

# The Darien Public Schools



## Parent Handbook

2018 - 19

The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance to families on the general guidelines, district policies, and/or operations of the Darien Public Schools. Throughout this digital handbook, you will find links to additional documents that support the efficient and safe operation of our school district. For additional information and resources, please refer to the Darien Public Schools website ([www.darienps.org](http://www.darienps.org)).

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## Part 1: District Administration and Board of Education

### **Darien Central Office Administration**

Elliott Landon, Ed.D, *Interim Superintendent of Schools*

Susie DaSilva, Ed.D., *Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, K-12*

Shirley Klein, *Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services*

Marjorie Cion, *Director of Human Resources*

Michael Feeney, *Director of Finance and Operations*

Jeff Adams, *Director of Information Technology*

Michael Lynch, *Director of Facilities*

Marc Marin, *Director of Instructional Technology*

Cory Gillette, *Program Director for Elementary Literacy and Social Studies*

Linda Johnson, *Program Director for Elementary Math and Science*

Scott McCarthy, Ph.D., *Program Director for Special Education and Student Services*

Shira Schwartz , *Program Director for Special Education and Student Services*

Laura Straiton, *Program Director: Early Learning Program*

### **Darien Board of Education**

#### Board Meetings

Meetings are typically held every month in the Darien Board of Education Meeting Room, 35 Leroy Avenue, Darien, CT, at 7:30 p.m. ***Please be sure to check the web site to confirm dates, times and locations of specific meetings.*** The schedule of meetings is available at: [http://www.darienps.org/uploaded/content/district/general/2018-19\\_school\\_calendar.pdf](http://www.darienps.org/uploaded/content/district/general/2018-19_school_calendar.pdf)

Agendas of regular meetings are posted the Friday prior to the meeting on the district website and listed in a legal notice in a local newspaper. Complete agendas, including meeting materials, are posted on the district website by 3pm on the day of the scheduled meeting on the Darien website. The meetings are also viewable on Cablevision Channel 78, Frontier TV Channel 99, live-streamed by link through the Darien Public Schools' website and will remain archived on the school's website at

<http://video.darienps.org/show-videos?g=2c483dee&view=tree&page=1>.

## Board of Education Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mrs. Tara B. Ochman, Chairperson	11/19	TOchman@darienps.org
Mrs. Elizabeth A. Hagerty-Ross, Vice Chairperson	11/18	EHagerty-Ross@darienps.org
Mrs. Kathrine G. Stein, Secretary	11/18	KStein@darienps.org
Mrs. Debra M. Ritchie	11/18	DRitchie@darienps.org
Mrs. D. Jill McCammon	11/19	JMcCammon@darienps.org
Mrs. Christa S. McNamara	11/19	CMcNamara@darienps.org
Mr. Dennis J. Maroney	11/20	DMaroney@darienps.org
Mr. David P. Dineen	11/20	DDineen@darienps.org
Mr. Michael J. Burke	11/20	Mjburke@darienps.org

## Non-Discrimination Statement

Darien Public Schools is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and equal access to Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Darien Public Schools does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The Darien Public Schools does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction.

Please contact the following persons for questions related to the following areas:

Facilities	Michael Lynch, Director of Facilities	203-656-7418 mlynch@darienps.org
Individual Education Plan (IEP) & Section 504	Shirley Klein, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services	203-656-7474 sklein@darienps.org
Non-discrimination policy, Employment and Title IX	Marjorie Cion, Director of Human Resources	203-656-7406 mcion@darienps.org

## Part 2: General Information

### School Hours:

Hindley Elementary School	8:25 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.
Holmes Elementary School	9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Royle Elementary School	8:25 a.m. - 2:55 p.m.
Ox Ridge Elementary School	9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Tokeneke Elementary School	8:25 a.m. - 2: 55 p.m.
Middlesex Middle School	7:52 a.m. - 2:22 p.m.
Darien High School	7:40 a.m. - 2:17 p.m.

### Bus Transportation

Bus routes are published in local newspapers and posted on the website about one week before school begins. In order to ensure the safety of our students, it is essential that parents and caretakers who receive students at their bus stops are there consistently and on time. For young riders, parents should have a back-up plan in the event that they, or their caretakers, are delayed so that youngsters can be discharged from the bus. If an adult is not at a bus stop where any kindergarten student is dropped off, the student will be returned back to school.

Due to the number of students riding the buses, parents are asked to refrain from requesting a change in the regularly scheduled bus assignment. Per Board of Education policy, transportation is provided to and from the student's primary residence.

**Transportation Concerns:** Questions or complaints about school transportation services or safety issues should be directed to Michael E. Feeney, Director of Finance and Operations, Darien Board of Education at 203-656-7405. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, a parent may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools: 203-656-7412. Subsequent appeal levels are:

- Darien Board of Education
- Connecticut State Department of Education

The District uses the electronic message system, School Messenger, to notify parents/cartakers of bus delays or issues. If you are interested in being notified of a bus status, please check out FirstView app in the district's website under Transportation for more information.



## Aspen: School Information Management System

ASPEN is a Web-based school information management system to collect contact and medical emergency information for your children. Emergency information will be completed in ASPEN by each student's parent or guardian and should be updated annually. Emergency information will be maintained for each student and will contain all necessary data such as names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the parent or guardian, family physician, designated hospital, and names of relatives or neighbors to be contacted if the parent cannot be reached.

***Please follow these steps as soon as possible so we have your child's info for the start of school.***

1. Create an ASPEN account if you don't already have one. Accounts are issued to one parent for the whole family. Go to <https://www.darienps.org/aspden>, to complete and submit the form to get your account activated. Allow at least 48 hours for processing. You will receive your username/password at your provided email.
2. If you have already established an Aspen account, please go directly to Aspen to log in and update your information.
3. When you receive your login information, visit the site and review the contact and emergency medical information for *each of your children* to assure it is complete and accurate. Please fill out all tabs for each child. Your initials are required on the tab called Releases, Computers, Handbook and 1:1 Device in order to complete the workflow process and the submitted information to be sent to the school for review. You will receive an email stating Aspen has received your submitted information if you have completed the process correctly.
4. *Follow this link for step-by-step instructions:* [DPS Resources Aspen](#)

## Darien Public Schools' Website

The School District website, [www.darienps.org](http://www.darienps.org), contains extensive information about every aspect of the school system and detailed descriptions of the curriculum. Parents may access "Curriculum at a Glance" for all curriculum areas at [DPS Curriculum at a Glance](#).

The web site also provides a detailed "Chain of Communication", which provides guidance regarding whom to call with questions, suggestions or concerns. Parents may review the complete Chain of Command at here: [DPS Chain of Command](#).

The site also provides links to information about our schools released throughout the school year by the State of Connecticut and the Federal Government.

## Emergency Weather-Related Information

During adverse weather conditions, the decision to cancel school, delay the opening of school, or dismiss school early is primarily informed by the need to ensure the safety of students and staff. The final decision will ultimately be made by the Superintendent of Schools. Conditions are assessed between 4:00-4:30 a.m. unless weather conditions the previous evening warrant a cancellation. A decision will be based upon information from a variety of sources, such as the weather service, the police and public works department. Rest assured that we will do our very best to make timely, rational decisions, based upon the best weather and travel information available at the time. Your understanding and cooperation is always appreciated when these decisions are made.

