

2009-2010 Family Handbook

**Pittsfield Elementary School
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Pittsfield Elementary School

Family Handbook

Accidents and Emergencies. Despite our best efforts to provide a safe, healthy environment for children and adults, accidents occasionally occur. When accidents take place, the supervising adult and our school nurse provide immediate and appropriate emergency attention.

In the event of serious injury, every effort is made to contact parents to inform and advise regarding the accident and to allow parents to make plans for further medical treatment or transportation, if indicated.

Animals. Due to potential health and safety concerns, animals are not permitted in our school building at any time.

Arrival at School. To allow for adequate supervision and to ensure safety, children who do not ride a school bus to school are requested to arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. but are expected to arrive on time to enter our school building with their classes at 7:55 a.m. Our "official" school day begins at 8:00 a.m. with morning meetings in each of our classrooms.

Upon arrival, children are expected to report to the assigned area for their grade in front of the school building. Kindergarteners enter our school through the cafeteria doors and meet their classmates inside our cafeteria; first and second graders gather on the walkway area in front of our school building; third through sixth graders gather on the circle and field in front of our school building.

On rainy days and on very cold days - when the wind chill factor is below 15° - kindergartners and first and second graders enter our school through the main entrance doors and assemble with their classmates in our cafeteria until 7:55 a.m. Third through sixth graders enter our school through the main entrance and assemble with their classmates in our gym until 7:55 a.m.

Children who arrive after 8:00 a.m. cause an interruption to the learning of others and are considered "tardy." Tardy children who arrive at school after classmates have entered the school building for the day must report to the school office to check in and obtain a "late pass" prior to reporting to their classrooms.

Assignment of Children to Classes. The assignment of a child to a class represents an important decision in the child's school life. Placement decisions are made on an individual basis and are the responsibility of the school administration. This process may also include consultation with parents and staff. Of course, the needs of class groups are also considered;

our classes are intended to be heterogeneous (diverse) in nature and of approximately equal numbers of children across a grade level.

Parents of children new to our school - both kindergarteners and transfers - are asked to complete all application materials and to schedule an interview with our principal prior to class placement. Following verification that the child is qualified to attend our school and following the interview, the child is assigned to a class. Typically, a twenty-four hour notice period following the interview is required prior to the start of school to allow the receiving teacher adequate time to prepare for the integration of the new entry into his/her class.

In reconfiguring our classes for subsequent school years, classroom teachers make placement recommendations to the school administration. Parents are encouraged to share their perspectives on school placement but are requested not to make specific teacher placement requests as such requests can not be honored. A questionnaire is distributed to all parents each spring to provide a common format for the sharing of parent observations.

We recognize that parents and teachers may not always agree on the best class placement for each child; however, we assure parents that each child's best interests are considered when making class assignments.

Attendance and Absence. Regular school attendance is essential for continuous learning and academic success. In fact, New Hampshire law (RSA 193:1) requires that parents ensure regular school attendance of all children between the ages of six and sixteen years.

Of course, state law permits absence from school for certain reasons, including illness. In the event that a child will be absent from school due to illness or other legal reason, parents or caregivers are requested to call the school office (435-8432) by 8:30 a.m. on the day of absence or as early as possible when such an absence is known about in advance. The purpose of this call is to ensure student safety as well as communicate the reason for absence. Notice may be provided outside of regular school hours by leaving a voicemail message.

In the event that notice is not provided, our office staff will make every effort to reach the parent or caregiver - either at work or at home - to ensure that the absent child is safe.

Behavior Expectations. P.E.S. utilizes a nationally recognized organizational system for developing and supporting a safe and productive academic environment in our school. This system, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ("PBIS"), seeks to support children, families, and staff in developing and maintaining practices that encourage respectful behaviors resulting in increased learning within a caring environment.

To this end, our behavioral program takes a proactive approach to schoolwide discipline. We seek to develop and utilize a schoolwide approach to discipline that creates a school environment in which:

- Learning and teaching are valued, and aggressive, unsafe behaviors are discouraged;
- Respect, responsibility, cooperation, and other universal, highly valued character traits are taught and encouraged;
- Individual differences are valued rather than criticized;
- Educating children with disabilities can be supported more effectively and efficiently;
- Teaching fundamental skills like reading, writing, and math can be maximized.

At a most fundamental level, in the interest of supporting a safe and productive academic environment, children are expected to:

- Use only language and speaking tone that is proper, respectful, and courteous to others;
 - Use common courtesies, such as "May I please," "Please," "Thank you;"
 - Refrain from walking between people who are engaged in a conversation;
 - Refrain from interrupting people who are engaged in a conversation; in an emergency and an interruption is necessary, interrupt in a courteous manner;
- Respect and refrain from interfering with the teaching and learning of others;
- Respect, cooperate with, and follow the directions of adults in supervisory roles;
- Bring only safe, school-appropriate articles to school;
- Refrain from approaching or touching others in an aggressive or threatening manner;
- Refrain from chewing gum;
- Respect school property and the property of others;
 - Refrain from writing in school and library books, unless the book is a workbook or journal for which specific directions have been given;
 - Keep assigned equipment (desks, chairs, other classroom equipment, storage areas, etc.) neat and clean;
 - Provide restitution for lost, damaged, or destroyed property.

Through a collaborative effort that was initiated in 2005 and continues on an ongoing basis, children, parents, and staff have identified the three universal values of respect, responsibility, and safety as guiding principles in developing behavior expectations. These values being established, we have further developed our *behavior matrix* that specifically defines and operationalizes these values in various school settings.

Our behavior matrix, reproduced below, is communicated to our children and adults to clearly communicate and teach our behavioral expectations for all.

After-School Activities

- Respect
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Sit quietly and listen or participate

- Show appreciation
- Dress appropriately for the occasion
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - If you make a mess, clean it up
 - Use supplies and equipment properly
 - Observe school rules
 - Arrive and leave at the appropriate time
- Safety
 - Walk
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
 - Stay in assigned area
 - Keep exits clear
 - Students must be supervised by an adult

Arrival and Dismissal

- Respect
 - Use indoor voices
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Wait quietly and patiently
- Responsibility
 - Arrival
 - Line up in a timely and orderly fashion
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Arrive on time
 - Go directly to assigned area (such as breakfast, assigned play area, etc.)
 - Dismissal
 - Line up in a timely and orderly fashion
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Leave school grounds promptly unless supervised by an adult
 - Wait to be dismissed before leaving classroom
 - Exit through front door
- Safety
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
 - Walk properly on ramp and stairs
 - Pass is needed to travel in building without an adult
 - Wheeled devices (bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades, etc.) must be walked on blacktop when on school grounds
 - Use sidewalks and paths
 - Wear appropriate attire

Assemblies

- Respect
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Wait patiently and quietly
 - Participate in activity appropriately
 - Ask/make appropriate questions/comments
 - Show appreciation appropriately (clapping)
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Keep eyes and ears on presenter(s)
 - Show appreciation appropriately
 - Sit appropriately
 - Take care of lavatory (bathroom) needs before assembly
- Safety
 - Walk
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
 - Stay in assigned area

Buses

- Respect
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Use appropriate language
 - Use quiet voice
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Follow rules specific to individual bus drivers
 - Be prepared for your stop
 - Get off at correct stop
 - If you make a mess, clean it up
- Safety
 - Stay in seat
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self and inside the bus
 - Keep aisle clear
 - Get on and off the bus in an orderly fashion
 - Cross in front of the bus

Cafeteria

- Respect
 - Be courteous - say "please" and "thank you"
 - Use good table manners
 - Socialize in a quiet, respectful way with the people near you
 - Wait quietly and patiently
 - Refrain from touching others' food or trays

- Responsibility
 - If you make a mess, clean it up
 - Come prepared for lunch and recess
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Take only what you can eat
 - Make everyone feel welcome at your table
 - Use supplies and equipment appropriately
 - Follow the rules for leaving your seat (varies by grade level)
 - Dispose of trash properly
 - Leave schoolwork and playground equipment in designated areas
- Safety
 - Receive permission to leave the cafeteria
 - Walk
 - Exit and enter cafeteria and building in orderly manner
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
 - All food must be consumed within the cafeteria

Emergency Procedures

- Respect
 - Take situation seriously
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Adhere to procedures for the area in which you are located
 - Stay patiently and silently in assigned area
- Safety
 - Keep hands and feet to self
 - Walk in an orderly manner

Field Trips

- Respect
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Wait patiently and quietly
 - Be a good listener
 - Respect the environment
 - Use appropriate voice level
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - If you make a mess, clean it up
 - Follow rules of the field trip location
 - Come prepared (appropriate clothing, lunch, money, etc.)
- Safety
 - Walk

- Remain with assigned chaperone
- Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self

Hallway

- Respect
 - Walk quietly
 - When entering school in the morning, talk quietly with nearby friends and classmates
 - When moving through hallway with class during the school day, talking is not permitted
 - When leaving school in the afternoon, talk quietly with nearby friends and classmates
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Wait patiently and quietly
 - Walk to the right in single file
 - Respect others' body space and place in line
 - Yield to classes/children already en route
 - Respect hallway displays
 - Greet others appropriately
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Must have pass when not with an adult
 - Go directly to your destination
 - Use ramp and stairs appropriately
- Safety
 - Walk
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
 - Stay in assigned area
 - Move safely

Instructional Areas

- Respect
 - Be courteous and use kind words
 - Wait patiently and quietly
 - Use appropriate voice
 - Respect personal space
 - Listen while others are speaking
 - Use positive language
 - Respect others' comments and opinions
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Follow rules specific to individual instructional areas

- Use supplies and equipment appropriately
- Use time wisely
- Be focused, listen, and learn new things
- Keep belongings neat and organized
- Sign out/in before leaving designated area
- Safety
 - Walk
 - Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self

Lavatories (Bathrooms)

- Respect
 - Wait quietly and patiently
 - Respect privacy of others
 - Knock before entering (primary grades)
- Responsibility
 - Use equipment and supplies properly
 - If you make a mess, clean it up
 - Keep trip short - use time wisely
 - Flush
 - Report any problems (vandalism, harassment, etc.) to a responsible adult as soon as possible
- Safety
 - Leave the light on unless room is empty
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water
 - Keep hands and feet to self

Recess

- Respect
 - Share equipment; take turns
 - Respect others' belongings
 - Demonstrate good sportsmanship
 - Wait your turn patiently
- Responsibility
 - Listen to and follow directions the first time
 - Line up quickly and quietly
 - Play by the rules agreed upon beforehand
 - Include others who want to participate in activities
- Safety
 - Stay in assigned area
 - Use equipment appropriately
 - Do
 - Go down slides in seated position with feet first

- Have no more than one person on slide at a time
- Have no more than two people on cargo net at a time
- Have no more than three people on tire swing at a time
- Ride tire swing with feet in center hole
- Stay on flat area of playground
- Don't
 - Stand up or walk on slides
 - Jump off structures
 - Walk or climb on top of tunnel
 - Walk, sit, or crawl on monkey bars
 - Hang off tire swing
- Keep hands, feet, and belongings to self
- Keep ice/snow, woodchips, rocks, etc. on the ground
- Be aware of personal space

To ensure a safe, productive, academic classroom and school environment with a clear focus on learning, children and teachers also establish classroom expectations and rules appropriate to the age of the children. These expectations and rules are posted in each classroom and are clearly communicated to each child and adult. (See also "Discipline" below.)

