

**ABINGTON HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL
HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Revised 2011

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Abington Heights Middle School
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Telephone (570) 586-1281

To: Parents and Students:

We at the Abington Heights Middle School believe that all students can learn. We will provide students with a supportive, caring environment that develops self-esteem, self-motivation and a sense of responsibility. We strive to provide every opportunity for maximum student achievement and to recognize and stimulate special talents in all students.

The educational environment and the teaching strategies are designed to meet the goals and objectives of a strong curriculum.

Our major goal is to prepare students to become responsible citizens, with the ability to take their places as productive members of the community.

We believe that education is a cooperative effort among home, school and community.

The information in this booklet provides a brief summary of our school procedures and curriculum. Parents are encouraged to call the Middle School if there are any questions about any aspect of the Middle School program.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Elia
Principal

MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION

At the Abington Heights Middle School, we strive to promote academic excellence within a caring, supportive environment. We emphasize self-esteem, self-motivation, and a sense of responsibility. Our staff is committed to providing all students with the opportunity to meet their maximum potential.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe that all students in the Abington Heights School District should have the opportunity and be encouraged to develop an understanding of themselves and their capabilities and to realize and more fully accept their responsibilities as citizens so they can deal with the problems of our changing society. The educational program should also help the students to appreciate the accomplishments of others and give them an understanding and respect for all people including those with varying backgrounds.

We further believe that the educational program should emphasize the development of basic educational skills along with good physical and mental health. Furthermore, by using a wide variety of content and learning activities, the students' interests and needs can be met while fostering their creative abilities and positive attitudes in all forms of learning. In addition, the students should have an effective counseling program to help them plan for future vocational or educational endeavors. It is also essential for the students to develop the ability to analyze and interpret data in order to make meaningful and sound decisions.

To help achieve these ends, the Abington Heights School District should involve the parents as a part of the educational process and should provide the financial support and administrative policies to enhance the achievement of this educational philosophy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OBJECTIVES

- To focus on the child between childhood and adolescence.
- To place emphasis on human growth and development.
- To be concerned with the personal development of the individual child.
- To promote closer relationships between the child and the teacher and/or counselor.
- To allow the child more time for exploratory learning and independent study.
- To provide an instructional program for the continuation of skills in learning.
- To provide a small school environment inside a big school by providing a "home base" for each child.
- To provide a bridge between elementary and the high school where self-discovery occurs.
- To provide for the development of values and the development of the self-concept with each child.
- To recognize and understand the child's needs, interests, background, motivations, goals, and even his stresses, strains, frustrations, and fears.

To provide an environment where the child, not the program, is most important and where the opportunity to succeed is available for all students.

To provide competent instructional personnel who will strive to understand the students they serve and develop professional competencies which are both unique and applicable to the middle school-aged child.

GENERAL SCHOOL RULES

1. Students may go to their team areas beginning at 7:30 a.m. All students must be in their homerooms at 7:45 a.m.
2. Students are not allowed to leave school grounds during school hours.
3. Students are not allowed in the building after dismissal unless they are under the supervision of a faculty member.
4. Students reporting late must report to the main office with a written explanation of their tardiness. Attendance secretary will issue an admittance pass which student must have before going to any class.
5. Attendance in school is compulsory. The state law requires a written excuse when student returns to school after being absent. There are only three legal reasons for absence from school: **1) illness; 2) death in the immediate family; 3) impassable roads**. All other excuses are unexcused and unlawful. Three unexcused absences may result in student's appearance along with student's parents before the magistrate.
6. Students are not allowed to run in halls or other areas of the school.
7. Students shall not mark or deface walls, desks, books or any other school areas. Any willful destruction of school property is considered the highest type of school misbehavior. Property will be replaced or student may be suspended from school.
8. Students are not to use obscene language (oral or written) at any time. Any objectionable material in a student's possession will be shared in a conference with his/her parents.
9. Students are not allowed to chew gum in any area of the school.
10. Students are not allowed to smoke anywhere on the school grounds or in the building. Students violating this rule may be sent home immediately and will not be permitted to return unless accompanied by his/her parents. Smoking will result in a three day suspension.
11. Fighting in school or on school grounds will not be tolerated. Violators of this rule may be subject to immediate suspension.
12. Faculty and administration encourage good taste and standards of decency in dress and personal grooming. Cut-off jeans are in poor taste and going barefoot in school is a health hazard and is prohibited. Hats should not be worn in the building. Please refer to dress code on Page 9.
13. Students are not allowed in teacher rooms unless accompanied or given permission by a teacher.

