

Totoket Valley Elementary School Student Handbook 2011-2012



Vision Statement

TVES will meet the needs of all learners by providing rigorous instruction, high expectations for behavior, and opportunities for creative expression. We recognize that “all students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way” (William G. Spady). Therefore, a continuum of academic, social, and behavioral supports will be provided to students in order for them to reach their personal best.

Mission Statement

The mission of TVES is to cultivate a positive school community that empowers all members to achieve academic excellence, creativity in the arts, personal growth and wellness.

Core Beliefs

We believe that all students can learn and succeed. At TVES, all students will be valued, instructed, supported, and encouraged in order to:

- *Put forth their **best effort** in all endeavors*
- ***Celebrate** hard work and accomplishments*
- *Become **confident** learners who take risks and assume new challenges*
- *Exhibit **innovation** and **inquisitiveness** in **problem-solving***
- ***Persevere** when facing difficulties or obstacles*
- ***Understand the world** they live in through study and experience*
- *Responsibly **access information, media, and technology** in **pursuit of knowledge***
- ***Communicate** effectively with others*
- *Make **safe choices** that promote **health** and **wellness** including good **nutrition** and **physical activity***
- *Appreciate the **arts** and express themselves **creatively***
- ***Respect** themselves and others*
- *Accept **diversity** in backgrounds, races, cultures, perspectives, interests, and abilities*
- *Demonstrate **honesty** in their interactions*
- ***Include others** and treat them with **patience** and **kindness***
- *Take **responsibility** for their actions, including their learning*
- ***Reflect** on and **learn** from their successes as well as their mistakes*
- *Work **cooperatively** and **collaboratively** with peers and adults*
- *Assume and model **leadership** in the classroom, school building, and related settings*
- *Develop **ecological awareness** by respecting the earth, nature, and all its inhabitants*
- *Recognize that they have a voice and can **make a difference** in the world*
- *Take **pride** in their school, district, community, and the country*
- *Realize that **every day is a new day**, and offers a chance to begin anew*

Children are our future. We are dedicated to their success.

Totoket Valley Elementary School (TVES) serves students in grade 3 through 5. Each teacher provides instruction in the core courses: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as response to intervention (RTI). In addition, all students have specials classes: art, music, physical education, as well as scheduled access to the Library Media Center and Computer Lab. Special services are provided to students who need additional support.

Our teachers work in teams of four, which comprise a Professional Learning Community (PLC). PLCs meet as a team and as a grade-level to monitor student progress, plan instruction and assessment, confer on general curriculum matters, scheduling, and activities.

Students are assigned to one specific (homeroom) teacher, but they may work with any one of the four teachers on the team. Our students switch classes for Math, RTI, Science, and Social Studies. We also flexibly group students according to their learning needs, so students may work with different teachers for different subjects throughout the year. We do not provide parents with written notice when we regroup the students.

Emergency School Closing

When the decision to close school has been made because of inclement weather or hazardous conditions, the North Branford School District's automatic voice recording system will contact families via a pre-recorded voice message which will inform them of a delay, cancellation, or early dismissal. In addition, radio stations WELI, KC101 FM and TV channels 8 (WTNH), 3 (WFSB), and 30 (WVIT) will release "No School" announcements for immediate broadcast. Localized conditions within North Branford may make attendance at the regular time hazardous at certain schools. Parents must exercise their own discretion in sending children in such cases. Instructional days missed due to emergency closings will be rescheduled in June.

Student Attendance

Connecticut General Statute 10 - 184 requires that all student absences be reported to the school office. Whenever your child is absent or tardy, the school should be notified. Parents are asked to contact the nurse's office at 203-484-1460 before 8:20 AM. An answering machine at that number allows you to leave a message regarding absence. Any absence reported by the teacher but not by the parent will alert the school to a potential problem and will necessitate a call to you either at home or at work. Please make sure the school office has current phone numbers.

The North Branford Board of Education believes that regular attendance in school is critical to a child's achievement. Instructional experiences that occur in school are meaningful and essential components of the learning process. It is the policy of the North Branford Public Schools to encourage regular attendance by all students. There are three assumptions or philosophical points upon which this Attendance Policy is based:

1. Time lost from class is irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction.
2. Not all classroom learning experiences can be measured by written tests.
3. For a student to receive a passing grade and subsequent credit, the student has an obligation to give as well as receive in the context of the classroom setting.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians of children over five years of age and, under 18 years of age, to cause their children to attend school regularly, subject to the option to delay public

schooling until age seven, and further subject to the option of the parent or guardian to consent to the withdrawal from school of a student who is age 16 or 17. The schools will make all reasonable efforts to keep parents and students informed as to attendance problems and will make all reasonable efforts to help students improve their attendance.

Students who are absent for 10 or more days will receive a form letter from the school informing them of their accrued absences, and reminding them that 20 days is the maximum number of absences permitted in a given school year. Students who are absent for 20 or more days will receive a letter from the school informing them that they have exceeded the allowable number of absences, and how they may appeal retention, if they wish to. It is important to note that retention is considered after 20 days absence regardless of the child's academic standing.

Definitions

“Absence” means when a student is not in attendance at school for an entire day, with or without parent permission.

“Excused Absence” means a student's absence from school due to:

- Student illness or injury
- Serious illness or death in the immediate family
- Religious observance
- Mandatory court appearance of the student
- Suspension or expulsion from school
- Other exceptional circumstances approved by building administrator or his/her designee

Documentation may be required in order to determine whether an absence is excused in accordance with the above, including without limitation a physician's verification with respect to student illness or injury. The building administration shall define other school absences (such as field trips) which will not count towards the maximum allowable absences.

“Interrupted school day” means any of the following:

- **“Tardy”** means arrival at school later than the official start of the school day.
- **“Early dismissal”** means a departure from school prior to the official closing of the school day.
- **“Early dismissal with return”** means a departure from school and a return prior to the official closing of the school day.

“Unexcused Absence” means those days when a student's absence from school is not excused, including without limitation, family vacations. In addition, any three of tardy, early dismissal and/or early dismissal with return shall be deemed to be one unexcused absence at the elementary and middle schools.

“Truant” means students, ages 5 through 16, enrolled in school who have four unexcused absences in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year. Any student age 5 through 16 inclusive, who has accumulated twenty (20) unexcused absences from school shall be determined to be a habitual truant.

“Maximum absences” means 20 (either excused or unexcused) absences per year.

Retention due to Absence

In grades 3-5, students who are absent more than 20 days will be considered for retention *regardless of academic grades or standing*. Students and their parents will receive a (form) letter of warning after reaching 10 days of absence. Upon exceeding 20 days of absence, the parent/guardian will receive written notification informing them that their child is being considered for retention. The student and his/her parent/guardian may appeal the decision by no later than June 1st. If the 20 days are exceeded after June 1st, then the appeal letter must be provided within 10 days of the last absence. The appeal must describe the reasons for excessive absence with medical documentation, if applicable.

The Retention Committee will judge each case individually and may (according to circumstances) recommend retention in the same grade for the following year, place the student on probation if the allowable number of absences was exceeded due to extended or chronic illness, or simply grant the appeal. The Principal will notify the parents in writing of the committee’s decision. The decision of the Attendance Committee is final. The principal will only review decisions if new information becomes available.

Truancy

Any student age five to sixteen, who has accumulated four unexcused absences from school in any one month, or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year is considered to be a truant. Any student age five to sixteen inclusive, who has accumulated twenty unexcused absences from school shall be determined to be a habitual truant.

