occurs, educators examine the context of the behavior for antecedents and possible consequences. We work with the students affected to determine prosocial ways to have needs met. Negative behaviors are addressed in a developmentally appropriate manner, with the ultimate goal of helping the child to learn from the situation and have strategies to make more positive and productive choices alongside necessary relational repair.

As caregivers are an essential member of a student's team, caregivers will be informed of continued reoccurrence of maladaptive behaviors. As appropriate, caregivers will participate in a plan of action to support the student to develop more adaptive behaviors.

### Due Process for Suspensions

Suspensions are only issued when all other efforts have proven ineffective to help a student make appropriate behavioral adjustments.

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO SUSPENSION UNDER M.G.L. CHAPTER 71, §37H<sup>3/4</sup>**

A student may not be suspended under M.G.L. Chapter 71, §37H<sup>3/4</sup>, unless one or more of the following apply:

- A. Alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents.
- B. There are documented specific reasons why alternative remedies are unsuitable or counterproductive.
- C. The situation is such that the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.

### **NOTICE OF PROPOSED SUSPENSION**

Except in the case of an emergency removal or disciplinary offense defined under M.G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½ or an in-school suspension as defined by 603 CMR 53.02(6), the school shall provide the student and caregiver with written and oral notice of the proposed out-of-school suspension, an opportunity to be heard at hearing, and the opportunity to participate at the hearing. Notice shall set forth in plain language:

- a) the disciplinary offense;
- b) the basis for the charge;
- c) the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
- d) the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the caregiver to attend the hearing;
- e) the date, time, and location of the hearing;
- f) the right of the student and student's caregiver to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. In order to conduct a hearing without the caregiver present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the caregiver. Reasonable effort is presumed if the principal sent written notice and documented at least two attempts to contact the caregiver in the manner specified by the caregiver for emergency situations.

All written communications regarding notice of proposed suspension shall be either by hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to address provided by the caregiver for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and caregiver) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

## **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

A short-term suspension is the removal of the student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive days or less. Out-of-school short-term suspensions which do not cumulatively over the course of the school year exceed ten (10) days of suspension shall be conducted in accordance with this section.

Principal Hearing. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts. A caregiver present at the hearing shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances.

Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal will make a determination whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequence. The principal will provide notification in writing of their determination in the form of an update to the student and caregiver, and provide reasons for the determination. If the student is suspended, the principal shall inform the caregiver of the type and duration of the

suspension, and shall provide an opportunity for the student to make up assignments and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through 3, the principal shall send their determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the address provided by the caregiver for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and caregiver) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate.

### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSIONS: HEARING AND PRINCIPAL DETERMINATION**

A long-term suspension is the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student has committed the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information. The student shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the principal will consider in determining whether alternatives to suspension such as loss of privileges, detention, an apology, a student contract, restitution, and/or probation are appropriate.

Additionally, the student shall have the following additional rights:

- i. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
- ii. the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's and or caregiver's expense;
- iii. the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
- iv. the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- v. the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal. All participants shall be informed that the hearing is being recorded by audio. A copy of the audio recording will be provided to the student or caregiver upon request.

Based on the evidence submitted at the hearing the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension (the use of evidence-based strategies and programs, such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive interventions and supports) what remedy or consequence will be imposed. If the principal decides to impose a long-term suspension, the written determination shall:

- i. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
- ii. Set out key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- iii. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school;
- iv. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive a specific list of education services to make academic progress during removal, and the contact information of a school member who can provide more detailed information.
- v. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or their designee (only if a long-term suspension has been imposed) within five (5) calendar days, which may be extended by caregiver request in writing an additional seven (7) calendar days.

The long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

If the student is in grades pre-k through grade 3, the principal shall send their determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons prior to imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

All written communications regarding the hearing and principal determination shall be either hand delivery or delivered by first-class mail, certified mail, or email to the provided by the caregiver for school communications (or other method agreed to by the principal and caregiver) in English, and in the primary language in the home if other than English, or by other means of communication where appropriate.

## **APPEAL OF LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

A student who is placed on a long-term suspension shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent if properly and timely filed. A good faith effort shall be made to include the caregiver at the hearing. The appeal shall be held within three (3) school days of the appeal, unless the student or caregiver requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, which the superintendent shall grant.

The student and caregiver shall have the same rights afforded at the long-term suspension principal hearing. Within five (5) calendar days of the hearing the superintendent shall issue their written decision which meets the criteria required of the principal's determination. If the superintendent determines the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than that of the principal. The superintendent's decision shall be final.

## **EMERGENCY REMOVAL**

A student may be temporarily removed prior to notice and hearing when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. A Principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate

provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal.

During the emergency, removal the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's caregiver of the emergency removal and the reason for the emergency removal. The principal shall also provide the due process requirements of written notice for suspensions and provide for a hearing which meets the due process requirements of a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable, within the two (2) school day time period, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and caregiver.

A decision shall be rendered orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day. The decision shall meet all of the due process requirements of a principal's determination in a long-term suspension or short-term suspension, as applicable.

### **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION UNDER 603 CMR 53:02(6) & 603 CMR 53.10**

In-school suspension is defined as the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not the school premises, for not more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions over the course of the school year.

A Principal may impose an in-school suspension as defined above according to the following procedures:

The principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for the charge, and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal shall inform the student of the length of the student's in-school suspension, which shall not exceed ten (10) days, cumulatively or consecutively, in a school year.

On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The principal shall also invite the caregiver to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible. If the principal is unable to reach the caregiver after making and documenting at least two (2) attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the caregiver of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall send written notice to the student and caregiver about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the caregiver to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth above, if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the caregiver for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the caregiver.