14. Students reporting to the medical room from any class must have a pass from the teacher. Emergencies will be handled immediately. At no time should students leave the building without permission.
15. Students must have a pass when going to library, nurse, office or guidance. Students who leave a classroom, cafeteria or other designated area without a pass may be subject to disciplinary action.
16. Students are reminded that they are under school regulations from the time they leave their homes to come to school until they return to their homes after school.
17. Cell phones, Ipods or any other electronic devices are to be shut off and are not permitted to be used during school hours – 7:45 am – 2:12 pm. Cell phones that are on or are visible during the school day, will be confiscated and given to the school administrator.
 - A. Students will receive a written warning for their first offense and their cell phones may be returned at the end of the day.
 - B. Further violations will result in additional consequences and the return of the cell phone over to a parent guardian.
 - C. Any misuse of cell phones to include: cheating of any kind or involving a class or school disruption will forgo any written warning and face additional consequences.
 - D. Students may call their parents from school only by using the telephones in the main office or nurse's office.
18. Students who do not attend a scheduled detention will serve ½ day In House suspension.
19. Energy drinks such as Monster or Red Bull are not allowed in school at any time or at any after-school events such as concerts, dances and after-school activities programs. Energy drinks brought to school will be confiscated.
20. Students will not be permitted to use skateboards, bikes, or roller blades on school property.
21. The Abington Heights Middle School administration may refuse any student the admission to attend a school dance, an evening school event, or after-school activity if he or she arrives at school after the half-day mark (11:05 A.M.) or is absent for the entire school day. A student's discipline and regular attendance records will be considered. Students who present a valid medical note will be permitted to participate in all evening events.

TIME SCHEDULE

5th Grade

7:25 Teacher in Classroom
7:45 - 7:55 Homeroom
8:00 - 9:25 Specials
9:30 - 12:00 Academics
12:00 - 12:30 Lunch
12:35 - 2:10 Academics
2:12 Student Dismissal

6th Grade

7:25 Teacher in Classroom
7:45 - 7:55 Homeroom
8:00 - 9:25 Academics
9:30 - 10:55 Specials
11:00 - 12:30 Academics
12:35 - 1:05 Lunch
1:10 - 2:05 Academics
2:12 Student Dismissal

7th Grade

7:25 Teacher in Classroom
7:45 - 7:55 Homeroom
8:00 - 8:47 Academics
8:48 - 9:25 Academics, Mon., Wed., & Fri.
8:10 - 8:47 World Languages, Tues. & Thurs.
8:50 - 9:25 World Languages, Tues. & Thurs.
9:30 - 10:25 Academics
10:30 - 11:00 Lunch
11:05 - 11:50 Specials
11:55 - 1:15 Academics
1:20 - 2:05 Activity, Wed. & Fri.
1:15 - 2:05 Academics, Tues. & Thurs.
2:12..... Student Dismissal

8th Grade

7:25..... Teacher in Classroom
7:45 - 7:55 Homeroom
8:00 - 8:40 Academics
8:10 - 8:45 World Languages, Mon., Wed. & Fri.
8:50 - 9:25 World Languages, Mon., Wed. & Fri.
9:30 - 10:25 Academics
11:10 - 11:40 Lunch
12:30 - 1:15 Specials
1:20 - 2:05 Academics, Mon., Wed., & Fri.
1:20 - 2:05 Activity, Tues. & Thurs.
2:12..... Student Dismissal

LUNCH PERIODS

7th Grade Teams	10:30 - 11:00
8th Grade Teams	11:10 - 11:40
5th Grade Teams	12:00 - 12:30
6th Grade Teams	12:35 - 1:05

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Abington Heights Middle School is dedicated to providing our students with a wide variety of diverse after school activities. These activities are designed to provide exploratory experiences that may provide them with future interests to help them become well-rounded adults.