### Cancellations

If schools must be cancelled due to weather-related emergencies, the decision will be made no later than 5:30 a.m. You can expect the announcement of the cancellation within a half hour on radio and TV stations, as well as on our website <http://www.darienps.org>.

**SchoolMessenger** is a service which provides e-mail, voice, and text communication to the community. Information can be found at [www.SchoolMessenger.com/tm](http://www.SchoolMessenger.com/tm)

You will be contacted by SchoolMessenger by e-mail and phone using the information provided by you in your Aspen account. However to receive text messaging from SchoolMessenger, **you must opt in for this service.**

In order to participate in this service you must indicate your willingness to receive text messages to your phone. The process is simple and only takes a few seconds to complete:

- Simply text any one of the following words to the number 68453: "subscribe," "optin," or "yes."
- You should receive the following reply message: "You are registered to receive aprox 3 msgs/mo. Txt STOP to quit, HELP for help."

*\*You will need to repeat the opt-in process for ALL wireless numbers that you wish to include.* In addition to performing the opt-in process above, you'll want to ensure that the district has your wireless number(s) in our student information database. **Please log onto Aspen and update your information with the "contact and medical emergency information" workflow.**

*\*To opt out of all text messages from SchoolMessenger, reply with STOP to the opt-in message or visit [www.schoolmessenger.com/tm](http://www.schoolmessenger.com/tm).*

Please note that when school is cancelled, no activities will be held in the buildings and all school-related and extracurricular events will be cancelled. A decision to close schools for the day, once made, will not change.

### Delayed Openings

If schools are delayed due to weather, the decision also will be made by 5:30 a.m. The decision to have a **TWO HOUR** delayed opening is based upon the available information that travel and weather conditions are expected to sufficiently improve to open schools. However, parents should continue listening to designated radio and TV stations following the announcement of a delayed opening. If travel conditions do not improve or if they worsen, the delayed opening may be changed to a full day closing. Any such change will be communicated via the media and website sources.

### Early Dismissals

If weather forecasts and conditions indicate that an early dismissal would be in the best interest of our students and staff, we will communicate such a decision via radio, TV, our website, and School Messenger. These sources will provide more information than can be gained through a call to the schools or central office. An early dismissal decision will be made no later than one hour prior to the dismissal. Again, media announcements will occur within a half hour. It is critical that parents have an emergency plan in place for child care should children be dismissed early from school.

### **Please note that there are two early dismissal times for weather-related emergencies depending on the timing of the arrival of inclement weather:**

(1) In the event of a **Morning Emergency Dismissal** due to inclement weather, all students, including kindergartners, will be dismissed according to the following schedule:

Darien High School: 10:30 a.m.

Hindley, Royle & Tokeneke: 11:00 a.m.

Middlesex Middle School: 10:30 a.m.

Holmes & Ox Ridge: 11:30 a.m.

All students will have the same bus stops as they had in the morning. No lunches will be served at school on those days, but elementary students will have a snack prior to dismissal.

**For Early Learning Program (ELP) ONLY:** ELP students at Ox Ridge, Royle, and Tokeneke will be dismissed at 10:00 a.m.

In the event of an **Afternoon Emergency Dismissal** due to inclement weather, all students, including kindergartners, will also have the same bus stops as they had in the morning. Lunch,

however, will be served to all students. Please note that this early afternoon emergency closing time is the same time schedule as when we have regularly scheduled early dismissals for conference days and before certain holidays. Also note that, regardless of whether we have an emergency closing or a scheduled early dismissal, kindergarten students will be dismissed along with all the other students in grades 1-5. The afternoon emergency dismissal times are:

Darien High School: 12:20 p.m.

Hindley, Royle & Tokeneke: 12:55 p.m.

Middlesex Middle School: 12:30 p.m.

Holmes & Ox Ridge: 1:25 p.m.

**For Early Learning Program (ELP) ONLY:** ELP students at Ox Ridge, Royle, and Tokeneke will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m.

The school system itself, except for a major emergency or extraordinary road conditions, will remain open until the usual closing time. For everyone's safety, we suggest that you allow your child to be transported home on his/her regular school bus.

## Chain of Communication Protocols

The Darien School District's communication protocols help to promote direct, open and respectful interactions so that problems and concerns can be worked out quickly and efficiently. The communication protocol starts with the staff member closest to the situation, as that person will usually have the most information. At times, additional personnel are required to resolve specific situations. Staff should return initial communication within 24 hours.

Appropriate communication channels for a variety of topics are listed below. The district encourages any and all questions from parents and residents regarding school matters. For a more detailed Chain of Command, please [click here](#).

### *Classroom Issues Involving an Individual Child*

(classroom procedures, behavior, grades, schedule, etc.)

OR

### *Curriculum and Instruction*

(subject matter being taught, teaching strategies, textbooks and materials used, etc.)

For Grades K-5:

STEP 1: Classroom Teacher; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction; if not resolved...

STEP 4: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 6-8:

STEP 1: Classroom Teacher; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Team Leader or Curriculum Monitor; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 4: Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction; if not resolved...

STEP 5: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 9-12:

STEP 1: Classroom Teacher; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Department Chair; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 4: Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction; if not resolved...

STEP 5: Superintendent of Schools

*Budget and Business Operations*

STEP 1: Director of Finance; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Superintendent of Schools

*Employment and Certification*

STEP 1: Director of Human Resources; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Superintendent of Schools

*School Personnel*

STEP 1: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Director of Human Resources; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Superintendent of Schools

*Residency*

STEP 1: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Director of Human Resources; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Superintendent of Schools

*Use of Building/Field Requests:*

STEP 1: Director of Facilities; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Director of Finance; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Superintendent of Schools

*Special Education*

For Grades K-5:

STEP 1: Teacher or Service Provider; if not resolved...

STEP 2: Facilitator or Case Manager; if not resolved...

STEP 3: Psychologist; if not resolved...

STEP 4: Building Administrator; if not resolved...

STEP 5: Asst. Supt. for Special Education and Student Services; if not resolved...  
STEP 6: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 6-12:

STEP 1: Teacher or Service Provider; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Facilitator or Case Manager; if not resolved  
STEP 3: Psychologist; if not resolved...  
STEP 4: Building Administrator, if not resolved...  
STEP 5: Asst. Supt. for Special Education and Student Services; if not resolved...  
STEP 6: Superintendent of Schools

#### *Medical Concerns K-12*

STEP 1: School Nurse; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Director of Nursing Services; if not resolved  
STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved  
STEP 4: Asst. Supt. for Special Education and Student Services; if not resolved  
STEP 5: Superintendent of Schools

#### *Guidance/Social Work/Psychology*

For Grades K-5:

STEP 1: Teacher and/or Psychologist; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Facilitator or Case Manager; if not resolved...  
STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved...  
STEP 4: Asst. Supt. for Special Education and Student Services; if not resolved...  
STEP 5: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 6-8:

STEP 1: Guidance Counselor, Social Worker, Psychologist; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Building Administrator; if not resolved...  
STEP 3: Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction; if not resolved...  
STEP 4: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 9-12:

STEP 1: Guidance Counselor; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Director of Guidance; if not resolved...  
STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved...  
STEP 4: Asst. Supt. for Curriculum and Instruction; if not resolved...  
STEP 5: Superintendent of Schools

#### *Transportation*

(Pickup, route problems, etc.)

