

Totoket Valley Elementary School Student Handbook 2017-2018



Vision Statement

TVES is a school of excellence where all members demonstrate continuous academic growth within a positive school climate.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of TVES to provide rigorous instruction, high expectations for learning and behavior, and opportunities for creative expression within a safe and positive school climate. 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 so they will demonstrate continuous progress.

Core Beliefs

- *All students will reach high levels of academic achievement.*
- *High quality instruction will result in improved learning outcomes for all students.*
- *All members of the school community are accountable for student learning.*
- *The strength of a community is tied to the quality of its public schools.*

We Value

- *Rigorous, relevant, and high quality instruction*
- *Student effort, engagement, and perseverance in the learning process*
- *Continuous improvement by systematically assessing our actions and outcomes*
- *Fostering students’ creativity, innovation, and inquisitiveness in problem-solving*
- *The responsible use of technology in the pursuit of knowledge and communication*
- *Diversity in backgrounds, races, cultures, perspectives, interests, and abilities*
- *Reflective practices that result in learning from successes as well as setbacks*
- *Honesty and integrity in all interactions*
- *Inclusive practices that provide opportunity, equity, fairness, and acceptance*
- *Safe, respectful choices that promote the health, physical and mental well-being of all school community members*
- *Music, art, and other forms of creative expression to develop well-rounded individuals*
- *Parents as their child’s first teacher and essential partners in their child’s education*
- *Community service and ecological awareness to become responsible members of our local and global society.*

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

School Organization

Totoket Valley Elementary School (TVES) serves students in grade 3 through 5. Each teacher provides instruction in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and/or 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 and Computer Lab. Special services are provided to students who are eligible for additional support.

Our teachers work in teams within a Professional Learning Community (PLC). PLCs collectively design instruction and assessments, monitor students' learning and progress using data and other sources of evidence, share best practices, and plan other instructional activities.

Students are assigned to one specific (homeroom) teacher, but they may work with any one of the teachers on the team. Our students may switch classes for Math, RTI, Science, and Social Studies so students may work with different teachers for different subjects throughout the year.

Emergency School Closing

If school is closed due to inclement weather, the North Branford School District's automatic voice recording system will contact families via a pre-recorded voice message. Local radio and TV stations will also release "No School" announcements. 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 are typically rescheduled in June.

School Hours: Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Instructional Hours

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 may be dropped off before 8:00 AM unless they are enrolled in the Family Resource Center (FRC). We do not have staff available to supervise them and ensure their safety before this time.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Parents can help make our morning drop-offs safer by doing the following: (1) encourage your child to ride the school bus whenever possible; (2) refrain from using your cell phone during drop-off so you can attend to your child and the directions of staff members on duty; (3) drive all the way up to the purple "Student Drop Off" sign before letting students out of the car, even if traffic is backed up; (4) remind your child to be ready to exit the car with his/her coat on and backpack ready to pick up; (5) only let students out of the **passenger's side** of the car. This will prevent children from walking into oncoming traffic; (6) follow the arrows and the boundaries of the designated lane and not attempt to bypass them. Parents are also reminded to follow the same procedures when dropping off/picking up children from FRC.

Please note that students may not be dropped off in the front of the building for any reason because this area is reserved for buses only. Parents must use the drop-off area on the far left side of the parking lot. These procedures must be followed to ensure the safety of students. Parents or designees who are picking up a child at the regular time must enter the building from the cafeteria door. Identification will be required by the person on duty during pick-up. They will then be permitted to sign the child out, and staff members will call the child forward to be collected.

Parent Authorization

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 at the front desk and wait for the student to meet them there.

Parent Access

Please note that school officials will not deny a parent access to their child unless the school has a copy of a restraining order or similar legal paperwork indicating that this is required. Verbal notice is not sufficient for this purpose. If the school officials feel that a child may be in jeopardy by accompanying a particular adult, then the police and/or Department of Children and Families (DCF) and/or local North Branford police will be contacted immediately.

Student Attendance

Please help us support your child's success by making sure he/she arrives to school on time each day, and stay for the duration of the day, unless he/she is ill. Our pace of instruction is rigorous, so any absence will have a detrimental effect on students' academic achievement. Lost instructional time is never recovered, even if the child makes up missed work or assessments. An absent child will not have the benefit of direct instruction, class discussion, group work, and guided practice. As a result, he/she will return to school behind his/her classmates, placing him/her at a disadvantage.

Teachers are not able to provide advanced work for students to complete prior to or during scheduled absences due to vacation (or similar). Homework and class work is assigned on a day-to-day basis based on the learning that takes place during each class period, and is subject to change. However, reasonable attempts to help the child catch up will be made upon his/her return to school.

Students who have perfect attendance during the school year will be recognized on the last day(s) of school with an announcement and special certificate.

Attendance and Truancy Regulations

A full copy of the North Branford School District's attendance policy can be found on the district website: northbranfordschools.org. Hover on the "Board of Education" tab, scroll down to "policies" and click on "students." You will find Policy P1020 listed there.

For your convenience, the most salient points have been summarized:

- Students are considered absent if they attend for less than one-half of the school day.
- If your child is absent, you must personally speak to an office secretary to confirm the absence. A voice mail message, text, or email will not suffice. If this does not occur, an office secretary will attempt to call you to verify the absence to make sure you know your child is not in school and that he/she is fully accounted for.
- Any absence before the student's 10th absence is excused provided that the parent/guardian provides a written note to the school or personally speaks to an office secretary within 10 days. If either of these do not occur, the absence will be considered "unexcused."
- If a student is absent 10 or more times, he/she will be excused only for the following reasons:
 - student illness (verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional);
 - religious holidays;
 - mandated court appearances (documentation required);
 - funeral or death in the family, or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
 - extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance and this regulation. (Vacations do not qualify).
 - lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends.
- The determination of whether an absence is excused is made by the building principal. Parents/guardians may appeal that decision to the Superintendent, whose decision is final.