Bicycles, Scooters, Rollerblades, Etc. Children are permitted to ride their bicycles, scooters, rollerblades, etc. to school with permission of their parent or caregiver. Children are required to wear safety helmets when riding bicycles in compliance with state law and are reminded to obey the rules of the road, be alert, ride in a safe manner, and refrain from carrying another person. Upon arriving at the turnaround area adjacent to our kindergarten addition, children are required to dismount and walk.

Our bicycle rack is provided in the area between our kindergarten addition and main building. Bicycles are to be stored at our bicycle rack immediately upon arrival at school; for safety reasons, bicycles, scooters, rollerblades, etc. are not permitted to be used on our playground or other areas on our school grounds before, during, or immediately after school hours. Children are expected to report to designated areas after storing equipment. Bicycle locks are not required but are permitted to be used during the school day.

Should a child ride in an unsafe manner or violate the guidelines described above, the privilege of riding to school may be rescinded.

Breakfast. Breakfast is provided daily in our school cafeteria before school hours. (Breakfast is not served after 7:55 a.m.; late-arriving children are not served.) Cost of hot breakfast is \$1.45; a la cart items are also available.

Bullying. New Hampshire law defines bullying as “a form of pupil harassment;” bullying is prohibited by law (RSA 193-F) and school board policy (Policy JICBB). Children and parents/caregivers who become aware of situation of possible bullying - as victims, witnesses, or through conversation - are encouraged to make a timely report to a teacher or administrator.

Bus Safety and Responsibilities. In the interest of student safety and security, the following guidelines and rules have been established by our school board to govern school bus operations:

- When waiting for the bus, children are expected to:
 - Stand in a safe location, out of and away from the roadway;
 - Behave in a safe, respectful, courteous, and appropriate manner while waiting for the bus;
 - Make eye contact with the bus driver and wait for the driver's signal before moving toward the bus for boarding;
 - Stay away from a moving bus;
 - Cross the road in front of the stopped bus after the driver has signaled, if it is necessary to cross the road to board.

- When riding the bus, children are expected to:
 - Cooperate and extend courtesy to the driver; follow the driver's directions; comply with bus rules and expectations;
 - Sit toward the front of the bus when sharing the bus with middle high school students;
 - Refrain from the following behaviors:
 - Using profane language, obscene gestures, and excessive noise;
 - Fighting, wrestling, or acting in a physically or verbally aggressive manner toward another person;
 - Play fighting, play wrestling; or play acts of physical or verbal aggression;
 - Placing any body part - head, hands, feet, etc. - or any object out a bus window or door (except for appropriate boarding and departing);
 - Littering on or out of a bus; throwing objects out of a bus;
 - Marking, defacing, or damaging a bus or its contents in any manner;
 - Behaving in a manner that creates

- When leaving the bus, children are expected to:
 - Stand clear of the bus, never stand or walk close enough to the bus to be able to reach out and touch it;
 - If it is necessary to cross the road, walk away from the bus along the right side of the road until you can see the driver's eyes; stop and wait for a signal before crossing the road; look both ways before stepping out onto the roadway.

- Should a misbehavior occur in violation of these rules, the following sequence of consequences will be followed:
 - First offense: warning (for minor offenses);
 - Second offense: two day bus suspension;
 - Third offense: ten day bus suspension;
 - Fourth offense: twenty day bus suspension;
 - Additional offenses: twenty or more days bus suspension, including indefinite suspension of the bus privilege.

Children are provided with an opportunity to discuss the reported offense prior to suspension. Typically, the bus suspension begins on the day following such a hearing. Parents receive a copy of the bus driver's report with the consequences noted thereon. In accordance with state law (RSA 189.9-a), it remains the parent/caregiver's responsibility to arrange for transportation of students to and from school during a bus suspension; Children suspended from the bus are not excused from attending school.

Consequences may be assigned out of this sequence for serious offenses at the discretion of the school administration. Consequences for a child who may repeat misbehavior beyond a fourth offense are provided at the discretion of the school administration and/or school board. Bus misconduct that involves violation of the law is reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

- Parents and caregivers are respectfully requested to support a safe transportation system by:
 - Making sure that children arrive at their designated bus stops on time;
 - Submitting requests to alter the routine - a bus change from the assigned bus, for example - to the school office in advance (Bus passes are issued from the office only; children gain admission to non-assigned buses by presenting passes to the driver.);
 - Directing concerns or complaints about bus operations to our transportation contractor (Marston Transportation at 435-8865) or to our school principal (435-8432);
 - Expecting students to comply with bus safety rules;
 - Supporting disciplinary actions taken to ensure safety and good order on our buses.

Calendar. The Pittsfield School Board establishes our school calendar, typically during the spring preceding the school year. In addition to the required number of days that school is in session, the school calendar also includes teacher workshop days and early release days.

We recognize that teacher workshop days and early release days may be inconvenient to parents and caregivers; however, our school board includes these days to provide our school staff with valuable time essential for training and for developing school improvement projects. Your understanding of the importance of these days is appreciated.

A copy of our 2009-2010 school calendar is included at the end of this *Handbook*.

Cancellation of School, Delayed Openings, and Other Schedule Changes. While every effort is made to maintain our regular school schedule, poor weather or other conditions occasionally require that school be cancelled, the opening of school be delayed, or dismissal may take place earlier than the usual time. If conditions indicate that cancellation or a delayed opening is in the best interests and safety of children and staff, the decision is typically made by 7:00 a.m. at the latest.

Parents/caregivers are informed of such a decision through the school and district web sites (www.pittsfield-nh.com/pes) and a number of local television and radio stations. As school may be cancelled or delayed due to conditions other than poor weather, parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to tune in to one of the stations listed below every morning that school is scheduled to be in session.

Poor weather conditions and other emergencies may also require that students be dismissed earlier than our usual dismissal time. Parents/caregivers should be assured, again, that every effort is made to maintain our usual schedule and that early dismissal occurs only in very unusual circumstances.

In the event that children must be dismissed earlier than the usual time, every effort is made to contact each child's parent/caregiver. As with changes to our morning schedule, parents/caregivers are also informed of early dismissals through the local television and radio stations listed below. In preparation for interruptions to our schedule, parents/caregivers are respectfully requested to make childcare plans to ensure children's safety.

Notice regarding cancellation of school, delayed openings, and other schedule changes is provided through:

- Television Stations:
 - Channel 5 - WCVB
 - Channel 6 - WCSH
 - Channel 9 - WMUR
 - Channel 11 - WENH

- Radio Stations:
 - 96.7 FM - WASR

- 97.5 FM - WOKQ
- 99.1 FM - WNNH
- 102.3 FM - WKXL
- 105.0 FM - WLKZ
- 105.3 FM - WJYY

Character and Citizenship Development. Character and citizenship encompasses a number of basic elements, but may be briefly described by the core values of *respect* and *responsibility*. Our three guiding principles for child and adult behavior support character and citizenship development as well as the maintenance of a high quality learning environment. These are (1) respect yourself, (2) respect others, and (3) respect our environment.

In practical terms, character and citizenship development are supported through several channels, including:

- The expectation that courtesy and respect be demonstrated in all communications and interactions within the school community;
- Participatory development of classroom and common area rules that reflect respect, responsibility, fairness, and justice;
- Implementation of daily morning meetings that provide a vehicle for social skills learning, including self-discipline, self-control, respect, courtesy, and responsibility;
- Instruction in our social studies curriculum that includes the teaching of citizenship, humanity, justice, human worth, and community service.

Class Parties and Celebrations. To support children's wellness and a healthy school environment, classes are limited to one party or celebration per month at which food is served that does not contribute to children's health by meeting established nutritional standards. Teachers are responsible for planning these events and will communicate with parents/caregivers regarding refreshments at such events. Parents/caregivers are respectfully requested to honor this practice by refraining from bringing or sending party or celebration treats to school without communicating with your child(ren)'s teacher.

Concerts and Other Programs. On several occasions throughout the school year, children will present concerts and other programs for the enjoyment of families and community members. These events are typically held during the early evening hours. Parents/caregivers, family members, and friends are cordially invited to enjoy these wonderful events and support our children's efforts.

When attending a concert or other program, participants are respectfully requested to remain through the entire program, as it is disruptive to children who are performing to have audience members leave during their presentation. In addition, children who attend the program but who are not performing or presenting are expected to remain with their parents/caregivers and remain under their supervision throughout the event.

Unless specifically invited to do so, audience members - both children and adults - are asked not to walk throughout the building before, during, or after a program. Unless specifically directed to do otherwise, children are expected to remain with their parents/caregivers and remain under their supervision before and after the event.

Curriculum. Our school curriculum, which reflects the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks* and the *New England Common Assessment Program Grade Level Expectations*, provides all students with a high quality program of instruction in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Supporting high standards, our school curriculum outlines what children should know and should be able to do as they progress through the grades in our school. Teachers provide parents/caregivers with information about the curriculum and expectations for each grade in the fall. In addition, copies of our school curriculum documents, the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks*, and the *New England Common Assessment Program Grade Level Expectations* are available upon request.

Completing each child's well-balanced educational program are curricula in the areas of art, health and safety, music, physical education, and technology education. Information on these curriculum areas is available upon request through either the child's specialist teacher or classroom teacher.

Federal law ensures the right of parents to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for students. Parents may make such a request directly to the appropriate teacher or to the school principal.

D.A.R.E. Through the involvement and cooperation of the Pittsfield Police Department, the nationally known D.A.R.E. program is provided to all children in our sixth grade each year. A fully trained police officer serves as our D.A.R.E. instructor.

Decoding Hard Words. Parents can help developing readers decode hard words by using these coaching steps:

1. Put your finger on the word and say all the letters.

It is very important here that children are saying the letters - not sounding out the word by saying individual sounds. English is not a sound-it-out-letter-by-letter language and all struggling readers are the ones who try to do it letter by letter. We want them to say all the letters so that we know that they have indeed looked at them all in the right order and having them say the letters is the only way to know for sure.

We also want them to say the letters because there is strong evidence that retrieval from our brain's memory store is auditory. If you are just looking at letters and searching your brain for the word or a rhyming word, it is apt to be harder to find that if you say the letters which you process through the brain's auditory channel.

(Between one-third and two-thirds of the time, children will get the word at this stage.)

2. Use the letters and picture clues.

Children should know that just guessing the unknown word based on pictures or just on letters won't get them very far, but the two strategies together are a powerful team in figuring out an unknown word. For example, the child who sees the word *raccoon* and says all the letters and then glances at the picture may indeed see a picture of a raccoon. The picture, along with the letters the child has just looked at, will often allow the child to decode the word.

3. Look for a rhyme you know.

Children can often figure out a word they know by looking at the pattern. *Raccoon*, for example, rhymes with *moon* and *soon*. If the child does not see this, the coach can say, *That word rhymes with moon and soon*. If the child still doesn't get it, proceed to the next step.

4. Keep your finger on the word and finish the sentence.

Have the child keep his/her finger on the word so that when he/she has read the sentence, he/she can quickly look back at the letters. Most times, if children are reading at a high level, they will be able to figure out the word through using the four steps. You should cheer and talk about how they did it. If they can't figure it out, it is often a word that they don't have in their listening vocabulary.

Deliveries. Deliveries to children and staff members are accepted at the school office. Class and school activities are not interrupted to complete such deliveries; deliveries are made during non-instructional times.