## **SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION FOR DISCIPLINARY OFFENSES UNDER M.G.L. 71 §§37H and 37H½**

The due process notification and hearing requirements in the preceding sections do not apply to the following disciplinary offenses:

### **Possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or assault of staff**

A student may be subject to expulsion if found in possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, or the student assaults a member of educational staff, and the principal determines the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student and caregiver(s) in writing of the opportunity for a hearing, and the right to have representation at the hearing, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses. After said hearing, a principal may, at their discretion, decide to levy a suspension rather than expulsion. A student expelled for such an infraction shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of their appeal. The student has the right to counsel at the hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student was guilty of the alleged offense.

### **Felony complaint or issuance of felony delinquency complaint**

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony, or the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the Principal may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the Principal if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Principal shall notify the student in writing of the charges, the reasons for the suspension (prior to such suspension taking effect), and the right to appeal. The Principal will also provide the student and caregiver(s) the process for appealing the suspension to the Superintendent. The request for appeal must be made in writing within five (5) calendar days. The hearing shall be held within three (3) days of the request. The suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing before the Superintendent. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

### **Felony conviction or adjudication/admission in court of guilt for a felony or felony delinquency**

The Principal may expel a student convicted of a felony, or who has an adjudication or admission of guilt regarding a felony, if the Principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for the proposed expulsion. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal the decision to the Superintendent, as well as the appeal process. The expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the Superintendent.



The student shall notify the Superintendent in writing of their request for an appeal of the decision no later than five (5) calendar days following the date of the expulsion. The Superintendent hearing shall be held with the student and caregiver(s) within three (3) calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, and shall have the right to counsel. The Superintendent has the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the Principal. The Superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

## **STUDENT SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING**

The District shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding in-school suspensions, short-term and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, access to education services under 603 CMR 53.13, and such other information as may be required by the Department. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

The principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status. In reviewing the data, the principal shall assess the extent of in-school suspensions, short- and long-term suspensions, expulsions, and emergency removals under 603 CMR 53.07, and the impact of such disciplinary action on selected student populations. The principal shall further determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify disciplinary practices due to over-reliance on expulsion, or in-school or out-of-school suspension, or emergency removals, or the impact of such suspensions, removals, and expulsions on selected student populations compared with other students.

### Disciplining of Students with an IEP or 504 (from MGL 71, 37H & 37H1/2)

#### *Authority of School Personnel*

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct. School personnel may remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than 10 consecutive school days (to the extent those alternatives are applied to children without disabilities), and for additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct.

After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal the public agency must provide services so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and

modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

For disciplinary changes in placement that would exceed 10 consecutive school days, if the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the school code is determined not to be a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to children without disabilities. The school is only required to provide services during periods of removal to a child with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days or less in that school year, if it provides services to a child without disabilities who is similarly removed.

#### *Manifestation Determination*

Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the LEA, the caregiver, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team (as determined by the caregiver and the LEA) must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the caregiver to determine if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability. If the LEA, the caregiver, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, LES must conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless the LEA had conducted a functional behavioral assessment before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child; or if a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the LEA agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

#### *Special Circumstances*

School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability, if the child carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or to or at a school, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises.

### Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan

#### *Priority Statement*

- Leverett Elementary School expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.
- LES is committed to providing all students with a safe, supportive environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.
- We understand that members of certain student groups, such as students with disabilities, students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and homeless students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing. The school or district will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills,

knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. We repeat that this plan is not focused on any one group of students but strives to create a safe environment that promotes positive peer relationships for everyone.

- We will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation, in our school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-related activities. We will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore the target's sense of safety. We will support this commitment in all aspects of our school community, including curriculum, instructional programs, professional development, extracurricular activities, and caregiver involvement.
- The LES Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying, and LES is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.

A complete copy of the LES Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan can be found online at [www.leverettschool.org](http://www.leverettschool.org). If you wish to have a printed copy of the plan, you can request one from the school secretary.

## RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

### Leverett Elementary School Anti-Racism Commitment

The Leverett Elementary School Committee and the Union #28 Leadership Team reject all forms of racism as destructive to the school's mission, values, vision and goals.

Leverett Elementary is committed to the following principles:

1. Establishing and sustaining a school community that shares the collective responsibility to prevent actions that perpetuate racism and its harmful outcomes.
2. Cultivating the unique strengths, talents and interests of every student to end the predictive value of social and cultural factors, such as race, class, and gender, on student success.
3. Respecting and championing the diversity and life experiences of all community members to support the school mission, values, vision and goals. Acknowledging that racism is often compounded by other forms of discrimination, including, but not limited to sexism, homophobia, classism, ableism, transphobia and xenophobia.

### *Purpose*

Personal and institutional racism have historically existed and continue to exist. Nationwide there are significant disparities between racial groups in student academic performance, achievement, and participation in academic programs. These include disparities in graduation rates, gifted-and-talented identification, course participation, special education identification, standardized test scores, and suspension rates. Combating racism in our schools is a legal and moral imperative.

These equity gaps exist because of inequitable access to opportunities that have significant intergenerational effects and perpetuate economic, social, and educational inequity. However, racial inequities, compounded by segregation within schools, were created over time and can be eliminated.

Similarly, personal prejudice is learned and can be unlearned. Educators play a vital role in reducing racism and inequity by recognizing the manifestations of racism, creating racially integrated learning and working environments, and dismantling educational systems that directly or indirectly perpetuate racism and privilege through teaching, policy, and practice.