Other considerations:

- A student serving an out of school suspension or expulsion will be reported as absent unless he or she receives an alternative educational program.
- On early dismissal days and days shortened due to inclement weather, the regular school day for attendance purposes is considered to be the amount of instructional time offered to students on that day. For example, if school is open for four hours on a shortened day scheduled, a student must be present for a minimum of two hours in order to be considered "in attendance."
- The district is required to provide data on truancy in the strategic school profile report for each school to comply with federal requirements.

Truancy:

- A student will be considered "truant" if he/she has accrued four unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten unexcused absences from school in any school year.
- If a student is truant, the building principal or his/her designee will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian and appropriate school personnel to review and evaluate the reasons for the student's truancy. This meeting will be held no later than ten days after the student becomes truant. The district will document the meeting, and if parent or other person declines to attend the meeting, or is non responsive, the meeting will proceed.
- If a student is truant, the principal or designee will coordinate services with and referrals of students to community agencies providing child and family services, as appropriate.
- If the parent/guardian of a student who is truant fails to attend the meeting or otherwise fails to cooperate with the school in attempting to solve the truancy problem, the principal or designee will file, within fifteen calendar days, a written complaint with the Superior Court alleging the belief that the acts or omissions of the truant are such that his/her family is a family with service needs (FWSN).
- A regular education student who is experiencing attendance problems will be referred to the building RTI team to consider the need for additional interventions. The team will also consider whether the student should be referred to a planning and placement team ("PPT") meeting to review the student's need and eligibility for special education. A special education student who is experiencing attendance problems will be referred to a PPT meeting for program review.

School Bus Transportation

DATTCO

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 and are reviewed annually and subject to change. The bus driver does not have the authority to change stops. Please be advised that any concerns regarding the job performance of a bus driver will not be resolved at the school level, but will be forwarded to Central Office and DATTCO. If you have any questions about school bus transportation, contact DATTCO at 203-466-1244.

Peer Conflicts

Sometimes students experience conflicts with the peers on the bus. Students are encouraged to discuss any problems that may arise with their classroom teacher or bus room teacher who will help them resolve it. School mental health staff members are also available to provide support and mediation. Parents may not board the school bus for the purposes of resolving these conflicts or attempt to reprimand or interrogate a child who is not their own. Instead, parents

may contact the school with concerns and they will be resolved expeditiously.

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. 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

The North Branford School District is committed to provide a safe learning environment for all students. To accomplish this, the following procedures are in place:

- The main entrance doors (and all exterior doors) are locked. A buzzer system is used by the door greeter and/or security officer to permit visitors access to the building.
- If a visitor would like to access the school building, he/she is required to provide their photo identification to the door greeter, sign the visitor's log, and obtain a visitor's badge. The badge must be worn in a visible location for the duration of the visit.
- The visitor's photo ID will be held at the greeter's desk until the visitor signs-out of the building. This is intended to discourage visitors from leaving the school through an emergency exit instead of the main doors. We need to know who is in the building at all times. Visitors must return to the greeter's desk to collect their ID, turn in their badge, and sign-out of the building.
- If a parent is picking up their child early due to illness or for an appointment, etc, he/she must show ID, but will not be required to leave the ID or wear a badge because he/she will remain at the greeter's desk. The child will be called to the main office, and then report to the greeter's desk to be released directly to the parent. Similarly, if parents are bringing their child to school late, they may simply sign-in their child at the greeter's desk and depart.
- During dismissal, parent pick-up occurs in the cafeteria. The side cafeteria door is open at that time, and a staff member is stationed at the (interior) door to check photo IDs against the approved pick-up list. Other staff members supervise the children. Parents sign-out their child, and students are released to their parents. The security officer is stationed nearby to ensure the safety of all parties during dismissal.
- There are no exceptions to our visitor rules, ***even if the greeter, staff member, or security officer knows the visitor***. If a visitor doesn't have photo ID, then he/she will have to go back to the car or home to retrieve it. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause. We believe that consistency will prevent lapses from occurring, and it is important that we maintain our vigilance around security matters.

- Students who are taking the bus home are assigned to bus rooms. They line up and when their bus number is called, they are escorted to their bus by a staff member through the main doors. We separate the bus route from the parent pick-up area so we can clearly monitor the comings and goings of our students. If parents entered the main doors as students were departing through them, they might collect their child without a staff member knowing about it, triggering a false missing child alert.
- Different security procedures are in place before and after school hours depending on the groups that are using the building at the time.
- We conduct regular lock-down and fire drills so students develop an automatic understanding of what to do in an emergency situation.

Visitors

The Board of Education School Visitor Policy (P4070) 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 or school event, 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, assemblies, Open House, Back to School Night, special themed luncheons, Evening of the Arts, band rehearsals and concerts, Eco Fair, Field Day, Invention Convention, Variety Show, and others. Parents also have the opportunity to volunteer in the school by becoming room parents, attending PTO meetings, or helping with PTO functions such as the holiday sale, the Teacher Appreciation luncheon, Scholastic Book Fair, Mother’s Day flower sale, and distribution of items from fundraisers, just to name a few.

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 email, twitter, the school website, automatic voice messages, and written correspondence. Our staff will actively look for opportunities to invite interested parents into the school building and include them as important members of the school community.

School Nurse

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 and/or injury 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.

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.

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.

Life Threatening Allergies

Anaphylaxis

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.

Routine Snack Procedures

To avoid anaphylaxis as the result of allergen exposure, classroom snack procedures will be implemented if there is a child with a food allergy in the classroom. Procedures will be based on the specific needs of the allergic child in collaboration with his/her parents/guardian, medical provider, and the school nurse. Teachers will send home specific information about snack procedures if this is the case.

