

Converse Middle School
24 Converse Street
Palmer, MA 01069
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www.palmerschools.org

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2009-2010

Mr. David Stetkiewicz
Principal

Mrs. Jackie Haley
Assistant Principal

Mrs. Natalie Noble
Office Manager

Mrs. Carol Thomas
Secretary

Mrs. Debbie Maloney
Nurse

Mr. Gregory Sturges
Guidance Counselor

Mrs. Donna Graveline
Guidance Counselor

Mr. Joseph Holland
School Psychologist

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Palmer School Committee Policy Statements*

- Addendum A - #IJNDB Acceptable Use Policy Technology
Addendum B - #EEAG Student Transportation in Private Vehicles
Addendum C - #JICHA Breathalyzer Policy

*available in the Converse Middle School Office

SCHOOL CALENDAR

August 19, 2009 – June 17, 2010

2009

Wednesday	August 19	New Teachers' Orientation Day
Monday	August 24	All Staff Orientation
Tuesday	August 25	Schools Open – Full Day for All Schools
Monday	September 7	Schools Closed – Labor Day, School Vacation
Friday	September 25	Schools Closed – Professional Development Day for Teachers
Monday	October 12	Schools Closed – Columbus Day, School Vacation
Thursday	October 29	Grades Close
Tuesday	November 3	Schools Closed – Town Election
Friday	November 6	Report Cards Issued
Wednesday	November 11	Schools Closed – Veterans Day (observed), School Vacation
Tuesday	November 24	Schools Close for Thanksgiving Vacation Regular Sessions This Day
Monday	November 30	Schools Reopen
Wednesday	December 23	Schools Close for Christmas Vacation Regular Sessions This Day

2010

Monday	January 4	Schools Reopen
Monday	January 18	Schools Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, School Vacation
Tuesday	January 19	Grades Close
Friday	January 29	Report Cards Issued
Friday	February 12	Schools Close for Midwinter Vacation Regular Sessions This Day
Monday	February 22	Schools Reopen
Tuesday	March 30	Grades Close
Friday	April 2	Schools Closed – Good Friday, School Vacation
Friday	April 9	Report Cards Issued
Friday	April 16	Schools Close for Spring Vacation Regular Sessions This Day
Monday	April 26	Schools Reopen
Monday	May 31	Schools Closed – Memorial Day, School Vacation
Sunday	June 6	High School Graduation
Thursday	June 10	Last Day of School – Scheduled 180 th Day Half-Day Sessions This Day for Students, Full-Day Sessions for Staff
Last Day of School		Report Cards Issued
Thursday	June 17	Scheduled 185 th Day

CALENDAR IS FOR 185 DAYS. SCHOOLS WILL CLOSE FOR SUMMER VACATION WHEN SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN IN SESSION FOR 180 REGULAR DAYS OF SCHOOL.

Adopted by the Palmer School Committee on April 15, 2009.

PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Palmer Public Schools is to ensure the opportunity for all of the children of Palmer to participate in the benefits afforded by a well-planned, coordinated educational program and designed to serve their needs by:

Providing a safe, secure and positive environment which fosters the growth of self-esteem through accomplishments in learning.

Addressing their educational requirements, recognizing the validity of varied learning styles, and providing appropriate programming for each student.

Preparing in our students a lifelong commitment to intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth.

Encouraging our students to have a deep understanding of the principles of fair play and the rights of all responsible individual within a democratic society.

To make the most of the educational opportunity afforded the student by the community, the student will demonstrate:

The self-motivation and the self-discipline necessary for the pursuit of excellence.

His/her understanding of how to learn and applying that knowledge to the enhancement of his/her life and the lives of others

CONVERSE MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Converse Middle School believes that every student will be given the opportunity to maximize learning abilities. This environment should address the unique characteristics and needs of early adolescents through cooperation among teachers, staff, counselors and administrators.

Students will gain mutual trust and respect that encourages self-esteem, dignity, cooperation and the ability to solve problems necessary for lifetime learning.

PALMER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mary Salzman, Chairperson
David M. Lynch, Vice Chairperson
Maureen R. Gallagher
Robert R. Janasiewicz
James St. Amand

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Gerald Fournier, Superintendent

**DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND COMPENSATORY SERVICES**

Neil T. Metcalf

CONVERSE MIDDLE SCHOOL

David Stetkiewicz, Principal
Jackie Haley, Assistant Principal

CONVERSE MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNCIL

David Stetkiewicz
Ivy Peritz-Smith
Linda Perry
Andrea Mastalerz
Lisa Murray
Charles Abbate

Palmer School Committee
24 Converse Street
Palmer, Massachusetts 01069

March 1995

TO PARENTS AND STAFF:

The Education Reform Act has altered various roles and responsibilities within the Palmer School Department. Under that Act, the Palmer School Committee has two prime functions – to set policy and to direct fiscal affairs.

To address issues or concerns you may have so that they may be efficiently and successfully resolved, you are to use the following procedure.

- A parent who has a problem with a teacher will discuss the matter with the teacher.
- If the matter is not resolved, the parent is to see the building principal.
- If further discussion is required, the parents are to make an appointment with the Superintendent of Schools.
- If the matter requires further discussion, the parent will send a request to meet with the School Committee to the Superintendent.

Staff members who have issues are to follow the same procedure as outlined for parents.

We feel that abiding by the above procedure will allow a variety of issues to be successfully addressed with the most appropriate person.

PALMER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT
Palmer, Massachusetts

NOTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

The Palmer Public School District is in compliance with federal and state legislation addressing discrimination in educational institutions. Specifically, the District complies with the provisions of the following legislation and regulations:

TITLE I OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990: Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of employment.

TITLE II OF THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990: Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits on the basis of disability in the areas of educational programming and activities.

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACTS OF 1964: Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on race, color and national origin.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972: Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits in educational programs based on sex.

SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973: Prohibits discrimination, exclusion from participation, and denial of benefits based on disability.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW, CHAPTER 76, SECTION 5: Prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation.

CHAPTER 622 OF THE ACTS OF 1971: Prohibits exclusion from or discrimination against admission to a public school in any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 151B, SECTION 3A: Prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

The Palmer Public Schools prohibits discrimination in all public schools on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion and sexual orientation

1. Health

Every effort is made to care for your child's physical, mental and emotional well-being while he/she is in school. Sick and injured children are given the best possible care, but the responsibility for treatment rests with the family.

Each school maintains an Emergency Information Card for each child. These are updated each September. This card requests information as to the address, home telephone number of the child, plus the name, address, and telephone number of a friend or relative who would be willing to care for your child if it is necessary to have him/her cared for when you are not at home. Ill students are not allowed to walk home. It also requests your permission to secure medical attention for your child in case it is needed and you are not available. The information on this form is extremely important, and we would request your cooperation in filling it out and returning it immediately.

If your child has a handicap or a particular health problem, please furnish us with any pertinent information that will enable us to make your child's adjustment to school a happy one.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Immunizations:

Students must be immunized according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health against measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, pertussis, diphtheria and polio. A second tetanus booster immunization is required prior to entry into Grade 7. This must have been received within the five (5) year period before grade 7 (on or after 9/1/04).

Documentation from the physician must be provided to show proof of immunization for the student health record. Parents are responsible to keep these immunizations up to date.

If your child receives any immunizations at the emergency room or at the doctor's office, please obtain a certificate at that time and forward to the nurse so the Health Record can be updated.

Physicals are required for all students entering the Palmer Schools, sixth grade students and every three to four years thereafter. It is preferred that the examination be done by your child's physician who is more aware of your child's health history. If a private physical examination is not submitted, the school physician will examine your child, usually the first two weeks of school (unless other arrangements are made with the nurse).

Physical exam forms are sent home with all new students and grade 6 students. Parents are urged to have dental exams on the child annually.

Screenings:

As required by the Department of Public Health, yearly screening for height, weight, visual and hearing difficulties will be provided as follows: Grade 5 – vision; Grade 6 – none; Grade 7 – vision, hearing, height, weight. BMI letters will be sent to the families of 7th grade children whose BMI is less than the 5th or greater than the 95th percentile.

Parents will be notified if their child is unable to pass the screening examination. These

screenings are not diagnostic. The physician is the one to make a diagnosis and recommend whether treatment is necessary.

Please return the physician form included in the failure notice that is sent home with your child. This is the only way the nurse knows if the failure has been evaluated. It is encouraged that those students who have prescription glasses bring them to school each day and use them as directed.

Postural Screening:

Grade 5-7 students will be screened yearly in physical education class (usually in January) for spinal difficulties as required by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Those parents wishing for their child to be screened by their own physician should make arrangements directly with the nurse in advance of the screening and schedule the appropriate doctor's appointment.

Pediculosis Policy:

A "no nit" pediculosis policy has been adopted by Palmer Public Schools. A copy of this policy will be provided to parents of affected students. The nurse will monitor children with repeated difficulties.

First Aid/Emergency Care:

Care will be given for minor injuries received during the school day. If a student becomes ill or seriously injured, every effort will be made to notify the parent immediately. Health care and treatment of injuries occurring outside school hours should be followed by the child's own physician.