STEP 1: Director of Finance; if not resolved...  
STEP 2: Superintendent of Schools

*Other Transportation Concerns  
(Behavior on school buses, etc.)*

For Grades K-5:

- STEP 1: Classroom teacher; if not resolved...
- STEP 2: Building Administrator; if not resolved...
- STEP 3: Director of Finance; if not resolved
- STEP 4: Superintendent of Schools

For Grades 6-12:

- STEP 1: Classroom teacher; if not resolved...
- STEP 2: Building Administrator; if not resolved...
- STEP 3: Director of Finance; if not resolved
- STEP 4: Superintendent of Schools

*Athletics:*

- STEP 1: Coach; if not resolved...
- STEP 2: Director of Athletics; if not resolved...
- STEP 3: Building Administrator; if not resolved...
- STEP 4: Superintendent of Schools

*Other School Activities*

- STEP 1: Activity Advisor; if not resolved...
- STEP 2: Building Advisor; if not resolved...
- STEP 3: Superintendent of Schools

## School Lunch and Milk Program (K-12)

Hot lunches are available to students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The cost at the elementary schools is \$3.55; \$3.75 at the middle school; and \$4.15 at the high school for 2018-19. Milk is available to students who bring a lunch at \$0.75.

Parents need to first establish an account by bringing a check to the cafeteria directly. Once the account is established at the school, parents may elect to either use the online K12 Payment Center or drop a check off to the cafeteria manager at the school. The 5-digit lunch account number issued will remain the same whether moving from elementary to middle to high school. Please click [here](#) for information on the K12 Payment Center.

Parents interested in applying for Free and Reduced lunch can find the application at <http://www.darienps.org/page.cfm?p=537>, under the Food Services Department.

Please note that the monthly lunch menus will be posted on the district and school websites for review. Parents are encouraged to monitor the lunch account balances closely to ensure money is available for purchases.

## School Attire

Students should dress within reasonable limits so that their dress does not jeopardize the health or safety of the wearers or others, or cause distraction or disruption of the educational process as determined by the Administration.

At the elementary level, during the winter months, all students are expected to dress warmly with appropriate footwear. Children will be going outdoors during recess, except in inclement weather. Every item should be labeled with your child's name.

At all levels, appropriate footwear and shirts must be worn at all times. Certain subject areas, such as Physical Education, Art, and others, may require specific clothing for both protection and safety.

Beyond this, the following prohibitions are given for elementary and secondary student school attire ([Policy 5280](#)):

- Clothing that may jeopardize the health or safety of the wearer or others includes, but is not limited to, spiked or studded bracelets, oversized or multi-finger rings, chains, belts or any other article of attire with spikes or studs attached.
- Clothing that is provocative or revealing or which conveys, supports or implies the use of drugs or alcohol, sex, violence, profanity, hateful or discriminatory messages is inappropriate for school wear.
- Attire or accessories that contain overly offensive or disruptive writing or pictures likely to unduly disrupt the educational environment, or that constitute "fighting words," are prohibited.
- Provocative or revealing clothing that reveal the abdomen, chest, or undergarments; see-through clothing, and shorts, miniskirts, or pants that reveal the upper thigh or undergarments.

Teachers may ask students to remove their head coverings. Head coverings include but are not limited to scarves, bandannas, masks, headbands, visors, kerchiefs, athletic sweatbands, hats, caps or hoods. Approved coverings worn as part of a student's religious practice or belief, or medical need, shall not be prohibited under this policy.



## Part 3: Academics

### English Language Learners

Students who qualify as English Language Learners (ELLs) are provided services to support their ability to understand, speak, read and write in English. Upon registration with the Darien Public Schools, parents complete a “Home Language Survey.” Eligibility for supplemental English Language Services will be determined based on information provided on the Home Language Survey and other school assessments.

### Field Trips

Formal permission must be given by parents through ASPEN for children to attend field trips within or out of Darien. Parents are required to give their electronic permission only once for all field trips to locations within or outside of Darien. This should be done at the start of the school year as part of the Contact and Emergency Permission sign-offs. By checking off on this form, you are giving permission for all scheduled field trips.

### Gifted Students

Darien’s gifted program is called the Idea (Interesting Dimensions that Extend Abilities) program. Gifted students in the Darien Public Schools are those students in grades two through nine who demonstrate or show potential for exceptional capability. Gifted students in Darien are identified through a collaborative process and show evidence of giftedness through a variety of measures. Parents, teachers, or other school staff may refer students to be evaluated for the gifted program.

Students in grades two through five participate in a gifted curriculum for seventy-five to ninety minutes per week with other gifted children. In grades six through eight, gifted students receive specialized instruction two periods weekly. In ninth grade, gifted students meet for ninety minutes per week during an elective period; they conduct research and embark upon an independent study that culminates in a presentation of a product or solution to a problem (Achiever’s Project).

In grades two through nine, the gifted curriculum focuses on critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and discussions about big ideas and essential questions.

For more information about the gifted program, please see our website at <http://www.darienps.org/page.cfm?p=893> or contact the Gifted Program Director, Linda Johnson, [ljohnson@darienps.org](mailto:ljohnson@darienps.org)

## Homework in the Elementary Schools

The following guidelines have been developed for homework in the elementary schools with the understanding they provide a general framework for assigning student work.

Homework and the nature of the assignments should support the curriculum, be appropriate to the children's ages and reflect teachers' judgment of their students' needs and abilities. Therefore, the amount of homework assigned is to gradually increase as students progress through the grades, reflecting the increasing expectations of the program, and facilitating transition to higher levels. Homework should not be assigned on weekends or holidays.

### Elementary Mathematics Homework, Grades 1-5

Education is a continuous process that takes place outside of school as well as in school. Homework completed by students should reinforce or extend skills and strategies taught in school to promote further practice. This work includes reinforcement of conceptual understanding, computational and procedural fluency, basic fact fluency and problem solving. Mathematics homework is given on a daily basis, with the exceptions noted above.

### Elementary Literacy Homework, Grades K-5

Children benefit from time spent reading outside of school. Just like any skill, practice is necessary for improvement. For kindergarten and grade 1 students, parents should read aloud with their children regularly. We recommend a variety of genres and mediums (i.e., newspapers, magazines, story books, informational books, poetry). In addition, all students will be bringing home 'just right' classroom books to read every night. (The only exception is Kindergarten when students begin bringing home 'just right' books early in the new year.) Therefore it is important for parents to provide a quiet time for reading each night. Research strongly supports regular nightly independent reading as an important way to help youngsters read more effectively. Your child will learn important skills and strategies by reading everyday. Check your teacher's blog or newsletter or the Darienps.org website under Parent Resources for suggestions on how to support your child with literacy at home. Writing and other language arts skills work are assigned as needed.