Active participation in the after-school program will provide students with: increased self-esteem and self-worth, increased confidence, friendship and leadership opportunities, and a sense of comfort and belonging to our school community. The after-school program runs 3 times a year, six weeks per session from 2:15-3:30 p.m. Over 45 different activities and clubs are available during these sessions. A full list of activities and clubs are available beginning at the end of September.

ANONYMOUS REFERRAL BULLYING PROGRAM

The administration, faculty, and staff of Abington Heights Middle School are dedicated and committed to providing students with a safe, caring, and supportive school environment. Our school-wide anonymous bullying reporting system is in place to address the serious issues related to school bullying.

This system works in two ways:

1. Students can make anonymous bully referrals by placing a bully reporting form into a team bully mailbox. This referral is addressed in a timely fashion by the team teachers.
2. Students, parents, and/or any community member can report bullying anonymously through an anonymous link on our Middle School website. If you need to make a referral, the web address is www.ahsd.org, find our schools, choose Abington Heights Middle School and click the Red Bullying link.

*This bully referral system give bystanders (students witnessing bullying but unsure what to do about it) and targets (victims of bullying), the chance to stop bullying without fear of repercussions.

ATHLETICS

Provision of broad based intramural activities is the major emphasis of the athletic program in the middle school. Activities are designed to provide exploratory experiences for all youngsters and are directed by members of the faculty. Intramural activities, when scheduled, are held from 2:15 to 3:30 p.m.

Seventh and eighth grade students may participate in interscholastic athletics at the junior high level in the following sports: cross country, soccer, football, wrestling, field hockey, seventh and eighth grade girls' softball, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, and track and field.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is essential for maximum success. Absences on account of illness, quarantine, death in the immediate family, impassable roads, and inclement weather are excused. Other excuses for absence are classified as unexcused and unlawful. When three (3) days of unlawful absences are recorded, an official notice is served on the parent. Additional unlawful absences may result in arrest and fines for violation of the State of Pennsylvania Compulsory School Attendance Law.

Letters of concern will be sent to parents of students who have been absent for ten school days, excluding extended illness or five approved vacation days. Parents of students who continue to reflect a chronic absence pattern (fifteen days or more) will be required to attend a school conference to discuss the absence. The school reserves the right to require M.D. excuses at any time.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The Abington Heights School District wellness plan encourages healthy and nutritious choices in the foods our students eat while at school and is intended to ensure a safe and healthy environment for students with serious health issues. The Abington Heights Middle School does not allow snacks and treats to be brought into the school for classroom birthday celebrations. Student birthdays will be recognized and celebrated without the sharing of snacks.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The Abington Heights School District furnishes transportation for students. It is understood that parents assume the responsibility of supervision prior to the time when their children board the bus in the morning and when children leave the bus at the conclusion of the school day. Children who ride school buses are required by school policy to conduct themselves as bus passengers in a manner consistent with established standards of classroom behavior. Abuse of the privilege of transportation may result in a student's loss of bus transportation as delineated in the policy statement adopted by the Board of School Directors and is available in school offices. Students may ride a bus other than their own only with written permission from a parent or guardian. Buses determined to be overcrowded by school administration are to have no extra riders. Vans will have no extra riders.

CAFETERIA POINT OF SALE SYSTEM

Every student will use his/her student PIN (Personal Identification Number) to buy lunch and to check their account. When your child enters their PIN into the system, their information including their picture appears on the screen for the cashier to view. The picture will prevent another student from using your child's account. Parents may deposit money into their child's account on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis (Checks are recommended). The money goes into your child's account and is automatically deducted when they make a purchase. By utilizing this system, you will no longer need to worry about giving your child money everyday, however, you can still send money on a regular basis. If your child has a balance in their account at the end of the school year, it can be returned or credited towards the next school year.