Health Problems:

Any health concerns should be reported to the nurse. (migraines, asthma, diabetes, seizures, allergic reactions, cardiac, orthopedic, vision or hearing, Attention Deficit Disorders, and communicable diseases). This will enable the nurse to assist with making educational adjustments and develop a school health care plan when necessary.

Medications:

Please see the complete medication policy. Physician forms are required for long-term use as in daily meds, inhalers, and emergency allergy medications. Forms are available from the school nurse. In general, inhalers are the only medications allowed to be carried by students with prior approval of the school nurse, parent and physician.

Insurance:

Parents without health insurance or in need of assistance for vision exams, eyeglasses and dental care for the child should call the nurse for program referrals.

Wellness Policy: (File : JLCAA, Adopted by the School Committee on 9/12/06.)

The Palmer Schools recognize the important relationship between wellness and academic success inclusive of the entire school community. The intent of this policy is to outline

the district's ongoing commitment in support and promotion of wellness in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and other school based activities. Using Section 204 of the Public Law 108-265- June 30, 2004: Child Nutrition and WIC Education Reauthorization Act of 2004, and recommendations by the Massachusetts Departments of Education and Public Health, the following beliefs guide our efforts:

1. Communication with parents or guardians, staff and students is essential. We will seek opportunities to educate the school community on trends and information related to health and wellness. We encourage community partnerships that assist the district in this effort.
2. Consistent with current federal and state nutrition regulations, the Palmer Public Schools will continue to increase the availability and sale of nutritious selections and discourage the sale and consumption of beverages and foods of low nutritious value during regular school hours.
3. Opportunities for physical fitness, both structured (K-12 physical education curriculum) and activity (recess, movement, extracurricular activities and sports teams/clubs) will be supported and strongly encouraged. Again, the Palmer Public Schools encourage community partnerships that assist the district to support and active, healthy community of learners.
4. Opportunities for staff in-service education to share best practices which incorporate activity and wellness across the curriculum will be offered. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle for school employees further supports the overall objective of a healthy community.

Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in the Educational Environment:

(File: JLCDD, Adopted by the School Committee on 12/21/06.)

It is the policy of the school committee to establish guidelines for students within the school district in order to minimize the risk to students with life-threatening allergies (LTFA). The guidelines established may include building based medical emergency plans, the implementation of Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) that include an individualized emergency plan, effective training programs personnel, students, and consultation with appropriate medical specialists.

The Palmer Public Schools has developed protocols/guidelines for the management of life-threatening food allergies. Building-based teams will consult parents, and where applicable the student, to develop a safe and effective health plan so that the student will be able to access all educational programs. If appropriate, the school-based team may indicate on the IHCP and/or the 504 Plan that the student will carry the EPI-pen on his/her person. Where there is a recommendation all necessary training procedures and guidelines articulated in the policy will be adhered to.

SUMMARY OF MEDICATION POLICY

In accordance with recommendations from the Mass. Dept. of Public Health, the Palmer School Committee has adopted administrative regulations in regard to the giving of

medications. The complete medication policy statement can be obtained in the school office.

A. Prescription Medication Policy

When the prescribed medication is to be given during school hours, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Authorization for dispensing prescription medication in school must have a written order by the student's physician. Some short term prescription medications can be administered by directions of the pharmacy label (example: antibiotic)
2. Written permission from the student's parent/guardian must be sent to the School. Forms for this purpose will be available from the nurse's office.
3. The medication must be delivered by an adult to the school in an original pharmacy container labeled as to name and strength of medication, dosage and time to be administered, name of the student and prescribing physician.

If a medication is taken both at home and school, duplicate containers should be requested from the pharmacy to avoid unnecessary round trip transportation.

4. The medication will be kept in a locked area (or refrigerated if necessary).
5. Medications given via intravenous, intra-muscular, sub-cutaneous or intra-dermal routes will be given by a registered nurse or a licensed physician.
6. Some medications, at the direction of the school nurse, may be self administered by the student at school. Prerequisites are: written approval for administration by a physician and parent/guardian and student demonstrates competency in self administration to school nurse. The school nurse will supervise these students.

B. Over The Counter Medication Policy (non-prescription)

The school nurse may administer non-prescription medication as stated on the student's health information sheet in accordance with the school physician's standing orders. However these medications will only be dispensed by the school nurse with prior written authorization from the student's parent/guardian. The authorization form can be found on the back of the Nurse's Emergency Data Card. Protocols for over the counter medications can be reviewed at the school nurse's office. Please note: All medication must be delivered to school by an adult. Students are not allowed to bring any medication of any kind into the school building. Violations of this provision may result in disciplinary action which may include detentions or a suspension of up to two days

2. **Safety and Transportation**

Alerting children to the need for being "safety conscious" at all times is a never-ending responsibility. Children should learn the need for rules and recognize the importance of

obeying them. The following are suggested safety guidelines to be shared with your child:

A. Walking

1. Walk on sidewalks when they are available. If there are no sidewalks, child should walk facing the oncoming traffic.
2. Walk in an orderly manner, keeping alert to any dangers.
3. Come directly to school and go directly home.
4. Look in all directions before crossing any street.
5. Cross streets at proper corners and where crossing guards are stationed.
6. Respect all public and private property, keeping off lawns, not cutting through backyards, etc.
7. Walking pupils are to be discouraged from arriving on the school grounds prior to 7:20 a.m.

B. Bussing

1. Stay out of the street while waiting for the bus.
2. Refrain from pushing or otherwise endangering yourself and friends while waiting at the bus stop.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a full stop before going near it.
4. Take a seat in the bus and remain orderly while the bus is in motion.
5. Keep head, arms, and hands inside the bus windows.

Bus pupils are assigned to a specific bus. Since bus loads are carefully planned, it is difficult to honor requests for a pupil to take a bus other than the one to which he/she is assigned.

The specific rules concerning the riding of school busses are as follows:

1. Only those high school students who act as tutors to our elementary school children following the regular high school day are permitted to ride an elementary school bus to their home. This can be done only by specific written approval by the Superintendent for this purpose.
2. Middle and high school students other than those indicated above may not ride elementary school busses at any time.
3. Children who normally walk to school may not ride a bus at any time.
4. ALL students must be picked up or dropped off at the same location each day. Morning and afternoon stops may not be the same. However, the location must remain a constant Monday through Friday. If a change in location is needed, a note must be sent to the principal. Changes will be approved only for emergencies. This procedure will enable the transportation process to run more efficiently and safely.
5. Designated bus students must ride the bus to and from school at all times. they cannot walk when they so choose.

There are both space and legal reasons for the above, so we would ask all parents or guardians to cooperate so that we may continue to have a safe bus transportation set-up and so that both parents and staff can feel that the legal requirements for safety are being followed. Special arrangements can be made for emergency situations with

permission slips from parents. This should be the exception and not the rule. The Superintendent or his designee must approve all such requests.

Whenever a pupil must cross the street upon leaving the bus, he must cross in front of the bus as required by state law. Extreme care must be exercised in crossing. Look both ways and then cross when no vehicles are moving.

The school authorities, the bus operators, and the police work closely to ensure safe operation of all busses. Parental cooperation plays a large part in the success of this phase of the school program. If a pupil's actions are dangerous to himself/herself or the safety of others, the privilege of riding a bus could be withdrawn. The school transportation contractor has specific "rules of conduct" on busses which will be handed out to each student rider at the beginning of the school year. Periodic review during the year will be helpful. Cameras may be used on school buses to monitor safety and behavior.

In addition to any penalty issued by the bus company for infraction of bus rules, the school principal may assess the incident and impose an additional punishment.

**First Student Transit Palmer Terminal
1181 Park Street, Palmer, MA 01069 413-283-5267**

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY AND CONDUCT RULES.

Your school day begins when you enter the school bus, and ends when you leave it. During this entire time you are under the legal jurisdiction of the Palmer School Department; therefore, your bus driver has the same authority on the bus as a teacher has in a classroom. Riding a school bus is a **PRIVILEGE** that can be suspended or revoked if the following rules are not observed.

- Be at the bus stop five minutes prior to the designated pickup time and ready to board the bus immediately.
- Do not stand or play in the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Respect property around the bus stop. Remember, property owners have to let you be their "guest".
- Remain at least 10 feet from the bus while it is stopping, and move forward only when the door opens.
- After boarding the bus, take a seat as quickly as possible.
- Always get on and off at your regular stop and ride the bus to which are regularly assigned, unless approved by the principal.
- Do not bring pets on the bus.
- Do not bring weapons or smoking material on the bus.
- Remain seated properly at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Eating and/or drinking on the bus are prohibited at all times.
- Do not change seats unless directed to do so by the driver.
- Do not extend any parts of the body out of the bus windows.
- Do not throw objects around the bus or out of the bus windows.
- Keep aisles and emergency exits clear of objects at all times.
- Do not tamper with emergency exits.
- Remain **quiet** when approaching railroad crossing.

- Always cross in front of the bus at the driver's "**thumbs up**" signal.

THE FOLLOWING OFFENSES ARE PROHIBITED AND WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION FROM ALL BUS PRIVILEGES.