## Homework in Middle School

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and support the learning that occurs during the school day. Consistent completion of homework is an essential component for academic success.

- Grade 6: Sixty minutes plus 20 minutes reading
- Grade 7: Seventy minutes plus 20 minutes reading
- Grade 8: Ninety minutes plus 20 minutes reading

Limited homework will be assigned on weekends. No homework will be assigned over school vacations. If a long-term project has been assigned, the due date will not be the Monday we return. Advanced level classes may exceed the above guidelines.

## Homework in the High School

At the beginning of each course, each teacher is required to submit to the department coordinator and the students an outline of the homework requirements for every course. Homework counts as a part of a student's grade in all courses. In academic courses, students should expect 2 1/2 - 5 hours/week for each course. Parents are advised that they may request homework assignments when their students are ill. These assignments will not be available the same day as the request is made, but will be available the next day. The administration will be sure the assignments are passed along to the students. Please contact the secretary in the main office for this assistance.

## Make-Up Work for Excused Absences

### Elementary Make-up Work:

Generally speaking, make-up work is not provided to or expected from a student who has been marked absent/excused for less than three consecutive days. Parents, however, may contact their classroom teacher to request make-up work. A friend or a sibling may also be used to deliver homework.

### Middle School Make-up Work:

Homework assignments may be requested for every two (2) consecutive days of absence. Parents are asked to contact their child's team leader by email to make the request. When possible, homework will be sent electronically. During shorter absences it is the responsibility of the student to obtain homework assignments by phoning a classmate, or by checking the teachers' websites. The student has the responsibility to make up any work missed within a reasonable amount of time. The student and teacher should determine when the work should be completed.

### High School Make-up Work:

If a student, because of illness or for other legitimate reasons, is absent, he or she is allowed to make up the work within a reasonable time as designated by the teacher. It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative in contacting the teacher prior to, during or immediately following the absence, in order to make up missed work or to request an I (Incomplete). Incomplete work at the end of a marking period that is not completed in two weeks results in an F. In extreme cases, the principal may authorize an extended make-up deadline. If the absences are unexcused due to cutting, truancy, etc., the teacher is under no obligation to offer make-up

work, tests, or quizzes. Students may be given a mark of I (Incomplete) at the end of a marking period by approval of the teacher and with the endorsement of the principal.

## Makeup Homework for Extended Absences Due to Family Vacations, etc:

Teachers are not required to provide special work for students who will be absent for reasons such as a family vacation and are not obligated to provide extra help or tutoring upon the student's return. If tutoring is necessary, the cost would be the responsibility of the parent.

## Communication with Private Sector Providers

The Darien Public Schools prioritize the time of its faculty members as they work with students in our classrooms. Our faculty's primary responsibility is to teach and support the students of Darien who attend our schools. Teacher time and energy is diverted when private service providers attempt to speak with Darien teachers to seek student information and/or request a visit to the classrooms of Darien students when school is in session.

In recognition of the valuable resources our Darien staff bring to their work with our students, Darien staff are not required or expected to communicate with or provide information to private service providers. Similarly, visits to Darien classrooms by private service providers and/or agencies are not be permitted unless as part of the process necessary to determine or develop programming for a student with special needs.

## Progress Reports and Conferences

**Grades K-5:** Three progress reports viewed electronically on Aspen and two regularly scheduled conferences each year.

**Grades 6-12:** Four report cards viewed electronically on Aspen each year. In middle school, conferences are scheduled as needed throughout the year with the school counselor or team leader. At the high school, conferences can be scheduled directly with the teacher or school counselor throughout the year.

### **Conferences:**

Elementary Parent/Teacher conferences are regularly scheduled twice yearly, in December and March.

## Promotion to Ninth Grade

In order to be promoted to high school, eighth grade students are expected to achieve a passing grade in each of these core academic subjects; English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. If, at the end of the third marking period, a student is failing one or more of these subjects for the year, the student's parents will be notified, and a meeting will be held with the

student, his or her parents, grade level counselor and a school administrator to determine the following:

- If any of the student's course recommendations for high school should be changed;
- If a Scientifically Research-Based Intervention (SRBI) meeting needs to be called to discuss the student's difficulties and possible supports;
- If the student should pursue opportunities to bolster his/her skills through a summer course.

## Graduation Requirements

The current graduation policy will be under review.

## Special Education

### Programs

Darien provides a broad continuum of services including: special education instruction within regular classrooms; special education instruction within a small group resource or study skills setting; regular education classes co-taught with a special education teacher or other related service provider and a regular education teacher; pull-out services for intense skill development; self-contained special education classes.

### Eligibility

Eligibility for special education is determined by a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) consisting of professional staff members and the child's parent(s). Parents and teachers who believe a child has a learning problem caused by a disability should notify the principal or the special education administrator in the child's school, who will begin the process. In order to qualify for services, a child must have a disability recognized by state and federal law.

### IEP

For an eligible student, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed that outlines the services the PPT believes are necessary for the student to receive a free and appropriate education.

### Section 504

For eligible students, a Section 504 Accommodation Plan will be developed to provide the student access to the general education curriculum and the school environment.

Additional information can be found by [clicking here](#). Or copy and paste

## Standardized Testing

The following standardized tests are mandated by the State of Connecticut and the federal government (No Child Left Behind Act).

<b>State Mandated Test</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Grades Administered</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Smarter Balanced assessments (SBAC)	Mathematics, English Language Arts	3-8	Spring
Connecticut School Day Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)	Mathematics, Evidence-Based Reading & Writing	11	Spring
Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)	Science	5, 8, 11	Spring
Connecticut Physical Fitness	Physical Fitness	4, 6, 8, 10	
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	Subjects may include: Arts, Civics, Economics, Geography, Math, Reading, Science, U.S. History, Writing	Grades administered may include: 4, 8, 10 and 12	Spring

Optional assessments include: AP, ACT, SAT, PSAT, Practice ACT

In addition, as noted in the section on gifted programs, the district administers the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT).

- Areas: verbal and nonverbal reasoning ability
- Grades administered: all third and fifth graders, and any students referred for gifted services in grades 1-8.
- Time frame: all third and fifth graders and currently enrolled students referred for gifted services in grades 1-8 take the OLSAT in February (results in May). Students new to the

district that are referred for gifted services in grades 1-8 take the OLSAT in September (results in November) or February.

## Technology Resources for Students ([Policy 5300](#))

The Darien Board of Education provides its students and staff access to a multitude of technology resources for educational purposes. In the coming years, Darien will be increasing these resources by rolling out devices 1:1 in certain grades at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These resources provide opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, and to build stronger connections within our town and to others in the global community.

With access to the District's technology resources comes a level of responsibility and expectation for students. Students will be required to exercise the highest forms of ethical and responsible use when working in digital environments. Students are also expected to treat technology resources with care so that their integrity is preserved for the benefit of all. The District has outlined a set of policies and procedures related to technology resources connected with these student expectations. Violations of these policies may lead to withdrawal of the access privilege and/or disciplinary measures in accordance with the Board's student discipline policy.

