

SECTION K, SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee (the “Committee”) believes that the Milton Public Schools belong to the people who created them by consent and support them by taxation, and the support of the people must be based on their understanding of and their participation in the aims and efforts of the schools.

Therefore, the Committee declares its intent:

1. To keep local citizens regularly and thoroughly informed through all available channels of communication on the policies, programs, problems, and planning of the Milton Public Schools, and to carry out this policy through its own efforts, those of the Superintendent, and such information officers as may be appointed.
2. To solicit the studied counsel of the people through advisory committees selected from the community and appointed to consider problems that vitally affect the future of our children.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

SCHOOL/PARENT RELATIONS GOALS

It is the general goal of the Milton Public Schools to foster relationships with parents that encourage cooperation between the home and school in establishing and achieving common educational goals for students.

While parents are individually responsible for their children, the Milton Public Schools provides direct services of education and indirect services of childcare for students during the time when they are within the supervision of school personnel. Consistent with these shared responsibilities and as appropriate to the maturity of the student, members of the school staff will consult with parents regarding student progress and achievement, methods to enhance student development, and matters of correction.

Additionally, parental involvement in the schools is encouraged through regular communication with the school Principal and staff, the parent/teacher organizations, the school volunteer program, and other opportunities for participation in school activities and Milton Public Schools programs.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS

The School Committee (the “Committee”) recognizes the fact that parents and guardians play an integral part in the success or failure of the Milton Public Schools to educate the children. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need, on the part of the staff, to maintain strong lines of communication with the parents and guardians of each child. Communication lines are developed in many ways – telephone calls, notes, formal notices, conferences – and the staff should attempt to use all of them in its quest to maintain a strong home/school relationship.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

RELATIONS WITH PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

To foster relationships with parents that encourage the home and school to work together to establish and achieve common educational goals for students, the Superintendent and the professional staff will:

1. Consult with and encourage parents to share in school planning and in setting objectives and evaluating programs;
2. Help parents understand the education process and their role in promoting it;
3. Provide for parent understanding of school operations; and
4. Provide opportunities for parents to be informed of their child's development and the criteria for its measurement.

To accomplish the above and to enhance communications between parents and school officials, the School Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations at each school building. For this purpose the School Committee will officially recognize a parent organization at each building. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent; and
2. A vote, open to all parents of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization makes the request.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

The School Committee (the “Committee”) endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the Milton Public Schools and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. It therefore intends to exert every effort to identify the desires of the community and to be responsive, through its actions, to those desires.

All citizens will be encouraged to express ideas and/or concerns about the schools to the school administration, to any appointed advisory bodies, and to the Committee.

Residents who are specially qualified because of interest, training, experience, or personal characteristics will be encouraged to assume an active role in school affairs. From time to time, these people may be invited by the Committee to act as advisors, either individually or in groups.

The Committee and the staff will give substantial weight to the advice they receive from individuals and community groups interested in the schools, particularly from those individuals and groups they have invited to advise them regarding specific problems, but will use their best judgment in arriving at decisions.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

The Superintendent will have authority to accept gifts and offers of equipment for the schools in the name of the School Committee (the "Committee") when the gift is of educational value. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts that would involve changes in school plants or sites will be subject to Committee approval.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the Milton Public Schools. Any gift of cash, whether or not intended by the donor for a specific purpose, will be handled as a separate account and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

The Committee directs the Superintendent to assure that an appropriate expression of thanks is given to all donors.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37A

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

The School Committee is a public servant, and its meetings and records will be a matter of public information except as such meetings and records pertain to individual personnel and other classified matters.

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

The official minutes of open meetings of the School Committee, the official minutes of executive sessions of the Committee which have been released to the public, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public, or any unauthorized persons, by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent, or guardian).

Each building administrator is authorized to use all means available to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 39:23B

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

The Milton School Committee recognizes the importance of the media in our community. Every effort will be made to assist the press, local news websites and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, budgets, planning and activities of the Milton Public Schools.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases or photos except as media representatives request information or photos on particular programs, plans or problems.

In cases where several media request access to the same staff member/student on the same day, it may be necessary to prioritize requests. In these cases, the first media organizations to ask for the interview will be given top priority.

In order that Milton Public Schools publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated into a common effort and purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

- The Superintendent of Schools will be the official spokesperson for the Milton Public Schools.
- The School Committee chairperson will be the official spokesperson for the Committee, in particular surrounding legal issues, negotiations, crisis or legal matters, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent or other designee.
- School Committee members may express their individual view points, but may not speak on behalf of the entire School Committee.
- News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established School Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.

