

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS GOALS

The School Committee believes that the District is an integral part of the community and that community support is necessary for the District's operation and achievement of excellence. The School Committee and District staff members recognize that community support is based on a mutual exchange, a dynamic process in which the District contributes to the community's success and, in turn, benefits from the community's resources.

In order to maintain productive relationships with the community, the District is committed to sustaining:

- **Effective, accurate, and meaningful communications that facilitate dialogue, encourage involvement in District programs, and create community advocacy for its public schools.**
- **Volunteer programs that provide mutually enriching experiences for our students, staff, and community volunteers.**
- **Recognition programs that publicly honor the contributions of our students, employees, and community partners and express pride in our individual and collective accomplishments.**
- **Community service efforts which enable the District's staff and students to express their commitment to the community.**

SOURCE: MASC – Updated 2022

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS' RIGHTS

As required by Massachusetts General Law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. The school district will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by law, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

- (a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:
 1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
 2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
 3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
 4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- (b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to regulation.
- (c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- (d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in regulation.
- (e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- (f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to law, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H
603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents
20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2022

RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

To enhance communications between parents/guardians and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations, including booster organizations, at each school building. For this purpose, the Committee will officially recognize parent organizations. These procedures will be observed:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized upon request by the building Principal who will file a copy of the organizational papers with the Superintendent.
2. A vote, open to all parents/guardians of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request.
3. All parent organizations that engage in fundraising shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

CROSS REFS: ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2022

PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee of the Lincoln Public Schools recognizes and appreciates the benefits to the school of donations of time, talent, and money in support of the educational goals of the School District. The School Committee further acknowledges the value of group or individual donations on behalf of the public schools that help to maintain, augment, and support approved new programs. The Lincoln Public Schools and the Lincoln School Committee greatly appreciate the continued support of our community.

In accordance with state law, all grants and gifts to the District shall be reviewed and accepted by the School Committee before expenditure or use. In the case of gifts from industry, business, or special interest groups, no extensive advertising or promotion may be involved in any donation to the schools.

Gifts will automatically become the property of the school district. Any gift of cash, regardless of donor intent, will be accepted by vote of the School Committee kept separate from the general fund, and expended at the discretion of the Committee, as provided by law.

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

SOURCE: MASC – Updated 2022

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 44:53A, 71:37A

CROSS REFS.: DD, Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects
GBEBC, Gifts to Staff and Solicitation by Staff
GBEBD, Online Fundraising and Solicitation--Crowdfunding

PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW

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

The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every effort to disseminate information. All requests for information will be responded to in compliance with Massachusetts law.

All commonly available public record documents of the School District shall be posted on the district's website. The length of time such records shall remain posted on the district website shall be in accordance with the Municipal Record Retention Manual. In addition, the official minutes of the Committee, its policies and regulations, and its financial records will be kept by the office of the Superintendent (or assigned administrator). In response to a public records request, the Superintendent (or designee) shall permit inspection or provide a copy of such public record, subject to the provisions of Massachusetts law. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released to the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent/guardian).

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

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2022

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes
GBJ, Personnel Records
JRA, Student Records

NOTE: The cross references are to related categories in this manual.

COMMUNITY USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

On recommendation of the Superintendent in conjunction with the Director of Educational Operations and Technology, the district shall determine when and which computer equipment, software, and information access, including the use of wireless internet access, systems will be available to the community.

Those using the district systems as a member of the community must abide by the district's procedures regarding responsible use.

All guests will be prompted to, and must accept the district's digital use form before accessing the district network.

The Superintendent or designee may revoke such access at any time.

SOURCE: MASC 2023

CROSS REF: INJD ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

INJDC ACCEPTABLE USE OF DIGITAL RESOURCES

DISTRICT WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The School Committee wishes to ensure accurate and accessible delivery of information, and as such, the Lincoln Public Schools will maintain a district website and such district and school social media accounts as authorized by the Superintendent. All such online platforms will be maintained by district staff, acting in their professional capacities.

In order for public communication with the School Committee and district personnel to be responded to in a timely manner, in line with the legal requirements for public communication, commenting on all district and school sites will be turned off. Every school and district site will clearly indicate this policy and will direct those wishing to contact the school and district personnel to the appropriate venues to do so.

Unauthorized use of district or school name is prohibited.

SOURCE: MASC 2023

LEGAL REF: Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Declaration of Rights, Article 16

Constitution of the United States of America, Amendment 1

MGL Ch. 66

MGL Ch. 30A

REF: A Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (Secretary of the Commonwealth)

CROSS REF: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

GBEE - PERSONNEL USE OF TECHNOLOGY

BHE - USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the successes, challenges, programs, planning, and activities of the school district.