Abington Heights School District's Food Service Department has implemented a Mealtime program that makes viewing or depositing money into student's lunch accounts an option for all parents in our district. This Mealtime Pay Online bullet, is located under parent links on the *ahsd.org* website. Now, any parent with an established profile on Mealtime Online will be invited to opt in to receive an email notification, automatically, whenever his/her student's account reaches a pre-determined "low balance level" set by the account holder. All parents are encouraged to utilize this software tool to monitor their student(s) purchases and daily balance. This system will replace all paper negative balance slips. For more information, contact Food Service Director Joanne Pesota by phone at 585-5309 or by email: pesotaj@ahsd.org.

CURRICULUM NIGHTS

Curriculum nights are held at the beginning of the school year to acquaint parents with the school program and to give parents the opportunity to meet their child's teachers.

CONDUCT

Proper conduct in school during school related activities is a joint responsibility of parents and school staff members. The school cooperates with parents to insure good student conduct and recognizes that youngsters will learn to make responsible decisions when they are provided with appropriate guidelines both in the home and in the school.

DRESS CODE

We feel it is beneficial to all students if the home and the school cooperate in the matter of student dress. School is the student's place of business, and students who are dressed in appropriate school clothing seem to do a better job.

- All upper body attire (blouses, tops, dresses, shirts, sweaters, etc.) should cover from the collar bone to the base of the torso so as not to expose any midriff, cleavage, or chest. Blouses, tops, and shirts are to have a collar.
- Sweaters, sweatshirts, and hoodies are acceptable outer attire.
- Wording, phrases or other representations with the exception of Abington Heights approved attire, is not permitted on clothing. Manufacture insignias, such as a Nike swoosh on the chest or sleeve, are acceptable.
- All lower body attire (pants, shorts, skirts, skorts, dresses, etc.) should be worn at the waistline and extend to at least the knee.

- Exposed underwear of any kind, including through clothing, as well as tears in clothing, is not permitted.
- Sneakers or shoes that are appropriate and safe for school activities must be worn at all times.
- Hats, spikes jewelry, sunglasses, or anything deemed disruptive or unsafe by administration will not be permitted.
- Special group attire may be worn on designated days with administrative permission and must conform to all rules of decency.

EARLY DISMISSALS

Medical and dental appointments for children should be scheduled by parents after the school day is concluded at 2:12 p.m. If it is essential that medical appointments be scheduled during a school day, a note must be submitted to the school principal's office requesting early dismissal and stating the reason. It is the student's responsibility to remind the teacher when it is time for the early dismissal for a medical appointment; students then report to the school office to wait for parents to pick them up.

EMERGENCY CARDS

A medical emergency card, indicating address, telephone number, doctor, or person to be contacted in the event of an emergency, is filed at the middle school for each pupil. Parents are requested to keep this card current by notifying the school nurse if there should be any change in this information.

EMERGENCY CLOSING OF SCHOOL

When it becomes necessary to close school due to inclement weather or other emergency conditions during the school year, area radio stations will broadcast school closing decisions in the early morning hours or as soon as such decisions are made during a school day. The school district contacts area radio stations relative to late starts, early dismissals or cancellation of school due to inclement weather. Parents are requested not to call the school since lines must be kept open for emergencies. Parents might wish to call the district Informa-Phone, dial 587-2000, which also offers emergency closing announcements when schools are dismissed early due to bad weather.

GYM UNIFORMS

For health and safety reasons, basic garments and footwear are required for physical education classes. Students are required to wear a T-shirt type top with physical education shorts and sneakers with socks. Cutoff shorts are not allowed and only plain T-shirts are permitted. Buckles, zippers and rivets which could damage equipment or be a safety hazard are not allowed. Appropriate clothing also acceptable for girls is any type of jumper with blouse or physical education shorts with blouse or plain T-shirt.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

When a physician certifies that a student will be absent from school for a period of two weeks or more, homebound instruction is provided by Abington Heights School District. Requests by parents for this service should be directed to the school principal.

HOMEWORK

Homework is beneficial to students at all levels of a public school program. At the Abington Heights Middle School, homework is an integral part of the student's total educational program. Homework is assigned on a regular basis at all four grade levels in the Abington Heights Middle School. Students should experience a gradual increase in homework each year as they progress from one grade level to the next. Students should assume more responsibility for independent work, long term assignments, and reading assignments as they progress from fifth to eighth grade.