Each year, a User Agreement sign-off in ASPEN will be required for students to use the district's technology resources.

## Part 4: Policies and Notification

### Bullying Prevention and Intervention ([Policy 5175](#))

The Darien Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining a safe educational environment free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. The Board has developed a Safe School Climate Plan that represents a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyberbullying and sets forth the Board's expectations for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying. Students, parents, and staff members may file written or anonymous reports of bullying with any building administrator and/or Safe School Climate Specialist. Complaint forms are available on the district website under [Policy 5175](#). All reports will be forwarded to the Safe School Climate Specialist for review and actions consistent with the plan. The District Safe School Specialist is Susie Da Silva, K-12 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction, [sdasilva@darienps.org](mailto:sdasilva@darienps.org) , (203)656-7414.

### Non-Discrimination of Students ([Policy 5710](#))

The Board of Education complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities because of race, religion,

color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, pregnancy, or gender identity or expression, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law.

It is the policy of the Board that any form of discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. The Board's prohibition of discrimination or harassment in its educational programs or activities expressly extends to academic, nonacademic and extracurricular activities, including athletics. It is also the policy of the Board to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics such as race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability, pregnancy, gender identity or expression.

For the purposes of this policy, "gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.

#### Health Regulations: Immunizations, Physical Examinations, and Screenings

Cumulative health records shall be maintained for each student, listing all examinations, immunizations and other pertinent data. Such health records shall be maintained in accordance with the Darien Board of Education Student Records Policy and state and federal law.

The Connecticut State Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Health and the Darien Board of Education have specific health regulations students must adhere to while enrolled in Darien Public Schools. Students will not be admitted to school until a school nurse has reviewed the student's completed physical exam/health assessment and immunization records and has determined it to be in compliance with the regulations.

#### New Entrants:

All new students entering Darien Public Schools must submit completed required immunizations and physical examination/health assessment prior to school entrance. The physical examination/health assessment must be dated no earlier than 365 days prior to school entrance. The physical examination/health assessment should be documented on: ***State of Connecticut Department of Education Health Assessment Record (HAR-3 REV 4/2012) or its equivalent.***



The health assessment must be performed by a legally qualified physician, advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), physician assistant (PA) who works with an MD, or qualified registered nurse. In Connecticut, a “legally qualified physician” includes doctors of medicine (MD) and osteopathy (DO). It does not include chiropractors, naturopaths, and homeopaths.

### Early Learning Program (ELP) Students

Students entering the Early Learning Program (ELP) must submit completed required immunizations and physical examination/health assessment upon entry. Those students accepted into ELP must also submit a physical exam with up-to-date immunizations annually thereafter while enrolled in ELP. The physical examination/health assessment must be dated no earlier than 365 days prior to school entrance. ELP students’ physical should be documented on: **State of Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (ED 191 REV 8/2011)** or its equivalent.

### Kindergarten Students:

All incoming Kindergarten students must submit a completed physical examination with required immunizations prior to entry. The exam must have been completed no earlier than 365 days prior to entrance.

### 6th & 9th Grade:

All 6th & 9th grade students must submit documentation of complete immunization update and physical examination (health assessment) completed within 13 months prior to the start of 7th & 10th grade. Documentation of a complete physical examination (health assessment) including up-to-date immunizations must be submitted to the school nurse prior to the student’s entry into 7th & 10th grade.

Kindergarten, 6th & 9th grade students’ physical exam should be documented on: **State of Connecticut Department of Education Health Assessment Record (HAR-3 REV 4/2012)** or its equivalent.

### Screenings

Connecticut State Law and Darien Board of Education Policy require that students will be screened for vision, hearing and postural problems. Vision and hearing will be tested in grades K, 1, 3, 4 5. Postural screenings by visual inspection will be completed in grades 5 and 7 for female students and grade 8 for male students.

The parents/guardians of students who need further evaluation by a healthcare provider will be notified. Parents should return the referral form to the school nurse after it has been completed. ***Please notify the school nurse annually if you do not wish your child to participate in these screenings***

Public Act 14-176 allows trained staff members, in the absence of the school nurse during regular school hours, to deliver an Epi-Pen auto injector to a student who presents with signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction. Under the revised law, a student's parent or guardian may submit a written directive to the school nurse to prohibit the administration of epinephrine to such student. ***If you do not wish for epinephrine to be administered to your child by a trained staff member in the absence of the school nurse, you must submit that in writing directly to your school nurse.***

## Health Requirements for Participation in High School Interscholastic Sports

Student athletes participating in an interscholastic sport must, in accordance with CIAC rules and the Darien Board of Education, have an annual Physical Examination / Health Assessment which certifies the athlete may participate in athletic activities and competitive sports. This Physical Examination / Health Assessment must be current within 13 months of the beginning of tryouts, practice and competitive play, and be kept updated and on file with the school nurse. At no time shall an athlete be allowed to practice or compete if the date since the Physical Examination / Health Assessment exceeds 13 months. Even if the Physical Examination / Health Assessment was accepted at the beginning of the season, if during the season it becomes more than 13 months old, the athlete will not be allowed to continue to practice or play until a new Physical Examination / Health Assessment is on file with the school nurse. The physical examination/health assessment should be documented on the ***State of Connecticut Department of Education Health Assessment Record (HAR-3 REV 4/2012) (3 pages)***

### DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form

Each sports season (fall, winter, spring) the student athlete and parent/guardian are required to complete and sign the DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form. Upon completion, the student athlete needs to bring the DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form to the school nurse to verify medical clearance to participate in athletic activities and competitive sports. The student athlete then submits the DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form which has been reviewed and signed by the school nurse to the respective team coach. The DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form is then kept on file with the team coach for the duration of the team's season. Please [click here](#) for a copy of the DHS Coaches Athletic Emergency Form, or copy and paste the following: [http://darien.finalsite.com/uploaded/content/district/departments/health\\_services/7.pdf](http://darien.finalsite.com/uploaded/content/district/departments/health_services/7.pdf)

### Psychotropic Drugs

The Board of Education prohibits school personnel from recommending the use of psychotropic drugs for any child. For the purposes of this policy, the term "recommend" shall mean to directly or indirectly suggest that a child should use psychotropic drugs. Moreover, personnel may not require that a child obtain a prescription for a controlled substance (as defined in the

Controlled Substances Act, 21 USC 801 et seq.) in order for the child to: 1) attend school; 2) receive an initial evaluation or reevaluation to determine a child's eligibility for special education; or 3) receive special education and related services. Notwithstanding the foregoing, school medical staff may recommend that a child be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to prohibit a planning and placement team from discussing with the parents and/or guardians of a child the appropriateness of consultation with or evaluation by, medical practitioners; or to prohibit school personnel from consulting with appropriate medical practitioners with the consent of the parents and/or guardians of a child.

## Residency

Students enrolling in the Darien Public Schools must submit proof of residency, which includes a signed copy of the lease or deed for the premises at which they will reside, together with two utility bills which have been delivered to that address.