Each building principal shall develop procedures to monitor student attendance which, as a minimum, shall include the following:

1. At the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment of a student during the school year, notification of parents or guardians of each child enrolled in school of their obligations under the attendance policy and of their obligations to cause their children to attend school pursuant to Connecticut General Statute 10-184. Specifically, parents or guardians shall (1) notify the school by telephone on the date of the child’s absence, and (2) write an excuse note to be delivered to the school upon the child’s return to school.
2. Holding a meeting with the parents or guardians of truants to review and evaluate the reasons for the child being truant. This meeting shall be held not later than ten (10) school days after the child’s fourth (4th) unexcused absence in a month or tenth (10th) unexcused absence in a school year.
3. Coordination of services with referrals of children to appropriate agencies.
4. Obtaining from each parent or guardian of an enrolled student, a telephone number or other means of contacting such parent or guardian during the school day.
5. Make a reasonable effort to notify, by telephone, the parent or guardian whenever a child fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and the school has not been notified by the parent or guardian of the student’s absence.

If a student is truant, and the parent or guardian of such student fails to attend the meeting described at paragraph 2 above, the Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee, shall file a written complaint with the Superior Court for each such truant alleging that the acts or omissions of the child are such that his/her family is a family with service needs.

School Hours: Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The regular school day runs from 8:20 AM to 2:45 PM. Early dismissal days run from 8:20 AM to 1:00 PM. No students should be dropped off before 8:00 AM unless they are enrolled in the Family Resource Center (FRC).

The driveway in front of the school is reserved for buses only. When dropping off a child before school, parents must use the drop-off area on the far left side of the parking lot. It is essential that all adults follow these procedures to ensure the safety of all students.

A note indicating that your child will be picked up from school must be submitted to the office on that day. No student will be permitted to leave the building without an adult escort. Any adult, parent or designee, picking up a student must enter the building from cafeteria door, not the main entrance. Siblings who are minors or older siblings who are not on the designated pick-up list may not pick up a student. TVES reserves the right to ask parents/guardians or designees to provide photo identification upon request. They will then be permitted to sign the child out, and staff members will call the child forward to be collected.

A note from home is necessary if a student is to be dismissed from school before the usual dismissal time. School officials must insure that no unauthorized person ever takes a child from school. Adults who pick up students early must sign the student out in the office and are expected to wait for the student to come to the office.

School Bus Transportation

The majority of TVES students travel to and from school on buses operated by DATTCO Bus Company. Students are assigned a bus number (route number) at the beginning of each school year. Students may only ride a different bus if they bring a note from home requesting a ride on a different bus and the bus has room for an additional student. Bus routes and assignments of students to their bus stop are made by DATTCO and the Director of Transportation, are reviewed annually and subject to change. The bus driver does not have the authority to change stops. If you have any questions about school bus transportation, contact DATTCO at 203-466-1244.

Parents are asked to review bus rules listed below with their children:

- Listen to the bus driver at all times.
- Seat selection is first come, first served (except for assigned seats).
- Once you select a seat, you must remain there for the entire ride.
- Keep your hands, feet, and belongings to yourself.
- Do not touch other people or their belongings.
- Nothing goes out of the window (including your words).
- No food, beverages, or gum on the bus.
- Use your indoor voice when talking to others.

- When entering/exiting the bus, take your time.
- If you have a problem that you can't solve yourself, ask an adult for help.

According to Board of Education policy, school transportation privileges are extended to students conditional upon their satisfactory behavior on the school bus. Students may be suspended from transportation services for unsatisfactory conduct while awaiting or receiving transportation to and from school which endangers persons or property or violates a Board Policy or Administrative Regulation. If a student loses his/her transportation privileges, he/she shall be allowed to ride home that day only. Students who lose transportation privileges are required to attend school and it is the responsibility of parents to see that the students are in school. Administrators (or their designees) shall conduct an informal investigation with the student in each such case and shall notify parents that transportation privileges are suspended.

Safety & Visitors

The North Branford School District is committed to provide a safe learning environment for all students. To accomplish this, all staff members are required to wear picture identification. TVES parents who are picking up students are required to enter the building from the exterior cafeteria door, sign-in with a staff member, and be prepared to show identification upon request.

All school visitors are required to sign in at the main office. They will receive a visitor's badge or sticker. Visitor Badges must be worn and visible at all times during school visits. Visitors are asked to sign out in the main office before leaving the building. Security procedures require all staff members to stop anyone in the hallways not wearing a Visitor Badge.

In May 2010 the Board of Education updated the School Visitor Policy (P4070), which states, "Parents and community members may visit schools with prior approval of the principal and for a specified and approved purpose." For instance, parents are welcome to enter the building when they have been invited to a class event by staff, made an appointment with school personnel, or have some other stated reason to be there for school business (e.g. room parents, PTO volunteers, designated chaperones, etc.).

Please be advised that we will be unable to accommodate parents who wish to visit their child during the school day, including during lunch time and recess. It is important that students use these times to socially interact with their peers and build interpersonal independence, as is developmentally appropriate for students in grades 3 – 5.

Parents and other family members will be invited to special school events throughout the year, such as conferences, Back to School Night, Fall Activity Night, the Art Auction, concerts, and others. We encourage parents to become acquainted with school personnel and programs and to communicate with school staff members regularly. Parents will receive updates on school events through the school website, newsletter, automatic voice messages, and written correspondence. Our staff will actively look for opportunities to invite interested parents into the school building and treat them as important members of the school community.

Health Program

Emergency Cards are distributed to students at the beginning of each school year. Parents/guardians must assure Emergency Card information is correct and updated. Emergency

Cards should include the phone numbers of reliable adults who are available to pick up and care for the child if the parent cannot be contacted.

A certified RN is on staff to deal with illnesses or medical emergencies. Students should remain home for at least 24 hours when sick with colds, flu, fevers, and other common illnesses. Students who contract a fever are asked to remain at home until fever-free for 24 hours. For the protection of all students, a child with a contagious disease will be excluded from school. Communicable diseases such as chicken pox, strep infections, pink eye, etc. should be reported to the school nurse, who will advise you on the length of time your child needs to be kept home.

The school nurse's role is to promote the physical well-being of all students within the school setting, to provide nursing assessment and intervention for students with acute illness and injury, to provide case finding services (e.g. health and developmental screenings), to identify students with existing and potential health problems, to refer identified students and their families to appropriate services, and to promote collaboration and communication among families, school personnel and health care providers. The school nurse will call parents if a child is ill or injured, and unable to remain in school. Children who need to return home during the school day must be picked up by a parent or designee as soon as possible.

Many students visit the nurse on a given day. The goal is to assess them, treat them (if necessary), and then send them back to class as soon as possible. Every effort is made to prevent loss of instructional time or unnecessary exposure to contagions that may be present in the office. The nurse will not necessarily contact parents unless a health problem is apparent.

If any physical restrictions or limitations are placed on a child through the course of the year due to health related issues, parents should notify the nurse. A note from the child's physician stating the problem and restrictions is required. This should be updated as necessary. Children will not be excused from physical education for more than one class without a doctor's note.

All medications, whether prescription or non-prescription, must be accompanied by a written authorization from a physician or dentist if they are to be administered in school. Children are not permitted to bring medications to school. This includes all prescribed and over the counter medicines. Cough drops are permitted, but may not be shared with any other student(s).

The following procedure must be followed for students needing to take medication during school hours: a Medication Authorization Form must be completed by the child's physician or dentist and parents; the medicine must be brought to school by a parent with completed form and delivered to the school nurse, the principal or the lead teacher; and the medicine must be in its original container labeled with the student's name, the physician's name, the name and strength of the medication, the date of the prescription and directions for treatment.