In considering individual differences and age level of the student, the average daily homework assignments for all subjects combined should approximate the following:

5th Grade	30-45 Minutes
6th Grade	40-60 Minutes
7th Grade	60 Minutes
8th Grade	60-70 Minutes

It is understood that one of the goals of the Abington Heights Middle School is development of the whole child. In considering this, we believe it is important to allow times for co-curricular and out of school activities. In recognizing that student needs and working abilities differ, homework assignments will be individualized or appropriately adapted when necessary.

Homework will be assigned for the following reasons:

1. To improve skills in a basic subject
2. To review important items
3. To increase knowledge learned in the classroom
4. To prepare for classroom discussion
5. To develop the skills of research:
Reading supplementary materials, using encyclopedia, gathering specimens, and making subject related projects.
6. To foster responsibility and independent study skills
7. Homework will not be assigned for disciplinary reasons
8. It is important for parents to understand that required homework is usually more than specific written assignments. Independent reading assignments, review of notes, gradual preparation of long term assignments, and advance preparation for tests to avoid cramming are all important components to quality homework. Parents are encouraged to work with students to properly budget their homework time on a consistent weekly schedule. Parents who observe students spending an inordinate amount of time doing homework or no homework at all, are encouraged to contact team teachers for assistance.

INFORMA-PHONE

The school district Inform-a-Phone operates on a 24-hour-per-day basis. When you phone 587-2000, you will receive information about school related activities. In the case of emergencies, such as school closings due to inclement weather, announcements immediately are placed on the Inform-a-Phone during the day for easy access to parents.

INSURANCE

Application forms for insurance are distributed during the first week of school each year or given to parents at the time of registration if the school year is in progress. The medical student insurance is made available at a nominal cost as a service by the school. Insurance coverage may be requested throughout the school year by contacting the principal.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

Each child is given a medical examination during the year of original entry into school and at sixth and eleventh grade levels. Either the family doctor or the school doctor may perform the exam. Height, weight, (BMI) and vision tests are done yearly. Hearing tests are provided at 7th grade level and as needed. Scoliosis exams are done at the 7th grade level with parent consent. A school nurse is available during any emergency. Questions concerning the health program may be directed to the school nurse.

MEDICATIONS

When a student must take medication in school (over the counter or prescription) the physician and parent must sign a medication request form. A prescription label will be accepted for five (5) days in lieu of a physician's permission. This five (5) day grace period allows for time to have the form completed by the physician. A note from home is **not** a sufficient parental request.

All medications **must** be in the original container. Prescription products must have a **current** prescription label attached. Medications must be dropped off to the nurse by the parent. With the exception of inhalers students may not carry medications to school.

MIDDLE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

A Middle Assistance Program has been established at the Abington Heights Middle School. Faculty members on this team have received training through the statewide Student Assistance Program. The purpose of the Middle Assistance Program is to identify students who may be having problems in school. These problems may be related to chemical dependence, suicide/depression, child abuse, or divorce/separation in the family. The Middle Assistance Program is a method for intervening and referring these students to appropriate school and community services. Parents, students, or teachers may make referrals to the Middle Assistance Program.

MUSIC PROGRAM

Bands, orchestras and choruses in the Middle School are open to all children. Lessons are provided on orchestra and band instruments. Parents of participating children may provide instruments or utilize rental instruments through the school rental program.

OPEN HOUSES

The Abington Heights Middle School will provide an 'Open House' day on the second Wednesday of every month beginning in October. During four of these sessions, attendees may visit the library or another designated area to take part in scheduled, brief and informational seminars. These seminars involve topics that are pertinent to the ever-changing middle school students and the people who help them to grow and foster their independence. Topics will also center around strategies to improve academics, social skills, and personal student responsibilities. In addition, on each 'Open House' day, parents and/or guardians are given the opportunity to visit their child's classroom in order to observe daily lessons and events. Those interested in attending should come to the Middle School on the designated day, and sign in at the Main Office. The 'Open House' dates are listed below, and four tentative seminar dates are marked with asterisks.