In addition, there are designated “nut free” cafeteria tables (or tables with similar labels based on the food allergen) for allergic students. Students who bring lunches containing the allergen will not be permitted to sit at those tables. The school cannot guarantee that other children will not bring “hidden” ingredients that may contain a given allergen, but reasonable precautions will be taken to prevent this. Staff members are not responsible for checking food labels. Students may not bring a snack to share with their classmates. Please see District Wellness Regulations for further information.

Mental Health Staff

School-Based Counseling Services

The School Social Worker, Ms. Masselle, and School Psychologist, Ms. Colonese, are 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. School-based counseling services are different from privately obtained counseling in that they maintain a focus on the student’s behavior, social interactions, and/or academic achievement specific to the school setting.

Consultation and Other Services

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.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution

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. Their follow-up with students usually includes mediation and conflict resolution. Parents will be notified of any issues of concern that may arise (e.g. hands-on behavior, name-calling, etc.)

Parental Consent

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

Positive Behavior Intervention Support

Background

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) is a positive and proactive approach to encouraging good behavior in school. We work closely with students to make sure they understand our behavior expectations in all settings. We reward students who demonstrate excellent behavior, and support our students who make poor choices using a continuum of strategies aimed to help them improve their behavior. Our goal is to create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, confident, and successful.

RTI Behavior Team

The RTI Behavior Team meets regularly to discuss specific student concerns and monitor students' progress. They also provide immediate crisis intervention as needed. Mental health staff administer behavioral and emotional screenings to all students in the fall to identify those who may need support. The team tracks patterns of behavior using a database, and develops targeted, time limited interventions for students who require more support. In the event that a student does not respond to tiered interventions, he/she may be referred to special education for further evaluation.

ROCKS

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. Students are awarded ROCKS cards when they are observed going above and beyond typical expectations to help a peer or adult, or generally make choices that distinguish them as a role model. Students may either keep their ROCKS cards or submit them in a basket raffle for a reward of their choice (e.g. lunch with a staff member, extra computer time, etc.) Raffles are usually drawn weekly or biweekly. Winners are announced over the loudspeaker and/or during school assemblies.

Students of the Month

Each month, a male and female student from each grade is recognized as being a “Student of the Month” for demonstrating exemplary behavior that reflects our ROCKS expectations. Selected students are announced over the loudspeaker and/or during a school-wide assembly. They receive a special certificate, and their picture is posted on the bulletin board. Being a Student of the Month is an honor, and indicates that a child has been singled out as a role model for others.

ROCKS Assemblies

Each month we have a ROCKS assembly to promote a sense of school community. Parents and guardians are welcome to join us. We celebrate our Students of the Month, select Magic Mailbox and Artist Spotlight winners, announce fundraisers, and showcase other student accomplishments. We also enjoy a visit from our school mascot, Rocky the Rockhopper penguin!

Misbehavior

We recognize that children 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.

Behavior Referral

A behavior 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 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 except during a designated “hat day” associated with a school fundraiser or classroom reward.

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, who work together as an

extension of the RTI Behavior Team.

It is important to note that it is often not possible to obtain a completely accurate picture of what has transpired between students. 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 interview all students involved, including any witnesses. The responder will strive to be fair, consistent, and timely in his/her dealings with the children involved. During an investigation a number of factors are considered, including the age/grade of the student, credibility of individuals interviewed, past discipline records, if any, the presence or absence of physical evidence, and whether or not other students were encouraged to participate in poor decision-making (e.g. ganging-up on another student(s)). Ultimately, the responder(s) will collaborate with the building principal (and any other relevant staff members) to determine the outcome of an investigation. The principal will use her judgment to assign disciplinary action.

In the event that an incident is very serious in nature, the police may be contacted. This may occur at the principal's discretion if a student makes a serious verbal or written threat (including a cyber threat) that indicates plans to harm another person(s) that is interpreted as substantive, specific, and potentially actionable. Parents will be immediately informed if police intend to interview a minor and/or visit the home for safety purposes. In these rare cases, every effort will be made to protect the intended victim(s), including notifying the family.

It is important to note that a student who makes a threat does not always pose a threat. However, all threats warrant serious consideration and a timely, thorough investigation. The steps undertaken during the investigation will help guide the responding adult in terms of how to best proceed. Sometimes a simple reprimand or phone call home is all that is required. School-based counseling services may also assist an individual who is feeling angry or frustrated. Regardless of the severity or the outcome, the building principal is always involved in this decision-making process as part of a collaborative process.

Parents of all involved students are contacted after the investigation is completed. The parent of the child who reportedly misbehaved will be informed of any consequences assigned for their child's alleged actions. School staff members will be informed of events on a need to know basis (e.g. if they are responsible for supervising the children involved). Oftentimes, increased supervision will take place as a preventative measure.

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. As previously stated parents may not board the school bus to question or reprimand another child for any reason. Instead, they are encouraged to call school staff members who will immediately look into any problems that may have occurred.

Behavior Referral Form

As previously mentioned, 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 the principal, mental health staff, lead teacher, dean of students, and/or other members of the RTI Behavior Team. 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. Parents do not have the option to alter or refuse school based consequences, even if they do not agree with them. If a parent chooses to keep their child home on a day that their child is scheduled to serve a detention or suspension, the consequence will move to the next school day until it is served.

Behavior Referral Form

Student Name: _____ **Location**
Date: _____ **Time:** _____ Playground Specials
Teacher: _____ Cafeteria Bathroom
Grade: _____ **Referring Staff:** _____ 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 ● Non-injurious 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 hitting, 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 it ● Threatening language/threats ● 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.