Medical restrictions or limitations due to allergy should be shared with the nurse by parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year. A note from the child's physician stating the problem and restrictions is also required.

Life Threatening Allergies

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening medical condition which can occur in students after exposure to an allergen. Symptoms may include swelling of any part of the body, hives or rash, itching, itchy lips, runny nose, difficulty breathing, throat tightness or closing, difficulty swallowing, change in voice, vomiting, cramps, nausea, diarrhea, irregular heartbeat, flushed, pale skin, bluish lips, fainting, dizziness, or shock. Staff will contact the nurse at the first sign of any of these symptoms.

To avoid anaphylaxis as the result of allergen exposure, the following classroom snack procedures apply to all classrooms at TVES.

- All students must wash their hands before and after snack and lunch. Hand sanitizers do not prevent cross-contamination from nut products, so students must use soap and water or hand wipes.
- After snack, a student(s) or adult(s) must be designated to spray and carefully wipe all desks to ensure that they're not contaminated from nut products.

In the event that a student with a food allergy is identified, the following additional classroom snack procedures will be followed:

- All parents of students in the class will receive a letter asking them to provide their (non-allergic) child with designated snacks, which include: fresh or packaged fruits (including raisins and Fruit Roll-Ups), vegetables, yogurt (including yogurt drinks, yogurt bars, and Yogos), cheese, or Goldfish crackers.
- If children bring a snack that is NOT on this list, they must eat it in a separate location in the classroom (while they continue their work). This is the same concept as designating a peanut-free table in the cafeteria.
- Teachers are not required to read ingredient lists. If the snack item is not on the designated snack list, the student needs to go to the separate area.

For more information on life-threatening food allergies please refer to *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Schools* published by the Connecticut State Dept. of Education (2006).

Mental Health Staff

The School Social Worker and School Psychologist are both available to students to support their academic, social, and emotional growth. Services include time limited counseling and crisis intervention to help with issues of concern that impact the child's functioning in school. Please bear in mind that school-based counseling services are different from privately obtained counseling, and will maintain a focus on the student's behavior, social interactions, and/or academic achievement that occurs in the school setting.

Mental health staff members are also available to consult with teachers, parents, and private providers, act as a community liaison, and conduct special education evaluations to identify and assess cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. They routinely conduct classroom observations, functional behavior assessments, develop behavior intervention plans, and review student records to make recommendations for their educational program.

Mental health staff members are often the first responders to student conflicts and discipline referrals. They are often designated to investigate those matters and report to the principal with their findings.

Parental consent is not required in order for a child to speak with a mental health staff member on isolated occasions, but consent will be obtained if the child requires regular and ongoing counseling support in school.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support & ROCKS

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is a proactive, comprehensive, and systemic continuum of support designed to provide opportunities for all students to achieve social, behavioral, and learning success. This is accomplished by creating a positive school climate or culture. As part of this process, designated PBIS team members examine the factors that impact behavior as well as the relationships between environment and behavior. A series of school-wide procedures are established that contain clear and consistent behavioral expectations. Positive behaviors are reinforced, and negative behaviors are addressed along a continuum of (tiered) support. This is consistent with Response to Intervention (RTI), also known as Scientifically Research Based Interventions (SRBI).

A group of TVES educators have received intensive PBIS training from the State Educational Resource Center (SERC) to help develop a positive school climate. The team developed the following belief statement:

We believe that positive behavior will enhance student learning. We are committed to maintaining a positive school climate for all members of the TVES community. Therefore, staff members, students and families will work together to demonstrate ROCKS behavior in school and related settings.

TVES uses the acronym “ROCKS” to remind students to exhibit the following behavior expectations at all times: respect, opportunity, cooperation, kindness, and safety. The following table will provide additional information on the positive behaviors we seek to elicit:

Respect	Follow teacher’s directions Listen and respond appropriately to others Raise your hand Be honest Use and store materials appropriately Accept differences
Opportunity	Encourage others Be ready to learn Do your best!

	Listen to others' opinions Remind others of the rules
Cooperation	Take turns Solve problems Help others Teamwork
Kindness	Include others Respond politely Show appreciation
Safety	Report unsafe behaviors/situations Stay in assigned area Demonstrate self-control Follow all school rules at all times

TVES posts visual reminders of ROCKS behavior throughout the building, including the classrooms, bathrooms, hallways, and other key areas.

We expect that all children will occasionally lose control and/or make mistakes. When misbehavior occurs, logical consequences will be taken that directly relate to children's behaviors in order to help them learn from their mistakes. The goal is to help students take responsibility for their actions, improve self-control, and consider the results of their choices so they will make better decisions next time.

An office referral form is used to document inappropriate behaviors that occur in school. Behavioral data is entered into a data monitoring system. Behavior is analyzed to determine patterns, and develop interventions to improve it throughout the school community. Behaviors are characterized as either "minor" or "major" problem behaviors.

Code of Conduct

Behavioral Expectations

The classroom teacher, in collaboration with the students, establishes classroom rules at the beginning of each school year in order to create a positive learning environment. In all other school settings including the hallway, playgrounds, cafeteria, and assemblies, students are required to exhibit ROCKS behavior.

Students are provided with an array of privileges that they must exercise with responsibility. These include the independent use of the bathrooms without an adult escort, eating lunch in the cafeteria, attending school functions, and participating in field trips. If students abuse their privileges or otherwise disregard school rules, these privileges will be revoked.

Dress Code Guidelines

Students are expected to dress appropriately as follows:

Footwear

- Shoes, sandals, sneakers and other appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.

- Healy wheels are prohibited in school.
- Sneakers are required to participate in gym class.
- *Students are strongly discouraged from wearing flip-flops to school because they tend to break and/or otherwise pose a safety hazard to the student who is wearing them.*

Hats

- Hats, visors and hoods are not permitted to be worn in the school building.

Tops and Bottoms

- Halter tops or tops with shoulder straps less than 1-inch wide are not permitted.
- Midriffs must be covered.
- Skirts and shorts must follow the *finger-tip rule* (reaching to the tips of your fingers with arms hanging at sides).
- Undergarments must not be visible.
- Clothing or accessories that are considered unsafe are not permitted.
- Clothing deemed to be inappropriate or offensive is not permitted.

Students who do not adhere to the dress code guidelines may receive one verbal warning (unless the item of clothing is offensive). If they violate the code a second time, their parents will be contacted to drop off a change of clothes and/or footwear.

Student Discipline Policy

Students are expected to behave in a manner that exemplifies respect, opportunity, cooperation, kindness, and safety. Infractions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the teacher, mental health staff members, the building principal and/or lead teacher. It is important to note that it is often not possible to obtain a completely accurate picture of what has transpired. There are often conflicting stories and uncertain or unreliable witnesses. Incidents tend to occur in less structured settings (e.g. playground, hallway, bus) when a staff member is not in the immediate vicinity. Children tend to be alert to these less supervised situations, and sometimes make poor choices during them.

The responding adult will thoroughly investigate a given situation and strive to be fair, consistent, and timely in his/her dealings with the children involved. Parents are notified when students have been involved in a conflict that required adult mediation. They are also informed of any consequences assigned for their child's alleged actions. Consistency, communication, and cooperation between home and school are essential to addressing incidents. At no time should any parent approach a child that is not their own in an effort to address or mediate a situation. Doing so may result in police intervention.

Behavior Referral Form

A behavior referral form is used to help monitor disciplinary referrals. Behaviors are categorized as either minor problem behaviors or major problem behaviors. For a complete listing of these behaviors, please see the Behavior Referral Form that follows. Minor problem behaviors are typically handled by the classroom teacher or supervising staff member, whereas major behavior problems are handled by office and/or mental health staff. The building principal and parents are informed of all major problem behaviors.