October 12, 2011
November 9, 2011*
December 14, 2011
January 11, 2012*

February 8, 2012
March 14, 2012*
April 11, 2012
May 9, 2012*

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Abington Heights Middle School Parent Teacher Association supports various activities for the benefit of our students. Parents are encouraged to participate actively in this worthwhile organization. Membership forms are distributed at the beginning of each school year or are available in the school office. The PTA meets in the Middle School the second Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The Abington Heights School District provides an opportunity for parents to meet with teachers during the evening to discuss their child's progress. Please consult the district calendar for specific dates and times. The conferences provide an excellent opportunity for parents to assess their child's progress and every effort should be made to attend. Parents also are encouraged to call the teacher at school and arrange for a mutually convenient time if they wish a conference at any other time during the school year.

PARENT TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

Parents who transport their children to school in the morning and/or from school in the afternoon should drive carefully around the school buildings and follow the procedures listed below.

Morning Drop-Off

- Parents may drop-off their children at the rear building entrance by the gymnasium between 7:00 A.M. and 7:40 A.M. Students are not allowed in the building before 7:00 A.M.
- Parents may not drop-off their children in front of the building until 7:45 A.M. due to the incoming bus traffic. Students entering the school as of 7:45 A.M. will be marked tardy in the main office. Parents may not, at any time, turn around before the driveway circle to drop-off students.

Afternoon Pick-Up

- Parents who wish to pick-up their children must send a written note to the office beforehand.
- Parents may pick-up their children in the afternoon directly in front of the main entrance to the school. Parents should line-up around the driveway circle starting at approximately 2:00 P.M. and wait in line until the students are dismissed from the building. The line-up of waiting cars should begin on the southern end of the driveway circle by the technology/woodshop building.
- Students will be instructed to wait directly in front of the building's main entrance and will not be allowed to walk out into the parking lot to meet their parent or guardian.
- If a student is not in front of the building as the parent arrives for pick-up, parents should park their car in a designated parking spot or drive further up the driveway until the student can be located in order to allow other students to be picked-up without delay.
- Parents may not, at any time, park at the outer edge of the driveway circle in order avoid the line of parent vehicles. These procedures are intended to ensure the safety of all students.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Abington Heights School District is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property. Valuables, if they are brought to school, should be stored in the Main Office safe. The Middle School administration strongly discourages students from bringing electronic devices such as ipods, MP3 players, and hand-held video games to school for any reason.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Students in Abington Heights Middle School receive report cards at the end of every nine week period. They are distributed in November, February, April and June. In some cases, interim progress reports indicating students' academic and social progress may be necessary. The interim progress reports usually are sent at the mid-point of each of the four report periods.

PUBLICATION OF STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS

The Abington Heights School District Public Relations Office works cooperatively with school and community organizations. From time to time, photos of students accompany press releases to the local media to promote our schools and students' achievements. Occasionally, television stations may also broadcast student activities. If you do not want your child to be photographed for publicity purposes, please contact Mrs. Judith Rhue, Director of Public Relations, at 585.8268.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The school counseling program at Abington Heights Middle School is designed to be a comprehensive support program to the overall education of all students. In accordance with the American School Counselors Association national standards our goal is to be sure that all students feel comfortable in the school environment in order to maximize academic, social-emotional and behavioral growth. The School Counseling Team Mission statement is as follows:

The school counselors are committed to helping all students achieve academically, grow emotionally, develop socially, and explore their career interests. They are focused on creating a safe, caring, respectful, and productive learning environment through a data-driven school counseling program. All students will be given the opportunity to develop to their highest potential and become responsible citizens of high moral character.

The school counselors strive to meet the needs of all students in an equitable manner and work within the school system on a daily basis to provide a program that is aligned with national standards for school counseling. As a department, the school counselors provide programs for staff, students, families and community members. Services include consultation with teachers and staff, coordination and referral services with families and agency involvement, systemic support, large group presentations, developmental lessons, small group support, and individual support.