- Obscene language and/or obscene gestures
- Smoking and/or the lighting of matches or other inflammable devices
- Any student involved in a fight
- Weapons of any kind
- Defacement of the bus (students involved will also be responsible for the cost to repair any and all damages)

SAFETY RULES (in case of emergency)

- Stop talking
- Stay calm
- Do not touch emergency equipment unless told to do so
- Wait for the driver's instructions
- If the driver is incapacitated, older students should assume charge

IF YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE

- Do not crowd the aisle
- Keep going toward an exit
- Keep your hands free by leaving belongings behind
- Duck your head and bend your knees if you have to jump out
- Help smaller children
- Get away from the bus
- Stay together

WARNING TICKET SYSTEM

1 st ticket	Warning
2 nd ticket	3 day suspension
3 rd ticket	5 day suspension
4 th ticket	Indefinite suspension

- A student's bus privileges may be suspended indefinitely without using the above system (profanity, vandalism, fighting, etc.).
- If a ticket is issued in the morning the student must: Have the principal sign the ticket; show the signed ticket to the bus driver in the afternoon; have parent sign ticket; return ticket to the bus driver the next morning.
- If a ticket is issued in the afternoon the student must: Have a parent or guardian sign the ticket; show the signed ticket to the driver the following morning; have the principal sign the ticket; return the ticket to the driver that afternoon.

The student **WILL NOT** be allowed to ride the bus if:

- The ticket has not been signed
- The student refuses the ticket
- The student loses or destroys the ticket

3. School Cancellations

It is the policy of the Palmer Schools to remain open whenever the buildings are in operating order and the busses can run. In doubtful cases, the final decision whether or not school will be in session may not be made until 6:15 a.m. If the decision is to cancel school, then the local radio stations will carry a no-school announcement as soon as telephone connections permit. The Palmer Public Schools will also utilize our Connect Ed telephone message system to announce school cancellations and/or delayed openings.

4. School Visitations

In the interest of maintaining building security, all visitors must stop at the school office upon entering the building, sign in and secure a visitor's pass. Parking in front of the building is prohibited. This regulation is strictly enforced.

5. Student Absences – Tardiness

It is the desire of the school system to encourage good school attendance since only through regular attendance may the student take advantage of the educational opportunities offered. Additionally, Massachusetts State Law, Chapter 76, sets forth specific attendance requirements, penalties and procedures. It is also realized that student absences may be required due to illness or other good reason. With this in mind, the following policy will be followed in order to comply with the law and to reinforce the school system's high priority regarding good attendance.

A. Notification of illness

1. The parent/guardian must call the school on the day of absence to notify school officials of the absence. It is best to call between 7:00 and 7:40 a.m. – the School number is 283-8109.
2. If it is to be a long term illness, arrangements should be made to get School homework for the child.

B. Emergency Telephone Number

The school should be furnished with a current home, work, or other emergency phone number where the parent/guardian can be contacted during the school day should the student become ill or injured during the school day.

C. Notes

The student must bring a signed note from the parent/guardian indicating the reason for the absence on the first day of attendance after the absence.

D. Attendance Policy (DAY)

State Board of Education regulations require a student to be in school for at least 50% of a school day to be considered legally in attendance for that day. Therefore, arrival at school after 10:45 a.m. and dismissal prior to 10:45 a.m. constitutes an absence for the whole day. Even though considered legally absent when arriving late, we strongly encourage parents to get their youngsters to school for the remainder of the day so that as little instruction as possible is missed.

Students may not participate in any extracurricular activity, i.e. dance, concerts, sports, etc. unless they are present for one-half of the school day on the day of such activity.

E. Attendance Policy (YEAR)

Students at Converse Middle School and Old Mill Pond must be present in school ninety-five (95%) of the time for promotion. This means that the student may not miss more than nine (9) days of school in order to remain in good standing. The following procedures will be followed:

1. The school will send a letter to the parent/ guardian after four (4) days of absence to warn that a problem might exist.
2. A letter will also be sent to the parent/guardian after the student accrue six (6) absences out of the nine (9) allowed.
3. If a student is absent more than nine (9), a conference will be held consisting of the parents/guardians, student, teacher(s), principal, and other concerned parties to determine whether failure, repetition of the grade, or other alternative is warranted.
4. Reasons which would be considered as to why excess absences should be excused include chronic or long-term disabling illness, injury or some major family catastrophe. No student at any grade level may participate in any extracurricular activities unless she has been in attendance for at least one-half day on the day of the activity. The rules of the Department of Public Health shall govern the return of a pupil to school after she has been absent from sickness or quarantine or exposure to contagious disease, in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws.

F. Tardiness

If you arrive at school after 7:35 a.m., you must report to the office for a late pass.

1. Notes- You must bring a note stating the reason for the tardiness. Failure to bring in a note will result in a detention.
2. Repeated Tardiness- Repeated tardiness' will result in a detention. A student who is tardy more than two days per quarter will be given a detention for the third and each succeeding tardiness. If a pattern of unexcused tardiness occurs (6) or more tardiness in a quarter, then a parent conference will be held and further discipline including possible suspension will be meted out. Alternatives to detentions such as loss of recess time may be used.

G. Vacations

Vacations other than the scheduled school vacations are discouraged as they may cause a major disruption in the education of the student. Even when written assignments are made up, students still miss valuable class direction and discussions.

6. Student Dismissal

Students are dismissed at the regular time unless special request warrants earlier dismissal. As few dismissals as possible should be requested as it does interfere with instruction, etc. Students will be dismissed from the school office, in such case only to the parent, guardian, or individual designated by the parent or guardian. When picking up a student early from school, the parent or guardian must come to the office and sign out

the student. If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up the student, a note indicating so must accompany the child. This is for your child's safety. Dismissals after 1:15 are discouraged because of the potential for the disruption of an orderly and safe dismissal.

Please note that parking in front of the building is prohibited. This regulation is strictly enforced.

7. School Lunches

A well-balanced lunch is available at nominal cost to pupils. The menus for the coming week are published in local newspapers and school monthly calendar. Milk in half-pint containers may be purchased by those who bring cold lunches. Lunch and/or milk are paid for on a daily basis. In an emergency, a lunch may be charged if a child forgets or loses his/her lunch and/or milk money. **This should not become a habit, as bookkeeping procedures become time-consuming and detract from the educational program.**

A breakfast program is offered and available to students.

Students will be walked to the cafeteria by the teacher in charge of the room. Students will report to their designated area and sit quietly until they are passed to the kitchen area to be served. Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their designated area. Each student, on a daily rotating basis will be assigned the responsibility of washing tables in his/her designated area.

Teachers will meet their classes in the cafeteria at the end of lunch and return them to the classroom for the next period.

RULES OF THE CAFETERIA

- No cutting in line ahead of others or giving cuts
- No throwing of food or papers around tables or cafeteria
- Stay seated until permission is given to get up
- Return all eating utensils to the dish room and be sure the table and floor area are clean before you leave
- Students are not to yell or be loud
- Students are not to leave the cafeteria to enter other parts of the building except to use the basement facilities adjacent to the cafeteria
- All food/drink must be consumed in the cafeteria; eating is not permitted in the classrooms, corridors or playground.
- Students who cannot follow these guidelines or in any way disrupt the lunch period will not be allowed to eat in the cafeteria. They will be placed in a separate supervised area for a quiet lunch.

Wellness Policy / Life Threatening Food Allergy Policy Guidelines

With the approval of the District's Wellness Policy and the Life Threatening Food Allergy Policy, the Palmer Public Schools recognize that food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to certain students. Our main goal is to provide a safe environment for all students. We would appreciate your adherence to the following policies and procedures.

Food Allergies: It is recognized by the Palmer Public Schools (Wellness Policy Regulations (JLCAA-R) that food allergies can pose a life-threatening risk to certain students; therefore the following recommendations have been developed:

- food sent in to school for the consumption of more than one student cannot contain nut or nut products,
- the school may prohibit specific foods from entering the classroom or may prohibit home-baked items from celebrations,
- special dining accommodations will be provided in the school as needed- for example peanut-free table, dairy-free table, etc.

Note: Due to the number of students with food allergies, delivery of fast food such as pizza, Chinese, etc. or other food products to students or staff is not permitted without prior approval of the principal. For additional information, please refer to the Wellness Policy/Regulations.

Classroom Parties / Group Snacks:

- It is strongly recommended that candy not be sent to school for group consumption- for example for field trips, in goody bags for birthdays, Valentine's Day, etc.
- It is recommended that only milk, water or 100% juice be available at school/classroom functions.
- Parents will be provided with a list of healthy snacks to send in for group snacks or parties at the beginning of the school year (available upon request).

8. Pupil Conduct

Establishing and maintaining standards of good conduct for young people are responsibilities mutually shared by the home and school system. Conduct that reflects self-respect and a concern for others is a desirable lifetime goal.

A. Suspension

The principal of the school, or his/her designee in his/her absence, may suspend a student from school for specified disciplinary reasons, truancy, or for other reasons where his/her presence would disrupt the normal operation of the school. Whenever a student is suspended, his/her parents are to be notified in writing, stating the specific reason and duration of the suspension. The following include the most common reasons for suspension but are not to be considered all-inclusive: truancy; disrespect for authority; repetition of any offense after notice; obscene language or gestures; general bad conduct or bad example tending to the injury of the school; cutting, marking, destroying, or injuring any school property--such as buildings, books, furniture, fences, trees, etc.; use of drugs or alcohol; smoking, including smokeless tobacco. Any subsequent violations shall double the time of suspension up to ten days. Parental conferences will occur as needed at the discretion of the principal.