Consequences for minor and major problem behaviors range based on the severity and repetition of the action. They may include the following: loss of privilege; time in office; conference with student; parent contact; detention; alternative educational setting; in-school or out of school suspension. All disciplinary action is undertaken at the discretion of the building principal.

Please note that the school may not disclose the consequences of another child to a parent, even if that child was involved with an altercation with the child of the inquiring parent. Student confidentiality is maintained at all times without exception.

Behavior Referral Form

Student Name: _____
Date: _____ **Time:** _____
Teacher: _____
Grade: _____ **Referring Staff:** _____

Location
Playground Specials
Cafeteria Bathroom
Hallway Arrival/Dismissal
Classroom Locker
Other _____ Bus/bus stop

Minor = handled by teacher or designated staff member

Major = handled by office or mental health staff

Minor Problem Behaviors	Major Problem Behaviors	Possible Motivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate language • Hands-on behavior • Defiance/disrespect • Throwing objects (that are not sharp or directed at a particular person) • Using an otherwise harmless object in a threatening way or making threatening sounds/gestures • Disruption to the learning environment (after 1 warning) • Dress code violation • Minor technology or electronics violation • Minor name-calling/ teasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulgar or abusive language including discriminatory words • Instigating or recruiting a peer(s) to break school rules • Fighting/physical aggression including punching, kicking, spitting, shoving, hands-on behavior involving private parts • Throwing objects at another person • Harassment/bullying • Talking to peers about an incident(s) in an effort to perpetuate gossip/name-calling • Threatening • Major technology or electronics violation • Cheating/forgery • Theft • Vandalism/property damage or blatant misuse of such • Possession of weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain peer attention • Obtain adult attention • Obtain items/activities • Avoid peers • Avoid adult • Avoid task or activity • Uncertain • Other _____

Outcome

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of privilege (specify) _____ • Time in office • Conference with student • Parent contact • Detention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative educational setting • In-school suspension (____ hours/days) • Out of school suspension (____ days) • Bus suspension (____ days) • Other _____
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Others involved in incident (circle): None Peers Staff Teacher Substitute Unknown Other

Comments (if any): _____

Please note that the school may not disclose the consequences of another child to a parent, even if that child was involved with an altercation with the child of the inquiring parent. Student confidentiality is maintained at all times.

Bullying

Students cannot learn if they do not feel safe in school. Students who are bullying others or being bullied may be too upset and/or distracted by events to fully attend to academic tasks. It is important that all members of the school community recognize acts of bullying if they occur, and follow correct procedures for addressing and preventing them.

Definition

Bullying is defined as any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. The school principal, after

conducting an investigation, is ultimately responsible for determining whether or not an act qualifies as bullying under this definition.

Prevention

Bullying prevention is undertaken through PBIS to promote a safe and positive school climate. School rules prohibit bullying, harassment, and intimidation, and establish appropriate consequences for those who engage in such acts, including individual interventions and counseling. Adult supervision is provided in areas of the school building where bullying is most likely to occur.

Reporting

Any individual may make anonymous reports alleging bullying to teachers and administrators in writing. However, no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Parents/guardians may provide reports of suspected bullying to the principal or classroom teacher. School staff members who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying allegations must notify the principal immediately.

Procedures

Any cases of reported or suspected bullying will be immediately investigated by the principal or designee (lead teacher, school psychologist, or social worker). The principal or designee will meet with the students involved in the alleged bullying event. If the complaint is determined to have merit, a progressive intervention and disciplinary approach will be employed, and parents will be notified. Measures may also be administered preventatively in cases where the behavior may not meet all of the criteria of bullying.

Interventions

In the event that the principal or designee determines an act of bullying has occurred interventions will occur according to a three-leveled intervention approach.

Bullying Interventions

Level I Interventions	Level II Interventions	Level III Interventions
Student meets with principal or designee	Student meets with principal or designee, classroom teacher and/or mental health staff member	Student and his/her parents collaborate with principal, classroom teacher and mental health staff to identify ways to prevent the behavior from recurring using both home and school-based supports

Incident is documented	Incident is formally documented	Incident and subsequent meeting are formally documented; a copy is sent home; a copy is placed in child's permanent file; a report of bullying will be made to the state per statutes.
Parents of all parties are contacted	Parents of all parties are contacted	Parents of all parties are contacted
Verbal warning is issued	Written warning is issued	Formal documentation process is followed (see above)
Consequences depend on severity of the incident but may include losing privileges (e.g. recess, eating lunch in cafeteria, missing a school event, etc.)	More significant consequences are assigned than previously occurred. The principal will use discretion based on the nature of the incident. Consequences may include detention, in-school suspension, or bus suspension	More significant consequences are assigned than previously occurred. The principal will use discretion based on the nature of the incident. Consequences may include in-school or out of school suspension, bus suspension, loss of privileges for an extended period of time
Mental health staff members will be notified	Mental health staff will be notified; a counseling referral may be generated	Student will meet with a mental health staff member on a regular basis
Staff members will be notified on a need-to-know basis to heighten their awareness	Staff members will be notified on a need-to-know basis; efforts will be made to increase supervision/monitoring	Staff members will be notified on a need-to-know basis to carefully monitor the child's behavior in all school and related settings

The name of any student who has engaged in bullying behavior and consequences he/she receives will not be released to anyone but that child's parents, due to confidentiality.

Health and Nutrition

Our lunch program offers students a variety of meal options. In addition, a salad, soup and sandwich bar, pizza and a variety of "extras" are offered daily. The cafeteria provides vegetarian entrees and limited organic snacks, as well.

Lunch prices are \$2.25 and subject to change. Students may purchase lunch tickets for five meals for \$11.25 or for twenty meals for \$45.00. Lunch tickets go on sale Mondays or the first day of school each week. Tickets do not have to be used on consecutive days and are good for the entire school year. Any unused meals can be changed over for use in September of the following year. Students who have forgotten their lunch money will be allowed to "charge" their

meal, but parents will be asked for timely repayment. Report cards may be held until payment is received. Information regarding free or reduced lunches is available from the school office.

The North Branford Board of Education promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Healthy meals are strongly encouraged. Students who bring their lunch to school should not bring soda, energy drinks, or candy. Please consider healthier options when packing your child's lunch. Families may be eligible for free or reduced price lunches based on federal family income guidelines.

Catching Rays in the Cafe

The PBIS team at TVES developed the Catching Rays in the Café Program to improve student behavior in the cafeteria by establishing effective and positive behavior support for all students. Classes are expected to follow the Café expectations which are as follows:

Cleanliness

- A table washer is identified prior to the lunch wave (selected by teacher).
- Students must clean tables and floor at the end of the lunch wave. If they see garbage, they must clean it up.
- Students must return trays in a neat and orderly manner. If they drop something, they must pick it up.
- Table washers must appropriately spray the table (not seats) and wipe the table.
- When finished cleaning, the table washers must check in with a lunch duty staff member to assure that the job was done successfully.

Noise

- Students must use indoor voices to speak to peers.
- Students may only speak to their nearby neighbors.
- If students need help, have a question, or want extras, they must raise their hand and wait for an adult to respond.

Lining Up

- After being dismissed, students must walk to the door to line up.
- Students must keep their hands and feet in their own body space.
- Students must face forward and wait for the teacher to arrive.
- Students must use an indoor quiet voice when talking to peers.

Behavior

- Students must follow the Code of Conduct.
- Students are expected to display ROCKS behavior!
- Students are asked to remind each other of the Café expectations and be kind to one another.