Detention

Students who are involved in a “major” incident or establish a pattern of “minor” behaviors may receive a detention or suspension at the discretion of the building principal based on the findings of an investigation. A detention is served for an hour immediately following the school day. Students typically report to the main office or another designated setting. They may work on homework or read quietly at that time. Parents are responsible for providing transportation after the detention is served. Reasonable attempts will be made to identify a convenient day for the detention to be served, but all detentions must be served within 5 school days of the incident.

In School Suspension (ISS)

Students who are involved in “major” incidents such as bullying, fighting, and other serious behaviors may receive an in school suspension. In school suspensions are usually served in an office or other designated space with adult supervision provided. Specific suspension rules will be mailed home if this consequence is assigned.

Out of School Suspension (OSS)

As the name reflects, out of school suspensions take place away from the school setting (e.g. home). They do not often occur at the grade 3-5 level. Specific suspension rules will be mailed home if this consequence is assigned.

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 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 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. 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 the parents of all involved children will be notified. Measures may also be administered preventatively, even if the behavior was not designated as “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 informally documented via investigation notes or similar	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	Mental health staff will be	Student will meet with a

will be notified	notified; a counseling referral may be generated	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. Child may be assigned an adult escort.

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.

Internet Safety for Parents (excerpt from kidshealth.org)

Internet and Social Media

For many students, the internet and social media are important parts of their lives and a fun way to communicate with others. It is essential that we teach them how to be safe online. Children don't always make the smartest choices when they post something to a site like Facebook or YouTube, and this can lead to problems.

For instance, without meaning to, children can easily share more online than they should. One study showed that 9 out of 10 teens post photos of themselves online or use their real names on their profiles; 8 out of 10 reveal their birthdates and interests; and 7 out of 10 post their school name and the town where they live. Actions like this can make kids easy targets for online predators and others who might want to cause them harm. Photos, videos, and comments made online usually can't be taken back once they're posted. Even after a child thinks something has been deleted, it can be impossible to completely erase it from the Internet. Children also can face the possibility of a physical encounter with the wrong person. Many newer apps automatically reveal the poster's location when they're used. This can tell anyone out there exactly where to find the person using the app. Posting an inappropriate photo can damage a child's reputation in ways that may cause problems years later — such as when a potential employer or college admissions officer does a background check. And if a child sends a mean-spirited tweet as a joke, it could be very hurtful to someone else and even taken as a threat, which can result in police intervention.

It's essential that parents are aware of what their children are doing online. Parents can help keep children grounded in the real world by putting limits on media use. Keep computers in public areas in the house, avoid laptops and smartphones in bedrooms, and set some rules on the use of technology (such as no cell phones at the dinner table). Privacy settings and passwords can be used for additional protection. Parents can download apps that allow them to view their child's online accounts, including cell phone use (e.g. texts). For additional suggestions, visit: internetsafetyconcepts.com.

TVES takes internet safety very seriously. Our computer labs and ipads are filtered and monitored carefully in school. We also actively educate students about internet safety and digital footprints during library and computer lab classes.

Digital Footprint

Please take a moment to review the concept of “digital footprint” with your child. It will be taught in school as well. The following can be read verbatim, or you can simply pick and choose the sections that you think are most important.

“Digital footprint describes the trail, traces, or “footprints” that people leave behind when they use social media and other online resources. It includes things that others post or put up about you. It also includes photos you, your friends, family, or anyone else puts online.

What you do online can be seen by everyone, copied and passed on – even to people you do not know! It can affect what people think about you. Later in life, it can affect college admissions and job applications.

What can you do? Keep your personal details private. Use a nickname instead of your real name and always ask your parents before giving out your name, address, or phone number online. Do not show your username or password to anyone (except your parents).

Think before you post! Once something is posted, it can difficult or impossible to remove. Don't post things that you don't want others to know about you or that you wouldn't say to their face. And be respectful of other people's content that you post or share.”

Before you...



THINK!

T = Is it True?
H = Is it Helpful?
I = Is it Inspiring?
N = Is it Necessary?
K = Is it Kind?

Tip for Parents:

Sometimes parents are not as technologically savvy as our children. For those of us who feel intimidated by or uninformed about technology, we simply can't afford to avoid the reality that our children are accessing it on a daily basis. Knowledge is power, and our kids are counting on us to keep them safe.

Fortunately, we have many tech-savvy employees at our school. They are a resource for you, and will happily answer your internet questions or address your concerns. They will even go online with you and help you problem-solve specific situations. Don't be reluctant to ask for help – we are here for you!

A TVES Technology team meets regularly to discuss concerns related to internet safety. You are welcome to contact any one of them if you need assistance. They include, but are not limited to the following:

- Joe Amodio, Lead Teacher/Third Grade Teacher
- Annie Masselle, Dean of Students/School Social Worker
- Carrie Seiden, School Librarian
- Kathi Maler, Technology Specialist

Your child's classroom teacher may (or may not) be able to assist you as well. In addition, we have provided internet safety resources on our website for your convenience. I hope this is helpful to you in monitoring your child's internet safety.

District Health and Wellness Regulations

North Branford Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of wellness, good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of children.

With regard to food-related activities and events that occur before and during the school day, they must be aligned with the specific curriculum or cultural related event. Food will not be allowed to be distributed purely for a birthday or celebratory event outside of the specific curriculum or cultural related activity that is approved by the building principal.

Accordingly, the following will NOT be allowed in the District as follows unless it relates to a specific curriculum or cultural related activity identified by a teacher, and is approved by the building principal:

- Daily or monthly birthday celebrations involving food items;
- Parent/caregiver supplying snacks to children other than their own;
- Sale of food/snacks by an individual or group/organization to other children.

At any school allowed function, healthy food choice options will be available.