Racial bias can be unconscious or unintentional. This is why anti-racist policies and commitments are so important in eradicating racism within our school. When we rely on good intentions alone we allow the opportunity for bias and prejudice to operate without oversight.

The purpose of this policy is to eliminate all forms of racism from the culture of the school in conjunction with related school policies.

### *Anti-racism Policy Regulations*

These regulations are designed to dismantle the individual, institutional, and structural racism that exists in the school. The School Committee directs the following actions:

### *Policy Communication*

The school shall post a public statement against racism in a location visible to students, staff, and visitors entering the school as well as on the school website. The public statement shall read: “Leverett Elementary School is committed to creating an equitable school culture that cultivates the unique gifts, talents, and interests of every child. We reject all forms of racism as destructive to our mission, vision, values, and goals. We commit to abolishing racism in our community and invite all families, staff and school visitors to join us in this effort.”

The School Council shall operate utilizing an anti-racism framework. A racially diverse school council will be strongly encouraged. The school council shall promote equity and diversity within the school.

The Anti-Racism Commitment and Policies will help guide the [School Improvement Plan](#).

The Principal and School Council will invite students to provide input and feedback on school accountability in regards to the anti-racism commitment. The perspectives of students of color will be prioritized so as to intentionally yield power to students to narrativize their own experience of how racism occurs in the school.

This policy shall be included in handbooks provided to students and families.

This policy shall be translated into other languages (as needed) and be made available for families.

### *Leadership and Administration*

The School Administration and the School Committee shall address systemic racism as follows:

1. Develop and conduct a systemic Equity Needs Assessment for the school to identify processes and practices that could contribute to inequitable outcomes. The Assessment shall also include an inventory of voluntary equity-related data collected by the district. Following the assessment, strategies will be developed and implemented to address any identified issues.
2. To address disparities in access to school resources:
  - a. Assessing staff recommendations and referrals for special education services
  - b. Prioritizing equitable access to curriculum and adjusting curriculums to avoid inherent racial bias
3. The school shall implement alternative discipline processes, such as restorative justice, to reduce racial disparities in discipline and suspension.
  - a. To ensure consistency in student discipline, the school shall collect and, at least annually, report data on all disciplinary actions. The data shall include the student’s race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, special education, and English Language Learner status, as well as a written explanation of the behavior leading to discipline and the specific corrective action taken.

- b. When school administrators determine a student has committed a racist act, the student shall be provided the opportunity to learn about the impact of their actions on others through such practices as restorative justice, mediation, role play or other explicit policies or training resources.

### *Curriculum and Instruction*

1. Curriculum and instructional materials for all grades shall reflect cultural and racial diversity, and include a range of perspectives and experiences. Curriculums will recognize and honor Black, Indigenous and People of Color's histories and contributions.
2. All curriculum materials shall be examined for racial bias by the district's Director of Learning Design with input from the School Council. Where materials may reflect racial bias, teachers utilizing the materials will acknowledge the potential bias and communicate it to students and parents.
3. The school shall implement an anti-racist curriculum and provide educational resources for students at every grade level.
4. Academic enrichment programs (including field trips, special school speakers, etc) shall examine the history and contributions of people of color.

### *Training and Performance Assessment*

1. All school staff shall be given this anti-racism policy.
2. All school staff shall be trained about racism and about how racism produces inequitable practices and outcomes.
3. All teachers and administrators shall be trained in anti-racism models in education and restorative justice.
4. Anti-racist teaching practices shall be incorporated into all performance assessments, including the teacher appraisal system and the administrator performance appraisal.

### *Policy Enforcement*

1. Administration shall collect, review, and provide an annual report to the School Committee on all voluntary data gathered regarding racial disparities in areas including, but not limited to, student achievement, enrollment, suspension/discipline, graduation rates, gifted-and-talented identification, and special education referrals. The report shall also include any evidence of growth or regression in each area outlined by the anti-racism policy (i.e., communication, leadership and administration, curriculum and instruction). The written reports shall also be made available to the public and to the School Council.
2. The Superintendent and Principal shall be responsible for implementation and evaluation of the Anti-Racism Commitment. Adequate financial resources and designated personnel shall be prioritized by the School Committee to support the maintenance and perpetuation of these initiatives.
3. The school leadership shall ensure there are various, including anonymous, means for students and staff to report racism and other forms of discrimination.

*Definitions* - adapted from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at [www.racialequityalliance.org](http://www.racialequityalliance.org)

Anti-racism: the practice of identifying, challenging, and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism.

Individual racism: pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race. Individual racism includes both privately held beliefs, conscious and unconscious, and external behaviors and actions towards others.

Institutional Racism: occurs within institutions and organizations, such as schools, that adopt and maintain policies, practices, and procedures that often unintentionally produce inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.

Structural (or systemic) racism: encompasses the history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions and society. It refers to the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies that perpetuate a system of inequity that is detrimental to communities of color.

*This text was adapted from the Albemarle County Public Schools Policy on Antiracism, Albemarle, VA <https://www.k12albemarle.org/our-division/anti-racism-policy/policy>*

### Discussion of Sensitive Topics

The Leverett School is strengthened by its diversity, which encompasses a wide range of beliefs and experiences. Our job is to provide a safe learning environment for every student. Occasionally, teasing or inappropriate language is brought into the school. The staff will address such behavior promptly and make a decision as to whether it is an individual matter, or one which students would benefit from discussing together. Sometimes discussion of sensitive topics (divorce, death, violent news, substance abuse, racism, sexism, gender, social class, lifestyle differences, etc.) helps all children to be able to ask questions, express fears and discomfort, and to get to a place of understanding and respect for a different point of view or experience. These discussions may arise without prior warning and the staff will make a professional decision (in consultation with the Principal and school psychologist) to allow the children to “clear the air” while grappling with an issue. If this occurs, caregivers will be notified that the issue was discussed.