While it is impossible to know the nature of press coverage in advance, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the Milton Public Schools and our students.

MPS Faculty, Staff & the Media:

All staff engaging in public comment through the media should do so consistent with the MPS's Code of Conduct.

The Superintendent will manage media inquiries regarding staff and/or faculty.

Parents/Guardians & the Media:

From time to time, parents, teachers and occasionally students will take photographs on school property or during field trips for submission to the local media. We ask that they adhere to the same policies as stated above, especially with respect to student privacy. If there is any doubt, please submit the photos to the building principal, who can approve the photo for publication.

Emergency Situations & the Media:

Student and staff safety and welfare will always be the priority in an emergency situation.

The Superintendent will be the official spokesperson for the Milton Public Schools. The chairperson of the School Committee will be the official spokesperson for the Milton School Committee.

In emergency situations, it is not appropriate to comment on the cause of the problem, extent of damage or extent of injury.

It is also inappropriate for any MPS staff, faculty or SC member to comment on matters currently under police investigation, likely to be part of a police investigation or subject to legal proceedings.

Media Releases:

All parents and guardians in the MPS were required to sign media releases during the registration process. A list of those students who cannot be photographed, filmed, interviewed or otherwise identified by the media will be held in each school's main office. During media visits, we ask that those classrooms not be included in the coverage, or if not feasible, that the student's privacy be respected.

In the case of television crews, the building principal should be notified as far in advance as possible. A faculty member should accompany film crews during on-site visits.

Building Protocol:

In cases when the news media makes a request to visit school property, the following protocol must be observed:

The Superintendent, or his/her designee, has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of visits by media representatives. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.

For security purposes, it is requested that all media representatives report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Visitors are required to wear a badge.

Under ordinary circumstances, media visits will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.

1st Reading: October 6, 2010

2nd Reading: October 20, 2010

Adoption: October 20, 2010

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the School Committee (the “Committee”) where the Committee has jurisdiction, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

The Committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the Committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving operational issues or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building principal
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the Committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the School Committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the Committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

The Committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 26:09 and 26.10

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

KEA

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT POLICY DECISIONS

Any person or persons who desire to petition the School Committee to review the decision of the Superintendent in enforcing general policy must be presented in writing to the Superintendent of Schools. A request to review the decision of the Superintendent to the School Committee must be made in writing and signed, and the Chairman of the School Committee shall determine whether the matter shall be heard by the School Committee or whether the subject matter of the request has previously been addressed by the School Committee.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

KEB

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his/her complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

Whenever a complaint is made directly to the School Committee (the “Committee”) as a whole or to a Committee member as an individual, it will be referred to the school administration for study and possible solution.

The Superintendent will develop, for approval by the Committee, procedures that assure prompt and fair attention to complaints against school personnel. The procedures will require that an employee who is the object of a complaint be informed promptly and be afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them.

If it appears necessary, and the Committee has jurisdiction in the matter, the administration, the person who made the complaint, or the employee involved may request an executive session of the Committee for a formal hearing and decision. Statutory restrictions on executive sessions will be observed.

LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CURRICULUM OR
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The School Committee, though it is ultimately responsible for all curriculum and instructional materials (including library books), recognizes the need and right of students to free access to many different types of books and materials. It also recognizes the right of the professional staff to select books and other materials supportive of the Milton Public School's educational philosophy and goals.

Criticism of a book or other materials used in the Milton Public Schools may be expected from time to time. In such instances:

1. If a parent requests that his/her own child not read a given book, the teacher and/or school administrator should resolve the situation, perhaps by arranging for use of alternative material meeting essentially the same instructional purpose. This does not apply however, to basic program texts and materials that the School Committee has adopted.
2. The School Committee will not permit any individual or group to exercise censorship over instructional materials and library collections, but recognizes that at times a reevaluation of certain material may be desirable. Should an individual or group ask to have any book or other material withdrawn from school use:
 - a. The person who objects to the book or other material will be asked to sign a complaint on a standard form on which the complainant will document his/her criticism;
 - b. Following receipt of the formal complaint, the Superintendent will provide for a reevaluation of the material in question. The Superintendent will arrange for the appointment of a review committee from among the faculty to consider the complaint; and
 - c. The Superintendent will review the complaint and the committee's reevaluation and will render a decision in the matter. Should the decision be unsatisfactory to the complainant, he/she may appeal it in writing to the School Committee. The School Committee in its discretion shall decide whether to hear such an appeal.
 - d. If such an appeal is deemed warranted, then the School Committee will act in executive session at the next available meeting. Any decision will be expressed to the complainant in writing and reported out in open session at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

In summary, the School Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students; it holds its professional staff accountable for their proper selection. It recognizes rights of individual parents with respect to controversial materials used by their own children; it will provide for the reevaluation of materials in library collections upon formal request. On the other hand, students' right to learn and the freedom of teachers to teach will be respected.