A complete copy of the District Nutrition Guidelines is available on the TVES website. A hard copy can be made available to you at your request.

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 \$2.50 and subject to change. Students may purchase lunch tickets for five meals for \$12.50 or for twenty meals for \$50.00. Parents can also use PowerLunch, the online system for food service payments, by logging on to <http://northbranford.revtrak.net/> to make payment or check your child's balance any time of the day. More information about PowerLunch can be found on our website at <http://totoket.northbranfordschools.org>. 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 will 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. Students may not share food with their peers for any reason. 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.

Cafeteria staff members report directly to the Supervisor of Food Service, Mr. Michael Auger. He is also responsible for menu items, prices and payment, serving procedures, and related matters. He can be contacted at (203) 484-1440 with any questions or concerns.

Catching Rays in the Cafe

Behavior Expectations in the Café

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 student table washer is identified prior to the lunch wave (selected by teacher). Students with food allergies will not serve as table washers to avoid contact with allergens.
- 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.

- Students must clean up after themselves at the end of the lunch wave. They should check the floor for dropped items or spills. 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.

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.

Rewards

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. A range of incentives are provided throughout the year to keep students engaged in this program. The more stars they earn, the more significant their rewards will be. Smaller rewards may include homework passes, a few minutes of extra recess, computer time, etc. Larger rewards may include a theme day (e.g. pajama day, crazy hair day), a class movie, or a class party.

Health and Wellness Activities at TVES

Field Day

Field Day typically takes place in June on the soccer fields (weather permitting). All students have the opportunity to sign up for special relays and contests that they practice during gym class. Students are challenged to use different physical skills than the ones required for organized sports. For instance, they may compete in a three-legged race, a barrel roll, balloon popping, a sack race, and various team-building exercises. Each class purchases t-shirts (at a nominal price) with their own unique color or design to foster a sense of classroom spirit. At the end of Field Day, a winning class is selected at each grade level, and then for the entire school. It's a great day for everyone!

Girls and Boys Talk

In the spring, TVES coordinates separate Girls Talk and Boys Talk for fifth graders. Guest presenters provide information and facilitate discussion on the physical changes that accompany the onset of adolescence. This event is optional, and parents are welcome to attend.

Jump Rope for Heart

All students participate in our annual Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser that promotes exercise, nutrition, and an awareness of cardiac health. Proceeds are donated to the American Heart Association. Individuals who raise the most money are given special awards.

Health and Wellness Expo

The Jump Rope for Heart assembly is the culminating event of the Health and Wellness Expo. As part of the Expo, each class researches a specific health topic and educates other students at a special information booth set up in the gym. We also invite special guests to join us, such as karate teachers, yoga instructors, and Zumba experts. It's a great learning experience for everyone!

EcoFair

TVES acknowledges Earth Day during the month of April with an annual EcoFair. The EcoFair incorporates health, science, and ecological awareness into one event. Similar to the Health and Wellness Expo, each classroom selects a special topic of study and shares their learning with their peers at an informational booth in the gym. Earth-friendly items are available for sale, and a raffle is held with special earth-themed prizes. Third graders perform earth-themed songs at the kick-off assembly, which takes place in the morning. Special presenters are available to teach students about bee-keeping, Arbor Day, animal preservation, and other topics. It is a memorable day for all participants.

Recess

All students have at least 25 minutes of recess each day. A schedule is designed to provide students with access to both playscapes during the course of the school year. We also have a wall ball court, swings, and asphalt surfaces that are ideally suited to hopscotch and four square.

During inclement weather, we provide indoor recess as an alternative to going outside. Students have access to board games, Legos, puzzles, and similar materials to engage them during this time.

Totoket Trotters, a running and walking incentive program that takes place during recess, reflects an effort to promote healthy lifestyles, goal setting, and to provide third, fourth and fifth grade students with opportunities to expend their energy in a positive way. Students opt to run laps around the field during their regularly scheduled recess block once a week, and earn charms for every mile they run or walk. Dedicated students may work up to a half-marathon through this program, and some may even reach marathon status by the end of this school year. According to staff members, *Trotters* has proven to increase focus in classrooms. It has also helped reduce negative recess behaviors. Totoket Trotters is possible due to the support of the PTO and parent volunteers.

Communication

Contacting Staff Members

TVES 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 at 203-484-1455 and leave a message. All staff members have voicemail. However, the quickest way to get in touch with a teacher is usually by email. To email a staff member please type “FirstinitialLastname@northbranfordschools.org”. For instance, the principal may be reached at Klindsay@northbranfordschools.org. Staff members will strive to respond to parent queries within 24 (school) hours.

Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking and microblogging service that enables users to send and read "tweets", which are messages limited to 140 characters. Registered users can read and post tweets. Users access Twitter through the website interface, or mobile device app.

Follow our *Twitter* account to receive instant access photos, announcements, and information about our school. We update our twitter site frequently throughout the week to share school news and the small every-day moments that parents may not always be able to see.

It is very simple to sign up for an account. Simply go here: <https://twitter.com/> and enter your full name, email address, and a password then click the Sign Up for Twitter button. Your request to follow us will usually be approved within 24 hours. Once your account is active, search for [@TVES_nb](https://twitter.com/TVES_nb) to begin following our daily tweets!

For more information, or additional assistance contact: Joe Amodio (jamodio@northbranfordschools.org) or Annie Masselle (amasselle@northbranfordschools.org)

School Website

The school website provides information about student activities and school events, PTO information, updates, and related information. It is not updated as frequently as our twitter account, so you are encouraged to access both. The website may be viewed at totoket.northbranfordschools.org. All certified staff members have webpages that are linked to the school site and may be accessed by parents, as well.

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.