Differing Instructional Needs. Our school curriculum is aligned with the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks and the New England Common Assessment Program Grade Level Expectations* and is intended to reflect currently accepted best practices in elementary school teaching and learning. In addition, our staff embraces and fully supports program modifications mandated to address special student learning needs, such as those specified under special education and other federal laws.

In addition, children's differing talents, interests, and levels of development receive consideration when instructional plans are developed. Examples of such considerations include the multi-level approach of our school literacy program and opportunities for academic choice offered within each classroom.

Discipline. "The word *discipline* is derived from the Latin root *discipline*, meaning learning. It needs to be associated with positive acts and feats of learning, rather than negatively associated with punishment. Teaching discipline requires two fundamental elements: empathy and structure. Empathy helps us *know* the child, to perceive her needs, to hear what she is trying to say. Structure allows us to set guidelines and provide necessary limits. Effective, caring discipline requires both empathy and structure. This approach to classroom management involves the systematic teaching of discipline - it is a basic structure which flows through every classroom activity. There are two basic goals for this approach: (1) creation of self-control and (2) creation of community" (quoted from author Ruth Charney).

- Premises. At Pittsfield Elementary School, our approach to discipline is based on several premises:
 - Our goal is to help children develop behaviors that are most conducive to learning.
 - Children need to share in the responsibility and decision-making that affects their education; our staff encourages parents to support this premise at home.
 - Discipline (external) ideally leads to self-discipline (internal), which becomes a foundation for self-approval and acceptance.
 - Discipline is fed, nourished, and encouraged by the orderly classroom.
 - Discipline is another form of instruction; because each child has individual needs, each disciplinary situation is considered personally.
- Proactive Discipline - Rules. Rules are guidelines for behavior that allow for all - both children and adults - to learn and to realize their hopes and dreams for the school year. Rules are generated for safety and organization as well as to provide standard expectations and responsibilities.
- Supporting Rules. Adults support rules both by paying attention to and recognizing positive behaviors and by paying attention to and addressing negative behaviors. By paying attention to the small negative behaviors, we catch those behaviors before a

child is out of control, scared, and threatened. In supporting rules, we focus primarily on the *3 R's of support*:

- Reinforcing. Reinforcing means consistently using language that notices and supports children's positive behaviors. It is directed to children and is intended to encourage (rather than praise) as children work to behave appropriately for intrinsic (internal) reasons rather than simply to receive a verbal reward. An example of a reinforcing statement is, "I notice the way you remembered to carry the scissors point down."
- Reminding. Reminding focuses on the adult's belief that children are capable of remembering and enacting positive behaviors. They are asked to remember the rules themselves and to act accordingly. An example of a reminding statement is, "Johnny, remind me what happens if someone needs to use the markers you are using. What can you say?"
- Redirecting. Redirecting continues to focus on the rules but allows for no re-negotiation or interpretation. The message is *I don't like what you're doing right now, but I do like you*. An example of a redirecting statement is, "I hear conversations about recess time. What do you need to be talking about right now?"
- Reactive Discipline - Logical Consequences. Logical consequences provide a reaction to mistakes that children make during the course of the school day. General principles of logical consequences include the following:
 - Our teachers seek to provide an orderly, consistent, and predictable approach to discipline that nurtures empowerment and self-respect as well as the social skills of cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
 - The *3 R's of logical consequences* guide the establishment of consequences to disciplinary situations:
 - Respectful;
 - Relevant (related to offense);
 - Realistic (reasonable).
 - Three kinds of logical consequences:
 - *You break it, you fix it.*
 - *Abuse a privilege, lose a privilege.*
 - *Take a break* (thinking time - see below).

- Other strategies that are utilized when rules and logical consequences are in place:
 - Time out of the classroom to get *back on track*;
 - Individual behavior contract;
 - Social conference - problem solving for one;
 - Conflict resolution - problem solving for two or three or more;
 - Class meeting - problem solving for a large group.
- Time Out, Taking a Break, and Getting Back on Track. Like adults, children make behavioral mistakes from time to time. In response, adults provide opportunities for children to *take a break* or *get back on track* as the situation may require to re-establish the learning environment. In addition, children may be suspended from school in the event of serious offenses. Time out options include the following:
 - *Take a break.* In the instance of a minor classroom disturbance or behavioral offense, a child is directed to *take a break*, which is a time out from the activity during which the child is excluded from the activity and provided with an opportunity to reflect on the offensive behavior.

A place for *take a break* is provided away from the group, in a location that is monitored by the adult. A child may return to the class activity from the *take a break* as directed by the adult. (An example of a misbehavior that might result in the child *taking a break* would be talking to a peer during a teacher's presentation.)

- *Take a break in a buddy teacher's classroom.* In the instance of a more serious disturbance or behavioral offense, a continuation of the disturbance or behavioral offense, or the failure of the child to *take a break* in an orderly, respectful manner, the child is directed to *take a break in a buddy teacher's classroom*.

In this case, the child is excluded from the classroom entirely and is monitored by the *buddy teacher*. The child may return to the class activity from the *take a break in a buddy teacher's classroom* as directed by the adult. (An example of a misbehavior that might result in the child *taking a break in a buddy teacher's classroom* would be talking out during a *take a break*.)

- *Take time to get back on track.* In instances of the child creating a serious disturbance or behavioral offense, engaging in a continuation of the disturbance or behavioral offense in the buddy teacher's classroom, behaving in an out of control manner, or willfully engaging in a power struggle with an adult, the child is directed to *get back on track*.

This level of time out occurs outside the classroom, typically in our Student Support Center. The child may return to his/her classroom later when he/she has demonstrated a willingness to behave in an appropriate manner, to make an apology of action, and to meet classroom behavioral expectations. (An example of a misbehavior that might result in the child taking time to *get back on track* would be failing to follow an adult's directions.) When a child is provided with time to *get back on track*, the teacher typically makes a telephone call to the child's parent to review the behavior and disciplinary action.

- School suspension. In the instance of gross misconduct or refusal to conform to the reasonable rules of the school - in other words, for more serious offenses - a child may be suspended from school, in either an in-school suspension or an out-of-school suspension - for up to ten school days. (An example of a misbehavior that might result in a child being suspended from school would be striking another person.)

During a school suspension, a child is not permitted to participate in school events - assemblies, concerts, etc. Additionally, a child suspended out-of-school is not permitted on school grounds until the suspension has been completely served.

When a child is suspended from school, the parent is notified by telephone call, which is followed-up with a formal written notice of the suspension. In the case of an out-of-school suspension, the child and parent are required to participate in a re-entry meeting with the adult involved and other school personnel prior to re-entry into the classroom.

Maintaining high standards of student discipline in school that allow for optimal teaching and learning represents a significant challenge for us all. Quite honestly, student discipline has become a greater challenge through the years due to a number of factors, including changes in what our society considers appropriate public behavior and the variety of stressors under which a good number of children live. The understanding and support of our community has been important, as school personnel have worked to reduce the interruptions due to student misbehavior in recent years. This understanding and support is appreciated.

Disclosure of Directory Information. We recognize our responsibility to protect the privacy of student information records in accordance with federal law (the *Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act* or *FERPA*). This and other laws define what is meant by *educational record* and ensure that information collected by Pittsfield Elementary School can be released only for specific and legally defined purposes.

Under the provisions of FERPA, the following information is defined as an *educational record*:

- Date and place of birth, parent(s) and/or guardian(s) names and addresses, and where parents/guardians may be contacted in emergencies;
- Grades, test scores, courses taken, academic activities, and official letters regarding a child's status in school;
- Special education records;
- Disciplinary records;
- Medical and health records collected or maintained in school;
- Documentation of attendance, schools attended, and awards conferred;
- Proof of residency;
- Personal information, such as birth certificates and photographs, which would make it easy to identify or locate a student.

Part of this information - which is classified as directory information - may be made public to external agencies and institutions upon request. Pittsfield Elementary School classifies only the following parts of our students' educational records as directory information that may be made public: name, grade, class assignment, academic activities, participation in officially-recognized and school-sponsored activities, awards conferred, and photo. All other information identified above as a *student educational record* will not be released without specific parent/guardian consent.

Parents/guardians may direct the school to remove all or part of this information from designation as directory information that they do not wish to be made available to the public without their consent. To remove any of this information identified as directory information, parents/guardians must notify the school principal in writing.

Dismissal. Classes conclude at 2:25 p.m. and dismissal begins following the conclusion of classes. Students taking the early buses are dismissed first, followed by walkers, bikers, and students being picked up by parents or caregivers. Students taking later buses assemble in the assigned area in front of our school or in our cafeteria or other designated area (during poor weather) until buses arrive.

Any changes to children's normal transportation arrangements must be made in writing and provided to the office at the beginning of the school day. Emergency exceptions to this procedure are made only in unusual circumstances and by direct request of the child's parent or caregiver.

Parents and caregivers are asked to wait in the school lobby or in the area in front of the main entrance during dismissal. Parents and caregivers are advised not to proceed directly to classrooms to pick up children or attempt to speak with teachers during this busy time of the day.

Dress. To maintain the proper atmosphere for learning, children are expected to:

- Refrain from wearing head coverings - hats, scarves, bandanas, skullcaps, ski caps, etc. - in our school building other than for observation of religious requirements or customs;
- Wear only shorts and skirts of modest length;
- Refrain from wearing mesh shirts and shirts that reveal the midriff;
- Refrain from wearing clothing that allows exposure of underwear;
- Refrain from wearing clothing that bears offensive printed or gestural messages, logos, meanings, or threatening symbols;
- Refrain from wearing clothing that advertises or promotes the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, or gang affiliation, including brand names and logos;
- Refrain from wearing outerwear during the school day.

Drop-Offs and Pick-Ups. To ensure the safety of children, staff, and community members, we respectfully ask the cooperation of parents/caregivers and others when dropping-off and picking-up children at school.

- Car and truck traffic is very heavy at school during drop-off time in the morning and pick-up time in the afternoon. We respectfully request that parents/caregivers and other drivers exercise extreme caution for the safety of our children, staff, and community members.
- When dropping-off and picking-up outside the building:
 - Drive at a safe speed. The posted legal speed limit on Bow Street is 15 mph.
 - Do not enter the circle in front of the main entrance of the building. Children use this roadway before and after school hours.
 - Adhere to the *Drop Off Only* and *15 Minute Parking* in the circle at the end of the building near our kindergarten classrooms;
 - Come to a full stop when leaving this circle;
 - Do not pull over to drop-off children on Bow Street forward of the *No Parking Beyond this Point* sign; you will be blocking the roadway for buses.
- Parents/caregivers dropping off preschool and morning kindergarten children are asked to supervise them to the cafeteria; please do not allow these children to walk to school or walk alone from the drop-off area in the circle.
- Parents/caregivers picking-up preschool and morning kindergarten children are asked to pick up in the courtyard between the main building and the kindergarten addition.
- Parents/caregivers picking-up afternoon kindergarten children are asked to either:
 - Pick-up at the exterior kindergarten classroom doors at the end of the building near the circle, or

- Sign-in at the office as a visitor, wear a visitor badge, and pick up at the interior kindergarten classroom door.
- Parents/caregivers picking up children in grades 1-6 at the end of the school day are asked to wait for your child(ren) at the main entrance or lobby; you are asked not to go to your child(ren)'s classroom at this very busy time of the school day.