### Caregiver Notification Relative to Sex Education

School districts in Massachusetts are obligated to inform families in writing about any courses, classes, or events that primarily involve human sexual education or human sexuality issues no less than two weeks before their occurrence. Each notice to caregivers about a course, class, or event covered by this policy will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy and will inform caregivers that they may:

- (1) exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school Principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the caregiver under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
- (2) inspect and review program instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to caregivers to the extent practicable. Caregivers may arrange with the Principal to review the materials at the school, and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.



A caregiver who is dissatisfied with

- a) a decision of the Principal concerning notice,
- b) access to instructional materials, or
- c) exemption for the student under this policy

may send a written request to the Superintendent of Schools for review. The Superintendent of Schools or their designee will review the issue and give the caregiver a timely written decision within fifteen days of the request unless extenuating circumstances require a delay.

A caregiver who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the caregiver a timely written decision, within thirty days of the request unless extenuating circumstances require a delay. A caregiver who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

### How to Handle a Concern

The policies, procedures, and programs of Leverett Elementary School are consistent with its philosophy. This handbook reflects our commitment to excellence and good relations with all members of the school community. Occasionally concerns occur and a need develops to share those concerns. Every effort should be made by the caregiver and teacher to solve a problem together. More information is generally available from the teacher regarding a particular incident or situation than from anyone else.

School problems should be handled:

FIRST with the staff member

SECOND with the Principal

THIRD with the Superintendent of Schools

FOURTH with the School Committee: Any complaints requiring School Committee action must be in writing.

### Communication with Teachers and the School

Contacting the teacher directly to request a conference is the best way to address important concerns. Conferences can be arranged at any time during the school year. **Don't wait until the biannual conferences to discuss an issue of importance.** If you have a quick communication to share with your child's teacher, you may contact them by school phone, email, or note. Teachers have both voicemail and email accounts at school. Teachers will check their email and voice mail daily and you should receive a reply within 24 hours. If the issue is especially time-sensitive, such as a change in your child's end-of-the-day plans, always leave a message with the office. **If there is an emergency that affects your child, please email or call Principal Dr. Annie Foley Ruiz at [foleyruiz@leverettschool.org](mailto:foleyruiz@leverettschool.org) at any time.**

### Rights of Divorced or Separated Parents

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial caregiver may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial caregiver is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless:

1. the caregiver has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. the caregiver has been denied visitation, or
3. the caregiver's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. there is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the caregiver.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial caregiver must submit a written request for the student record to the school Principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial caregiver by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial caregiver, that it will provide the non-custodial caregiver with access after 21 days, unless the custodial caregiver provides the Principal with documentation that the non-custodial caregiver is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

(e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial caregiver from student records provided to non-custodial caregivers. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial caregiver that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial caregiver.

Regulatory Authority:

603 CMR 23.00: M.G.L. c. 71, 34D, 34E.

### Student Record Regulations

Leverett Elementary School maintains children's records in a way that ensures confidentiality. General information including records of attendance, academic achievement, school behavior, and the like are kept in a locked file cabinet in the Main Office. A log indicating the name and date of anyone accessing education records is included at the front of each student record folder and must be completed by anyone accessing those records, except a person exempt from that requirement by regulation which means, primarily, staff who work directly with the child. In cases where records include more than one student, such as the special education register, these same rules apply, except that care is taken to ensure that caregivers may see only the information for their child.

A caregiver or a caregiver's designee who requests an opportunity to review their child's records may do so in writing. That request will be granted as soon as is practicable and within 10 days of

the request. The school will assist in the interpretation of the records while they are being reviewed. If a caregiver wishes for copies of their child's records, the school district will provide those copies.

If a caregiver wishes a change in their child's record, they may confer with the Principal or request a change in writing. The Principal must respond to that request within one week. If the Principal's decision is adverse, the caregiver may appeal in writing to the Superintendent of Schools who must respond within two weeks. If the Superintendent's decision is adverse, the caregiver may appeal in writing to the School Committee, which must hold a hearing within four weeks, governed by formal procedures at which the caregiver may be represented by an advocate and school officials may be represented by an advocate.

The school district only releases student names or permits access to student records under the extremely limited circumstances permitted by the Student Record Regulations. The regulations do permit and the school district may release for publication the student's name, class, participation in certain activities, or receipt of certain award, but only after informing caregivers of this practice and allowing them to exclude their child from such lists. The most common instance of this is informing caregivers of the children in individual classes.

All records, except transcripts from previous years, are under the direct supervision of the school Principal who is responsible for maintaining confidentiality. All staff with access to these records are trained at the beginning of the school year in the responsibilities associated with confidentiality. The school district rarely has occasion to destroy records because such records accompany students to the secondary schools associated with the district. Registers/transcripts are kept at the office of Superintendent of Schools for sixty years and then are destroyed only after proper notice is given. Any temporary records kept for seven years because forwarding them to the secondary school was inappropriate, are destroyed only after proper notice is given.

### Transfer of School Records

Transfers are made most easily if adequate notice has been given. The school and the teacher can help prepare a child for a transition to another school. Health and academic records will be sent to the new school when the caregivers have signed a release form at the new school and the new school requests the records.

### Names, Addresses, and Phone Numbers on School Lists

The school publishes a School Directory, which includes student and caregiver names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Caregivers are asked to give their consent to be included in this Directory as a part of the back-to-school process. This Directory is distributed to every family at school.