Automatic Telephone Messaging System

Totoket Valley communications are supported by a telephone messaging service, SchoolMessenger, which allows the sending of personalized voice messages and emails to parents and families. 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 and email addresses they would like to have included in our system.

Reporting Student Progress

Standards-Based Report Card

TVES utilizes a standards-based report card in an effort to focus what students learn, rather than what they earn. Our goal is to shift the mindset of students and parents to reflect more on what the student is learning (and how they can improve) rather than what the student is earning, especially at the elementary level. Students are graded on the development of skills and knowledge, what they know and can do, rather than their completion of assignments. Students will be provided multiple opportunities to meet the standards and are offered a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning.

Four Essential Elements to a Standards Based System:

1. The content standards that describe what a student should know and be able to do at a given grade-level;
2. The standards-based curriculum or roadmap a teacher uses to ensure that instruction targets these standards;
3. The assessments that a teacher uses to measure learning and the extent to which a student has met the standards; and finally,
4. The reporting tool that allows a teacher to communicate accurately a student's progress towards meeting standards at critical junctures throughout the school year.

Considering Assessment Purpose

Student work is assessed frequently (formative assessment) and graded occasionally (summative assessment). "Scores" on formative and other practice work (e.g., homework) are used descriptively to inform teachers and students of what has been learned and the next steps in learning. Reporting grades are based on summative assessments.

Elementary Standards-Based Grading Definitions

Diagnostic Assessment (Pre-Testing) – takes place prior to instruction; designed to determine a student's strengths, knowledge or skills in order to identify student needs. Teachers will communicate these results but not include them in the overall grade.

Formative Assessment (Practice) – designed to provide direction for improvement and/or adjustment to a program for individual students or for a whole class. Includes: quizzes, initial drafts/attempts, homework, and questioning during instruction. Teachers will communicate these results and provide feedback, but not include them in the overall grade.

Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning) – designed to provide information to be used in making judgments about a student’s achievement at the end of a period of instruction, including quizzes, tests, exams, quarterly assessments, final drafts, assignments, projects and performances. Summative assessments provide measurable evidence of learning and therefore will be counted for the overall grade.

Impacting Assessment Practices

Assessment, grading, and record keeping are among the most important tasks a classroom teacher performs. These processes help teachers determine what and how well students have learned and serve as a vehicle for providing feedback about student learning to parents and students. Standards-based learning, or SBL, calls for a clear identification of what students should know and be able to do. Increased clarity in terms of student learning goals quite naturally calls for increased accuracy in terms of assessment, grading, and record keeping.

Standards-based grading focuses on measuring students’ proficiency on a specific set of outcomes. A student’s progress toward proficiency is tracked by performance on learning tasks that align to the outcome, which encourages student ownership of the learning and allows the teacher to provide accurate feedback to the student. The goal of a standards-based approach is to clearly communicate to students and parents what is expected of the students and how to help them be successful.

Standards-based grading and reporting has little direct impact on classroom instruction – quality teaching is quality teaching regardless of the grading system being used. What SBL will impact is the focus of classroom instruction and the feedback students receive. By specifying the essential knowledge and skills the students must master, teachers select tasks and activities that will have the most impact on student learning.

Grading Scales

Achievement Scale	
4	Student exceeds grade level standard, demonstrating an understanding above and beyond what is expected at this grade level
3.5	Student consistently meets grade level standard, demonstrating an understanding above and beyond what is expected at this grade level some of the time
3	Student meets grade level standard, consistently demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level
2.5	Student is progressing toward grade level standard, demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills expected at this grade level some of the time
2	Student is progressing toward grade level standard, developing an understanding of concepts and skills taught at this grade level

1.5	Student demonstrates limited, or inconsistent progress toward grade level standard
1	Student demonstrates no progress toward grade level standard
N/E	Standard not evaluated at this time (1st and 2nd trimester only)

What does the number scale (4, 3.5, 3, 2.5, 2, 1.5, 1) on the rubric mean?

The scores on the scale represent a learning continuum and are NOT equated to grade point average. Each of the levels builds on the others and explains the learning students have to demonstrate in order to earn that score.

½ points give students additional opportunities to make progress and will be particularly motivating for students who are not the most confident test-takers. For example, a student would receive a 2.5 if he/she demonstrated mastery of a standard through daily class work, but performed poorly on the summative assessment.

Report Card Distribution and Grading

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, “Reading Comprehension” consists of different skills and strategies. Writing Connections contains different grammatical rules and spelling lists, etc. Furthermore, our expectations increase during the course of the school year. In some cases, a standard may not be formally assessed during a trimester (e.g. Geometry). In those cases the area will be grayed out.

Interpreting Report Card Data

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.

Grade Changes

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

reason(s) in support of the change, with a copy to the teacher and the parent or guardian.

Academic Support

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.

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
1	Core instruction	All students
2	Targeted intervention	Small group of students
3	Intensive intervention	Very small group of students

RTI takes place on a daily basis. Students are flexibly grouped according to their learning needs. Levels of support include:

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

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.

The Core RTI 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.

Reading Success, Math Success, and Summer Success at TVES

The TVES "Success" programs are free after school (and/or summer) tutoring programs that focus on improving the reading and/or math skills of eligible students. Eligibility is determined based on assessment data and teacher recommendations. Parents are notified of their child's eligibility via letter. Parents must provide for their child's transportation home. We strongly

encourage parents/guardians to take advantage of this excellent program. It's a great way to boost your child's academic skills!

Homework

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 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 Ms. Seiden, Library Media Specialist, Mrs. Michalowski, Language Arts Consultant, or your child's classroom teacher. The local town libraries are also excellent resources for families.

Retention Consideration

According to 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.