ANY STUDENT WHO IS SUSPENDED FROM CLASSES MUST MAKE UP THE CLASSWORK UPON RETURN TO SCHOOL. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain all notes and assignments needed to complete work missed from the suspended period.

B. Suspension Procedures (This section does not apply to situations covered by M.G.L., Chapter 71, Sections 37H and 37H1/2.)

If the suspension is ten (10) days or less, a hearing with the principal or his designee will be held. The student has the constitutional right to receive:

- (1) Oral or written notice of the charges against him/her.
- (2) An explanation of the evidence against him/her.
- (3) The opportunity to present his/her side of the story to an impartial decision-maker (who may be a school administrator).

C. Expulsion/Long Term Suspension (This section does not apply to situations covered by M.G.L., Chapter 71, Sections 37H and 37H1/2.)

Students who commit prohibited acts in the Palmer Schools are liable to criminal charges as well as suspension or expulsion from school. The School Committee assures the students that the civil rights of all students under investigation will be protected. The procedural rights for students facing expulsion/long term suspension include:

- (a) Written notice of the charges;
- (b) The right to be represented by a lawyer or advocate (at the student's expense);
- (c) Adequate time to prepare for the hearing;
- (d) Access to documented evidence before the hearing;
- (e) The right to question witnesses; and
- (f) A reasonable, prompt, written decision including specific grounds for the decision.
- (g) The student may appeal the decision to the proper authority.

The Superintendent may at any time refer a student to the School Committee for a hearing and/or recommendation for exclusion, if, in his/her judgment, the seriousness of the offense warrants such action.

D. Detention Converse Middle School has two types of detentions: teacher detention and office detention. Office detentions are held in the auditorium Monday through Thursday from 1:35 p.m. until 2:10 p.m. However, arrangements can be made if these times present a problem to serve the detention in the office from 7:00 a.m. until 7:35 a.m. Monday through Thursday. If a detention is not served within five (5) days of the original date of issuance, the student will be suspended for repeated failure to serve a detention. Failure to report to a teacher detention will result in an office detention. Unacceptable behavior during a detention will result in repeating the detention or possible suspension. Suspension does not waive previously accumulated detentions.

A student who accumulates ten (10) detentions will be suspended. Parents will be notified after a child receives his/her seventh detention.

E. Extracurricular Activities and/or Field Trips

Students may be excluded from such events if, in the judgment of the teacher and principal, a student's behavior warrants it.

F. EDUCATION REFORM LAW - Tobacco

The EDUCATION REFORM LAW prohibits the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. From the time they get on the bus in the morning to the time they get off the bus in the afternoon, students are prohibited from carrying tobacco products or paraphernalia. The penalty for non-compliance with this law will be enforced as follows:

First offense - 2 day suspension
Second offense - 4 day suspension
Third offense - 5 day suspension

There will also be mandatory educational activities on the hazards of tobacco use in which offenders will have to participate.

G. REQUIREMENT OF THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT (M.G.L., c 71 37H)

By State Law the following procedure is followed in certain cases of serious student misconduct as specified below:

a. Any student who is found on school premises or at school sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

b. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

c. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

d. Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the Superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the Superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the Superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

e. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who received such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the

department of social services, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said Superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of social services, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents, involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

FELONY COMPLAINT OR CONVICTION OF STUDENT, SUSPENSION, EXPULSION RIGHT TO APPEAL (M.G.L., c 71, 37H1/2)

- (1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster 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 the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.
- (2) The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the regional school district with regard to the suspension.
- (3) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student

if such principal or headmaster 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 such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his/her request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his/her behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student.

H. Specific Offenses and Consequences

1. Students who gamble in any form (including, but not limited to money pitching and card playing) will be given a detention.
2. Students are not to be out of their designated lunch area without a pass. Those found wandering will receive a detention.
3. Cutting in the lunch line is prohibited. Students found cutting will be asked to step to the rear of the line. Refusal to do so or repeated cutting will result in an office detention.
4. Students who disrupt the educational program will be suspended for two (2) or more days.
5. Students who use vulgarity will be suspended for up to one (1) day.
6. Students who threaten or intimidate any student for the purpose or intent of obtaining money or other items of value will provide restitution and will be suspended for two (2) or more days dependent on the circumstances.
7. Students who bring pets, animals, (mice, lab rats, hamsters, birds, frogs, snakes, etc.) of any kind will be suspended for one (1) day or more. Instructors may occasionally request exceptions to this rule for instructional purposes.
8. Any student who verbally or physically attacks others based on their race, color, sex, religion, national origin, social status, or disability will be suspended from school for one (1) or more days depending on the severity of the offense.

9. Students who destroy, vandalize, steal or deface school or other students' property will be responsible for restitution and will be suspended from school for two (2) days or more.
10. Students who fight or otherwise willfully (as judged by school authorities via hearing) cause injury to others will be suspended. The length of suspension will be set by school authorities after reviewing all pertinent facts. Factors to be considered include but are not limited to: degree of injury inflicted to other parties, behavior which led to the fight, cooperation with supervising personnel and self defense factors.
11. Students who assault a staff member will be externally suspended for five (5) or more days or will be subject to the provisions of Section G (b) of this handbook
12. Illegal items or other possessions determined to be a possible threat to the safety or security of others will be confiscated and the student will be suspended or expelled. If suspended, the length of suspension will be set by school authorities after reviewing all pertinent facts. The local police department will be notified of any illegal items. **Conviction for placing a bomb threat is punishable by up to 20 years in prison. Students must make up all time lost due to a bomb threat evacuation.**
13. Students who engage in disorderly conduct involving three (3) or more persons that results in or threatens to cause injury or damage to the school or other persons or which materially and substantially disrupts any school activity will be suspended for two (2) or more days.
14. Students who engage in disorderly conduct involving three (3) or more persons that results in or threatens to cause injury or damage to the school or other persons, or which materially and substantially disrupts any school activity will be suspended for two (2) or more days.
15. Leaving school without authorization and cutting class will be subject to a suspension of up to two (2) days.
16. Spitting is not acceptable at school. Students will be subject to detention or suspension for this infraction.
17. Any student who shall commit any act or offense which is not specifically set forth in this handbook, but which shall nevertheless result in any damage or injury to the person or property of the school or of another, or which act or offense shall result in or be likely to result in the creation of a disorder or prejudice the good order and/or decorum of the Palmer Public Schools, shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings with punishment to be commensurate with the offense.

PLEASE NOTE: Any student who shall aid, urge, encourage or abet any other student to commit any of the offenses prohibited by any provision of this handbook shall be subject to the same penalties identified in this handbook.

I. Hazing and Harassment of Others Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 269, Sections 17-19 strictly prohibits any type of hazing or initiation into any student

organization which will endanger, either physical or mental, a student's person. The law specifically states: **Section 17:** Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this section.

Section 18: Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so, without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

J. Alcohol/Drugs The use or possession of, or being under the influence of controlled substances (including alcohol and/or unprescribed drugs) or the possession of the paraphernalia by students at school or at a school sponsored activity is strictly prohibited.

Any infraction of this restriction calls for an immediate hearing with the Principal or his/her designee to officially determine the details of the incident.

Any student who carries or uses illegal drugs (including alcohol) and or drug related paraphernalia (including rolling "papers") will be suspended for a minimum of two (2) days. The student will be required to go home with his/her parent/guardian and meet with the Principal or his/her designee for re-admittance. In addition, the student will be required to meet with the guidance counselor for an appropriate follow-up. Students who are guilty of carrying or using illegal substances a second time will be suspended for five (5) school days. In addition the student, parent, guardian, principal, and counselor will be required to meet in order to implement an on-going program and any determined treatment center program. Any subsequent incidents will result in expulsion.

Any student who distributes or sells illegal drugs (including alcohol) will be suspended for a minimum of five (5) days and be recommended for suspension for the remainder of the school year. Due process procedures for suspension and expulsion will be followed and the local police will notified. Massachusetts General Laws mandate mandatory jail times and fines for the sale of drugs within 1000 ft. of a public school. The laws also provide for the suspension of a person's driver's license or prohibiting a person from getting one if there is a violation of the drug and alcohol laws.

K. Discipline-Special Education In the case of a student who has a signed Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Palmer special education staff will add a statement

in the IEP as to whether or not the student is expected to follow the regular discipline code of the school. If modifications are needed, Palmer staff will incorporate them into the IEP.

The Team will meet if it appears suspensions will accumulate to more than ten (10) days a year. According to the school's policy, "If the Team concludes that the student's misconduct is related to the student's handicapped condition, or if the result of an inappropriate special education placement, or the result of an IEP that was not fully implemented, then the IEP will be modified to reflect a new program designed to better meet the student's needs. Following parental approval, the student will be placed immediately in the new program." The new program, of course, can mean a modified teaching style or curriculum as well as a new placement.

At this IEP review, all facets of the student's handicapping condition will be considered. If, after careful review, the parents and professional determine that the misbehavior is not related to the disability, and that the IEP was appropriate and was being properly implemented, two steps may occur: 1) An amendment to the IEP will be written to provide for delivery of special education services during the suspension. 2) A long-term plan to help the students stay in school will be added to the original IEP. When it is clear a student with special needs may be suspended for more than ten (10) days in a school year, the Director of Special Education and Principal will immediately notify the Regional Center of the Department of Education. The Director and Principal will ask for approval of an alternative plan for delivering special education services. The parents will receive a copy of this notice and the alternative plan.