LEGAL REF: 603 CMR 26.09 and 26.10

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

It is the School Committee's desire that maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the townspeople. It is the School Committee's intent that such use will maintain safe conditions and preserve the property for school program use.

The Milton School Committee is committed to providing a tobacco-free environment for the health and well being of the entire school community – students, staff, and visitors to its facilities. It is the intention of the School Committee to prohibit the use or distribution of tobacco products at all times whether or not school is in session within school buildings, on school grounds, on school buses or in other school vehicles, and at all school-sponsored functions in order to improve the health of students, all school personnel and visitors.

Use of school buildings and other facilities by organizations will be permitted only when a worthy educational, civic, or charitable purpose will be served; or a substantial group of citizens from the community will be benefited. Other uses may be approved on a case by case basis.

School facilities will be used according to the regulations and rental fee schedules recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the School Committee.

Permission for the use of facilities must be obtained from the Building Principal and the Superintendent of Schools. Applications are available for this purpose through the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Eligibility

School facilities will be available for the following:

1. Public school activities;
2. Parent-teacher activities;
3. Official town public hearings and activities;
4. Meetings and activities sponsored by the School Committee and school personnel;
5. Parks and playgrounds activities;
6. Local nonprofit and noncommercial organization activities;
7. Metropolitan civic, educational, social, and religious organization activities if a substantial portion of the members are residents of the town; and
8. The activities of other organizations when approved by the School Committee.

School and Town Preference

The priority given requests for use of school facilities will be as follows:

1. School activities;
2. Town meetings and elections over other community activities; and
3. Parks and playgrounds.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:71; 71:71B; 272:40A

CROSS REF: ADC, GBED, JICG

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

The Superintendent in conformity with the following regulations, which have been approved by the School Committee, will authorize the use of school buildings, grounds, equipment, and facilities.

1. Requests for the use of school facilities will be made at the office of the Superintendent at least 10 days prior to the date of use;
2. School facilities may not be used for individual, private, or commercial purposes, except with the permission of the School Committee;
3. School-related groups will be permitted reasonable use of school facilities without charge;
4. All activities must be under competent adult supervision approved by the Superintendent and the Principal of the building involved. In all cases, an assigned school employee will be present. The group using the facilities will be responsible for any damage to the building or equipment;
5. Groups receiving permission are restricted to the dates and hours approved and to the building area and facilities specified, unless requested changes are approved by the Superintendent;
6. Groups receiving permission are responsible at all times for the observance of fire and safety requirements;
7. It is the intention of the Milton School Committee to prohibit the use or distribution of tobacco products at all times whether or not school is in session within school buildings, on school grounds, and at all school-sponsored functions in order to improve the health of students, all school personnel and visitors;
8. Proper liability insurance will be required of all groups given permission to use school facilities;
9. The Committee will approve and periodically review a fee schedule for the use of school facilities;

10. In situations where there is no cost factor to the Milton Public Schools, or in situations where a mutual exchange of facilities is possible between the Milton Public Schools and the organization, rates may be modified or eliminated by the Superintendent. In situations where extended usage for a long period of time is required, rates may be set at a contract price; and
11. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel any permission granted.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

USE OF SCHOOL GROUNDS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES

Pursuant to the protection of school property, no school property is to be used for the operation of unauthorized motor vehicles; for example, mini-bikes, all terrain vehicles, go-carts, and snowmobiles unless authorized by the School Committee or its agents.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

PUBLIC SOLICITATIONS IN THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee will place limits on commercial activities and fund-raising activities in the schools for the following reasons:

1. The Milton Public Schools should provide students, parents, and employees some measure of protection from exploitation by commercial and charitable fund-raising organizations.
2. The Milton Public Schools should not give the public the impression of generally endorsing or sanctioning commercial and fund-raising activities.
3. Commercial and fund-raising activities may disrupt school routine and cause loss of instructional time.

Following these guiding statements, the Superintendent and Principals may permit occasional commercial or fund-raising activities related to the objectives of the schools with the following exceptions:

1. No direct solicitation of students or employees may take place without prior School Committee permission.
2. No general or class distribution of commercial or fund-raising literature may take place without prior School Committee permission.