Early Dismissal from School. Because early dismissal interrupts learning, parents are strongly discouraged from dismissing children prior to the conclusion of class in the afternoon. However, should it be necessary to have a student dismissed from school early, the parent or caregiver is requested to provide a written request to the office on the morning of the day on which early dismissal is being requested. The parent or caregiver should then report to the school office to sign the child out of school at the requested time. The child will then be called to the office. To ensure each child's safety, children are not dismissed directly from classrooms, the playground, the cafeteria, or other school locations.

Children are dismissed only to an adult; children are not permitted to leave school on their own accord or to another minor when being dismissed early. Children are only dismissed to the authority of the parent or caregiver or to another adult with the authorization of the parent or caregiver.

When a parent or caregiver wishes to grant permission for another adult to pick up the child, such permission may only be provided in writing and signed by the parent or caregiver. Out of consideration for safety, the parent or caregiver may be called to confirm such arrangements and the office staff may request the adult to whom the child is being dismissed to provide verification of identity (for example, a driver's license).

In the event a parent or caregiver is called, he/she will be asked to identify a *code word* to verify his/her identity. As an additional safety measure, each parent/caregiver is requested to provide children with such a code word to be used for purposes of identification. The code word should be identified on each student's emergency card.

Electronic Devices. To ensure that an academic atmosphere is maintained in our school and to ensure the security of valuables, electronic devices are not permitted in school at any time. Prohibited items include radios, pagers, cell phones, CD players, tape players, hand-held computer games, remote-control toys, etc.

Should a child wish to bring an electronic device to school for use in a class activity, the permission of the teacher and school administration is required. In such circumstances, the item is stored in the school office for safekeeping before and after the classroom use.

Emergency Procedure Practice and Fire Drills. To ensure the safety of our children and staff, a variety of emergency procedure practices (including safety alerts and lock-downs) and fire drills are scheduled at regular intervals throughout the school year. Children are expected to adhere to the very specific expectations for these important activities. Disciplinary action can be expected for procedural violations during emergency procedure practices and fire drills.

Emergency Information. In the interest of student safety and wellbeing, it may be necessary to make immediate contact with a parent, caregiver, or other responsible adult. For this reason, it is essential that information requested on the school emergency card be accurately provided and updated when necessary. For example, it is important that changes in address, telephone number, place of employment, child's physician, responsible adults to contact in the event that the parent/caregiver cannot be reached, etc., be communicated to the school office as soon as possible.

Exclusion from Activities. Children are excluded from regularly scheduled activities, such as recess and physical education class, only upon written request from the child's physician. Children may return to such activities, again, only upon written request from the child's physician.

Exclusion from School Due to Illness or Disease. In the interest of individual children's comfort and wellbeing, as well as the prevention of contagious diseases, parents and caregivers are requested to have a child who is not feeling well remain at home rather than send him/her to school. For example, it is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to keep a child at home who is exhibiting symptoms of an illness, such as severe cold, vomiting, nausea, sore throat, headache, or red and watery eyes.

If a student begins to exhibit such symptoms while in school, the student's parent/caregiver will be contacted with the request that the child be transported home for rest and recuperation. Of course, the child should remain at home until he/she has recovered.

Schools are required to report incidences of communicable diseases to the state health department. The cooperation of parents/caregivers is essential in helping us meet this responsibility. Therefore, parents/caregivers are asked to report communicable diseases to our school nurse, whether the disease occurs during school days, weekends, or school vacations.

More specifically, students are not permitted to attend school if experiencing one or more of the following health conditions.

- Chicken pox: for one week after the first skin lesions appear;
- Purulent conjunctivitis: until examined by a health care provider and approved for readmission, with or without treatment;

- Impetigo: twenty-four hours from the time treatment is started;
- Infectious hepatitis: for at least seven days after the onset of jaundice; the child's physician must advise on the safe date of return to school;
- Mononucleosis: physician's recommendation regarding safe return is accepted;
- Pediculosis (lice): until effective treatment has destroyed all lice and nits; returning students must be accompanied by parent/caregiver and report to the school nurse for hair examination prior to return to class (information pamphlets are available from our health office);
- Respiratory diseases: until nasal discharges and severe coughing spasm have ceased and temperature has returned to normal for twenty-four hours;
- Streptococcal disease: twenty-four hours from the time treatment is started.

Lesions caused by poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are caused by a fixed nonvolatile oil. Contrary to general belief, these conditions are not contagious and students with these conditions are permitted to attend school.

Facility Use. The facilities of the Pittsfield School District are available for use by community groups when not utilized for school activities. Applications for requests to use a school facility are available in our school office. The Pittsfield School Board strongly discourages Sunday activities.

Field Trips. Field trips extend opportunities for learning beyond the walls of the school; field trips are an important part of each child's educational program. Written parent/caregiver is required for participation in any field trip; it is essential that field trip permission forms be completed and returned to school in advance of the planned trip.

Full participation on field trips by all students is our aim. To this end, classroom teachers consider the needs of each individual student when making field trip plans. For most students, participation without accommodations will be the norm. For some students, accommodations may be required to ensure safety and enjoyment of the trip; parents/caregivers and teachers meet to review individual needs and identify specific accommodations when necessary. Students who are suspended from school at the time of a field trip are excluded.

All participants are expected to ride the school bus with their classmates and teachers when taking a field trip. Parent/caregiver chaperones may, however, with prior notification to the school office and teacher, sign their child out at the conclusion of the field trip should they wish to transport home via a private vehicle. Such a sign-out is considered an early dismissal from school. Parents chaperoning field trips are asked not to bring younger siblings along on trips so that they may devote their attention to the students on the trip.

Guidance Services. Our school guidance counselor provides a range of guidance services. Our counselor visits classrooms regularly to present lessons on a variety of topics and provides

individual and small group counseling services to children to address issues that may arise that prevent children from gaining the full benefit of the school experience. Such counseling may be initiated at the request of individual students, parents or caregivers, or teachers. Long-term therapy, however, lies outside the responsibilities of our school counselor.

In addition, the services of our school psychologist are available one day per week. Our psychologist conducts individual assessments, provides support and assistance for teachers, and assists our Pupil Personnel Placement Team in making program decisions for special needs students.

Handbook Amendments and Updates. In consideration of the best interests of children and of our school program, amendments will be made to the policies and procedures contained within this handbook if and when appropriate. Such amendments are announced through our weekly school newsletter, which is distributed to each child on the last school day of each week.

Handbook Approval. In accordance with Pittsfield School Board policy (Policy CHCA), this handbook has been approved by the Pittsfield School Board.

Handbook Receipt. Schools have a legal obligation to provide much of the information contained in this handbook. To verify that we have met this obligation, parents/caregivers are respectfully requested to review the contents of this handbook, then sign and return the handbook receipt provided. Parents/caregivers are requested to call the school office if you have not received a handbook receipt.

Handwriting. Our instruction in handwriting begins with the *ball and stick* method of manuscript handwriting in our kindergarten, grade one, and grade two. Researchers have pointed out that this method is easier to read than other methods, is the form that students most commonly see outside of school, and is the form that is most commonly used in the books that young students read.

In addition, the *ball and stick* method is also easier to write, is written with continuous strokes, and requires fewer pencil lifts than other methods. Our school has adopted the commercial program of *ball and stick* handwriting provided by Zaner-Bloser, the most widely used commercial program in the country.

For home reference, a copy of this manuscript alphabet is included at the end of this handbook. In addition, a copy of the Zaner-Bloser model cursive letter system - utilized beginning in grade three - is also included for reference.

Health Services. Our school nurse meets the health needs of children and staff resulting from disease, accident, congenital defects, or adjustment. Importantly, our school nurse also

supports children's learning about health issues and developing attitudes conducive to healthful living. In addition, our school nurse counsels children and parents/caregivers regarding health issues and provides an annual program of evaluation of hearing, vision, height, and weight on a rotating basis.

Impaired vision or hearing in children can seriously impede learning and contribute the development of emotional and behavioral problems. Early discovery and treatment can prevent, or at least alleviate, many of these problems. Children with impaired vision or hearing are often not aware of their impairment; therefore, they do not complain or seek help. If they have always seen things in a blurred or distorted way, for example, they accept the imperfect image without question. For this reason, it is up to the adults responsible for children's health care and educational development to detect vision and hearing problems.

Screening is a practical approach to identifying children needing professional services. It is an efficient, economical, and efficacious manner of detecting possible problems in the preschool and school age population. By definition, screening is the process by which a large number of persons are tested using a fast, efficient method to separate them into two different groups. The purpose of the screening test is to identify those children who probably have no problems from those who should be examined by a doctor for potential problems and possible treatment.

School screenings are a very basic, first level tool only. They are general in nature. Therefore, if parents/caregivers have questions about a child's vision or hearing, you are advised to communicate with our school nurse to arrange for a screening.

Homework. Homework is assigned to all children on a regular basis to "encourage individual student growth, independence, and responsibility" (Pittsfield School Board Policy IKB). Homework assignments provide children with opportunities to enrich learning, practice basic skills, engage in long-term projects, and develop productive work and study habits.

The following homework guidelines (which may vary on occasion) have been established by our teachers:

Kindergarten

- Time: 15 minutes
- Types of Assignments: Read aloud
- Parent Role: Read with child

First Grade

- Time: 15-20 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 15 minutes of reading
 - Math Link (later in year)

- Parent Role:
 - Read with child
 - Complete Math Link with child

Second Grade

- Time: 20-30 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 15 minutes of reading
 - Math Link
 - Word Wall word work
- Parent Role:
 - Read with child
 - Complete Math Link with child
 - Initial Homework Log (indicating that reading and other assignments have been completed)
 - Ensure that homework time not extend beyond 30 minutes; if not completed within this time limit, provide teacher with note

Third Grade

- Time: 20-30 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 15 minutes of reading
 - Math Link
 - Word Wall word work
- Parent Role:
 - Read with child
 - Complete Math Link with child
 - Initial Homework Log (indicating that reading and other assignments have been completed)
 - Ensure that homework time not extend beyond 30 minutes; if not completed within this time limit, provide teacher with note

Fourth Grade

- Time: 45-60 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 15-20 minutes of reading
 - Reading comprehension activities
 - Math Link
 - Word study
 - Other assignments (occasionally)
- Parent Role:
 - May help with Math Link

- Initial Homework Log / Assignment Book (indicating that assignments have been completed)
- Ensure that homework time not extend beyond 60 minutes; if not completed within this time limit, provide teacher with note

Fifth Grade

- Time: 45-60 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 20 minutes of reading
 - Reading comprehension activities (occasionally)
 - Math Link
 - Word study (occasionally)
 - Science and/or social studies (occasionally)
 - Handwriting (occasionally)
- Parent Role
 - Converse with child about reading
 - Provide general encouragement and support
 - Initial Homework Log / Assignment Book (indicating that assignments have been completed)
 - Ensure that homework time not extend beyond 60 minutes; if not completed within this time limit, provide teacher with note

Sixth Grade

- Time: 45-60 minutes
- Types of Assignments:
 - 20-30+ minutes of reading
 - Specific reading assignments
 - Math Link
 - Science and/or social studies (occasionally)
 - Long term projects
- Parent Role:
 - Provide general encouragement and support
 - Initial Homework Log / Assignment Book (indicating that assignments have been completed)
 - Ensure that homework time not extend beyond 60 minutes; if not completed within this time limit, provide teacher with note

Homework is considered "complete" if it is presented at time and day required by child's teacher or a reasonable effort has been made to complete (with parent note).