9. Extracurricular

No student may participate in an extracurricular activity if he/she has failed two (2) or more subjects at the time the last report card was issued. To be eligible during the first quarter, a student must have been promoted the previous year or not have received two (2) failures on the last report card of the previous year.

Students may not participate in any extracurricular activity; i.e., dance, concert, after-school jazz band, etc., unless they are present for one-half day of school on the day of such activity. Students may be excluded from such events if, in the judgment of the teacher and principal, a student's behavior warrants it.

10. Report Card Schedule

Report cards are issued on a regularly scheduled basis. The report card must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the student's teacher.

GRADES CLOSE	October 29, 2009	ISSUE	November 6, 2009
GRADES CLOSE	January 19, 2010	ISSUE	January 29, 2010
GRADES CLOSE	March 30, 2010	ISSUE	April 9, 2010
GRADES CLOSE	June 10, 2010 or last day/school	ISSUE	June 10, or last day

11. Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are available at all times. Parents are encouraged to call the school at any time and ask that the teacher contact them if there are any questions or

problems relative to their child's progress. Cooperation between parents and teachers inevitably results in benefits for the child.

12. Student Records

Testing- The primary use of school-wide testing is to determine how groups of students in Palmer compare with students in other parts of the country and to diagnose strengths and weaknesses with the aim of correcting the latter.

Each year standardized achievement tests may be administered to all students. Results of this testing will be made know to all parents. Any needed individual psychological testing will be done only with parent approval.

Access to Student Records of Eligible Students and Parents The eligible student or the parent shall have access to the student record. In no event shall such access be delayed more than two consecutive weekdays after the initial request, unless the requesting party consents to a delay. Upon such requests for access, the entire student record regardless of the physical location of its parts shall be made available.

(a) Upon request, copies of information contained in the student record shall be furnished to the eligible student or the parent. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the cost of reproduction, may be charged. However, a fee may not be charged if to do so would effectively prevent the parents or eligible student from exercising their right, under Federal Law, to inspect and review the records.

(b) Any student, regardless of age, shall have the right pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71 34A to receive a copy of his/her transcript.

(c) The eligible student or the parent shall have the right upon request to meet with professionally qualified school personnel and to have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.

(d) The eligible student or the parent may have the student record inspected or interpreted by a third party of their choice. Such third party shall present specific written consent of the eligible student or parent, prior to gaining access to the student record.

Third Party Access Under 603 CMR 23.07(4)(a) a school may release the following information without prior consent “a student’s name, address, telephone list, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans.” However, before the school releases this information it must give public notice that it releases these types of information and it must inform parents and eligible students that they have the right to request this information not be released without prior consent. A copy of 603 CMR 23.00 regarding student records is available in the school office. **The latter paragraph constitutes public notice. Parents or guardians may contact the Principal’s office to request directory information not be released.**

13. Homework Policy

In grades 5-7, a regular schedule of homework is established. The purpose behind this policy is to develop good home study habits and to reinforce classroom work. We suggest that the student have a quiet place in the home and preferably a well- lighted desk that is away from other family activity. It is encouraging to the student if parents become involved in the homework program and check over the assignment to see that it is completed and ready on time.

14. Extra-help Sessions – Schedule (see handout letter first week in September)

To aid in furnishing the most help possible to our students, the faculty of each school will be reserving afternoons during the week from 1:35 to 2:10 p.m. as extra-help sessions. On these afternoons, students who are having educational problems, either of a temporary or more serious nature, will be afforded the opportunity of more individualized instruction. We hope you will have your children utilize these sessions if they are in need of them. Sometimes the smallest problems can be handled in a single session. These afternoons may be altered on occasions due to special events. The students will be notified if this occurs. **Transportation is not provided by the school following extra-help sessions.**

15. Special Subject Areas

Art, physical education, and vocal music instruction are given on a regular basis. Small group instrumental music lessons are offered to students. It is the responsibility of the student to procure his/her personal instrument.

16. School Pictures

Individual school pictures are taken in the fall of each year (September 16, 2009). Although every child is photographed, this does not obligate the parents or guardian to make a purchase. Group pictures are taken each spring.

17. Lost and Found

Articles, which have been found in the building or on school grounds, are turned in to the office, where their owners may claim them. Losses should be reported and the Lost and Found Box checked periodically whenever losses occur. Articles left aboard busses may be claimed at the office of the transportation company.

18. Special Services

Special programming is available for children who have been identified as having special needs standing in the way of their progress. Careful evaluations are made by members of the school staff to better serve the special needs of such children. Specialists in counseling, speech, reading, and special education are involved in the programs.

19. Insurance

A student accident policy is available to all students at a nominal fee. Application forms are sent home at the beginning of each school year. In the event an insured child is injured, forms are available for processing in the principal's office. **Please note: The schools do not insure the students but only provide this opportunity as a help to**

parents. The decision to take out such insurance rests solely with the parent or guardian; however, parents are strongly urged to take this insurance since it provides dental protection in addition to other policies and covers dental accidents as well.

20. Appropriate Outdoor Dress

Youngsters should come properly dressed to meet weather conditions. Outdoor recess, which is an integral part of our curriculum, is held every day except when rain or extremely cold, blustery days occur. Outerwear such as boots, jackets, etc., will not be allowed to be worn inside during the school day for obvious health reasons. Parents are encouraged to supply shoes, sweaters, etc., for their child's use within the building and should label clothing with the child's name.

21. Dress Code

It is expected that students will take pride in their personal appearance. Students should come to school well groomed, wearing clothing that is neat, clean and in good taste. Student safety is of great importance; therefore, dressing for school should be done with safety as a priority. If clothing is disruptive to the school environment and/or the learning process, the student may be asked to change at the discretion of the principal.

- Hair must be neat, clean, and well groomed.
- Any potentially dangerous item of dress will be prohibited for safety reasons.
Some examples: long dangling earrings, untied sneakers, baggy pants, flip-flops. Sandals and shoes must have a back strap.
- Provocative items of clothing, including pajamas are inappropriate as school attire. All shirts are waist length. No undergarments are to be exposed. Tank tops (thin straps), halters tops are not allowed. Shorts and skirts must be no shorter than mid thigh.
- Hats are not to be worn during the school day. They should be left in the locker.

22. Promotion Policy

The marking scale is as follows:

A+ (97-100)	B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D (65-69)
A (93-96)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	
A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	E Below 65

The failure of two major subjects will, in most cases, constitute the necessity of repeating a grade. The major subjects will consist of math, reading, English (which includes spelling), social studies and science. All possible retentions will be reviewed in accordance with the school committee policy dealing with student retention (Policy IKER). A copy of this policy is on file in the principal's office.

It is within the principal's province to promote a repeater anytime during the repeating year, provided that his/her progress warrants such a promotion.

Warning notices are issued halfway through each making period to inform parents of a child's lack of progress. They will be issued on or about the following dates: September 24, 2009, December 7, 2009, February 25, 2010 and May 7, 2010. Warning notices may be issued anytime a student is not performing satisfactory work.

23. NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Palmer Public Schools reaffirms that it does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or exercise of civil rights in admissions to, access to, treatment in or employment in its programs or activities. The Palmer Public Schools also affirms its commitment to maintain a school and work environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or exercise of civil rights. Any harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or exercise of civil rights will not be tolerated.

If you should have a complaint or concern that there has been discrimination, you may also utilize the following procedure:

1. Report the violation to the building principal. The building principal will meet with you and other persons who might have information about the issue promptly and will attempt to resolve the issue. Any additional investigation will be commenced within a reasonable period of time. The building principal will issue his/her decision in writing to you within ten (10) days of the conclusion of the investigation.
2. If the complaint is not resolved, it can then be appealed to the school system's Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/A.D.A. Coordinator. This appeal must be in writing, describe the circumstances, and the relief you seek. This appeal should be taken within one week after receipt of the principal's decision.
3. The Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504./A.D.A. Coordinator will meet with you within a reasonable time. Following a review of the materials presented to the principal and any additional investigation which will be conducted promptly, the Coordinator will make a final determination on whether there has been a violation of the district's policy within ten (10) days after the conclusion of any additional investigation. If there has been a violation, the Coordinator will indicate the steps to be taken to correct it.

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights. U.S. Department of Education, J.W. McCormack POCH, Room 222, Boston, MA 02109-4557.

The school system's Equal Opportunity/Title IX/Section 504/A.D.A. Coordinator is Mr. David Stetkiewicz, Principal. He has been designated to respond to any questions about the district's policy, and is part of the review process for complaints or concerns about

discrimination. Mr. Stetkiewicz can be reached at 24 Converse Street, Palmer 01069, 413-283-8109.

24. Sexual Harassment Policy/Complaint Procedure for Students

PURPOSE

To create for all Palmer Public School students a study-environment free of sexual harassment.

The Palmer Public Schools is committed to safeguarding the right of all persons associated with the Palmer Public Schools, including students, employees, school committee members and volunteers to a work and educational environment that is free from all forms of sexual harassment. Therefore, the Palmer Public Schools condemns and prohibits all sexual harassment on its premises.