For the purposes of this policy, local PTA and PTO groups and groups representing Milton Public Schools employees will be considered "school groups" and will be governed by the Committee's policy on staff solicitations. (See GBEBC)

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 44:53A

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

ADVERTISING IN THE SCHOOLS

No advertising of commercial products or services will be permitted in school buildings or on school grounds or properties without the permission of the School Committee. Each request will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Publications of the Milton Public Schools will not contain any advertising. However, this will not prevent advertising in student publications that are published by student organizations, subject to administration controls, or the use of commercially sponsored, free teaching aids if the content is approved by the administration.

Subject to the provisions of the Milton School Committee policy regarding promotional materials in the Schools, policy KHC, solicitation of sales or use of the name of the Milton Public Schools to promote any product will not be permitted by the Committee.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS IN THE SCHOOLS

Neither the facilities, the name, the staff, nor the students, the Milton Public Schools, nor any part thereof shall be employed in any manner for promoting or otherwise advertising the interests of any commercial or other nonschool agency or organization except that:

1. The school may cooperate in furthering the work of any non-profit, community-wide social service agency, provided that such cooperation does not restrict or impair the educational program of the schools. The activities and materials must be nonpartisan, nonsectarian and non-controversial in nature;
2. The schools may use films or other educational materials bearing only simple mention of the producing or sponsoring firm;
3. The schools may participate in radio or television programs under acceptable commercial sponsorship when such participation is supplementary or beneficial to the program of the schools;
4. The Superintendent may, at his or her discretion, announce or authorize to be announced any lecture or other community activity of particular educational merit;
5. The schools may, upon prior approval of the Superintendent, cooperate with any governmental agency in promoting activities in the general public interest which are nonpartisan and non-controversial and which promote the education or other best interests of the pupils; and
6. School publications may accept and publish paid advertising under established procedures.

Promotional literature will not be distributed through the schools except for recognized educational and youth-oriented organizations. The prior permission of the Superintendent is required before any materials may be distributed or announcements made.

The foregoing policy is for the purpose of insuring maximum instruction time for the teacher and in no way reflects negative attitude toward many of the worthwhile activities sponsored within the community.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

Visits by parents to several classrooms in a given grade, for the purposes of comparing teaching styles in order to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher, are not permitted. The Milton Public School's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

Subject to the foregoing provisions, the following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Parental requests for classroom visitations will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least forty-eight hours in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Visitors are required to wear a badge. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school must ask permission of one of the administrative staff 24 hours in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

RELATIONS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

We believe that the Milton Public Schools have the primary responsibility for the formal education of the children and youth of the community. However, the School Committee recognizes that many governmental agencies and community organizations, while not primarily concerned with education, play a definite role in education.

Therefore, it will be the desire of the School Committee to establish positive working relationships with all other public and private organizations that contribute to the education process and to the general welfare of the citizens of the community.

Proposed plans, projects, or activities of community organizations must be evaluated and promoted in light of their stated contribution to the academic as well as the athletic and fine arts programs of the schools. Care must be taken to avoid compromising or diluting the responsibilities and authorities of the School Committee.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

KLG

RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

Cooperation with law enforcement agencies is essential for the protection of students, for maintaining a safe environment in the Milton Public Schools, and for safeguarding all school property.

Relationships between the schools and officials of law enforcement agencies in investigative matters concerning pupils will take into consideration the respective roles of the schools and law enforcement agencies in assisting and protecting the interests of the community, and ensuring the rights of all concerned.

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program. To this end a Resource Officer may be assigned to one or more of the Milton Public Schools.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward law enforcement agencies and personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

RELATIONS WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Any inspection of the building by the Fire Department should be done with the knowledge of the Principal. A written report of any such inspection should be forwarded to the Principal and Superintendent.

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment the fire prevention agencies can make in the educational program.

Efforts should be made to develop and maintain a healthy attitude toward Fire Department personnel to promote better understanding and communication.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

KLJ

RELATIONS WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The School Committee will participate in local and state planning functions that could directly affect Milton Public Schools and their immediate environment.

The Superintendent or designee will keep the School Committee informed of planning matters bearing directly on the operation of Milton Public Schools or school-sponsored programs, and will undertake action on behalf of the School Committee to influence matters in the best interests of the students, the schools and the Milton Public Schools.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005

KLK

RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

The School Committee and its administrative officers welcome all who seek to serve the residents of the community and will participate with them in the planning and execution of such projects as will be mutually beneficial for students.

It is School Committee policy that the administration informs elected and appointed officials of the local and county government of the desire to work cooperatively for improved services.

REC'D: NESDEC

Original Adoption: January 31, 2005