Consistent with federal and state regulations about privacy, the Leverett School will provide information about children who are in afterschool activities, specific teacher's classes (not including Special Education or Chapter 1 services) or other activities such as chorus to caregivers of children in those activities. If you prefer that your child's name not be included on these lists or if you prefer that your telephone number and/or address not be included, please indicate that in writing to the school.

The names and addresses of all students are also provided to the Leverett Police & Fire Departments when approved by the School Committee. This information is used only in the event of an emergency.

## Grievance Procedures

Leverett Elementary School has established an internal procedure in order to provide for prompt and equitable resolutions of complaints.

### *Definitions*

A “Grievance” is a complaint made pursuant to, and arising out of, the Leverett Elementary School's obligation to comply with state regulations regarding civil rights, discrimination and harassment.

An “Aggrieved Party” is a person or persons making the complaint.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this grievance procedure is to secure prompt and equitable solutions to grievances.

No aggrieved party will be subject to coercion, intimidation, interference, or discrimination for registering a complaint or for assisting in the investigation of any alleged complaints within the context of this grievance procedure.

All documents, communications and records dealing with the filing of a grievance will be kept confidential to the full extent provided by law.

The principal shall serve as the primary harassment grievance officer. They will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all harassment complaints in accordance with the established procedures. In the case that the harassment involves the principal, or the aggrieved party feels uncomfortable disclosing the information to the principal, the Superintendent shall serve as the temporary grievance officer. If the harassment involves the superintendent, the Chair of the Leverett School Committee shall serve as the grievance officer.

### *Procedure*

1. Any member of the school community who believes that they have been subjected to sexual harassment will report the incident(s) to the grievance officer. All complaints shall be investigated promptly and resolved as soon as possible.
2. The grievance officer will attempt to resolve the problem in an informal manner through the following process:
3. The grievance officer will confer with the charging party in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts and may interview any witness.
4. The grievance officer will then attempt to meet with the charged party in order to obtain their response to the complaint.
5. The grievance officer will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to establish the facts.
6. On the basis of the grievance officer's perception of the situation they may:
  - a. Attempt to resolve the matter informally through reconciliation.
  - b. Report the incident and transfer the record to the superintendent or their designee, and so notify the parties by certified mail.
7. After reviewing the record made by the grievance officer, the superintendent or designee may attempt to gather any more evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation to the committee for termination or expulsion. At this stage of the proceedings the parties may present witnesses and other evidence and may also be represented. The parties, to the extent permissible by law, shall be informed of the disposition of the complaint. All matters

involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible. If it is determined that inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the offending conduct.

8. The grievance officer, upon request, will provide the charging party with government agencies that handle sexual harassment matters.

### Family Engagement

Caregivers contribute crucial elements to a strong and joyful school, including support, advice and hard work. Please consider joining one of the following or this tradition at the Leverett Elementary School by joining one of these organizations. There are many other ways parents/guardians can be involved in the life and work of the school. The Friday Post will often contain requests for volunteers. Classroom teachers also will ask for caregiver assistance with different projects throughout the year.

### *Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO)*

The PTO exists to support and enhance the educational, social, and physical environment within the school and school community. This is accomplished through various activities, social events and fund raising efforts held throughout the school year. Some previous and ongoing PTO sponsored events and educational contributions include: All-school directory, Family Game and Skate nights, Staff Appreciation Luncheon, assembly performances, bus service for field trips, Grade 6 yearbooks, and various program and facility equipment.

All LES families and staff are part of the PTO; membership is automatic. As PTO Members, involvement with the production of and participation in any and all PTO events/programs is welcomed and encouraged. One important need is for a Class Representative to the PTO for every homeroom. Event details, program updates and requests for volunteers are communicated through the LES Friday Afternoon Post.

Board Meetings are open to all and are typically held once a month. Meeting dates/times and locations will be listed in the Friday Afternoon Post and on the school calendar.

Board Members' names and contact information are located at the beginning of the All-School Directory.

### *Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)*

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council is focused on the goal of collaboration with the school community to influence special education programs and policies in real and valuable ways. Evening meetings are held 3 to 4 times a year, with a specific topic addressed at each meeting. Announcements of meeting times and topics are announced in the Friday Post. All interested caregivers and members of the community are invited to attend.

### *School Council*

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 mandated the formation of a School Council at each school in the Commonwealth. The School Council's responsibility is to consult with the Principal in the process of identifying educational needs of students attending the school, adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with the goals and standards the Commonwealth established as a result of this law, and formulating a school improvement plan

which is reviewed and approved annually by the Superintendent.

The Leverett School Council includes the following members: the Principal, two school staff members, two parents/guardians and one member from the Leverett community who is not a caregiver of children in the school. Terms are usually for three years. Meetings are held monthly throughout the school year and are open to the public.

## LEVERETT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### Function of the School Committee

The School Committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The Committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

1. **Legislative or policymaking.** The Committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
2. **Appraisal.** The Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
3. **Provision of financial resources.** The Committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school district to carry out the Committee's policies.
4. **Public relations.** The Committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
5. **Educational planning and evaluation.** The Committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School District.

The committee is the elected representative body of the Town and is the final authority for local decisions on school policy and budget. It reaches decisions by a majority vote.

### Meeting Procedures

A printed agenda is followed at each meeting. Agendas are prepared by the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee Chair a week to ten days prior to each meeting and are designed to provide a specified time for public comment about issues relevant for the School Committee. In addition, the agenda provides time for presentation of reports and recommendations by the school administration and for deliberation by the School Committee members about matters affecting the school and its program.