### Moving within Darien

When you move, you must notify the school of your new address and phone number immediately, and present proof of your continued residence in Darien. Parents are required to submit all documentation that was required when the student was first enrolled in Darien Public Schools.

## Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment ([Policy 5275](#))

It is the policy of the Darien Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is prohibited, whether by students, Board employees or third parties subject to the control of the Board. Students, Board employees and third parties are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful of the rights of students. Any student or employee who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action. Victims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment should promptly report such claims to the principal unless that individual is the subject of the complaint, in which case the complaint should be forwarded directly to the Superintendent of Schools. Students may make a report of sexual harassment to any staff member with whom he or she feels comfortable.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's ability to learn or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment can include conduct that is verbal, such as suggestive comments, insults, jokes, etc.; nonverbal, including pictures, gestures, whistling etc.; or physical, including pinching, kissing, touching, assault or coerced sexual intercourse.

A copy of any complaint filed under this policy shall be forwarded to the appropriate individuals listed below.

Majorie Cion, Director of Human Resources, [mcion@darienps.org](mailto:mcion@darienps.org), (203) 656-7406

Christopher Manfredonia, Director of Athletics, [cmanfredonia@darienps.org](mailto:cmanfredonia@darienps.org), (203) 655-3981 ext. 2263

Alicia Casucci, Director of Health Services, [acasucci@darienps.org](mailto:acasucci@darienps.org), (203) 655-3981 ext. 2304

## Child Abuse Reporting

Staff members are required to report any case of suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the local law enforcement agency. School employees are also required to report when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a student is a victim of sexual assault and the perpetrator is a school employee. The employee shall make an oral report as soon as practicable, but not later than twelve hours after having reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or neglected or placed at imminent risk of serious harm. Not later than forty-eight hours after making an oral report, the employee shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Children and Families or the Commissioner's designee containing all of the required information. Because child abuse involves a serious threat to a student's health and safety, and is considered an emergency situation, regulations permit the disclosure of information contained in the student's records to the DCF without obtaining the consent of the child's parent or legal guardian.

## Suicide Prevention ([Policy 5375](#))

**Support:** For students who may be involved in life-threatening behavior or who are in crisis or at risk, the school district provides staff and programs to offer support for the students and to work cooperatively with families and professionals in developing intervention plans which access appropriate school and community resources.

**Notification:** Any school employee who may have knowledge of a suicide threat must report the information to the principal or designee who will notify the student's family and appropriate staff and community resource services.

## Student Attendance and Truancy ([Policy 5130](#))

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child. A signed note, email, or phone call to the school attendance line from the student's parent/guardian, an-in person explanation to a school official, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional as appropriate is required. Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of absence. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion is always considered absent with excuse. In grades K-8, a parent contact is legally required on each day of a student's absence. Parents are requested to

call the school in the morning. If the parent has not called the school, the school will try to contact the parent. Therefore, the law also requires that the parents provide the school a telephone number where they can be reached.

The following key excerpts and definitions are taken from the district policy:

- "Unexcused absence" - any absence from a regularly scheduled school day, which absence is not an excused absence.
- "Excused absence" - an absence from a regularly scheduled school day which, as determined by the building principal (or his/her designee), is for: a) reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits. The administration reserves the right to require physician or other appropriate certification for health-related absences. b) religious holidays; c) court appearance; d) funeral or death in the family; e) approved school activities, including field trips; f) suspension or expulsion; and g) in limited circumstances, special activities or emergencies with the consent of the parent or other person having control of the child.
- "Disciplinary absences" – absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from "unexcused" and "excused" absences.

A student is considered "Truant" under the following circumstances: any student five to eighteen years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.

State law states that a student is in attendance if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school for at least half of the regular school day.

## Standards of Conduct ([Policy 5215](#))

It is the responsibility of the Darien Public Schools to provide an environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning. It is clear that, in order to implement effectively the Standards of Conduct for Students contained in this policy, cooperation and mutual support on matters of discipline and attendance are necessary between home and school.

Students, teachers, and administrators have the right to expect mutual courtesy and fair and equitable treatment and to be informed of their rights and responsibilities. The goal of the schools is to assist students in developing the ability for self-direction and self-discipline and to provide opportunities for decision-making. However, in the pursuit of these goals, those students who infringe on the rights of others or who violate school policies and regulations will be subject to corrective action. In all cases the constitutional rights of students will be preserved and protected.

Listed below are the minimum standards of conduct for students at all levels of the Darien Public Schools. The administration of each individual school is expected to inform the school community in writing of these standards and its specific rules for interpreting these standards. The Superintendent of Schools or his designee has the responsibility to work with principals in developing guidelines and procedures for uniform implementation where consistency is necessary and desirable. It is recognized that in order to implement the following standards effectively, cooperation between parents and professional staff is required. Failure to follow these standards may result in discipline, up to and including expulsion, as provided in the Board's **Student Discipline Policy 5220** ([http://darien.finalsite.com/uploaded/content/district/board\\_of\\_ed/policies/5220.pdf](http://darien.finalsite.com/uploaded/content/district/board_of_ed/policies/5220.pdf))

- Students are expected to show courtesy and consideration for all members of the school community.
- Students are expected to behave in a manner that is not disruptive to the educational process.
- Students are expected to comply with classroom procedures and requirements as designed for their individual needs.
- Students are expected to dress in a manner that does not interfere with the work of the school nor create a safety hazard to themselves or others.
- Students are required to comply with state, local and school health, safety, and attendance regulations.
- Students are required to comply with State statutes and local laws and regulations regarding possession, sale, or use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Students are not permitted to smoke, or use tobacco products, in the school buildings.
- Students are not permitted to smoke or use tobacco products on school property or at school-sponsored student activities. The use, possession, sale or distribution of drugs or alcohol in or on school property, in any vehicle while such vehicle is being used to transport students for the school, or at school events is prohibited. Attendance at school events while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.

The administration of each individual school is given authority to take appropriate action to ensure compliance with this policy.

## Asbestos Management Plan

The Board of Education, in compliance with federal law, has developed an asbestos management plan, concerning the presence or suspected presence of asbestos-type materials within district school buildings, and required inspections and preventive measures related thereto. In accordance with federal law, members of the public, including parents, teachers and other employees, shall be permitted access to the asbestos management plan of the Darien Board of Education. Upon request, the district shall permit members of the public, including parents, teachers and other employees, to inspect any asbestos management plan. The district shall

grant access to such management plans within a reasonable period of time after a request from a member of the public is received. Legal Reference: Federal Law: 40 CFR 763.93

## Pesticide Application on School Property

It is the policy of the Darien Board of Education to implement an integrated pest management plan to reduce the amounts of pesticides applied in any building, or the grounds of any Darien public school, by using all available pest control techniques including judicious use of pesticides, when warranted, to maintain a pest population at or below an acceptable level, while decreasing the use of pesticides. The decision to apply pesticide in any building, or the grounds of any Darien public school is dependent on results of periodic monitoring for pest populations to determine if a pest problem exists that exceeds acceptable threshold levels. No application of pesticide shall be made in any building, or the grounds of any Darien public school during regular school hours or during planned activities at any school except as provided by Connecticut statute or regulation.