In making homework assignments, teachers strive to provide clear directions for tasks the children are able to complete independently. To maximize the value of homework assignments, teachers review, check, and discuss children's work in a timely manner.

To get the most out of homework assignments, children are expected to:

- Write down all homework assignments when given and know what is expected;
- Complete all homework assignments nearly, on time, and to the best of their ability;
- Turn in homework assignments according to the procedure established by the teacher.

To support the goals of homework, parents/caregivers are requested to:

- Provide your child with a suitable environment for home study that includes a regular time for homework and independent reading every day;
- Encourage your child to do his/her best work in completing homework assignments, but avoid undue pressure that can lead to frustration;
- Demonstrate interest in homework assignments and support the development of productive work habits;
- Discuss concerns or questions with your child's teacher as soon as possible; this includes concerns about the amount of homework assigned and difficulty of homework assignments;
- Provide resource material as may be needed to complete assignments.

In terms of grading, homework assignments are not included in subject area grades on quarterly report cards. However, teachers report the percentage of homework assignments completed to ensure effective communication with parents regarding the level of responsibility assumed by children.

Immunizations. The following immunizations are required by law prior to school attendance:

- DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus): four to five doses, at least one of which must be administered after age four (revision 2009); also, if a child reaches eleven and has not had a DPT within five years, he or she needs a booster of Tdap.
- MMR (Measles, mumps, rubella): two doses;
- SABIN (oral trivalent polio vaccine): minimum of three doses; regardless of the number of doses, one dose must be administered after the age of four for new enrollees; four doses are required for prior enrollees;
- Varicella: all children entering kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 6 shall receive two valid doses.

Students may be enrolled but may not commence attendance until verification is provided to our health office that these immunizations have been administered.

Kindergarten Schedule. Our kindergarten operates on a half-day schedule. Children are assigned to class and session (morning or afternoon) in the spring prior to the start of kindergarten. Children remain in the same session throughout the kindergarten year.

As is true of all grades, regular attendance in our kindergarten is very important. Our kindergarten program provides children with vital early literacy instruction that forms the basis for reading and writing skills in the later grades. The best interests of our young learners are best served through regular school attendance.

Starting on October, 2009, we will offer an extended-day Title I kindergarten program for 10-12 eligible kindergartners enrolled in regular afternoon kindergarten classrooms.

kYdstop Out-of-School-Time Program. Pittsfield Elementary School, in collaboration with the Concord Y.M.C.A., offers an out-of-school-time program, located at our school. kYdstop runs after school hours and during school vacations. This program offers a healthy snack, academic support, and a variety of activity options for all children after school hours and during school vacations.

Parents and caregivers who would like more information about this program are encouraged to visit Site Director, Jean Richards at school or call Program Director Mike Taylor at the Concord YMCA (228-9622 ext. 133). This program is funded in part by a *21st Century Community Learning Center* grant through the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Library. Our school library is open regularly during school hours. Children are encouraged to use library resources for pleasure reading as well as a source of information to support inquiry on a wide range of topics. The following rules have been established for the efficient operation of our library:

- Children in kindergarten through grade two may borrow one book at a time;
- Children in grades three through six may borrow two books at a time;
- Books may be borrowed for up to one week;
- Children are expected to provide proper care for borrowed books and to return borrowed books on time and in good condition;
- Children are provided with *overdue* notice in their classrooms in the event that a borrowed book is not returned on time;
- Should a *second overdue* notice be required, the notice includes the replacement cost of the book;
- Should a *third overdue* notice be required, the notice is sent home to the parent/caregiver with the student;
- Should a child fail to return, replace, or pay for a borrowed book, the child's end-of-year report card is withheld until restitution is made;

- Children who have not returned, replaced, or provided the replacement cost of a borrowed book are not permitted to borrow additional books; this restriction is carried forward to the following school year until the obligation is met.

Literacy: *The Four Blocks*. Children are provided with a strong instructional program to ensure the development of high levels of literacy. Our multi-method, multi-level approach, known as *The Four Blocks*, was developed in 1989 in North Carolina and adopted in our school in 2000.

The Four Blocks is a coherent, school-wide approach that recognizes that our children have individual needs in learning how to read and write. It is based on the significant research that concludes that two methods are better than one for classrooms of diverse learners; *The Four Blocks* actually combines four successful methods of instruction in one program approach.

Children receive instruction in each of these four methods, or *blocks*, every day in the primary grades and in equal measure over a week's time in the intermediate grades. A common sense approach, each block serves a different instructional purpose.

- In the *guided reading block*, children read selections together under the guidance of their teacher. The benefits of the *guided reading block* include exposing children to a wide range of literature, teaching reading comprehension strategies, practicing reading skills, and teaching children how to read material that becomes increasingly more challenging.
- In the *self-selected reading block*, children choose interesting reading matter to read on their own. The benefits of the *self-selected reading block* include building children's motivation for reading, increasing background knowledge on many topics, building reading fluency, developing listening and speaking vocabulary, learning about story structure, getting ideas for writing, and reading instructional level materials.
- In the *working with words block*, children study word structures, phonics, and spelling. The benefits of the *working with words block* include learning patterns that allow children to decode and spell lots of words, learning to read and spell high frequency words, and transferring work knowledge to their own reading and writing.
- In the *writing block*, children use their own expressive language within traditional and non-traditional writing formats. The benefits of the *writing block* include practicing phonics and other reading skills through writing, learning to write more fluently, seeing writing as a way to tell about things, applying grammar and mechanics to children's own writing, practicing penmanship, and learning to write in different forms.

Lost and Found. Our lost and found bins are located on the main level of our school, under the stairway at the gym end of the building. We regularly donate large amounts of unclaimed clothing to the Pittsfield Clothes Closet; students and parents/caregivers are encouraged to check our bins in a timely manner for any lost clothing, backpacks, etc.

Lunch. Nutritious hot lunches are available for purchase daily in our cafeteria. Lunch menus are distributed monthly to children. Lunch (including milk) costs \$2.40; milk costs \$.35. Payment for hot lunch is collected on Monday or the first school day of each week. Lunch payment envelopes are provided weekly.

MAP Testing. PES students in all grades will take computerized MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) tests developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA). Students take these tests in the Computer Lab usually in the fall and spring. Tests in reading, mathematics, and science are aligned with the *New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks* and state tests (NECAP). MAP tests are designed accurately reflect the instructional level of each student and measure growth over time. The tests are engaging for students and provide useful information to teachers. Teachers will use the test results to measure the skills and concepts individual students have learned; diagnose instructional needs; monitor academic growth over time; make data-driven decisions at the classroom and school levels; and place new students into appropriate instructional programs.

Mathematics Instruction. Pittsfield Elementary School has adopted the nationally recognized mathematics instructional program Everyday Mathematics for use with all children school-wide. This research-based, rigorous program provides children with a spiral curriculum that introduces and revisits key concepts, knowledge, and skills throughout the elementary school years.

Teachers provide parents/caregivers with a Family Letter at the beginning of each new unit of study (canary-colored paper) and assessment results at the end of each new unit (except for the first several units of the school year, which are shared with parents/caregivers during our annual fall conferences. Parents/caregivers are provided with regular opportunities to be involved with children's mathematics learning through "Home Links" and "Study Links," activities designed for at-home explorations.

Medications. New Hampshire Department of Education guidelines suggest that medications should be administered to children at home by a parent/caregiver whenever possible. However, we recognize that this is not always possible or advisable. The following guidelines have been established for medications to be administered at school:

- For administration of non-prescription medications (such as Advil, over the counter cold remedies, etc.):
 - Medicine must be in the original, labeled container;

- The parent/caregiver must provide a written and signed note or consent form (available in our health office) specifying the date, time, and method of administration.
- For administration of prescription medications:
 - Medicine must be in the original, labeled prescription container;
 - The parent/caregiver must provide a signed consent form (available in our health office) specifying the date, time, and method of administration;
 - Medicine must be delivered to the school by a responsible adult (not carried by a child); the amount received is verified and signed for;
 - The child's physician must provide written directions specifying the proper dose, route, schedule of administration, and side effects; the directions must be signed by the physician.

A record of all medicines administered to students is maintained in our health office. Consent forms must be renewed for each school year. Parents/caregivers are requested to update their child's school health record by speaking with our school nurse whenever new conditions develop (such as illnesses, allergies, routine daily medications, surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.).

Morning Meetings. Morning meetings are held in our classrooms each day to support academic achievement through:

- Creating community in our classrooms - providing children with a sense of belonging, significance, fun, and investment;
- Fostering responsive interactions - sharing, listening, inclusion, and participation;
- Teaching the skills needed to be an active, responsive member of the classroom and school.

Morning meetings start shortly after children arrive in their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. Scheduled to be held for 20 to 30 minutes daily, morning meetings are typically conducted with students arranged in a circle to allow for a strong sense of group and attention. Components of morning meetings include greetings, sharing, a group activity, and news and announcements. To take full advantage of this important school program component, regular attendance and on-time arrival is essential.

Music. Students in grades 4-6 learn to play the soprano recorder as part of our music curriculum. Each student is required to have his or her own personal recorder to bring to music class. Recorders are available for purchase from the music department at the beginning of the school year.

Newsletter. Our weekly school newsletter, *the P.E.S. News*, printed on bright pink paper, is distributed to children on the last school day every other week. On alternate weeks a briefer

publication, *P.E.S. News Notes*, is distributed. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to keep informed about school programs and events by reading our school newsletters each week. The information in these publications is also published and archived on our school's web site, pittsfield-nh.com/pes.

Non-Discrimination. The Pittsfield School Board "prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on grounds of race, creed, color, national origin, disability, sex, marital status, and/or sexual orientation by employees, administrators, and other staff (including athletic coaches) and students, against employees, administrators, students ... on school grounds, school buses or at school sponsored activities" (Policy ACA).

"Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning the school district's compliance with the district's non-discrimination policy or written regulations implementing Title VI (discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin), Title IX (sex discrimination), or Section 504 (discrimination on the basis of disability), and/or the Americans with Disabilities Act is directed to contact the school principal."

Notification of Rights Under FERPA. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over eighteen years of age (*eligible students*) certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within forty-five days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the parent of the eligible student believes are inaccurate.

Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the school board; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school district to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA). PPRA affords parents and students who are eighteen years of age or older or *emancipated minors (eligible students)* certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purpose, and certain physical examinations. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (*protected information survey*) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED):
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 - Sex behavior or attitudes;
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;

- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or parents; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

For surveys that contain questions about one or more of these eight protected areas but are not funded in whole or part by the U.S. Department of Education funds, the school district will notify parents of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when it will administer the survey(s) and provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participating.

Additionally, parents are hereby notified of the right to review, upon request, any survey that concerns one or more of the eight protected areas, any instructional materials used in connection with any survey that concerns one or more of the eight protected areas, and any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student.

- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:
 - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law; and
 - Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use:
 - Protected information surveys of students;
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

As a matter of practice, the school forwards educational records to other schools that have requested the records and in which the student seeks or intends to enroll. Typically, this process includes a formal request signed by the child's parent.