If a given class follows the above expectations during their lunch period they earn a star for the day. Stars are placed on the class' designated space on the bulletin board in the cafeteria. At the end of the week, the classes that earn 4 out of 5 stars earn a reward. Other classes who do not earn 4 out of 5 stars may "bank" their earned stars for a future reward. An array of incentives

are provided throughout the year to keep students engaged in this program including homework passes, extra recess, a theme day (e.g. pajama day, crazy hair day), extra computer time, or a class party.

Communication

Totoket Valley teachers strive to establish effective communication between the family and the school community. Parents wishing to confer with a teacher may call the school office and leave a message or contact the teacher via email. All staff members also have voice mail and e-mail. Staff e-mail is "FirstinitialLastname@NorthBranfordSchools.org". Some staff members have web pages that are accessible to parents, as well.

Reporting Student Progress

The North Branford School District utilizes a standards-based report card for students in grades K-5. Students do not receive averaged grades (A, B, C, D, F) or percentages. Instead, they earn a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to indicate their progress towards standards (see below). The language that we use is consistent with the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). Our goal is to provide families with useful and accurate information about their child's progress towards grade level curriculum standards/expectations.

1	2	3	4	5
Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Goal	Advanced

Our minimum expectation is that students will earn a score of "3," which reflects proficiency towards curriculum standards, although we challenge all students to meet goal, as reflected by a score of "4." (The Direct Assessment of Writing and Process Writing pieces are scored out of 12 possible points, similar to the way it is reported on the CMT).

Report cards are issued three times a year. While the reporting standards remain the same throughout the year, each trimester measures different content within a standard. Within Language Arts, for example, "Vocabulary and Concept Development" consists of different word lists. Reading Fluency is measured using different passages, some more difficult than others, and our expectations increase during the course of the school year. In addition, Reading Comprehension assesses different focus skills each theme. In some cases, a standard is not formally assessed (e.g. Geometry), and an entry of "n/e" (not evaluated) will be inputted.

When reviewing their child's report cards (or isolated tests, quizzes, or projects), parents are encouraged to consider overall trends in their child's performance, as opposed to one single grade. Many students demonstrate inconsistency in their ability to generalize skills, and this can result in a range of scores, none of which best captures his/her learning. Sometimes parents express concern that their child has "regressed" in a given trimester (i.e. that his/her grades have declined in a given category). Again, it is important to note that in all subject areas, different content is taught and assessed during each trimester that may reveal a child's particular strength and/or weakness. Parents should talk with their child about his/her performance, and offer praise for his/her accomplishments and hard work. Conferences are always available at parent request if concerns arise.

Academic support is provided for all students through differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, consultation, and Response to Intervention (RTI). We closely monitor the progress of all students, and make timely referrals to the RTI team if more assistance is required. As previously stated, conferences may be requested at any time to discuss a child's progress, but will be offered no less than twice per year. Phone conferences are also available upon request. Please see the district calendar for dates of conferences and report card distribution.

According to Board of Education policy, the building principal may change an assigned grade only to accurately reflect a student's academic performance, as measured by a uniformly applied evaluation of the student's demonstrated mastery of the subject area. Prior to the changing of any assigned grade, the principal shall consult with the teacher and obtain and thoroughly consider the teacher's written explanation of why the grade accurately reflects the student's demonstrated, measurable academic performance. Any and all changes to a student's assigned grade, whether said change is rendered by a teacher or an administrator, shall be documented in writing and maintained as part of the student's education records, along with a detailed description of the reasons in support of the change, with a copy to the teacher and the parent or guardian.

Friday Folders

To the extent possible, all important information is distributed to our students to be taken home in their "Friday Folders". This information includes but is not limited to program announcements, events, fund raisers, newsletters, permission slips, etc. Parents are asked to check with their children each week to ensure that these important papers are received and read.

Parent Bulletin Board

A parent bulletin board is located in the main entrance of the school. Parents and other visitors are asked to check it regularly for updates on school, district, and community events.

Website

TVES, along with all other North Branford Schools, has a website linked with the district's website. This site contains information about school and district news, events, and student achievements. Please visit the website at: www.nothrbranfordschools.org. Click on the TVES link to access information specific to our school.

TVES Times

TVES Times is a quarterly newsletter which is written by staff members and students. It is sent home electronically, but printed copies are also available upon request. TVES Times contains important information about events and activities going on in and around the school. Archived copies are available on the TVES website.

Automatic Telephone Messaging System

Totoket Valley communications are supported by a telephone messaging service, SchoolMessenger, which allows the sending of personalized voice messages to parents and families with one recorded phone call. This system is used for general announcements or to announce an early dismissal in the case of bad weather. We are able to reach families at a

moment's notice should an emergency arise. Parents are asked to provide the school with information regarding which numbers they would like to have included in our system.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The objectives of the TVES PTO are to promote the welfare of the children in school, home and community; to bring into closer relation the school and the home, so that parents, teachers, and administrators may cooperate intelligently in the education of the child; and to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental and social education.

The PTO provides our students with enriching cultural arts assemblies, special projects, evening events, assistance with field trips costs, class parties, student t-shirts, CMT snacks, and more. PTO volunteers are essential members of the TVES community. They coordinate two major fundraisers per year to finance events and activities. Parents are encouraged to support their efforts to the degree possible.

PTO membership is open to all TVES parents, guardians and staff members. Membership is \$7.00 per family and \$4.00 per staff member. All parent/guardians are encouraged to become members of the TVES PTO, attend PTO meetings, and work in collaboration with the PTO to support its activities. Meeting dates are listed in the North Branford Schools Calendar. Additional PTO information is available and periodically updated on the school website. Being a member of the PTO is a great way to learn more about your child's experiences in school, decisions made at the building and district level, and opportunities to make a difference in the school community.

Distribution of Student Information

Room Parents are volunteers who provide assistance to classroom teachers and students as needed. They often help with class parties, disseminating information, and chaperoning field trips. Room parents also receive a class list with phone numbers for important communications. Please notify the school office if you do not wish your phone number to be given out to the Room Parents. Teachers do not give out students' phone numbers to any other parent.

Photos and Videos

From time to time various school activities or student artwork may be photographed or videotaped. This information may make its way into a local newspaper, onto public access TV, or onto our district website. We assume your permission to have your child or his or her artwork photographed or videotaped is granted unless we hear from you. Identifying photographs of individual students will not be posted on our website. Parents and students may not take pictures of any child (except their own/themselves) during school events, activities, or field trips. Classroom teachers may take photographs for school use.

Network Acceptable Use Policy

According to the Acceptable Use Policy of the North Branford Board of Education (P1370), parents must sign an agreement to allow their student to have an individual North Branford Educational Network account. Parents may request alternative computer activities for their child(ren) that do not require Internet access. Said agreement is signed upon registration in the North Branford Public Schools and remains in effect unless and until written notification

revoking the authorization is provided to the school office. If access was not authorized at the time of registration, a parent may change the status by completing the referenced agreement.

School Supplies

The school provides textbooks, trade books, assignment pads, and basic supplies to all students. Students are asked to treat these materials respectfully so that they can be used again. Textbooks remain in better condition if they are covered. Replacement costs for lost or damaged books will be billed to parents. Student report cards will be held in the school office if any outstanding student accounts for lost or damaged school supplies (including library books) are not paid by the last day of school. Teachers may ask students to purchase specific materials at reasonable cost. Financial assistance is available for those families who are unable to purchase these materials.