All individuals associated with the school system, but not necessarily limited to the School Committee, the administration, the staff, students and members of the public while on campus, are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Any person who engages in sexual harassment while acting as a member of the school community or while on school property will be in violation of this policy.

Appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including the dismissal, will be taken in any instance where an employee violates this policy. Sexual harassment by a student will result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. Sexual harassment by others will result in their being excluded from School premises or if it is required that they enter the premises, they will be accompanied by a school system representative at all times.

If the sexual harassment is criminal in nature, the offense shall be reported to the police department as well as the Title IX Coordinator. If the sexual harassment requires the intervention of State social service or protective agencies, the proper authorities will be contacted. In these circumstances, the School's attorney will be immediately contacted to give advice and guidance on how to process these actions with the appropriate authorities.

Any student who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should make a complaint to any administrator, the Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent, so that appropriate action may be taken at once.

Management representatives are charged with the responsibility of discouraging any sexually harassing behaviors within or outside of their areas of supervision. This includes directly confronting the harasser when a management representative observes harassing behavior, and immediately reporting the activity to the Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator will investigate complaints promptly, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. No person will suffer retaliation or intimidation as a result of using the internal complaint procedure.

A copy of this policy and its accompanying regulations are posted in appropriate places, and made available to individuals upon request.

The Title IX Coordinators for the Palmer Public Schools are:

Bonny Rathbone
Title IX Coordinator
4105 Main Street, Thorndike 01079
413-283-6511

Neil Metcalf
Title IX Coordinator
24 Converse St., Palmer 01069
413-283-2651

Legal references: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act 1964 as amended
45 Federal Regulations 746776 issued by Chapter 622/EEOC Title IX
Of 1972 Education Amendments

SEXUAL HARASSMENT DEFINITION

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where:

1. Submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of a student's education; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for education decisions affecting such student; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. Assault, inappropriate touching, intentionally impeding movement, comments, gestures, or written communications of a suggestive or derogatory nature.
2. Continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that the interest is unwelcome. (Reciprocal attraction between peers is not considered sexual harassment.)
3. Implying or actually withholding grades earned or deserved, suggesting that a poor performance evaluation will be prepared, or suggesting that a scholarship recommendation or college application will be denied.
4. Coercive sexual behavior used to control, influence or affect the educational opportunities, grade and/or the learning environment of a student.
5. Offering or granting favors or educational benefits, such as grades or recommendations, in exchange for sexual favors.

Other sexual harassing behavior directed towards students, whether committed by management, staff, or students, is also prohibited. Such conduct includes but is not limited to

1. Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions;
2. Sexually explicit language or gestures.
3. Touching that an individual interprets as sexual in nature;
4. Any unwelcome physical contact;
5. The presence of sexually provocative photographs, pictures, or other material, and the telling of sexual stories or jokes;
6. Verbal or non-verbal behavior about an individual's body that is interpreted as sexual in nature.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE - INFORMAL PROCESS FOR STUDENTS

In determining whether an alleged incident constitutes sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all sexual harassment complaints in accordance with the procedure outlined below, unless the Title IX Coordinator is the subject of the complaint.

1. Any student of the school system who believes that he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment is to report the incident(s) to any administrator, Title IX Coordinator, or directly to the Superintendent. The administrator and/or Superintendent are to immediately contact the Title IX Coordinator. A written record of the complaint will be made by the party receiving the complaint. A separate file system will be maintained, apart from the student's personal record, regarding these complaints and as to all matters relating to the complaints.
2. If the alleged harassment involves the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent of Schools will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
3. If the alleged harassment involves the Superintendent of Schools, the Secretary of the School Committee will act as the Title IX Coordinator.
4. The Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator will look at the totality of the circumstances and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. They will attempt to resolve the problem by conferring with both parties in order to obtain a clear understanding of the facts. All matters involving sexual harassment complaints will remain confidential to the extent possible.
5. Students may be accompanied, at any phase of this process or subsequent hearing before the Committee, by a parent, guardian or representative of their choosing. Parents will be immediately notified by the Title IX Coordinator of the existence of a student's report of sexual harassment.
6. The Title IX Coordinator will explain each phase of the Informal and Formal Complaint Process to a student who wishes to file a complaint and will assist the student in the processing of the complaint. In addition, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the student of additional forums for resolution of the complaint such as the Office of Civil Rights (O.C.R.) and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (M.C.A.D.).
7. Under normal circumstances, the Title IX Coordinator's investigation will be completed within five working days of the initial complaint. Upon completion of the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator shall issue his/her findings in writing to the student and the alleged harasser.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE - FORMAL PROCESS FOR STUDENT

1. A complainant may file a formal complaint immediately or may do so after the Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator's efforts to reach a settlement under the informal process have proven unsuccessful.
2. The complaint will state clearly and concisely the complainant's description of the incident and it will also indicate any remedy sought. The complaint must be signed by the complainant. The Superintendent's office will send the respondent a copy of the complaint within five working days after it is received. A separate file system shall be maintained as to all matters relating to the complaint. Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent possible.
3. The respondent will have ten working days to respond in writing. This statement will contain full and specific references to each claim in the complaint, admitting, denying or explaining the complainant's allegations. The respondent must sign his or her statement which will then be appended to the original complaint. Within three working days, the Superintendent's office will forward both statement to the complainant and the respondent.
4. There will be two modes of resolution for formal complaints. A complaint may be settled through mediation or through a hearing. If the complainant and respondent agree to pursue mediation, a date mutually acceptable to both parties will be set within ten working days. If the mediation results in a mutually acceptable agreement, copies of the agreement will be forwarded to both parties. If the mediation does not result in an agreement, the case will be forwarded to the Superintendent for a hearing unless the Superintendent is the alleged harasser in which case the hearing will be before the Palmer Public Schools School Committee.
5. When a hearing is requested, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the Superintendent or the School Committee, as the case may be, and the case will be heard at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the School Committee pursuant to the provisions of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law and/or before the Superintendent pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71 42.

FORMAL HEARING

1. The purpose of the Superintendent or School Committee Hearing is to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated and, if so, to determine the appropriate consequences for the violation.
2. Both parties will be given a full and fair hearing. The proceeding, although formal, is not a court proceeding and the Superintendent or School Committee is not bound by the procedures and rules of evidence of a court of law. In most instances, complainants and respondents will be expected to speak for themselves, although, if desired, each party may be accompanied by counsel or an advocate.
3. The presiding officer of the hearing may have counsel present for purposes of assisting in the orderly conduct of the hearing and the questioning of witnesses. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to clarify the issues and to define the areas of disagreement. To encourage a fair and focused hearing, at the start of the proceedings the points of agreement and disagreement will be reviewed. The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will hear testimony and consider whether the School Committee Policy on Sexual Harassment has been violated, and, if so, will recommend appropriate consequences.
4. The presiding officer will:
 - a. ensure an orderly presentation of all evidence;
 - b. ensure that the proceedings are accurately recorded by means of a tape or stenographic recording; and
 - c. see that a decision is issued no later than ten working days after the conclusion of the hearing or, when written agreements are submitted, ten working days after their submission.
5. The Superintendent or the Committee, as the case may be, will:
 - a. conduct a fair and impartial hearing which ensures the rights of all parties involves;

- b. define issues of contention;
- c. receive and consider all relevant evidence which reasonable people customarily rely upon in the conduct of serious business;
- d. ask relevant questions of the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses if needed to elicit information which may be of assistance in making a decision; and
- e. ensure that the complainant and respondent have full opportunity to present their claims orally or in writing, and to present witnesses and evidence which may establish their claims.

DECISION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OR THE COMMITTEE

1. After all the evidence, testimony, and written arguments have been presented, the committee will convene for deliberations to determine whether the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been violated. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the policy has not been violated, that fact will be registered in the records of the hearing, and the written decision will be forwarded to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after completion of the hearing. In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the policy has not been violated, the Superintendent will issue a written decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

2. If the Committee finds after a roll call vote that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the hearing Committee will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Committee will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

In hearings before the Superintendent, if the Superintendent finds that the charge of violating the school system's policy on sexual harassment has been substantiated, the Superintendent will prepare findings and will determine a penalty for the respondent and relief for the complainant. The Superintendent will issue such decision to the complainant and the respondent no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the hearing.

The findings of fact as well as the penalty and relief will be based solely on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing.

3. The penalty should reflect the severity of the harassment. The penalties may include, but will not be limited to any one or combination of the following: verbal admonition, written warning placed in the respondent's personnel file or student record, probation, suspension without pay, dismissal, demotion, or removal from administrative duties within a department; students may be subject to suspension or expulsion proceedings following a finding that the policy has been violated. The Committee or Superintendent may also make appropriate recommendations, such as professional counseling, and may recommend relief for the complainant which reinstates and restores, as much as possible, the aggrieved party.

25. Personal Belongings

Cell phones, music players, cameras, radios, electronic devices, laser lights, dolls, toys, playing cards, trading cards, etc., are not allowed at school except on special occasions and with the permission of the principal. The above items will be confiscated and held in the principal's office until the end of the day. Students

should avoid bringing unnecessary money and expensive belongings or clothing to school as a general practice since there is always the danger of loss or theft. Students are not allowed to bring cans or bottles of soda, juice, etc., to school. Gum chewing is not allowed at school at any time or any place including the schoolyard.