The three school counselors work with students in grades 5 – 8 as they progress through the middle school. They are assigned students alphabetically by last name (see below). Students may be referred to the school counseling program through self-referral, teacher and/or staff referral and through parent referral. The school counseling program centers on a brief and solution-based counseling approach.

We look forward to the 2011 – 2012 school year being an enjoyable and successful year! As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Counselors	Phone Numbers	Email Addresses	Serving Students whose last names begin with
Mr. Brian Kelly	585-4338	kellybr@ahsd.org	A-G
Mrs. Sarah Smith	585-4335	smiths@ahsd.org	H-N
Mrs. Stacey Bamford	585-4316	bamfords@ahsd.org	O-Z
School Counseling Secretary: Mrs.Terri Winowich, 585-4328			

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Parents and/or guardians may request school personnel to provide school related information about their child to an outside agency. An outside agency may include, but is not limited to a: physician, counselor, psychologist or social worker. The type of information requested mainly consists of the following categories:

- verbal/written reporting of a child’s social, emotional and academic strengths and weaknesses
- attendance records
- request for teacher(s) to complete behavior rating scale(s)
- medical information from the school nurse
- report of disciplinary history
- special education records

In order to ensure your child’s confidentiality, it is important for us as a school to follow consistent procedures for releasing information to agencies about our students.

Release of Information Procedures:

1. When requesting information to be shared with an outside agency, please contact a school counselor.
2. The school counselor will send home a copy of the Consent to Release information form or one can be downloaded from the school’s website.
3. Please return the completed release form and any forms that you would like completed and sent to the agency to the school counselor.
4. The school counselor will fax or mail requested information to the agency names on the Content to Release Information form.
5. The original Consent to Release Information form will be filed for one (1) year in the counseling office.

SCHOOL HOURS

The Abington Heights Middle School classes begin at 7:50 a.m. and school is dismissed at 2:12 p.m. each school day. Students may enter assigned team areas at 7:30 a.m. Parents are encouraged not to transport students to the school prior to that time. When school is dismissed, no private cars should enter the bus pickup area when buses are loading between 2:00 p.m. and 2:20 p.m. Private car pickups should be made after 2:25 p.m. to insure student safety.

SCHOOL MATERIALS CARE

Textbooks, library books and other school materials used by students should be treated with care and respect. Students are responsible for books or materials which are damaged or lost while in their care and assessment will be made to cover the cost of repair or replacement.

SCHOOL VISITS

Parent visitation to the school is encouraged (see open house description, page 12); however, it is policy not to allow visiting or vacationing students to attend our classes. All visitors are required to report to the office of the building principal to sign in prior to visiting any classroom.

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Our students in the middle school are acknowledged in several ways during the school year for their academic achievement, citizenship, and overall effort. The two student recognitions that occur during the school year are:

- A. **Student of the Month Award** – is awarded to one male and one female from each team in every grade from October through May. Each student is chosen by their team of teachers for their strong academic performance and work ethic. Each student will receive an Abington Heights hooded sweatshirt, a certificate of achievement, and their picture posted in the main lobby. In addition, Student of the Month winners along their parents are invited to an end of the year breakfast banquet to celebrate their achievements.

- B. **B.U.G. Award** – Students who receive a B.U.G. Award (Bringing Up Grades) Awards are students who have gone up in at least one subject without going down in any from the previous quarter. One male and one female from each team in every grade will earn the award for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter. Students are chosen by their teachers for their strong work ethic, commitment to their grades and overall improvement in grades from the previous quarter. Each student will receive an Abington Heights hooded sweatshirt, a certificate of achievement, and their picture posted in the main lobby.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Students in the Abington Heights Middle School determined to be in need of academic remediation may be recommended or required to complete a summer school educational program offered through the Scranton School District. Students who fail academic courses and/or who fail to complete a summer school program risk being retained for the upcoming school year. The middle school administration will make student promotion and retention decisions based on a comprehensive review of the student's academic records and unique social and educational needs.