Lockers

At the beginning of the year students in grades 4 and 5 are assigned lockers for storing books, papers, and other personal items that they would not want to carry during the day. These lockers provide storage, but not security, as they cannot be locked. Valuables should not be stored in them, including expensive articles of clothing. Students will be allowed to use lockers at specified times of the day. Lockers are school property and may be searched at the discretion of the administrator. Students may not decorate the outside of their lockers, but they may decorate the inside of their lockers. All items, pictures, and remnants of tape or other adhesives must be removed on the last day of school.

Valuables

Students are asked to leave large sums of money and other items of personal value at home, including electronic devices. Students are not allowed to use electronic devices during the school day, although they may use them on the bus (depending on the driver's rules) and/or at the Family Resource Center (FRC). Please bear in mind that there is no secure place to store valuables at school (desks and lockers have no locking capacity). It is very upsetting to children to lose their important belongings. Electronic devices are often expensive for families to replace. The school is not responsible for any lost items. Please talk to your child about making good choices regarding the care and storage of their valuables to prevent disappointment and tears. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Lost and Found

The TVES Lost and Found can be found in the main lobby of the school building across from the parent bulletin board. Clothing and related items are generally sorted into a series of bins that are housed on a shelving unit. We encourage our students to check these bins regularly. We donate unclaimed items to charity organizations periodically as our bins become full. Electronics, jewelry, keys, and other important or expensive items are kept in the main office. Any article found by students should be brought to the main office.

Homework

The North Branford Board of Education recognizes that homework is an integral component of a comprehensive educational program. Therefore, the Board supports developmentally appropriate

homework designed to promote quality activities that reinforce and enrich classroom instruction. Homework shall not be used for disciplinary purposes.

At TVES, students are held accountable for regular homework completion. Homework assignments include practice, application, and reinforcement of skills and concepts that have been taught during the school day. We believe that daily and long-term homework assignments will help students develop better study habits and organizational skills. Homework completion is also necessary for students to be fully prepared for class discussions, instruction, and assessments. Students who do not complete a given homework assignment may be asked to complete it during an alternative time, such as recess, to ensure that they are fully prepared for class and understand the instructional material.

Students should be relatively independent in their ability to complete a given homework assignment. A parent's role in homework completion should be minimal. Parents are asked to help their child select an appropriate setting for doing homework, make sure the child really needs help before offering to assist him/her, encourage the child to make-up any missed work due to absence, and communicate with the teacher if the homework cannot be completed due to confusion about the nature of the task or assignment. As a rule of thumb, students should spend approximately 30-45 minutes on homework completion per night. Please speak with your child's classroom teacher for further information.

In addition, parents are asked to encourage their child to read at home on a nightly basis. They should be encouraged to select reading material that is on the child's reading level, and of interest to him/her, including age appropriate magazines. For suggestions on reading material or other strategies to bolster your child's reading at home, please feel free to contact Mrs. Seiden, Library Media Specialist, Mrs. Roberti or Mrs. Darragh, Language Arts Consultants, or your child's classroom teacher. The local town libraries are also excellent resources for families.

RTI

Response to Intervention (RTI), which is also known as Scientifically Research Based Interventions (SRBI) is a process that provides intervention to all students. RTI is a three-tiered model as shown below:

Tier	Intervention	Recipients	Time
1	Core instruction	All students	30 minutes per day, 3 days per cycle
2	Targeted intervention	Small group of students	45 minutes per day, 3 days per cycle
3	Intensive intervention	Very small group of students	45 minutes per day, 6 days per cycle

TVES operates on a six day rotating schedule. Math RTI is provided on Days 1, 2, 3. Reading RTI is provided on Days 4, 5, 6. Students who need intensive (Tier 3) intervention receive RTI in either Math or Reading on all 6 days.

All students receive instruction during a 30-45 minute RTI block. Students are flexibly grouped according to their learning needs. Levels of support include:

- Reteaching/intervention (Tier 2 and 3)
- Review/reinforcement (Tier 1)
- Extension/enrichment which may include Creative Learning programming (Tier 1)

Student progress is monitored through weekly probes, curriculum assessments, and benchmark assessments. Data is collected and entered into RTIm Direct, a software system dedicated to this purpose. Five data points are collected to identify trends in each student's performance. If they respond to intervention, they return to Tier 1. If they need more prolonged intervention, they remain on Tier 2. If they require additional intervention, they will move to Tier 3. Students who do not make progress after spending 6 to 8 weeks on Tier 3 are typically referred to special education. Formal evaluations may be recommended at that time to develop a comprehensive picture of the child's functioning.

An RTI Core Team meets on a regular basis to monitor progress and determine whether a student needs to move to a different tier. Parents are informed in writing of their child's entry to/exit from Tiers 2 or 3.

Child Find

North Branford Public Schools are responsible for the identification, location and evaluation of all children with disabilities and who are in need of special education or related services except for children enrolled by their parents in private schools located outside the district. Referrals for special education or 504 accommodations may be made by school personnel, parents, or private providers with parent consent. Referrals should be submitted in writing to the building principal.

Special Services

Every child has the right to a free, appropriate public education. A student identified as a possible candidate for special services is referred to a planning and placement team (PPT) which includes the parents/caretakers. The PPT may recommend evaluations to determine student eligibility for special services. Special education programs include self-contained classes, resource services and related services. In accordance with federal regulations, TVES assumes responsibility for the location, identification and evaluation of all children who require special education and related services. All children who are suspected of having a disability and who are in need of special education are part of the child find process in our District. This child identification process is coordinated by the Office of Special Services. Planning and Placement Teams (PPTs) ensure that students meet the eligibility requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state regulations. The school develops an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student requiring special education and/or related services. Our PPT develops, reviews, and or revises the IEP to meet the needs of each student who requires special education and related services.

Section 504: Notification of Rights, Grievance Procedure and Coordinator

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (commonly referred to as “Section 504”) is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students.

For the purposes of Section 504, the term “disability” with respect to an individual means: (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment. “Major life activities” include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function, including, but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions.

Many students will be eligible for educational services under both Section 504 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but entitlement to services under the IDEA or other statutes is not required to receive services under Section 504.

The following is a description of the rights and options granted by federal law to students with disabilities under Section 504. The intent of the law is to keep you fully informed concerning decisions about your child and to inform you of your rights if you disagree with any of these decisions. You have the right:

- To be informed of your rights under Section 504;
- To have your child take part in and receive benefits from the North Branford School District’s education programs without discrimination based on his/her disability;
- For your child to have equal opportunities to participate in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities in your school without discrimination based on his/her disability;
- To be notified with respect to the Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement of your child;
- To have an evaluation, educational recommendation, and placement decision developed by a team of persons who are knowledgeable of your child, the assessment data, and any placement options;
- If your child is eligible for services under Section 504, for your child to receive a free appropriate public education. This includes the right to receive reasonable accommodations and services to allow your child an equal opportunity to participate in school and school-related activities;
- For your child to be educated with peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate;
- To have your child educated in facilities and receive services comparable to those provided to non-disabled students;

- To review all relevant records relating to decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation, and educational placement;
- To obtain copies of your child's educational records at a reasonable cost unless the fee would effectively deny you access to the records;
- To request changes in the educational program of your child;
- To an impartial hearing if you disagree with the school district's decisions regarding your child's Section 504 identification, evaluation or educational placement. The costs for this hearing are borne by the local school district. You and the student have the right to take part in the hearing and to have an attorney represent you at your expense;
- To file a court action if you are dissatisfied with the impartial hearing officer's decision or to request attorney's fees related to securing your child's rights under Section 504;
- To file a local grievance with the designated Section 504 Coordinator to resolve complaints of discrimination other than those involving the identification, evaluation or placement of your child;
- To file a formal complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The Section 504 Coordinator for this district is:

Scott Schoonmaker, Superintendent
 1332 Middletown Avenue
 Northford, CT 06472
 (203) 484-1440

For additional assistance regarding your rights under Section 504, you may contact:

Boston Regional Office
 Office for Civil Rights
 U.S. Department of Education
 8th Floor
 5 Post Office Square, Suite 900
 Boston, MA 02109-3921 Telephone: (617) 289-0111

U.S. Department of Education
 Office for Civil Rights
 550 12th Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20202-1100 Telephone: 1-800-421-3481

Connecticut State Department of Education
 Bureau of Special Education and Pupil Services
 P.O. Box 2219
 Hartford, CT 06145 Telephone: (860) 807-2030

State Department of Education Complaint Resolution Procedure

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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

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.