Parents or guardians of children in any school and/or staff members in any school may register for prior notice of pesticide application at their school. Each school shall maintain a registry of persons requesting such notice, and shall provide notice to registered individuals in accordance with applicable Connecticut statutory and regulatory provisions. The Superintendent may direct that an emergency application of a lawn care pesticide be made without prior notice to parents or guardians of children in any school and/or staff members in the event of a threat to human health, subject to applicable Connecticut statutory and regulatory provisions. The Superintendent may direct that an emergency application of a pesticide be made during regular school hours or during planned activities at school without prior notice to parents or guardians of children and/or staff members in any school in the event of an immediate threat to human health, subject to applicable Connecticut statutory and regulatory provisions. There shall be no application of any lawn care pesticide on the grounds of any school with students in grade eight (8) or lower, except on an emergency basis, subject to applicable Connecticut statutory and regulatory provisions.

## Confidentiality and Access to Student Records ([Policy 5265](#))

The Board of Education ("Board") complies with the state and federal regulations regarding confidentiality, access to and amendment of education records. The following is a brief summary of information relating to Educational Records.

Educational records include information recorded in any way, (e.g., handwriting, print, tape, videotape, disk, film, microfilm and microfiche) that is directly related to a student and maintained by the school district except personal records that are kept in the sole possession of the school staff member who made them. Permanent Records, which are kept for 50 years, include identifying information, academic achievement, grade level attained, attendance and immunizations.



**Custodian of Records:** The Principal is the official custodian of the records except: the Vice Principal is the custodian of disciplinary records in grades 6-12, the School Nurse is the custodian of health records, and the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Services is the custodian of extra confidential records.

**Access to Records:** Student records are confidential. Aside from a parent or eligible student, staff members, school employees and other school officials may access a student's educational records only if they have been determined by the school system to have a legitimate educational interest in accessing the information contained in such records. Disclosure may be made to a contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the outside party performs an institutional service or function of which the district would otherwise use employees, and is under the direct control of the district with respect to the use and maintenance of education records, and is subject to the requirements of FERPA with respect to the use and disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records. Disclosure of personally identifiable material to others will not be made without written authorization, except to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena. In an emergency, such information may be disclosed if the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals or as required by state and federal law.

**Legal Rights:** Parents, legal guardians and a student over 18 have the following rights with respect to the student's records:

- **Inspect the Records:** Inspection must be available within 45 days of the day we receive a request in writing from the custodian. It is customary to set up an appointment in advance to review records.
- **Obtain a Copy:** If the record is extensive there is a charge for the reproduction cost.
- **Challenge:** Students and parents have the right to challenge the presence in the record of material which they feel is false, inaccurate or inappropriate. Should such challenge be found valid, such materials shall be removed and destroyed. Should the district refuse to remove or amend challenged material, the challenger has the right to a hearing.

## Section 504 of the the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ([Policy 5125](#))

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") prohibits discrimination against individuals with a disability in any program receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, an individual must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Darien Public Schools recognize a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel, students, parents and members of the public who participate in school sponsored programs. In this regard, the Darien Public Schools prohibits discrimination against any person with a disability in any of the programs operated by the school system. The school district also has specific



responsibilities under Section 504 to identify, evaluate and provide an educational placement for students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. The school district's obligation includes providing access to free appropriate public education ("FAPE") for students determined to be eligible under Section 504. Under Section 504, FAPE is defined as the provision of regular or special education and related services that are designed to meet the individual educational needs of a student with a disability as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met, and that are provided without cost (except for fees imposed on nondisabled students/parents).

If the parent or guardian of a student disagrees with the decisions made by the professional staff of the school district with respect to the identification, evaluation, and/or educational placement of his/her child, a parent/guardian has a right to request an impartial due process hearing. The parent or guardian may also file an internal grievance on these issues or any other type of discrimination on the basis of disability by utilizing the complaint procedures outlined in the Board's Administrative Regulations, and/or may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education. Any student, parent, guardian or other individual who believes he/she has been discriminated against by or within the district on the basis of a disability may utilize the complaint procedures outlined in the Board's Administrative Regulations, and/or may file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, 8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02109-3921

Anyone who wishes to file a complaint, or who has questions or concerns about this policy, should contact Dr. Susie Da Silva, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, K-12, the Section 504 Coordinator for the Darien Public Schools, at 203-656-7414.

### Green Cleaning Program ([Policy 1075](#))

The Darien Public School system is committed to providing an environment conducive to the learning, health and safety of students. An essential component of a healthy school environment is indoor air quality (IAQ). To promote the ongoing control and improvement of air quality in our schools, the school district has established and continually updates its policies and procedures related to a wide variety of IAQ-related issues, including preventive maintenance, integrated pest management and cleaning and chemicals. In accordance with our environmentally sensitive cleaning approach, all areas of all school facilities are cleaned daily with environmentally preferable glass cleaner, waxes, strippers, multi-purpose cleaner and disinfectants. Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of our policy pertaining to the green cleaning program. **No parent, guardian, teacher or staff member may bring into any school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.**

## Zero Tolerance

While children are in school or engaged in school-sponsored activities on or off school grounds, including athletic events and field trips, or on school buses, we are entrusted with their safety and well being, and we take this responsibility very seriously. Having recently reviewed our school measures relating to the prevention of violence, we want to be certain all students and parents understand our policy of zero tolerance for weapons on school property and at school-sponsored activities. No weapons or facsimiles of any kind may be brought upon school property or to school sponsored activities. That includes knives of any kind as well as all firearms, including BB guns and toy guns. This policy is applicable to students of all ages and grade levels.

**Connecticut State law requires** us to institute expulsion proceedings for all students charged with weapons offenses, whether on or off school grounds, regardless of age. Students who wield otherwise neutral instruments as a weapon also will be subject to disciplinary action, as will students who threaten and/or harm others. We hope that parents will discuss this topic with their children and impress upon them the seriousness of these school rules.

***We pledge to do our utmost to ensure that no Darien student ever injures another in our schools.***

## Student Discipline ([Policy 5220](#))

This policy reviews definitions and procedures related to student discipline.

## Illegal Substances and Tobacco Policy for Student Athletes and Students Participating in Extracurricular Activities ([Policy 5230](#))

The Board participates in the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference ("CIAC"). In accordance with CIAC participation rules and the Board's obligation under state and federal law, the Board prohibits the use, sale, distribution or possession of controlled drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, performance enhancing substances or alcohol during any school sponsored activity, whether occurring on or off school property, including but not limited to athletic activities. It shall be the policy of the Board to take positive action through education, counseling, discipline, parental involvement, medical referral, and law enforcement referral, as appropriate, in the handling of incidents by Darien High School student athletes and Darien High School students participating in extracurricular activities involving the possession, distribution, sale or use of substances that affect behavior, including performance enhancing substances. The Board further prohibits Darien High School student athletes and Darien High School students participating in extracurricular activities from using any form of tobacco including smoking using an electronic nicotine delivery system (e.g., e-cigarettes) or vapor products. This policy applies to all Darien High School student athletes participating in school

sponsored athletics, whether or not such athletes are participating in CIAC controlled activities, and to all Darien High School students participating in extracurricular activities.