Retention does not occur as a punitive measure. Instead, it is intended to be an opportunity for a child to receive more instructional time working on the skills that he/she has not mastered due to absence, immaturity (i.e. young chronological age), or academic difficulty. In other words, retention is "the gift of time."

In general, it is expected that students who may require retention 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. This multidisciplinary team serves in an advisory capacity to the principal. No one data source will be used to make decisions related to retention. Instead, multiple sources of information will be considered minimally including attendance, grades, age, and a completed Light's Retention Scale. The principal makes the ultimate decision.

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. 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 prior to the last day of school.

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.

Talented and Gifted Students

Talented and gifted 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.

The North Branford Public Schools has determined that students be identified in third grade through the use of multiple criteria including a norm referenced test of aptitude and an assessment of creativity. A team reviews assessment results and identifies students who meet the criteria. Eligibility determination is made through the Planning and Placement Team process.

At TVES, 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. TVES is fortunate to have two Creative Learning Resource educators on staff, Ms. Thompson and Ms. Seiden. For additional information about this program or talented and gifted processes, please contact Mrs. Tracy Wootton, Director of Curriculum and Instruction at (203) 484-1440.

Arts Integration

TVES views the arts as an integral part of the educational program. We incorporate many strategies to provide students with opportunities for creative expression and cultivate student

leadership. Our goal is to develop students who learn to “think outside the box,” which is essential to becoming 21st Century learners.

Some examples of arts integration at TVES include the following:

- **Magic Mailbox:** The Magic Mailbox is located across from the main office. Every month, a featured contest challenges student to submit their exemplary work consistent with a given theme (e.g. comic strip, photography, poetry, etc.). From these submissions, a panel of judges select the highest quality work to showcase in the school building to celebrate artistic achievement and inspire others. In addition, students can submit any creative work that they wish to share with others, regardless of theme.
- **Arts Action Team:** The Arts Action Team helps create featured contests for the Magic Mailbox. They also announce and celebrate winners from each contest, display exemplary works, and carry-out other tasks.
- **Artist Spotlight:** Each month students who have created exemplary artwork are recognized by the Arts Action Team for their accomplishments.
- **Arts Week:** For one full week, TVES celebrates the arts by creating sculptures, working with guest artists, listening to student performances, attending virtual field trips to museums, and wearing clothes according to an artistic theme (e.g. neon day, primary color day, etc.)
- **Student Senate:** Every September students have the opportunity to run for Student Senate. They campaign within their classroom and elections are held. Each representative attends monthly meetings to plan events, discuss issues that impact the school community, and volunteer for tasks. Being a member of the Student Senate is a privilege, and all members are required to behave as peer role models or else they are asked to step down.
- **Artists in Residence:** Students have multiple opportunities to work with professional artists during the school year. Artists from The Art Spot work with students to create a tile mosaic, musicians provide instrumental workshops to band students, and story-tellers engage students deeply in a given unit of study.

Art Education

Art Class

All students participate in Art class once per week. The art teacher, Ms. Mortensen, teaches art history, artistic techniques, journaling, pottery, and other topics. Students have an opportunity to showcase their works on bulletin boards throughout the school, as well as at a district art show, community settings, and the TVES Evening of the Arts. Arts offerings are available as afterschool activities, as well. In addition, Ms. Mortensen coordinates all large scale art projects throughout the school building, coordinates a school fundraiser featuring student artwork, and

works in close collaboration with visiting artists and local museums.

Evening of the Arts

Evening of the Arts typically takes place in the spring. Each student displays a piece of two-dimensional art, as well as a piece of pottery for visitors to view. The newest large scale tile mosaic is showcased, as well. Vocalists and instrumentalists perform in the cafeteria, and refreshments are provided by PTO.

TVES Art Gallery

Reproductions of fine artwork are displayed in the hallways throughout TVES. They are intended to instill art appreciation, build students' background knowledge, create familiarity with art history, and inspire their own artwork. They also connect with visual literacy initiatives and the district partnership with the Yale British Art Museum. The pieces are grouped by artist, theme, or style (e.g. van Gogh, surrealism, pop art, sports motif, etc). In addition, there are a series of wall murals featured in the Library Media Center depicting different geographical locations. The collection is expanded each year.

Music Education

General Music

All students attend General Music class once per week. Third and fourth graders learn how to play the recorder and percussion instruments, and fifth graders learn keyboarding skills. The SmartBoard is used to provide students with interactive music instruction using the latest technology. Each year, a keyboarding recital is held for students who opt to go above and beyond classroom lessons and build performance level skills. Students also have opportunities to perform for their peers and parents. For instance, third graders perform eco-themed songs during the EcoFair. Students may also elect to participate in the TVES Chorus. They sing carols during the holidays, perform at Evening for the Arts, and travel to community venues, such as the Senior Center.

Instrumental Music

Instrumental music lessons are offered to fourth and fifth grade students. Typically, students elect to learn the flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone, although other instruments are also available. They begin by learning how to care for their instrument, read music, and play basic notes in small groups. They also develop the habit of practicing their instrument on a regular basis to improve their skills.

Instrumental students attend at least one workshop provided by professional musicians to learn more about their instrument. They also have other opportunities to attend assemblies and concerts provided by more accomplished performers. By the Spring, they begin to perform with the whole band under the direction of Mrs. Tedeschi. Parents are welcome to attend these rehearsals. Select instrumental students perform for the school as part of a Holiday Ensemble, as well as during Evening for the Arts. A whole band assembly and concert are held in the month of June for students and families.

Library Media Center

It is essential that students develop the habit of reading at home to practice their fluency and comprehension skills, build their background knowledge, and foster life-long learning. At

TVES, the library is truly the “heart” of the school. The School Librarian, Ms. Seiden, regularly expands the library collection based on the learning needs and interests of students. Each class visits the library once per week to develop research skills, learn about authors, and check-out books. Our library circulation typically exceeds 19,000 books per year. Ms. Seiden also coordinates several author visits per year so students can learn more about the process of writing and publishing. They also have the opportunity to purchase signed copies of books for their personal collections.