### Agenda Items

Any person wishing to have an item placed on the Committee agenda should present that item to the Superintendent of Schools, the School Principal, or the Committee Chairperson at least ten days prior to the date of the next School Committee Meeting. Efforts will be made, when possible, to place such items on the School Committee's next regular meeting agenda, provided that the item has gone through the appropriate administrative levels. Submission of written statements of explanation or support of any agenda item is encouraged and for certain types of issues may be specifically requested. Such statements are helpful to the Committee as it ensures



careful consideration of the issues involved.

### Concerns

Concerns, problems and complaints about the school should normally be brought first to a teacher's attention (when appropriate) or if a satisfactory result is not achieved or if more appropriate to the Principal or Superintendent of Schools (see page 34). If the Superintendent of Schools is unable to resolve the matter, it may be brought to the School Committee for further consideration. After considering the information submitted by both the petitioners and the Superintendent of Schools, the School Committee may grant a hearing to the interested parties. Such a hearing may be held during a regular meeting of the Committee, either in open session or executive session in accordance with the State's Open Meeting Law.

### Public Participation at School Committee Meetings (Policy)

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear public comment.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority.

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner. The Chairperson will determine the length of the Public Comment period given the urgency and relevancy of the items raised, the number of other speakers and the length of items on the agenda. The Chairperson, in conjunction with the Committee, will determine an appropriate time to revisit the concerns/issues raised by the public.
2. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and city/town. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit, in extenuating circumstances.
3. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of School Committee authority.
4. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate speech which is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless

conduct, or contains obscenities.

5. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Leverett School Committee.
6. Sign up instructions will be provided for those who wish to participate in Public Comment.

**The Committee encourages caregivers and other interested citizens to attend and participate in its public meetings, which are generally held the first Monday of the month at 6:00 PM in the school library (or Google Meet).**

## POLICIES

Policies referenced in this Handbook are included below. The entire school policy manual can be found in the school office, as well as on our website through the following link:

[http://leverettschool.org/school\\_information/school\\_committee/policy\\_manual](http://leverettschool.org/school_information/school_committee/policy_manual)

### School and District Policies Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment \*

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Acts of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Chapter 151B of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Leverett Elementary School affirms that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, national origin, disability, homelessness, sexual orientation, pregnancy or pregnancy related condition, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity it operates, including employment therein, and admission thereto. Leverett Elementary School will not tolerate verbal or physical harassment of any student or school personnel under any circumstances.

\* An extended version of this policy may be found on our website through the following links:

[Non-Discrimination Policy \(AC\)](#)

[Sexual Harassment Policy \(ACAB\)](#)

Any complaints or inquiries concerning this policy should be directed as follows:

Annie Foley Ruiz, Principal  
Leverett Elementary School  
85 Montague Road  
Leverett, MA 01054

Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent  
Erving School Union # 28  
201 Wendell Road  
New Salem, MA 01355

Policy on Student Absences and Excuses (Policy JH) Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of their character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

Tardiness or early dismissals are generally considered to be half-day absences. Parents will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in

advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

Teachers may make a reasonable effort to provide missed assignments/instruction provided that this effort does not place an undue burden on the teacher. In instances where arrangements are not easily established, the teacher and the student's family shall seek guidance from the Principal. Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation.

### **Student Absence Notification Program**

The Principal will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

The Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

### Preschool/Kindergarten Bus Route Policy (EEAJ)

1. All Kindergarten students are entitled to ride the school bus. Normally, preschoolers are brought to and from school by their parents/guardians. Permission for preschoolers to ride the bus is given by the principal. Parents/guardians should write a letter asking for permission for their preschool child to ride the bus and submit it to the principal.

The following criteria are considered when responding to these requests:

- The preschooler must be four years of age.
- The preschooler must be able to sit independently, understand and adhere to the bus rules, and follow the direction of the bus driver.
- If the preschooler has an older sibling, the older child may be asked to sit at the front of the bus with the preschooler.
- The length of the route, and the number of seats available on the bus will also be considered.

2. Preschool and Kindergarten students will be picked up at the door of their home and returned directly to the door of their home except when any one of the following conditions exist:

- a) When a preschool or kindergarten student lives on a private road. (See Policy EEA)
- b) When the road the preschool or kindergarten student lives on is inadequate for a Class I school bus. The suitability of a road for a Class 1 school bus will be determined by the bus company in consultation with the principal and/or town highway officials.

3. Bus drivers are not allowed to leave Preschool or Kindergarten children at their home/bus stop unless a parent/guardian or older sibling is there. If no one is at the bus stop to meet a Preschooler or Kindergartener, the bus driver will return the child to school unless prior

arrangements have been made in writing and submitted to the Principal.

### Acceptable Use Policy (IJNDB)

Leverett Elementary School provides caregivers, students, community members, and guest users, with a statement of purpose and explanation of the use of technology within the learning community. This procedure is reinforced by instruction, practice, responsible use guidelines and is required to be read before accessing the technology devices, digital resources, and network infrastructure. Students, parents/guardians, staff and community members must also read and sign the accompanying Statement of Responsibilities. We respect each family's decision whether their child should or should not have access to the internet. Students will be given an account on the network and access to the Internet only if a parent or legal guardian submits a signed Acceptable Use Form. Once agreed to, access to electronic resources will remain in force for the duration of the student's enrollment, staff employment or community member's active residential status unless expired, or revoked due to violations of this policy.

These guidelines are based on the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and its four guiding principles of respect, privacy, sharing, and safety. These guidelines are appropriate for all technology users. Every user has the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of every other user in our school communities and on the internet. Account holders are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, consistent with the school and district policies, rules, regulations and guidelines and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States.

Leverett Elementary School provides access to electronic resources that promote educational excellence, information sharing, innovative instruction and online communication. All users are encouraged to use digital tools to pursue intellectual activities, seek resources, access libraries and collaborate and engage in learning activities.