The school district will/has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The school district will notify parents and eligible students of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The school district will also directly notify parents

and eligible students, such as through U.S. mail or e-mail, at least annually at the start of each school year, of the specific or approximate dates of the following activities and provide an opportunity to opt a student out of participating in:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution;
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED;
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents/eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Notification of Rights Under the "No Child Left Behind Act." Under the federal "No Child Left Behind Act," the Pittsfield School District is required to provide you with an annual report related to assessments, accountability, and teacher quality. This report is required to convey information both about the district and schools within the district.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" states that highly qualified teachers should teach all students and that parents have the right to ask whether the teachers in their child's school have met state requirements for the grade levels and subjects that they teach. Parents also have the right to know the major subject area that their child's teacher studied in college and if the teacher holds a graduate degree. Additionally, parents may also request information regarding the training and qualifications of paraprofessionals who work with their child.

In the Pittsfield School District, 100% of our teaching faculty met the "highly qualified teacher" requirement of the law as determined by the State of New Hampshire by June 30, 2009. Specifically, at both the Pittsfield Elementary School and the Pittsfield Middle High School, 100% of our teaching faculty meets these same standards and requirements.

The "No Child Left Behind Act" also requires that school districts provide parents with information regarding their child's level of achievement on state-mandated academic assessments. During the month of January 2010, the district expects to provide reports to parents of children tested in grades 3-8 in the upcoming round of assessment, October 2009. This assessment, known as the "New England Common Assessment Program," will provide parents with information regarding your child's performance in comparison to other children in the same grade at Pittsfield Elementary School and in the same grade in New Hampshire. Parents will be provided with an opportunity to ask questions about this report by speaking with your child's teacher or our guidance counselor.

Office Hours. Our school office is open from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on days when school is in session and from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during school vacations and on weekdays when school is not in session.

Parent Involvement in Literacy Development. Parents are strongly encouraged to play a central role in the development of your child's literacy. The following activities have been found to support literacy development.

- Read to your child. Try to find a quiet time each day to read to your child. Become a reading role model. There should be good lighting, minimal noise distractions, and comfortable seating in your reading space. Choose books that relate to your child's experiences as well as those that introduce new people, places, and experiences.
- Encourage prediction when reading with your child. Start reading a book to your child. (Do this with older children too; they love stories.) Stop the story at an exciting place and have your child guess how the story ends. Then, finish reading the books and see if the guess was correct. Discuss what helped your child make the guess.
- Retell. Have your child retell the story to you after reading. This helps your child to organize thoughts and develop story sequence.
- Draw from an assortment of books. Provide a variety of reading material, including poetry, fiction, and nonfiction books. Find out what your child is interested in reading about and aid him/her in making a selection. Our public library will offer assistance too.
- Write. Writing is an essential part of the reading process. Provide an assortment of paper and writing materials for your child. Promote letter writing, journal writing, story writing, and making books. Encourage your child to write regularly and often.
- Visit our library. Habits are formed early. Help your child develop the library habit by taking him/her to the library regularly. Our library provides rich experiences for all children.
- Listen. Most importantly, take the time to listen to your child read a story to you or something that he/she wrote. When you give your child your undivided attention, it lets your child know that he/she is important; this can motivate him/her to continue to read and write even more.

Remember: you play a crucial role in your child's learning. Have fun with it!

Parking. The following guidelines have been established for safety and convenience.

- The circle in front of the main entrance of the school building is a fire lane; to ensure the safety of children and adults; do not park in the circle at any time.
- Disabled drivers may park in specially marked parking spaces in front of the school building on the gym end of the building; disabled passengers may be dropped off directly in front of the main entrance.
- A drop off area has been established in the circle at the kindergarten end of the building; please do not leave cars unattended in this area.
- A ten-minute parking area has also been established in the circle at the kindergarten end of the building; please do not leave cars in this area for an extended length of time.
- Parking is permitted in the parking lot at the kindergarten end of the building and along Bow Street below the "do not park beyond this sign" sign.

P.B.I.S. Pittsfield Elementary School utilizes P.B.I.S. ("Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) to support a positive, productive school environment. This strategy is used in many New Hampshire schools, thanks to a federal grant, and in many schools throughout our nation.

Through our work with P.B.I.S., our children and staff have identified respect, responsibility, and safety as our three core values. Further, we have developed a "behavior matrix" that describes behavior expectations exemplifying these values in the various school settings.

Several other key components of P.B.I.S. include software that allows our staff to collect and analyze discipline data and school-wide assemblies that communicate and reinforce the key values with all children and adults.

Personal Safety. In the interest of the personal safety of our children, school employees are legally required to report all suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to state authorities.

In addition, parents/caregivers are respectfully reminded to speak with your child about personal safety. Remind your child:

- Not to accept gifts (including food) or rides from strangers;
- To report suspicious behavior to you and/or school authorities;
- To practice safety while walking or biking to and from school;
 - Walk on the left side of the road; ride on the right side of the road;
 - Wear clothing that permits children to see clearly;
 - Wear clothing that permits drivers to see him/her clearly;
- Specifically whose homes or cars they are permitted to enter;

- What to do if school is dismissed early or when plans for after school care are unexpectedly changed;
- To know his/her full address and telephone number;
- To use common sense in new or uncomfortable situations.

Physical Examinations. To enroll and begin attendance, children must be in good physical condition. A physical examination, provided by the child's physician, is required by law before attendance may begin for children entering kindergarten and for children entering from a private school or a home school program. A physical examination is not required for students transferring from another public school, provided that the child's health records are available and provided upon the transfer.

Physical Education. Students participate in physical education one day each week in accordance with their classroom schedules. In order to be able to participate fully in physical education activities each student is required to wear sneakers that lace up and fit properly. Socks and loose fitting clothing are also strongly recommended.

Pledge of Allegiance. The *Pledge of Allegiance* is recited daily in all classrooms. Children and adults are expected to demonstrate respect for our flag and our nation during this daily exercise.

Professional Qualifications. Federal legislation known as the *No Child Left Behind Act* provides that each parent/guardian may request and be provided with information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's classroom teacher. Such information includes:

- The degrees and state certifications held by the teacher;
- Whether or not the teacher has met state qualifications for the grade level and subject area in which he/she provides instruction;
- Whether or not the teacher is teaching under a state-issued waiver or emergency certification; and
- Whether or not your child is provided with services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

To obtain such information, parents/guardians should submit the request in writing to the school principal.

P.T.O. Our Pittsfield Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) is an active group of parents and educators who have organized to enhance and support the children of Pittsfield Elementary School and to support and enhance our school's educational programs. Our P.T.O. organizes a variety of events and projects throughout the year. Interested community members are invited and encouraged to participate. P.T.O. meetings are held monthly in our school library; event announcements are made through our school newsletter.

Public Solicitations. In accordance with school board policy (Policy KI), "no soliciting of or by students will be allowed on school property, except those activities which are carried on for the benefit of the school or student body (i.e., food sales, car washes, etc.) and approved in advance by the administration and school board. No soliciting from door to door by students will be allowed for school sponsored functions or activities."

Questions and Concerns. Open and honest communication between home and school can support learning. Parents and caregivers are strongly encouraged to ask questions and address concerns in a timely manner regarding any aspect of our class and school operation directly with the person involved. Conversely, parents and caregivers should expect such open and timely communications from school personnel.

In the interest of effective communications and efficient resolution of classroom and school concerns, the following process has been established by our school board (Policy KL):

- *Step 1 - Individual.* Make an appointment to discuss the concern with the teacher or other individual involved. Depending on the situation, it may be helpful to have the child participate in a conference.
- *Step 2 - School Administrator.* If the situation has not been resolved to your satisfaction at the individual level, make an appointment to discuss the concern with the principal or director of student services.
- *Step 3 - Superintendent of Schools.* If the situation has not been resolved to your satisfaction at the school administrator level, make an appointment to discuss the concern with the superintendent of schools.
- *Step 4 - School Board.* If the situation has not been resolved to your satisfaction at the superintendent of schools level, make arrangements to discuss the concern with the school board. Such arrangements may be made by contacting the superintendent of schools.

Recess. Except on rainy days and on extremely cold days (a wind chill factor below 15°), children are provided with daily outdoor recess time. Parents/caregivers are reminded to send children to school prepared for recess with proper clothing and footwear. Children are excused from recess only through his/her physician's written request.

During rainy, snowy, and muddy seasons, children are encouraged to keep an extra pair of shoes in school as they are not permitted to wear boots or other foul weather footwear in school during the school day. (Wearing boots indoors for many hours can result in foot infections.) For safety reasons, children are not permitted to go barefoot or wear slippers or socks only while in school.

Registration for School - New Kindergarteners. Our annual kindergarten registration is held in the spring. To register for kindergarten, a child must be five years of age on or before September 30 of the year he/she plans to begin kindergarten (School Board Policy JEB). Parents/caregivers should check our school newsletter, *The Suncook Valley Sun*, or call our school office in April to find out about the registration dates and documentation required.

Registration for School - Transferring from Another School. New Hampshire law requires school attendance; parents of school age children who are new residents of Pittsfield are expected to register at the earliest possible date to allow for the continuation of regular school attendance. To register, visit the school office during regular hours to pick up a registration packet and to schedule an interview with the school principal.

Report Cards and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Report cards, issued four times each year at the conclusion of each quarterly marking period, are intended to communicate information about each child's growth and school achievement. Parents/caregivers are requested to pick up report cards at parent-teacher conferences, which are held at the conclusion of the first and third quarters; report cards are issued to students at the conclusion of the second and fourth quarters.

As noted above, regular parent-teacher conferences are scheduled at the end of the first and third quarters by classroom teachers. Parents are also encouraged to call the school office to schedule a conference with your child's teacher at any time during the school year in support of student learning and academic success.

Requests for Student Work. To support their child(ren)'s school success, parents/caregivers frequently request classwork for children who miss school due to illness or family emergency. We greatly appreciate your interest in and support of your child(ren)'s school achievement.

Many of us remember our parents making similar requests and receiving the assignment of textbook readings, workbook pages, or worksheets of math examples to complete so we didn't *get behind* our classmates during an absence.

Our teachers, however, utilize methods and materials very different from those that we remember from our own school days. So much of what we do is interactive, taking advantage of small and large group synergy in designing learning experiences. As a result, it is quite impossible to duplicate today's learning experiences at home.

Of course, we do not discourage parents/caregivers from making such requests. But we do ask that parents/caregivers be aware that the amount and type of assignments and tasks provided will not mirror our memories of the kinds of things that we received as children. This all underscores the importance of regular school attendance for all children in today's world.

Residence Requirement. In accordance with state law (RSA 193.12), no child may attend Pittsfield Elementary School who is not a legal resident of the Pittsfield School District without permission of the district. With the exception of those who may be homeless, children who move out of town are expected to be enrolled in the schools of the district into which they have moved.

The Responsive Classroom. To support a positive school environment, promote academic achievement, and help children develop essential social skills, Pittsfield Elementary School utilizes a strategy known as The Responsive Classroom. Components of The Responsive Classroom include a Morning Meeting in each classroom, Rules and Logical Consequences developed by classes, and a focus on team building during the First Six Weeks of School.

Retention in Grade. Children are typically expected to progress from grade to grade each year having developed the skills and understandings outlined in our school's curriculum (School Board Policy IKE). However, under certain circumstances, retention in grade may be considered as an individualized alternative for children who have not developed the expected skills and understandings at a particular grade. Such children are evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether or not retention is in his/her best interests.