Ms. Seiden works in close collaboration with the town librarians to coordinate special events such as Read Across America Day, the Governor’s Summer Reading Challenge, and the Six Flags Reading Challenge. She also works with Creative Learners and other high achieving students during the Response to Intervention block, and helps coordinate the fourth grade Invention Convention, along with Ms. Thompson.

The Library Annex is designed to be a research and learning center. It houses rows of computers with internet access and instructional programs. It also contains print periodicals and large tables meant to foster group work and collaboration. There are also two computer labs at TVES, with approximately 60 desktop computers. Students visit a computer lab once per week to develop keyboarding skills, access instructional technology, learn responsible internet use, and conduct research. Students also report to the computer labs for online testing.

Other Technology

All certified staff members are assigned ipads which are used to support teaching and learning. They contain a variety of educational applications, as well as online access. Students use ipads at designated times to practice skills, look up information, or as a time-limited reward. Ipads are also used to create short films and take pictures of school events. Classroom sets of ipads are available at each grade level to enhance instruction. In addition, TVES has used telepresence technology to interact with neighboring schools, authors, historical sites, museums, and to access other learning opportunities.

After School Enrichment

We believe that it is essential for students to have opportunities to explore their interests, hobbies, and express their creativity as part of educating the “whole” child. We provide art and music education during the school day, as well as instrumental band for fourth and fifth graders. However, we also extend the school day for students who would like to participate in other engaging activities. In the past, we have offered: pottery, theater, singing, newspaper reporting, lego-building, Spanish, comic book-drawing, sports, rock-wall climbing, and cooking.

Our After School Enrichment program provides a range of programs at nominal cost to families, on a regular basis. Course offerings are first-come, first-serve and tend to reach maximum capacity very quickly. Many courses are offered several times per year, as After School Enrichment tends to have 4 enrollment periods. Information will be sent home informing parents about upcoming course enrollment.

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 Peabody Museum,

Connecticut River Museum, Tilcon, Hartford Science Center, and others. School field trip permission slips must be signed by parents. PTO funds help defray the cost of field trips, but do not usually cover the entire cost. Parents who are unable to pay for a field trip may contact the office for assistance.

For some field trips, parents may be asked to volunteer to chaperone, and we appreciate their assistance! Chaperones are asked to refrain from taking pictures of any child except their own. We also ask parents not to post field trip pictures on their social media sites (e.g. Facebook) in order to respect the confidentiality of all students, some of whom sign “opt out” forms to avoid appearing in school publications. Parents who are not chaperones may not accompany their child to a field trip unless they are invited to on the field trip form. Some venues have strict rules about maximum capacity, child/adult ratios, and may incur cost. Please note that parents may not drive their children to/from field trip sites. Children are required to take the school bus per Board of Education guidelines.

From time to time, our students may travel by bus to the North Branford Auditorium or other school in the district 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 fundraising. 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, food 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. Efforts are made to limit fundraising endeavors to one per month.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Joining the PTO is a great way to become involved in and informed about your child’s school. You can support the PTO by becoming a paid member, by attending monthly meetings, by signing up for committees, projects and events, attending functions, participating in fundraisers, and/or becoming a member of the PTO Executive Board. As you can see, there are many different ways to become part of this valuable home-school partnership. Members are welcome to share their ideas and brainstorm new ways to enrich the school community while respecting and maintaining the existing school culture. Each school in the North Branford system has its own practices, traditions, and values that make it unique.

Objectives

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.

PTO Events

The PTO funds are used in a variety of ways. They pay for cultural arts assemblies, special projects with visiting artists and guest speakers, evening events, provide assistance with field trips costs, student t-shirts, and more. Many of our most memorable events are made possible through the generous financial support of the PTO. All PTO activities must be approved by the building principal.

PTO Volunteers

PTO volunteers are important members of the TVES community. They typically coordinate two major fundraisers per year to finance events and activities. They also run special events such as the Book Fair, the Holiday Shopping Sale, the Plant Sale, as well as evening events. TVES recognizes their efforts and thanks them for their time.

PTO Meetings

As previously mentioned, monthly PTO meetings are held by the PTO board in the TVES library and are open to all parents. During these meetings information is provided about the PTO budget, including fundraising efforts. PTO members plan and exchange ideas for upcoming events and activities subject to the principal's approval. In addition, the principal or designee provides a monthly update on issues that impact the school and district. All parents are welcome.

Please see the district calendar or view the school website for a list of PTO meeting dates (subject to change in the event of inclement weather). Additional PTO information is available and periodically updated on the school website.

PTO Membership

All parent/guardians are encouraged to become members of the TVES PTO. Membership is \$10.00 per family and \$5.00 per staff member (subject to change). All proceeds are used to support special events and activities for the TVES community as described above.

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 at 203-484-4243.

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. In addition, the school twitter account has regular updates on events and activities. We assume your permission to have your child or his/her artwork photographed or videotaped is granted unless parents opt out. 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 are assigned lockers, based on availability, 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 and electronics. 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. 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.

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 may be found on the district website include the following:

Topic	Location/Tab	Heading/Policy #
Students with Disabilities	Special Education	The PPT Process

		Parent Links Parents Guide to Special Education Procedural Safeguards
Section 504	BOE Policies Special Education	P1010 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
Confidentiality and Access to Education Records	BOE Policies	P1290
Non-Discrimination	BOE Policies	P1005
Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment	BOE Policies	P1015
Green Cleaning Products	BOE Policies	P7526
Pesticide Application	BOE Policies	P7520

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.

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