A private school official shall have the right to complain that a local educational agency did not engage in consultation that was meaningful and timely, or did not give due consideration to the views of the private school official.

Gifted and Talented Students

Gifted and talented students are those who perform at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibit high performance capability in intellectual areas and creative experiences beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

The Connecticut State Department of Education requires all school districts to identify students who perform at the highest level of performance in their grade level but are not required to provide special services to accommodate their special needs. In addition, “No Child Left Behind” does not include programming or monitoring requirements for the identified gifted and talented student.

The North Branford Public Schools has determined that students be identified through the use of multiple criteria including the Connecticut Mastery Test, a norm referenced test of aptitude and an assessment of creativity. (The district is currently reevaluating its process for identifying students. Updates will be posted on the district website). A team reviews assessment results and identifies students who meet the criteria. Eligibility determination is made through the Planning and Placement Team process.

Students who are identified as Talented and Gifted are included in the Creative Learning Program. They access the program for direct instruction during the RTI block, and also have embedded projects and/or assignments that they may accomplish during regular class time. In the past, Creative Learning students have participated in the Keep Connecticut Cool competition at Mystic Aquarium, displayed architectural models at the town library, and participated in the Invention Convention (which is now open to all fourth and fifth graders). They have created videos, published books, and met with special guest speakers, including children’s authors.

TVES is fortunate to have three Creative Learning Resource educators, including Ms. Thompson, Ms. Leining, and Mrs. Seiden. For additional information about this program or talented and gifted processes, please contact Mrs. Sara Querfeld, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at (203) 484-1440.

Retention Consideration

Policy

According the North Branford Board of Education Policy 1210, the administration shall assign students to the grade level best suited to them academically, socially and emotionally, as determined by the administration. Students shall normally progress annually from grade to grade.

Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the administration, after consultation with teachers and parents/guardians, the administration determines that it is in the student’s best educational interest to either be retained or advance a grade. Such decisions shall be made on an individual basis and only for compelling reasons.

Process

In general, it is expected that students who may require retention during their academic career will be retained during their primary school years. However, if a TVES student is being considered for retention, he/she will be referred to the Retention Committee. The Retention Committee is a multidisciplinary team that serves in an advisory capacity to the principal. The principal makes the ultimate decision about whether or not to retain a child.

In the event that a TVES student is referred for retention consideration, the Retention Committee will convene to discuss the referral. In making their recommendation the Retention Committee will do the following:

Steps	Outcome	Additional Information
Administer the Complete Light’s Retention Scale	Results will be analyzed to guide decision making	
Consider information provided by parents	Parent concerns will be considered, including any recommendations and/or evaluations submitted by private providers	
Record review	Determine whether there are patterns of social immaturity or academic difficulty over the years	Students who were previously retained will not be candidates for retention a 2 nd time
Review current report card	If the report card reflects minimal progress made towards multiple Language Arts or Math standards for a minimum of two trimesters, retention may be warranted.	Science and Social Studies grades will not be considered
Review most recent CMTs (if any)	If CMT scores reflect below basic skills in Total Reading and/or Mathematics, retention may be warranted	Writing and Science scores will not be considered
Review attendance records	If the child has been absent 20+ school days in a given year, retention may be warranted	

No one data source will be used to make decisions related to retention. Instead, multiple sources of information will be considered.

Timelines

Parents and/or teachers who would like a child to be considered for retention must submit their request to the principal in writing by no later than May 1st of a given school year. This will ensure that the principal has ample time to convene the Retention Committee and consider the request. The letter must provide detailed information explaining the reason and rationale for the

request. The principal will render a decision about whether or not to retain a child in writing by no later than June 1st of a given school year.

Appeals

If the parents/guardians do not agree with the administration's determination regarding grade placement, the parents/guardians may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools whose decision regarding the student's placement shall be final. The appeal must be made in writing, stating reasons that the parent/guardian is appealing the administrator's decision. Appeal letters should be sent to the following address: PO Box 129, Northford, CT 06472.

Field Trips

Field trips are an extension of the general curriculum. Typically, each grade takes a minimum of one field trip per school year. In the past, field trips have included Mystic Seaport, Peabody Museum, Noah Webster House, Tilcon, Meigs Point Nature Center, and others. School field trip permission slips must be signed by parents. Parents who are unable to pay the cost of the field trip should contact the principal.

From time to time, our students may travel by bus to the North Branford Auditorium for rehearsals, orientations, or special programs. These trips are not considered to be field trips and do not require parental permission.

Students are expected to follow all TVES rules during school-sponsored events. Students may be excluded from field trips for safety or disciplinary reasons at the discretion of the building administrator. Alternative educational programming will be available to them within the school building, instead.

Community Service

One of our goals at TVES is for students to participate in community service activities which foster a sense of caring for others, and encourage good citizenship. We encourage activities that involve student activity and interaction in addition to simple fund raising. All students participate annually in community service projects either with their classmates or through some other means such as the PTO. In the past, TVES has participated in Jump Rope for Heart, UNICEF collections, food closet drives, and fundraising for the American Cancer Society, to name just a few. Community service projects which involve fund raising require approval of the principal prior to the beginning of the project.

Family Resource Center

The Family Resource Center is a system of services located in various school buildings throughout the town, including TVES. FRC provides before and after school child care and when school is not in session. The goal of the program is to provide the children with a safe and nurturing environment at a reasonable cost to the members of the community. For more information please contact Anne-Marie McCarthy 203-484-4243.

Fire Drills

A fire evacuation plan is posted in each room. Students should review the plan and become familiar with it. When the fire alarm sounds, students will immediately line up and follow teacher's directions to the nearest exit. Running is not permitted. Students are not permitted to

talk during a fire drill and are to remain at least 50 feet away from the building until the signal is given to re-enter. Misconduct during evacuation procedures will result in disciplinary action.

Board of Education Policies

The North Branford Board of Education policies and administrative procedures and practices change throughout the school year. The latest policies and administrative regulations are available at the Board of Education offices, and on the district website. Parents who would like to become more familiar with Board of Education policies are encouraged to visit the BOE website at: www.northbranfordschools.org. The website also posts information about monthly Board of Education meetings and related information. If you have any questions about the applicability of a particular policy to a specific situation, questions may be directed to an appropriate district administrator.

Some important policies and/or state statutes that warrant your attention include the following:

Student Records Policy or FERPA Notice

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, ‘directory’ information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. Parents will be informed about directory information, if any, and be afforded a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, or you may contact them at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office
 U.S. Department of education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Equal Education Opportunity & Non-Discrimination

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, or disability, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law.

Title IX: Grievance Procedure and Coordinator

It is the policy of the North Branford Board of Education that any form of sex discrimination or sexual harassment is forbidden, 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 the Board’s sex discrimination and sexual harassment policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Definitions

Sex discrimination occurs when a person, because of his or her sex, is denied participation in or the benefits of any education program receiving federal financial assistance.