Online communication constitutes but is not limited to email, internet, blogging and any use of network resources. LES electronic resources include, but are not limited to: all hardware, software, data, communication devices, printers, servers, filtered internet access, and local and wide area networks.

Online communication is critical for today's learners to apply 21st Century Skills and employs tools such as interactive websites, blogs, video conferencing, and podcasts which offer authentic opportunities for students to express and share information.

This Leverett Elementary School AUP outlines the rules and guidelines under which all members of the LES community (students, staff, community and guest users) will be held accountable. In all cases it is the responsibility of parents/guardians, students, staff, community members and guest users to immediately report any findings of improprieties to school administration.

### *Responsible Use Guidelines*

Leverett Elementary School has established protocols to ensure the safety of our school community, the security of computer networks, and compliance with applicable law. All users should be aware of the following standard practices:

### *Content Filtering*

Leverett Elementary School uses software designed to block access to certain sites and filter content as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, 47 U.S.C. §254 (CIPA). Leverett Elementary School is aware that not all inappropriate information can be filtered, and the district

will make a concerted and ongoing effort to correct any known gaps in the filtering of information without unduly inhibiting the educational use of age appropriate content by staff and students. Users will inform teachers or administrators of any inadvertent access to inappropriate material, in order that there is appropriate modification of the filtering profile. Leverett Elementary School will educate students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms as well as cyberbullying awareness and response.

### *Student Safety*

To ensure personal safety and the safety of others, users shall not publish or send any message that includes personal information such as home address, personal phone numbers and/or last name for any individual student. The staff is not permitted to post this information to public domains (i.e. class web page or Internet). Student pictures and/or work may only be included on district/ school/ classroom websites with caregiver permission and without identifying captions unless the site is password protected.

All users are expected to exercise care when using technology equipment/resources and to follow the directions for proper use. Any user whose action alters the proper functioning of equipment may face disciplinary action and may be charged for the repair or replacement of the equipment.

Student use of electronic resources is restricted to teacher-approved projects and research. Student use of the Internet will be under the supervision of school staff, but due to the nature of the Internet and evolving technology, students might get to an inappropriate site inadvertently. It is the student's responsibility to immediately report any inappropriate site to a staff member.

Teachers of K-2 students will establish access to appropriate student websites via the use of personalized learning environments (i.e. pathfinders, classroom webpages). Students in grades 3-6 may not attempt to access any Internet resources without the prior consent and only with direct supervision of staff.

### *Password Protection*

Passwords are provided for each user's personal use only and are, therefore, confidential. Passwords should never be shared, stolen or used by another person without permission. If a student or staff member suspects that a password has been compromised, they should notify a teacher or network administrator. Student usernames and passwords will be established and assigned by the network administrator. Staff usernames will adhere to established naming conventions.

### *Privacy*

Students and staff need to be aware that files stored on school computers are not private. Network and internet access is provided as a tool for educational purposes only. The District has the right to monitor, inspect, copy, review and store any and all usage of the computer network and Internet access, including transmitted and received information, without prior notice. All information files are the property of the District and no user shall have any expectation of privacy regarding such files. Federal Law requires that all email, sent and received, be stored for a period of seven years. The District may choose to archive longer.

### *Online Etiquette*

All school users are expected to use appropriate language and graphics, and shall not engage in swearing, vulgarities, suggestive, obscene, belligerent, harassing, threatening or abusive language of any kind. School online access may not be used to make, distribute, or redistribute

cyber bullying, obscene material or material which is based on slurs or stereotypes relating to race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.

### *Messaging*

Teachers may incorporate restricted email, protected blogs, podcasts, video conferencing, online collaborations, electronic devices, instant messaging, texting, tweeting, walled garden social media, Virtual Learning Environments and other forms of direct electronic communications or internet applications for educational purposes. Although teachers monitor student online activity, it is the direct responsibility of the user to comply with the Leverett Elementary School AUP.

### *Internet Tools*

Use of blogs, podcasts, or other internet tools are considered an extension of the classroom. Whether at home or in school, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate in all uses of blogs, podcasts, or other internet tools. Students using blogs, podcasts or other internet tools are expected to act safely and responsibly by keeping all personal information out of their posts. Comments made on school related blogs should follow the rules of online etiquette detailed above and will be monitored by school personnel. If inappropriate, they will be deleted. Users must not link to websites from a blog without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.

### *General Communications Guidelines*

Below is a general summary of guidelines related to email and any form of online chat or instant messages. Email and online chat is to be used for school related communication. The following practices are not allowed when using LES resources:

- Sending harassing emails or instant messages or content.
- Sending offensive email or instant messages or content.
- Sending spam email or instant messages or content.
- Sending email or instant messages containing a virus or other malicious content.
- Sending or reading email or instant messages at inappropriate times, such as during class instruction.
- Sending email or instant messages to share test answers or promote cheating in any way.
- Using the account of another person.

### *Plagiarism/Copyright/Licensing*

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's words or ideas as your own. Students and staff are required to give proper credit to all Internet and non-electronic sources used in academic assignments, whether quoted or summarized. This includes all forms of media on the Internet, such as graphics, movies, music, and text. Plagiarism of Internet and non-electronic resources will be addressed in a developmentally appropriate manner. In addition, all students and staff must adhere to the copyright laws of the United States (P.L.94553) and the Congressional Guidelines that delineate it regarding software, authorship, and copying information. All students and staff must adhere to the Creative Commons licenses where the author/artist denotes what media may be shared, remixed, or reused.