If retention is being considered by the child's teacher, notification is provided to the child's parent/caregiver by March 1. The process for consideration includes a discussion involving both the child's parents/caregivers and teacher on the benefits and penalties of retention for the individual child.

When considering retention, the following guidelines are followed:

- Retention is considered only under unusual extenuating circumstances, such as:
 - A child is unavailable for instruction due to prolonged illness;
 - A child has moved frequently and has not acquired needed skills for promotion;
 - A child may benefit socially, emotionally, and/or academically; especially appropriate to children in the primary grades.
- Retention recommendations are made by a team consisting of the child's parents/caregivers, classroom teacher, members of the school's Teacher Assistance Team, and a school administrator; the school administration retains the legal responsibility to assign children to classes within the school.
- When retention is recommended, the child's teacher identifies goals to be achieved through the retention; the child's subsequent teacher monitors the effectiveness of the retention in terms of the identified goals.

- Retention is not used in place of the provision of appropriate educational services, such as special education services or available remedial instruction.
- Retention is never used as a punishment.

School/Family Learning Compact. Our School/Family Learning Compact is a voluntary agreement between family and school that is intended to identify specific means by which families and our school can work together to support our children's education. The compact includes three components:

- **Student's Role.** I agree to:
 - Come to school ready to learn;
 - Maintain a positive attitude;
 - Respect myself and others;
 - Work hard on school assignments and projects;
 - Ask for help when needed;
 - Talk with my family about school;
 - Complete homework and long-term projects to the best of my ability.
- **Family Role.** I/we agree to:
 - Provide a supportive learning environment at home;
 - Send my/our child(ren) to school regularly;
 - Send my/our child(ren) to school clean, properly dressed, well fed, and well rested;
 - Send my/our child(ren) to school prepared to learn with necessary learning materials;
 - Read and respond to communications from school;
 - Communicate with school staff in a timely manner regarding my concerns;
 - Read to or with my/our child(ren) at least four times per week.
- **School Role.** We agree to:
 - Provide ways for families to participate in decisions affecting their children's education;
 - Provide flexible times for family activities;
 - Support all efforts made to help students learn;
 - Support teachers in adapting curriculum to meet the needs of all students;
 - Provide the school staff with ongoing professional development around family involvement;
 - Assist families in meeting their needs;
 - Communicate clearly with students and families;
 - Encourage active family participation in all aspects of children's education;
 - Help students be prepared to learn.

The compact is sent home at the beginning of each school year with the request that it be signed by each child and parent/caregiver. The compact is then returned to school to be signed by each child's teacher and our school principal. A copy of the compact remains in school while the original is returned to the child's home to document the voluntary partnership for school success to which each party has agreed.

School Hours. Children are expected to be on time for school and arrive at school for orderly entry into our school with their classes at 7:55 a.m. Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. and children who arrive later than 8:00 a.m. are considered tardy; tardy children must report first to the school office for an admission pass before proceeding to their classrooms. Tardiness is to be avoided as a late entry into the classroom interferes with learning. Our school day concludes at 2:25 p.m.

Searches and Inspections. In accordance with school board policy (Policy ECAC-R), "school officials may conduct a search when there is reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal a violation of school rules or produce evidence of unlawful activity." Our school board provides specific guidelines for searches to ensure that all individuals involved are permitted to maintain their dignity during a search or inspection.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. "It is the policy of the district to provide all eligible students a program appropriate to his/her individual needs," according to School Board Policy IGB. A child who is "handicapped within the meaning of 504" shall be provided with an appropriate program, in accordance with this policy. Questions or referrals may be addressed to our Director of Student Services.

Smoking. New Hampshire law (RSA 155) prohibits smoking in schools and on school grounds at all times. Smoking is also prohibited during school-sponsored events.

Snacks. Children are provided with a daily snack time; children are encouraged to bring a healthy snack to school every day. Milk, juice, and a selection of healthy snacks are available for purchase in our cafeteria.

Special Education Notice of Rights. Federal special education laws (United States Code, Sections 1400-1415) and state special education laws (RSA 186-C) require that school districts provide a "free and appropriate public education" to all educationally disabled children.

These laws define educationally disabled children as children suffering from certain specified disabilities who are between the ages of three and twenty-one years and who have not yet obtained a high school diploma.

A "free and appropriate education" consists of specially designed instruction and educationally related services in accordance with an "individualized education program" developed by the school district in consultation with the student's parents/guardians.

If a parent or caregiver suspects that your child is educationally disabled and qualifies for such special services, you may make a written referral requesting that the school district determine whether your child is educationally disabled and qualifies for such special services and request that the school district determine your child's eligibility. Such referrals should be addressed to Pittsfield Elementary School.

The special education laws confer many rights and obligations upon parents/caregivers and school districts regarding educationally disabled children. These include, but are not limited to, the following (which are listed in the United States Code, Title 20, Section 1415b):

- Parents/guardians may examine all relevant records with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the appropriate public education.
- Parents/guardians may obtain an independent educational evaluation.
- The school district must adopt procedures to protect the rights of the child whenever the parents/guardians of the child are unknown or unavailable or whenever the child is a ward of the state. Such procedures may include the assignment of an individual who is not an employee of the school district or the state department of education to act as a surrogate for the child's parents/guardians.
- The school district must give the child's parent/guardian prior written notice whenever the district proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free and appropriate public education. The school district must adopt procedures designed to assure that this notice fully informs the parents/guardians, in their native language, of all procedures available under Section 1415, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.
- The school district must adopt procedures that include the opportunity to present complaints with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free and appropriate public education to such child.
- Whenever a school district receives such a complaint, the child's parents/guardians shall have the opportunity for an impartial due process hearing officer appointed by the state department of education. The hearing officer shall not be an employee of any agency involved with the education or care of the child. The administrative hearing

officer's decision may be appealed to the United States District Court of the New Hampshire Superior Court.

State law establishes short deadlines for requesting an administrative hearing and for appealing the hearing officer's decision to the courts. According to state law (RSA 186-C: 16-b), which took effect on May 1, 1992:

- Any action seeking to enforce special education rights under state or federal law shall be commenced by requesting an administrative hearing from the state department of education within two years of the date on which the alleged violation was or reasonably should have been discovered. However, any action against a school district to recover the costs of a unilateral special education placement shall be commenced by requesting an administrative hearing from the state department of education within ninety days of the unilateral placement.
- Where the parent/guardian, legal guardian, or surrogate parent/guardian has not been given proper notice of special education rights pursuant to Title 20, United States Code, Section 1415(b), including notice of the time limitations in the New Hampshire RSA 186C: 16-b, such limitations shall run from the time notice of those rights is properly given. The state department of education shall make available a model notice of rights that school districts may use as one means of complying with this notice requirement.
- An appeal of the state department of education administrative hearing officer's decision to a court of competent jurisdiction shall be commenced within one hundred twenty days from the receipt of the decision. All such decisions shall be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.
- Any action under Title 20, United States Code, Section 1415(e), seeking reimbursement from the school district for attorney fees related to a request for an administrative hearing, shall be commenced with one hundred twenty days from receipt of the state department of education administrative hearing officer's decision.
- Where a unilateral placement has been made without the school district of residence being offered a reasonable opportunity to evaluate the child and to develop an individualized educational plan, reimbursement may not be sought from the school district for any costs incurred until the school district is given an opportunity to evaluate the child and to develop an individualize educational plan.

Special Education Services. All educationally disabled children are entitled to participate in "a free and appropriate public school program." All children who appear to be educationally disabled are eligible for due process with regard to identification, evaluation, and placement.

A written individual education plan is developed for each student who is educationally disabled. Placement is made in the least restrictive environment appropriate to the child's special learning needs.

When it is in the best interest of the student, he/she is included in the regular school program with appropriate support services. In addition, available placement opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- **Resource Room.** Our resource rooms provide settings for educational programs provided by our special educators in consultation with children's individual teachers. Resource room programs include assessment of individual children's strengths and needs as well as small group and individualized instruction.
- **Speech and Language Therapy.** Our speech and language therapists identify and support students who have difficulty communicating. The development of listening skills and the ability to express ideas and needs in support of optimal academic achievement are important goals of our therapists. Services include individual therapy, group therapy, and teacher consultation.
- **Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy.** Our occupational and physical therapists evaluate individual children's needs in the areas of gross and fine sensory motor skills, visual perception skills, and in the activities of daily living. Services include individual therapy, group therapy, and teacher consultation.

Special Events. A number of special events are held for children and parents throughout the year. Our annual open house, curriculum fair, book fairs, concerts, and other events provide parents/caregivers and families with opportunities to be involved with children's school experiences. Look for information about special events in our weekly newsletter.

State Testing Program. Our children participate in the annual state testing program, presently known as the *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*. The aims of this program include the improvement of instruction through assessment of student learning of subject matter and processes as identified in the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks. Individual results are provided to parents in a timely manner following their receipt from the state.

Parents of participating children are respectfully asked to ensure that our children approach the testing sessions well prepared for the challenging tasks that they will face. Adequate rest, good nutrition, and a positive attitude during the testing period will help our children best demonstrate their knowledge and abilities.

Student Records. Eligible children, parents, and legal guardians have access to and enjoy the right to inspect and review official records of students attending school in the Pittsfield School District (Policy JO). Upon request, school officials make records available to eligible students, parents, and legal guardians in a timely manner. The records may be inspected and copied; material may not be removed from student records without a formal request and hearing.

Children's records are not released to third party individuals, agencies, or organizations without the written consent of parents or legal guardians.

Study Habits. The development of productive study habits supports school success and forms the basis for the development of productive lifelong work habits. Parents/caregivers can support this important development in each child by establishing regular, daily study time. During this time, children can:

- Complete homework assignments;
- Read; this includes independent, silent reading; reading aloud to another person; and being read to by another person;
- Share something learned in class with another person;
- Conduct research for a special project or presentation;
- Write (a letter to a family member, a to-do list, a diary entry, a poem, etc.);
- Prepare for a presentation or test;
- Explore a topic of special interest.

Regardless of homework assignments or other responsibilities, daily reading time is a must for all children.

Superintendent of Schools. The office of the superintendent of schools for the Pittsfield School District is located at:

S.A.U. #51
Locke's Location
175 Barnstead Road, Suite #3
Pittsfield, New Hampshire 03263

Telephone: 435-5526

Supplies. In general, needed classroom supplies are provided to our children through our school district funds. Individual classrooms, however, may require additional specific items to support a learning activity or special project. Requirements for classroom supplies are intended not to impose a financial burden on families. If this occurs, parents/caregivers are asked to speak with the child's teacher to make arrangements to have your child's needs supported.

In addition, children are required to wear sneakers during physical education classes. In the interest of safety and comfort, these sneakers should be the variety that ties. It is also recommended that children wear a smock (large, oversized shirt) to protect clothing during art classes when paints, inks, and clay are used.

Tardiness. When children are late to class in the morning, they miss the important beginning of the school day and cause a disruption to their teacher and classmates. Children are expected to arrive to enter with their classmates at 7:55 a.m. Classes start at 8:00 a.m. If a child is tardy, he/she is required to check in at the school office before proceeding to class.

Telecommunications. The following regulations reflect school board policy regarding the use of computers and telecommunications.