Sexual harassment: In a school setting, sexual harassment is conduct that 1) is sexual in nature; 2) is unwelcome; and 3) denies or limits a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from a school’s educational program. Sexual harassment can be verbal, nonverbal or physical. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are examples of sexual conduct prohibited by this policy:

1. Statements or other conduct indicating that a student’s submission to, or rejection of, sexual overtures or advances will affect the student’s grades and/or other academic progress.

2. Unwelcome attention and/or advances of a sexual nature, including verbal comments, sexual invitations, leering and physical touching.
3. Display of sexually suggestive objects, or use of sexually suggestive or obscene remarks, invitations, letters, emails, text messages, notes, slurs, jokes, pictures, cartoons, epithets or gestures.
4. Touching of a sexual nature or telling sexual or dirty jokes.
5. Transmitting or displaying emails or websites of a sexual nature.
6. Using computer systems, including email, instant messaging, text messaging, blogging or the use of social networking websites, or other forms of electronic communications, to engage in any conduct prohibited by this policy.

Complaint Procedure

1. It is the express policy of the Board of Education to encourage victims of sex discrimination or sexual harassment to promptly report such claims. Timely reporting of complaints facilitates the investigation and resolution of such complaints.
2. As soon as a student feels that he or she has been subjected to sex discrimination or sexual harassment, he/she should make a written complaint to the building principal, or his/her designee, or to a district Title IX Coordinator listed below. The student will be provided a copy of the Board's policy and regulation and made aware of his or her rights.
3. The complaint should state the:
 - A. Name of the complainant,
 - B. Date of the complaint,
 - C. Date(s) of the alleged harassment/discrimination,
 - D. Name(s) of the harasser(s) or discriminator(s),
 - E. Location where such harassment/discrimination occurred,
 - F. Names of any witness(es) to the harassment/discrimination, and
 - G. Detailed statement of the circumstances constituting the alleged harassment/discrimination.
4. Any student who makes an oral complaint of harassment or sex discrimination to any of the above-mentioned personnel will be provided a copy of this regulation and will be requested to make a written complaint pursuant to the above procedure. In appropriate circumstances, due to the age of the student making the complaint, a parent or school administrator may be permitted to fill out the form on the student's behalf.
5. If the complainant is a minor student, the person to whom the complaint is given should consider whether a child abuse report should be completed.
6. All complaints are to be forwarded immediately to the building principal or designee unless that individual is the subject of the complaint, in which case the complaint should be forwarded directly to the Superintendent of Schools. In

addition, a copy of any complaint filed under this policy shall be forwarded to the Title IX Coordinator.

7. Upon receipt of a sexual harassment or sex discrimination complaint, the Title IX Coordinator shall either promptly commence an investigation of the complaint, or shall designate a school administrator to investigate the complaint. The Title IX Coordinator or designee shall consult with all individuals reasonably believed to have relevant information, including the complainant, the alleged harasser/discriminator and any witnesses to the conduct. The investigation shall be carried on discreetly, maintaining confidentiality insofar as possible while still conducting an effective and thorough investigation.
8. The Title IX Coordinator or designee shall make a written report summarizing the results of the investigation and proposed disposition of the matter. Consistent with state and federal law and as deemed appropriate by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, the findings of the investigation shall be shared with persons involved in the investigation.
9. If the student complainant is dissatisfied with the findings of the investigation, he or she may file a written appeal to the Title IX Coordinator, or, if he or she conducted the investigation, to the Superintendent of Schools, who shall review the Title IX Coordinator or designee's written report, the information collected by the Title IX Coordinator or designee together with the recommended disposition of the complaint to determine whether the alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or sex discrimination. The Title IX Coordinator or Superintendent of Schools may also investigate the complaint further. After completing this review, the Title IX Coordinator or Superintendent of Schools shall respond to the complainant, in writing, as soon as possible.

If after a thorough investigation, there is reasonable cause to believe that sexual harassment or sex discrimination has occurred, the district shall take appropriate corrective action in an effort to ensure that it ceases and will not recur.

Retaliation against any individual who complains pursuant to the Board's policy and regulations is strictly prohibited. The district will take actions necessary to prevent retaliation as a result of filing a complaint.

Title IX Coordinator

The district Title IX Coordinators are:

Donald A Winnicki
Director, Personnel and Business
1332 Middletown Avenue
Northford, CT 06472
(203) 484-1440

Dr. Kris Lindsay
Principal, TVES
1388 Middletown Avenue
Northford, CT 06472
(203) 484-1455

Green Cleaning Products Notification

This notice is in response to §10-231g of the Connecticut General Statutes, regarding our “green cleaning” plan effective July 1, 2011. This information is also available on the district website and may be updated throughout the year. The following environmentally preferable cleaning products will be used on a daily basis:

- Stetson PC101 neutral and glass cleaner
- Stetson PC108 spray and wipe cleaner
- Stetson PC116 non-acid restroom cleaner
- Stetson PC117 winterclean
- Stetson PC120 peroxide multi-use cleaner
- Afflab Classic Touch hand soap
- For floor care, we have been using a Clarke Boost water-based mechanical stripper to the extent possible. To supplement this process, we will use Stetson PC118 EPS stripper or Harmony stripper, and Transcend floor finish.

Asbestos Containing Materials in School

In accordance with §19a-333-1 through 19a-333-13 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, “Asbestos Containing Materials in Schools”, we are required to inform you that asbestos containing materials have been identified in various areas of the school, primarily in maintenance areas not accessible to students. Much of this material has been removed. What remains is included in an Operations and Maintenance program.

The building will be inspected every six (6) months to determine any changes in the conditions of the materials. Additionally, the buildings are thoroughly reinspected every three years by CT licensed asbestos inspectors following the same basic criteria as the original inspection.

Updated copies of the asbestos management plan are available in the school office during normal business hours for review.

Pesticide Application

Staff, parents or guardians may register for prior notification of pesticide applications at the school. Notice will be provided by any means practicable to any person who has requested notification on or before the date that such application is to take place at the school. The notice will include 1) the name of the active ingredient, 2) the target pest, 3) the location of the application on school property, 4) the date of the application, and 5) the name of the administrator who may be contacted for additional information.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND NOTICES

Non-Emergency Invasive Physical Examinations/Screenings

If the school district wishes to conduct any non-emergency, invasive physical examinations/screenings, other than those required by state law, the district must notify parents of the approximate dates of such examinations/screenings at the beginning of the school year. The Board must also have a policy governing the conduct of these non-emergency examinations/screenings that comports with the PPRA, as revised by NCLB.

Notification to Parents of Their Right to Know Teacher Qualifications

School districts that receive Title I funds must notify parents of students enrolled in Title I schools of their right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child’s teachers and paraprofessionals. This notice must be provided at the beginning of the school year and must be in an “understandable” and “uniform” format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

Parental Access to Curricular Materials Policy

School Districts must alert parents to the existence of the Board’s policy with respect to their right to access certain curricular materials. This notice may be included in the PPRA notice discussed below.

Parental Involvement Policy

School districts must notify parents of students eligible to participate in Title I, Part A programs of the existence of the school’s written parental involvement policy. Schools must invite parents to an annual informational meeting to inform them about the school’s participation in Title I programs and explain the requirements and their right to be involved.

Student Privacy Policy or PPRA Notice

School districts must send an annual notice to all parents in the district advising them of the Board’s student privacy policies and parent/student rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (“PPRA”). This notice should be sent at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time after any substantial revision to student privacy policies.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Student Handbook. We hope that your child has a very successful school year!