26. Care of Property and Textbooks

Students are responsible for all school property loaned to them, including textbooks and workbooks. Any student who marks, damages, destroys school property will be held liable for the cost. The cost of replacement is the responsibility of the student. An outstanding balance will lead to a seventh grade student not being allowed to participate in the end of the year “moving on” ceremony.

Textbooks and workbooks must be covered at all times and the student’s name and homeroom must appear on all book covers.

27. Bell Schedule

7:25 a.m. First bell	10:45 a.m. 5 th Block / 1 st lunch
7:35 a.m. Homeroom / Tardy bell	11:10 a.m. 2 nd lunch
7:45 a.m. 1 st Block	11:35 a.m. 3 rd lunch
8:30 a.m. 2 nd Block	12:00 noon 6 th Block
9:15 a.m. 3 rd Block	12:45 p.m. 7 th Block
10:00 a.m. 4 th Block	1:33 p.m. Dismissal

28. Playground and School Safety

For safety reasons, students are not allowed to bring to school any of the following items for use on the playground: 1. Hard covered balls (baseballs, softballs, etc.); 2. Leather covered balls (footballs, soccer balls, etc.); 3. Whiffle balls, which are taped; 4. Wood or aluminum bats.

The principal will determine whether any items other than those noted above are a safety hazard. For safety reasons, students are not allowed to walk or play on snowbanks on school property. Bicycles and skateboards are not allowed on school property.

29. Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)

Asbestos management plans have been developed for all public schools in Palmer which have asbestos-containing materials present. These plans are available and accessible to the public at each individual school as well as at the Superintendent’s office.

30. Entering and Leaving the Building

Students will not be allowed to enter the building through the east entrance in the cafeteria in the newer section of the building. The Rathbone Street or West entrance to

the cafeteria should be used by students arriving at school by means of private transportation. The main or front entrance is not to be used by students.

Parents dropping off and picking up students should use the driveway on the west side of the building. Students should be dropped off near the cafeteria door. Cars may then continue to Rathbone Street to exit onto Converse Street. This should prevent any traffic congestion on Converse Street and provide a safe process for students to enter and leave the building. **Please note that parking in front of and in the EAST parking lot of the building is prohibited. This regulation is strictly enforced.** Students are **not** to be dropped off or picked up in the east parking lot as this is for bus drop-off and pick-up only! Walking students should not arrive before 7:20 a.m.

31. Emergency Early Dismissal

When emergency early dismissal is in order, the Superintendent will notify local radio and television stations who will in turn alert parents of the specifics regarding early dismissal. Parents should listen for early dismissal announcements as it is impossible for the school staff to make special arrangements to notify parents on an individual basis. **We encourage parents to refrain from calling the school unless it is absolutely necessary. Parents are advised to establish a plan of action for children to take in the event of unanticipated emergency early dismissals as students may not be able to access school telephones.**

32. School Library

The use of the library is a privilege. Students with overdue books or outstanding obligations will lose their library privileges. These privileges will be restored only upon receipt of the overdue book(s) or payment of any outstanding obligations.

33. Alternative Education

The Converse Middle School offers a highly structured program designed to address the emotional, social and academic needs of those students who display characteristics that prevent them from functioning in a regular classroom setting.

34. Sexuality Education

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 32A, the Palmer Public Schools Policy for Parental/Guardian Notification Pertaining to Sexuality Education is on file in the office of the Superintendent of Schools. This policy allows parents access to instructional materials and allows for the exemption of their children from portions of the curriculum dealing with sexuality, without academic penalty.

The Health education program at Converse Middle School includes, but is not limited to: anti-tobacco education, nutrition, puberty, first aid and safety, fetal development and childbirth, communication, self-image, body systems, dating issues, stress & time management, and human growth and development. Health is a required 36-day program for all students in grades 5, 6 and 7. Science class may also contain material of a sexual nature.

35. Student Placement

A letter similar to the one below (sent to the parents/guardians of all 4th, 5th, and 6th grade parents on May 5, 2009) will be sent home in early May 2010. This letter will outline a process for requesting a student placement for the following year.

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

Converse Middle School will soon begin to establish class lists for the 2009-2010 school year.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the process involved in creating class lists.

In forming heterogeneous student groups, we look at the male/female ratios, ability and achievement levels, children's learning styles, teaching styles and personalities. Some grouping or clustering may be necessary to insure the various educational services such as reading, math, speech and language, occupational and physical therapy, special education and inclusion are delivered both effectively and efficiently.

Social factors such as placing a child in his/her best friend's class are not considered since children are adaptable and will make friends wherever they are placed. Although parents may have preferences for a particular teacher, these requests cannot be accommodated since it would jeopardize the balance of a heterogeneous mix and the delivery of educational services.

Please note: The number of teams, number of homerooms and teacher assignments for the next school will not be known until the budget has been approved.

If you feel there is a unique situation or special information about your child's learning needs that the principal needs to know prior to class assignments, please put that information in writing and deliver it to me no later than Friday, May 22, 2009. In the summer, your child will receive a class placement for the upcoming school year. If for some reason(s) you feel the placement is inappropriate for your child, you may appeal said placement in writing to the school principal requesting an alternate assignment. The school administration will review your request for reassignment and inform you of a decision no later than August 21, 2009. Thank you for your cooperation.

36. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The rights of an individual are preserved only by the protection and preservation of the rights of others. A student is responsible for the manner in which his/her individual rights are exercised and must accept the consequences of any actions which are committed outside the boundaries of those rights. The staff, students and parents must work cooperatively to avoid the extremes of regimentation on the one hand and anarchy on the other if the goal of democratic society within the schools is to be realized.

The student has the:

RIGHT TO LEARN - Each student has the right to attend school and to gain an education. The right to learn also includes the right of classes to meet and to carry on studies without interruptions, disruptions, or distractions, whether they be inside the classroom or from the outside. Behavior which disrupts the normal functioning of classes is an infringement upon the right of others and will not be tolerated.

RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH AND EXPRESSION - The students have the right to express opinions provided that the language used in such expressions is courteous and respectful. Appropriate language should be used during all school activities and toward all other persons be they students or adults.

RIGHT TO BE INFORMED ON RULES - Students have the right to be informed of all policies, rules and regulations which they will be expected to follow. Students are

responsible for the consequences of their behavior. All students are responsible for knowing and obeying all school rules and regulations.

The student has:

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACADEMIC WORK - Students are responsible for completing class assignments on time and according to the instruction given by the teachers.

RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS -

Students are responsible for being in attendance at the beginning of the school day. They are responsible for knowing and for following the rules of attendance, absence and tardiness as provided in the handbook.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISCIPLINE - Students are responsible for complying with the rules and regulations of the school as well as with the instructions of all school personnel and for accepting the authority of the faculty and school officials on school property and on field trips.

RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS - Personal property brought in by other students should be used only with the permission of the owner.* If permission is granted, the materials are to be used carefully and are to be returned to the owner at his/her request.

(*school personnel cannot be liable for loss or damage to personal property.)

RESPONSIBILITY OF CARRYING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND HOME - Students will be given many communications from the school which should be brought from home. If answers are required, the student must return them to school.

The teachers have the:

RIGHT TO TEACH - Each teacher has the right to maintain discipline in the classroom in order to ensure a proper learning atmosphere for all students.

RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT - Teachers should not be subjected to language from students which would show disrespect for their position and their authority. Personal property and materials provided by the teacher to be used in the classroom should be handled with care and with respect.

RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE A HIGH STANDARD OF EDUCATION The teacher must be aware of the requirements of the Palmer Public Schools. The teacher will also recognize individual differences among students and work to meet the individual needs of these students. The teacher must make discipline and control in the classroom a priority in order to provide the best possible learning atmosphere within the classroom.

RESPONSIBILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS - The school should be a place where parents, teachers and students unite. Parents must meet with the teacher in order to be aware of the goals and policies which have been established for the classroom. Parents must be kept informed of any learning difficulties and behavior problems as well as of the progress of the child.

37. CODE OF CONDUCT- In order to maintain a pleasant learning atmosphere, students should remember that good behavior plays a major role. This type of

atmosphere has a positive effect on the student and it allows the teacher to focus on helping students toward their educational growth potential.

Students should be fully aware that the teacher is authorized and has the primary responsibility for maintaining order. In the classroom, those actions which are disruptive to the learning situation will be dealt with by the teacher. Any infraction of a school rule either reported to or observed by a teacher in the building, will be subject to a teacher detention. Failure to report to a teacher detention will result in an office detention.