- **General Statement of Policy.** Permission for use of telecommunication resources is a privilege, not a right. It demands legal, responsible, ethical, and considerate behaviors by both staff and children. Each staff member and child is held responsible for his/her actions and activity within his/her account. Unacceptable conduct will result in disciplinary action.

All information and data storage areas are considered to be school property. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and insure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on our servers or other storage areas would always be private.

- **Limited Educational Purpose.** The school district is providing children and employees with access to the school district's computer system, which includes Internet access. The purpose of the system is not merely to provide children and employees with general access to the Internet. The use of the computer system is limited to educational purposes, which include the use of the system for classroom activities, professional or career development, and limited Internet searches. Users are expected to use Internet access through the district system to further educational and personal goals consistent with the mission of the school district and school policies. Uses, which might be acceptable on a user's private personal account on another system, may not be acceptable on this limited purpose network.

In order to match electronic resources to the approved district curriculum, whenever possible and feasible, district personnel will review and evaluate resources. In this matter, staff will provide developmentally appropriate guidance to students as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies related to the district curriculum.

Additionally, where possible, access to informational resources will be designed in ways, which point students to those resources, which have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. While students may be able to move beyond those resources to others, which have not been evaluated by the staff, they shall be provided with guidelines for such use.

- Use of System is a Privilege. The use of the school district system and access to use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. Depending on the nature and degree of the violation and the number of previous violations, unacceptable use of the school district system or the Internet may result in one or more consequences. When appropriate, the Pittsfield Elementary School discipline play will be used. The following are noted as forms of misconduct in the use of telecommunications.
- Unacceptable Uses.
 - A. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures and/or using obscene language are prohibited.
 - B. Staff and children should not reveal personal information online. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, name, address, telephone number, and password. Staff and children are never to reveal any personal information about any other staff member or child.
 - C. Hate mail, harassment, discriminatory remarks, and other antisocial behaviors are prohibited.
 - D. Malicious use of the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage the software or a computer or computing system is prohibited.
 - E. Violating copyright laws is prohibited.
 - F. Use of telecommunications to access or process pornographic material, inappropriate text files, or files dangerous to the integrity of the local area network is prohibited.
 - G. Intentionally seeking information on, obtaining copies of, or modifying files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresenting other users is prohibited.
 - H. No use of telecommunications shall serve to disrupt the use of telecommunications by users.

- I. Hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way. The destruction of, modification of, and/or the abuse of hardware or software, in any way, are prohibited.
 - J. Intentionally wasting limited resources is prohibited.
 - K. Employing telecommunications for commercial purposes is prohibited.
 - L. Use of telecommunications for product advertisement or political lobbying is prohibited.
 - M. The foregoing will be subject to further determinations as to whether specific uses of telecommunications are consistent with the policies of the Pittsfield School District.
 - N. There are not facilities provided by this system for sending or receiving private or confidential electronic communications. Mail received at any address provided by the Pittsfield School District is subject to review by system administrators. Messages related to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
 - O. The Pittsfield School District reserves the right to log telecommunications use and to monitor file server space utilization by users and assumes no responsibility or liability for files deleted due to violation of file server space allotments.
- Limited Expectation of Privacy.
 - A. By authorizing use of the school district computer system, the school district does not relinquish control over materials on the system or contained in files on the system. Users should expect only limited privacy in the contents of personal files on the school district system.
 - B. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the school system may lead to a discovery that a user has violated a policy, another school district policy, or the law.
 - C. An individual investigation or search will be conducted if school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the search will uncover a violation of law or school district policy.

- D. Parents have the right at any time to investigate or review the contents of their child's files. Parents have the right to request the termination of their child's individual Internet access.
 - E. School district employees should be aware that data and other materials in files maintained on the school district system might be subject to review, disclosure, or discovery under New Hampshire statutes.
 - F. The school district will cooperate fully with local, state, and federal authorities in any investigation concerning or related to any illegal activities and activities not in compliance with school district policies conducted through the school district system.
- Network Account Authorization Agreement.
 - A. The proper use of the Internet, and the educational value gained from proper Internet use, is the joint responsibility of children, parents, and employees of the school district.
 - B. This policy requires the permission of and supervision of the school's designated professional staff before a student may use a school account or resource to access the Internet.
 - C. The Network Account Authorization Form must be read and signed by the user and the parent on an annual basis. The form is filed in the school office.
- Limitation on School District Liability.
 - A. The Pittsfield School District assumes no responsibility or liability for any equipment, the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions, caused by negligence, error, or omission. Use of any information is at the user's own risk. Any computer connected to our network should have anti-virus software installed.
 - B. The Pittsfield School District specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. There are not warranties, either expressed or implied, with regard to software obtained from this system.
 - C. The Pittsfield School District reserves the right to remove a user account.

- D. Employee misuse of telecommunications will be subject to disciplinary measures as provided by board policy and legal statute.
 - E. Although the school district may use technical means to limit children's Internet access, these limits do not provide a foolproof means for reinforcing the provisions of this acceptable use policy.
- Parent/Guardian Responsibility and Notifications.
 - A. Outside of school, parents bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information services such as television, telephones, radio, movies, and other possibly offensive media. Parents are responsible for monitoring their child's use of the school district network and of the Internet if the student is accessing the school district network from home or a remote location.
 - B. Goods and services can be purchased over the Internet that could potentially result in unwanted financial obligations. Any financial obligation incurred by a student through the Internet is the sole responsibility of the student or the student's parents.
 - C. Should the user violate the school district's acceptable use policy, the child's access privileges may be revoked, and school disciplinary action and/or legal action may be taken.
 - D. All provisions of the acceptable use policy are subordinate to local, state, and federal laws.
 - E. Students may be asked to use the school district resources/accounts to access the Internet for completing individual class assignments or projects. The school district will provide parents with the option to request alternative activities not requiring Internet access.
 - F. The school district's acceptable use policy is available for parental review in this handbook.
 - G. Parents are encouraged to provide opinions regarding this policy to the principal or technology coordinator.
- Consequences for the Misuse of Network Resources and Telecommunications.

A. General rules for school behavior apply when using media within the school system. The school-wide discipline program consequences will also be employed for any misconduct in the use of telecommunications or the network.

- Level 1 Misconduct.
 - Violation: Using telecommunications for purposes other than education and research.
 - Consequence: Loss of telecommunication privileges for up to one month.

- Level 2 Misconduct.
 - Violation: Accessing or processing objectionable material; transmission of objectionable or harassing material.
 - Consequence: Loss of telecommunication privileges for a minimum of one quarter. If a child, parent/guardians will be notified and a meeting between child, parents/guardians, and the administration may be necessary to determine further consequences. Children will be held responsible for any costs incurred, such as telephone charges, etc. If the offender is a staff member, further consequences may be imposed by the administration.

- Level 3 Misconduct.
 - Violation: Use of threatening comments, sexual harassment, or unlawful use of the Internet or Internet e-mail.
 - Consequence: Loss of telecommunications privileges for up to one year; notification of police as well as parents/guardians. Parents/guardians may be held responsible for any costs incurred, i.e., telephone charges, court costs, etc. A meeting between all parties involved may be necessary.

B. Level 2 or 3 violations are considered very serious and additional consequences may occur. The school reserves the right to revoke permission for use of the network and telecommunications resources available. Consequences will be determined by the administration.

Telephone Use. Children are not available to take telephone calls during the school day. Parents/caregivers may leave emergency (and only emergency) messages for students at the school office.

Except for emergencies, children are not permitted to make telephone calls to parents/caregivers during the school day. Children are not permitted to call parents/caregivers for

forgotten homework, permission slips, or other items; children are not permitted to make telephone calls to make social plans.

Time Schedule. We recognize the importance of adequate time allocations to allow for the achievement of instructional objectives. At the same time, the integration of subject matter, especially of literacy skills and subject area content, is encouraged and incorporated into teaching plans. Teachers plan to maximize the use of instructional time to ensure that the school's curriculum is adequately addressed.

Title I Program. Title I is a federally funded program intended to support the basic skill development of eligible children. Children qualify for services through teacher recommendation and formal evaluation of achievement. Questions about our program or about eligibility may be addressed to our Title I project manager.

Transferring to Another School. To ensure a successful transition to another school, parents/caregivers are respectfully requested to notify your child's teacher and the school office well in advance of the actual transfer. This will allow us to provide your child's records to the new school at the earliest possible opportunity.

Visitors to School. Our school board (Policy KKA) states "citizens are encouraged to visit the schools and to observe the school program. The Board believes that parents of school children have special rights and responsibilities to keep themselves informed about the schools in order to benefit their children."

"Persons wishing to meet with a teacher for the purpose of discussing a particular problem shall do so only at a time when it does not interrupt the normal school program. Persons wishing to make such arrangements may do so by securing an appointment with the teacher through the office of the principal or by direct contact with the teacher."

"No person shall visit a school or school grounds during the school day (7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) without first reporting to the office of the principal as to the purpose and place of the visit. In addition, all visitors must recognize that unplanned direct contact with children must be restricted to serious emergency situations; visitors will be permitted communicate directly with child(ren) only with the permission of the principal or assistant principal."

Visitors to classrooms are expected to make prior arrangements with the teacher involved. Upon entering our school building, all visitors (including parents/caregivers) are expected to report first the main office. Visitors are required to sign our visitor's log and receive a visitor's badge, which must be worn while the visitor remains in the school building. The office staff will announce the arrival of visitors to appropriate personnel. Under no circumstances may a visitor enter our school and proceed directly to a classroom or other location or engage in contact with a child without reporting first to our school office.

Volunteers. A large number of community members provide important services to our children and school program by generously volunteering their time and abilities. Any community member who wishes to volunteer is invited to call our school office. A wide variety of areas of service are available.

While recognizing the potential benefits of school volunteers, our School Board also asserts its responsibility to ensure that our school is safe and secure and its intent to remain in control of school programs and activities. "In the interest of maintaining a safe, secure environment (according to Policy IJOC), the School Board requires that volunteers:

- Submit a photocopy of their driver license or other photo identification prior to the start of service;
- Submit to a criminal history record check and fingerprinting if volunteer service includes:
 - Working with students on a regular basis for an extended time (for example, on a weekly basis for one or more school terms),
 - Working with students in a location that lacks immediate presence of a supervising district employee;
 - Circumstances as determined by the principal."

Weapons and Dangerous Implements. Weapons and dangerous implements are strictly prohibited from the school and school property (School Board Policy JICI). This prohibition includes knives of all types; guns of all types; sharp instruments, such as ice picks, screwdrivers, and pieces of metal sharpened to a point; inflammable fluids; mace; pepper gas; explosives; and items made for hitting or throwing, such as brass knuckles, chains, black jacks, and martial arts weapons.

In addition, toys and novelty items that represent or resemble weapons or dangerous implements, such as rubber knives or toy guns (including water guns), are also prohibited from the school and school property. (Although such items usually do not pose a physical threat, their presence represents a potential disruption to the education process and, in certain circumstances, could be used to threaten others.)

The penalty for violation of this prohibition could include suspension or expulsion. For additional information on the issue of weapons and dangerous implements, refer to School Board Policy JICI, which is available at our school office.

Wellness. Our school board has adopted a *Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition* in compliance with federal law. Components of this policy include goals relative to physical activity and nutrition as well as guidelines for our school district wellness committee, the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold and served at school, promotion and marketing within the schools, and physical activity opportunities.