### *Proxies*

The use of anonymous proxies to avoid content filtering is strictly prohibited and is a direct violation of this agreement.



Illegal Activity. Use of any U28 electronic devices/resources for any illegal activity is prohibited. Illegal activities include but are not limited to:

- (a) tampering with computer hardware or software,
- (b) software piracy,
- (c) unauthorized entry into computers and files (hacking),
- (d) knowledgeable vandalism or destruction of equipment,
- (e) deletion of computer files belonging to someone other than oneself,
- (f) uploading or creating computer viruses,
- (g) distribution of obscene or pornographic materials,
- (h) sexting,
- (i) cyberbullying.

Such activity is considered a crime under state and federal law. Users must be aware that any illegal action carried out over the Internet will be reported to law enforcement officials for possible prosecution. Please be advised it is a federal offense (felony) to break into any security system. Financial and legal consequences of such actions are the responsibility of the user (staff, guests, and student) and student's parent or guardian.

### *Cyberbullying*

The use of electronic devices, digital resources and the network for the purpose of cyberbullying is strictly prohibited both on and off school grounds.

Cyberbullying as defined by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010 (An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools) is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

### *Terms of Agreement*

Leverett Elementary School reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, expulsion (students), or dismissal (staff) for violations of these Guidelines. The District will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the LES Internet connection. The District also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the network. The District and its representatives are not responsible for the actions of the users or the information they access.

Leverett School Committee Final Vote: 01/09/17

## Library Material Selection and Adoption Policy

The School Committee endorses the School Library Bill of Rights, as adopted by the American Library Association, which asserts that the responsibility of the school library is to:

1. Provide materials that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
2. Provide materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards.
3. Provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives.
4. Provide materials on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop under guidance the practice of critical reading and thinking.
5. Provide materials representative of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to our American heritage.
6. Place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality in order to assure a comprehensive collection appropriate for the users of the library.

Initial purchase suggestions for library materials may come from all personnel--teachers, coordinators, and administrators. Students and families will also be encouraged to make suggestions. The librarian will recommend materials to be included in the school library. Final approval and authority for distribution of funds will rest with the building Principal subject to the approval of the Superintendent.

Gifts of library books and materials will be accepted in keeping with the above policy. Complaints about library materials will be handled in line with Committee policy on complaints about instructional materials.

## School Choice Policy

It is the policy of Leverett Elementary School to admit nonresident students under the terms and conditions of the Interdistrict School Choice Law (M.G.L. 76:12) and under the following conditions:

1. That by May 1 of every school year, the administration will determine the number of spaces in each school available to choice students.
2. That by June 1 of every school year, if consideration is being given to withdraw from the provisions of the choice law, a public meeting will be held to review this decision.
3. That resident students be given priority placement in any classes or programs within the District.
4. With respect to the selection of nonresident students:
  - a. That preference will be given to siblings of admitted students if an opening exists in that grade level. If there are more eligible siblings than open slots, a lottery for the siblings will be held.
  - b. The selection of nonresident students for admission is in the form of a random lottery when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces.
  - c. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place during the month of June of the current school year. The second will be conducted during the

week immediately preceding the opening of the next school year and will be based on the possibility of an unexpected additional opening.

5. Any student who is accepted for admission under the provisions of this policy is entitled to remain in the District until graduation from high school except if there is a lack of funding of the program.
6. The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, age, homelessness, sexual orientation, ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, pregnancy, pregnancy related condition, academic performance or proficiency in the English language.

#### Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited (ADC)

Use of any tobacco products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco and snuff and electronic cigarettes, electronic cigars, electronic pipes or other similar products that rely on vaporization or aerosolization, within the school buildings, school facilities, on school grounds or school buses, or at school sponsored events by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District policy and requirements of state law.

## PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

### ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

FY 2018-2019

(As required by AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act)

Asbestos Management Plans have been developed for the:

LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

These plans are available and accessible to the public at this facility as well as from the LEA located at 28 Northfield Road, Erving, MA 01344

The LEA Designated Person is: Caitlyn Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations  
28 Northfield Road  
Erving, MA 01344  
(413) 423-3326 ext. 234

A three-year reinspection was conducted in August 2018 by ARC, Inc. The next reinspection is due in 2021. Periodic surveillance is done every six months by the head custodian.

The Maintenance Supervisors received training in the management of asbestos containing materials and HazCom. When supervisors leave they train their replacements as well as their staff.

### ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

FY 2023-24

The water system at the:

LEVERETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

is subject to regulations established by the Department of Environmental protection. Routine regular testing is required and copies of the analytical reports are available for access at school Main Office. The School is, and has been, in compliance and up to date with all DEP requirements.

### ANNUAL PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

FY 2023-24

Leverett Elementary School Integrated Pest Management Program

In October 2001 Leverett School compiled an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and submitted it to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Food and Agriculture. The head custodian is the IPM Coordinator for the school.

We have been successful in keeping the building and grounds substantially pest-free without the use of commercial pesticides by keeping the facility sealed and clean. The only chemical which is used periodically outdoors and away from children and staff is wasp and hornet spray. If any questions concerning our program arise, please contact the custodial office at 548-9144.

## Compliance

The Superintendent of Schools serves as compliance officer for all state and federal laws.

Superintendent of Schools

Erving School Union #28

201 Wendell Road

Erving, MA 01355

Telephone: 413-423-3337

Complaints to the Massachusetts Department of Education may be addressed to:

Department of Education

350 Main Street

Malden, MA 02148

Telephone: (781) 388-3300

Complaints regarding the implementation of Title IX may be addressed to:

Office of Civil Rights

McCormack Building

One Ashburton Place

Boston, MA 02108

Telephone: (617) 727-2200