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

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

1. The School Committee Chair will be the official spokesman for the Committee, except as this duty is delegated to the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of a district-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent. All statements made to the press by other staff members on topics that are of a district-wide or sensitive nature, or that pertain to established Committee policy, must be cleared with the Superintendent.
3. News releases that are of concern to only one school, or to an organization of one school, are the responsibility of the Principal of that particular school. All statements made to the press by other staff members of the particular school must be cleared with the Principal.

While it is impossible to know how news releases will be treated by the press, every possible effort should be made to obtain coverage of school activities that will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the school district.

SOURCE: MASC – Updated 2022

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the Committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels before investigation or action by the Committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern Committee actions or Committee operations only.

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

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

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

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

Matters referred to the Superintendent and/or School Committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. In addition, the School Committee will only consider the matter if after review of the process carried out, it is determined that the administration failed to follow through adequately or did not follow a district policy or state or federal regulation or law.

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

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2022

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:5
603 CMR 26.00

ADVERTISING AND COMMERCIALISM

It is the spirit and intent of this policy to protect the educational environment from the undue influence of advertisers and commercial interests.

Lincoln Public School Activities:

School system publications shall not contain any advertising. Further, no advertising of commercial products or services will be allowed in or on school buildings, school grounds, school buses, or teaching materials without permission (except as noted below). The Superintendent, or their designee, *may* grant permission *to a school employee or commercial vendor* on an exception basis, when it is their judgment that the educational or health benefits far outweigh any commercial influences.

The School Committee will not permit solicitation of sales or use of the name of the school system to promote any product.

Activities of Parent-Teacher Association/Parent-Teacher Organization:

Parent organizations will make reasonable accommodations to adhere to the spirit and letter of the District's Advertising and Commercialism policy, in minimizing the amounts of commercial advertising from their various fundraising and other activities on school grounds.

Clothing and Personal Effects of Students, Teachers, and Administrators:

In recognition of the fact that contemporary clothing and personal effects frequently include logos or other brand images that could be considered advertising, these items, providing they are not disruptive to the educational process, are exempt from this policy.

Voted at May 6, 1996 School Committee Meeting
Adopted at School Committee Meeting of April 12, 2007
Revised at School Committee Meeting of February 14, 2008
Revised at School Committee Meeting of November 7, 2019

SOURCE: Lincoln

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

The School Committee welcomes parents/guardians and guests to visit classrooms to observe and learn about the instructional programs taking place in our schools. Such visits can prove most beneficial in promotion of greater school-home cooperation and community understanding of how we carry out the school district's mission and goals.

Visits by parents/guardians to several classrooms in a given grade for the purposes of comparing teaching styles to provide a basis for a request for student assignment to a particular teacher are strongly discouraged because the School District's policy of assigning a student to a particular class is the sole responsibility of the building Principal in consultation with the staff of that school.

The following guidelines to classroom and school visits should be followed:

1. Requests for classroom visitations by parents/guardians will be welcomed as long as the educational process is not disrupted. To this end we request that such requests be made at least two school days in advance to allow for proper arrangements to be made.
2. The building Principal has the authority to determine the number, times, and dates of observations by visitors. This will be done in consultation with staff members so as to give adequate notice to the staff members of the impending visits.
3. For security purposes it is requested that all visitors report to the Principal's office upon entering and leaving the building and sign a guest log showing arrival and departure times. Teachers are encouraged to ask visitors if they have registered in the Principal's office.
4. Under ordinary circumstances classroom observations will be strongly discouraged during the first three weeks of school in September and during the month of June.
5. Because of the disruption to classroom routines, children not enrolled in the Lincoln Public Schools generally are not allowed to visit the schools during the day while school is in session. Principals may make an exception to this policy under circumstances determined by them to be appropriate. Any student who wishes to have a guest in school MUST ask permission of one of the administrative staff at least two school days in advance of the proposed visit. If permission is granted, the guest is expected to follow the standards of behavior expected of all students. Upon arrival the guest must register in the office. Any guest who fails to comply with student regulations will be asked to leave the school building and grounds immediately.

CROSS REF.: IHBA, Observations of Special Education Programs

SOURCE: MASC - Reviewed 2022

RELATIONS WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES

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

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

The School Committee also recognizes the potential enrichment that law enforcement agencies can make in the educational program.

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

SOURCE: MASC – Reviewed 2022

RELATIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC – Reviewed 2022