Infractions of the following will result in a teacher/office detention/suspension:

1. Gum and candy are not allowed in school.
2. Cough drops are allowed only with dated parental note and permission of the teacher.
3. Cell phones, music players, cameras, other electronic devices, pagers, laser lights, etc. are not allowed in school. In addition to possible disciplinary action, as stated above, with the first violation the item will be taken and may be returned at the end of the day at the discretion of the principal. All subsequent violations may result in the item being held until a parent claims the item.
4. Skateboards, scooters and bicycles are not allowed.
5. Toys and trading cards are not allowed.
6. Selling of items to students, other than those recognized as part of a legitimate approved fund raiser, is not allowed.
7. Cosmetics, toiletries and hairspray are to be used only in the restroom.
8. Food and beverages are to be consumed only in the cafeteria.
9. Hats are **not** to be worn during the school day. They should be left in the locker.
10. Proper language and dress is expected at all times.
11. Books and workbooks **are to be covered at all times.**
12. An absence note must be presented to the homeroom teacher upon return to school.
13. Students must be on time for classes.
14. Students must have a pass to see a teacher, go to restrooms, use the phone or go to their locker other than at specified times.
15. Vandalism and littering are not allowed.
16. Students must show proper respect for people, places and materials within the school environment.
17. Students will come to class prepared with books, assignments, notebooks, and homework and writing instruments. Also students should have reading materials with them at all times.
18. Students will show proper behavior in the lunchroom.
19. **Poor work notices and report cards and other notices requiring signature are to be returned within five (5) calendar days after issue.**

Other infractions such as fighting, insolence, vulgarity, insubordination and those outlined in this Student Handbook will be subject to punishment as outlined in said Handbook.

Avoid conflicts. All students have the right to attend school without fear of physical harm or threats.

1. You may not fight, push, trip or hit another student or staff member.
2. You may not play-fight or play-scuffle with another student or staff member.
3. You may not threaten to harm another student or staff member.
4. You may not ask other students to threaten or hurt another student or staff member.

Fighting is not tolerated in the middle school. There is NO reason that would justify this kind of action. You are expected to:

1. Solve little problems before they become big.
2. Get help from a teacher or guidance counselor.
3. Consult with the principal or assistant principal. Do NOT lose your cool; keep it and act maturely. If a fight does develop, usually it results in both students being suspended from school. **REMEMBER**, the main objective is to control and cool the situation, not to make it worse.

38. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students will be required to participate in Physical Education classes on average twice each week. Students will be excused only if a doctor's note is presented for a long-term illness or parental notice for a short-term illness. All students will be required to change clothes for gym class. Shorts, sweatpants, running pants, tee shirt, sweatshirt, and sneakers that can tie (jean shorts or jean pants are not allowed) are required for participation in each class. This is not to be the same clothing worn to regular classes.

Students do not participate in physical education class when they do not change into appropriate clothes for gym class. Students that do not change for 3 classes may receive a failing grade. Lockers are available for students to use for clothing and towel storage. A lock is recommended to insure the safety of articles left in the lockers during class. It is also suggested that the combination to the locker or a duplicate key be made available to the instructor so as to prevent problems that arise from lost keys or forgotten combinations.

The first week of school the staff of the Physical Education Department will review policies regarding attendance, behavior and grading.

39. LOCKERS

Students will be assigned a locker to safeguard their personal belongings such as books, supplies and clothing. Students will be allowed to use their lockers before school, prior to lunch and dismissal. Lockers should be kept clean and locked at all times. Students should not bring valuables and large sums of money to school. The school cannot be held responsible for materials missing from lockers. Students should keep locker combinations **private** and make sure that locks are properly secured. Students **should not** slam locker doors or kick them shut. Lockers are subject to inspection at any time as they are **school property** and are **on loan** to students.

40. TELEPHONE USE

Students are not allowed to make phone calls from the MAIN OFFICE, GUIDANCE or NURSE'S OFFICE for personal business. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Students may have permission to use the office phone only in an emergency.

41. PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY

The Palmer Public Schools complies with the Department of Education (D.O.E.) restraint regulations 603 C.M.R. 46.00 et. seq., as required by law. These regulations apply not only while attending school, but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property. Copies of this law are available at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html>, and in the office of the principal.

The Palmer Public Schools uses non-violent restraint such as redirection, escorts to quiet areas, talking to student and other such methods. Physical restraint is only used as a last resort.

42. PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ENHANCED CORI POLICY

As per state law and school committee policy, all school volunteers, including chaperones for field experiences are required to submit to a CORI background check.

43. OFFENSES AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

1. Truancy	Up to 2 days suspension
2. Disrespect for authority	“
3. Repeat of offense after notice	“
4. Obscene language or gestures	“
5. General bad conduct or bad example	“
6. Cutting, marking or destroying school property	“
7. Repeated unexcused tardiness (more than 2/quarter)	Detention for each tardiness or some alternative
8. Gambling	Detention/suspension up to 2 days
9. Tobacco (possession of)	2 day suspension and educational activity
10. Seriously disrupted program	Suspended for 2 days or more
11. Vulgarity	Suspended for up to 2 days
12. Extortion	Restitution and 2 or more days suspension
13. Unauthorized pets or animals	1 day suspension
14. Verbal or physical attack on person's race, color, sex, religion, national origin, social status or disability	1 or more days suspension
15. Destroy, vandalize or deface school or school property	Restitution and 2 days suspension
16. Assault of student	Suspension for 5 or more days (Possible expulsion)
17. Disorderly conduct	Suspension for 2 or more days
18. Leaving school grounds or cutting classes	Suspension up to 2 days
19. Spitting	Detention or suspension
20. Illegal items or item posing threat to safety and security of others	5 or more days of suspension or expulsion Police will be notified
21. Excessive tardiness 6/more per quarter	Parent conference and possible suspension
22. Verbal or physical abuse	1 or more days suspension
23. Hazing or harassment	Multiple days suspension or

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| 24. Fighting | possible expulsion |
| 25. Assault on staff member | Multiple detentions or up to 5 days suspension
5 or more days of suspension or expulsion |

44. Renaissance

The Converse Middle School became registered with the Renaissance program in 1994. The Jostens Foundation is the owner of the registered logo and trademark of the Renaissance Education Foundation. Renaissance is a program that stresses excellence in every endeavor. It encourages each student to excel academically through incentives supported by business partnerships and in-school privileges. Converse Middle School recognizes students at three levels; High Honors, Honors, and VIP (Very Improved Person). Students must meet **both** the **academic and conduct requirements**.

Academic Requirements:

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|--------------------|---|
| High Honors | All A's on report card with only <i>excellent</i> and <i>good</i> in effort and conduct. |
| Honors | All A's and B's on report card with only <i>excellent</i> and <i>good</i> in effort and conduct. |
| VIP | Must obtain two half-grade improvements in two subjects. No downward movement in other grades, and only <i>excellent</i> and <i>good</i> in effort and conduct. |

Conduct Requirements:

In order to be eligible for Renaissance at any level, a student must maintain a high level of desirable conduct.

- If a student receives an office detention, they will not be eligible in the quarter they receive it.
- Conduct/effort grades of "3=fair" or "4=poor" will not be eligible for Renaissance.
- If a student is suspended, they will not be eligible for Renaissance during the quarter that they received the suspension in **and** during the following quarter.

Teams will re-evaluate a student's status during the third quarter following the suspension.

45. Bullying

Bullying and harassment are major distractions from learning. The grades of the victims can suffer. Fear can lead to chronic absenteeism, truancy, or even dropping out of school. Bystanders feel both guilty and helpless for not standing up to the bully.

As a rule bullying behavior starts in elementary school and peaks in middle school years. However, it attracts more attention from adults when it appears in high school. There, the students are older and physically larger and the behavior is recognized as being less tolerable and more inappropriate. Also, sexual harassment is, in fact, often a form of bullying.

Most bullying starts out verbally- teasing and put-downs- and may become progressively worse and assume physical dimensions.

POLICY STATEMENT: Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Palmer Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying.

EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY: None

AMPLIFYING INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:

A. DEFINITION OF THE TERM, "BULLYING"- Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through verbal, physical, mental, or written interactions. Bullying can take many forms and occur in virtually any setting. It can create unnecessary and unwarranted anxiety that will affect attending school, walking in corridors, eating in cafeterias, playing in the school yard or recreation areas, participating in or attending special and extracurricular activities, or riding on the bus to and from school each day. Examples of bullying include but are not exclusive to:

1. Intimidation, either physical or psychological
2. Threats of any kind, stated or implied
3. Assaults on students, including those that are verbal, physical, psychological and emotional
4. Assaults on student property

B. DISCIPLINARY ACTION- The School Committee expects administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination of employees.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment, including bullying. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment, including bullying.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY- The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JICFA-E, Hazing

46. Student-To-Student Harassment

Harassment of students by other students will not be tolerated in the Palmer Public Schools. This policy is in effect while students are on school grounds, School District property or property within the jurisdiction of the School District, school buses, or attending or engaging in school activities.

Harassment prohibited by the district includes, but is not limited to, harassment on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or disability. Students whose behavior is found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

Harassment means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb or trouble students when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student's education or of a student's participation in school programs or activities;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the students, or;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with a student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile learning environment.

Harassment as described above may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal, physical or written harassment or abuse;
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature;
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matter.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at the student.

The District will promptly and reasonably investigate allegations of harassment. The Principal of each building will be responsible for handling all complaints by students alleging harassment.

Retaliation against a student, because a student filed a harassment complaint or assisted or participated in a harassment investigation or proceeding, is also prohibited. A student who is found to have retaliated against another in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion.

The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 151B:3A
 Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
 Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

REFS.: *“Words That Hurt”*, American School Board Journal, September
 1999
 National Education policy Network, NSBA