## Connecticut State Department of Education

### Complaint Resolution Procedure

#### Elementary and Secondary Education Act

#### 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 299(10)(a)

### I. Filing of Complaint

- A. Violation of Law: A written complaint may be filed by an organization or individual with the Connecticut Commissioner of Education alleging that the state educational agency (SEA) or an agency or consortium of agencies is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to the following applicable programs:
  1. Part A of Title I (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies).
  2. Part B, Subpart 1 of Title I (Reading First).
  3. Part B, Subpart 3 of Title I (Even Start Family Literacy Programs).
  4. Part D of Title I (Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk of Dropping Out).
  5. Part A of Title II (Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund).
  6. Part D of Title II (Enhancing Education Through Technology).
  7. Part A of Title III (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act).
  8. Part B, Subpart 4 of Title III (Emergency Immigrant Education Program).
  9. Part A of Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities).
  10. Part A of Title V (Innovative Programs).
- B. Review of an Appeal: A written complaint may be filed by an individual with the Connecticut Commissioner of Education appealing the decision of an agency or consortium of agencies based on prior written complaint presented by an individual to such agency or consortium of agencies.
- C. Content of Complaint: The complaint shall be in writing, signed by the complainant and contain the following:
  1. A statement that the SEA or an agency or consortium of agencies has violated a requirement of federal statutes or regulation regarding the applicable program, or in the case of an appeal, a statement of aggrievement with the decision rendered by the agency or consortium of agencies based on a prior written complaint.
  2. A clear and concise description of the facts on which the statement is based and the specific alleged violation or aggrievement.
  3. A description of prior efforts to resolve the complaint, including information demonstrating that the SEA, agency or consortium of

agencies has taken action adverse to the complaint or has refused or failed to take action within a reasonable period of time.

4. Complainant's and respondent's name, address and telephone number.
5. Other materials or documents containing information which support or clarify the statement.

II. Review of Complaint

- A. Analysis: Within three business days of the receipt of the complaint, the Commissioner shall assign a review official. Within five business days of the assignment, the review official shall determine whether the complaint has been properly filed in accordance with Section I. If necessary, the review official shall interview the complainant.
- B. Dismissal of Complaint: The review official may dismiss the complaint in writing stating an explanation for such action. The grounds for dismissal shall include, but not limited to, the following:
  1. Failure to file a proper complaint pursuant to Section I.
  2. The allegations fail to state a bona fide violation of federal statute or regulations by the SEA or an agency or consortium of agencies.
  3. The allegations fail to state a bona fide aggrievement with the decision rendered by an agency or consortium of agencies based on prior written complaint.
  4. The allegations were not caused by the actions or failure to act by the SEA, agency or consortium of agencies.

III. Notification of Complaint and Investigation: If a complaint is not dismissed, the review official shall forward the complaint to the respondent immediately along with a copy of the Complaint Resolution Procedures.

IV. Response to Complaint: Within 10 business days of the receipt of the complaint from the review official, the respondent shall file with the Commissioner a written response to the complaint.

A. Content of Response: The response shall address each and every allegation of the complaint and shall list the respondent's name, address and telephone number.

B. Interview: The review official or the respondent may request an interview to discuss the response and to resolve the dispute informally.

V. Complaint Investigation: Upon completion of Section IV or the failure of the respondent to file a response, the review official shall conduct an investigation. All parties may be duly notified that an investigation has begun. At any time during the investigation, the review official shall attempt to resolve the dispute informally.

Within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint, an investigation of the complaint shall be completed and a written report shall be mailed to both parties. Information shall be gathered in a timely manner, while minimizing any inconvenience or disruption to the complainant or respondent.

Concerning a review of an appeal of the decision of an agency or consortium of agencies, the review official may elect to disregard the procedures contained in this section using in lieu thereof the following abbreviated procedure.

1. Review all of the appropriate records and determine whether the decision of the agency or consortium of agencies shall be affirmed, reversed or modified.
  2. Draft a letter of review of an appeal addressing, but not limited to, the issue in dispute, the facts found, the affirmation, reversal or modification of the lower decision and recommendation for improved practices, policies or procedures.
- B. **Data Collection:** The complainant and respondent shall provide the review official with copies of all relevant records requested in writing. Telephone interviews of the complainant, respondent and others with knowledge of the allegations may be conducted. Pursuant to 34 CFR 99-35(a) the review official, acting on behalf of the SEA, is authorized to have access to education records in connection with an evaluation of federal or state-supported education programs or for the enforcement of or compliance with federal legal requirements which relate to those programs.
- C. **Independent On-Site Investigation:** The review official may conduct an on-site visit to investigate the complaint if the official deems it necessary. Any on-site visit shall be coordinated with the respondent.
- D. **Complaint Investigation Report:** The Complaint Investigation Report shall be completed by the review official and mailed to the parties within 60 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint by the SEA. The Commissioner may grant an extension for the completion of the report on written request of the review official or respondent if exceptional circumstances exist with respect to the particular complaint. Such extension shall be in writing and shall be mailed to the parties. The report shall contain the following contents:
1. Summary of all investigation activities including, but not limited to, date of receipt of complaint, allegations, parties interviewed, documents received and dates of on-site visits.
  2. Specific allegation of the complaint, the findings of fact, conclusions and final decisions rendered regarding each allegation, including citation to applicable federal statute or regulation.
  3. Specific corrective action plan that resolves the complaint or ensures future compliance of the respondent regarding the violation of federal statute or regulation.
  4. Recommendations for improved practices, policies or procedures shall be offered when no violation of federal statute or regulation is found.
- E. **Corrective Action Plan:** If the Complaint Investigation Report finds that the respondent is violating federal statute or regulations, the respondent shall be requested to submit a corrective action plan within a specified period of time as

determined by the review official. Respondent may request technical assistance from the SEA in order to prepare a plan to achieve compliance. 45 VI. Review of Final Decision The complainant may file a written request with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education to review the final decision of the SEA. All local educational agencies shall disseminate information about the complaint procedures to teachers, staff, parents and appropriate private school officials or representatives.

## Student Use of the District's Computer Systems and Electronic Communications ([Policy 5300](#))

The Darien Board of Education provides its students and staff access to a multitude of technology resources for educational purposes. In the coming years, Darien will be increasing these resources by rolling out devices 1:1 in certain grades at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These resources provide opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, and to build stronger connections within our town and to others in the global community.

With access to the District's technology resources comes a level of responsibility and expectation for students. Students will be required to exercise the highest forms of ethical and responsible use when working in digital environments. Students are also expected to treat technology resources with care so that their integrity is preserved for the benefit of all. The District has outlined a set of policies and procedures related to technology resources connected with these student expectations. Violations of these policies may lead to withdrawal of the access privilege and/or disciplinary measures in accordance with the Board's student discipline policy.

Each year, a User Agreement sign-off in ASPEN will be required for students to use the district's technology resources.