TARDINESS

Any student entering school after the official starting time must report to the school attendance office and obtain a class admission slip for presentation to the classroom teacher. Habitual tardiness could result in a one-half day unexcused absence being recorded on a student's attendance record. Should this occur, parents will be notified of the situation. After-school detention will be assigned for chronic unexcused tardiness or other discipline deemed necessary by administration.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Telephone calls to the school requesting that messages be delivered to students should be restricted to emergency situations only.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS & SCHOOL ADDRESS

If you wish to contact the Middle School, the telephone number is (570) 586-1281. Questions concerning any aspect of the Middle School program may be directed to Mr. Michael S. Elia, Principal, or Mr. Eduardo Antonetti, Middle School Assistant Principal. The address of the Abington Heights Middle School is 1555 Newton-Ransom Boulevard, Clarks Summit, PA, 18411.

TELEVISION BROADCASTING STUDIO

The television broadcasting studio program is devoted to fostering communication and promoting teamwork among students while they are creating, producing, and presenting a live television style news broadcast to be aired as morning announcement. Students will be given the opportunity to rotate among various studio jobs that allow them to participate in front of and behind the camera gaining both technical and communication skills while promoting teamwork among participants. Students will work together after school to create pre-recorded segments dealing with current issues, school issues, and age appropriate social issues which will be aired during the studio's live broadcast of morning announcements.

TESTING PROGRAM

Grade 5: Students take the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment in mathematics, reading, and writing).

Grade 6: Students take the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment in mathematics and reading).

Grade 7: Students take the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment in mathematics and reading).

Grade 8: Students take the PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment in mathematics, science, reading, and writing).

WEB SITE

The Abington Heights Middle School has a school web site that includes a great deal of valuable information. The web address is: www.ahsd.org. Find "Our Schools" and choose Abington Heights Middle School.

CURRICULUM

LANGUAGE ARTS PHILOSOPHY

**Mrs. Victoria Jones, DIRECTOR
K-12 LANGUAGE ARTS**

The Language Arts program of the Abington Heights School District is intended to build a lifelong appreciation of the English language in all its forms and to develop the skills necessary for success in all subject areas. Learning to read is seen as a complex process of constructing meaning from print – not merely learning a set of isolated skills. Skills should be taught within a meaningful context, and there should always be a balance between skills instruction and application. While students are always encouraged to write, even if they make mistakes, correct grammar, spelling and usage are expected on final drafts. Daily opportunities should exist for actual reading and real writing. There should also be a balance among the types of reading and writing assignments in which students take part (narrative, informational, persuasive). Although students come to school from diverse backgrounds and with differing levels of motivation, all students can learn to read and write. We recognize that students learn at different rates and in different ways. We know that the classroom atmosphere should meet the cognitive and affective needs of the learners. In order to best meet the needs of all learners, multiple types of approaches and materials should be utilized. The interrelationship of the language arts should always be stressed.

Because language can neither be learned nor evaluated in a fragmented way, holistic, performance-based means of assessment should be used as the true indicators of student ability. Monitoring of student progress should be ongoing and results should guide instruction. Teachers who are knowledgeable of the reading and writing processes are essential. Staff development activities which reflect current research about reading and writing must be available to all teachers in order to ensure the most effective classroom instruction. Effective instruction requires that each teacher achieve a balance between developing an individual teaching style and incorporating specific methods supported by research to help students master state and local curriculum standards.

We believe that literacy skills are the keys to opening the doors for productive, meaningful citizenship. Our ultimate goal, as a school system, is to produce students who have the ability to read and write independently and the desire to do so frequently.

READING, ENGLISH AND SOCIAL STUDIES

All students in grades 5-8 have daily Reading, English and Social Studies classes. There students are exposed to a wide array of reading materials including informational textbooks, literature anthologies and novels (or trade books). To fully engage students, some direct instruction is done for the entire class, some readings are discussed in small-group literature circles and still other readings are done independently. Collectively, students are exposed to fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, and they have a chance to become acquainted with the works of many well-known authors.

In addition to engaging the students through wide reading and collaborative, small-group learning, all classrooms have access to instructional technology to enhance learning. Video clips, for example, can be used to provide background information for an upcoming reading assignment or graphic overviews can be constructed to summarize what was just read. Of course online sources can provide information on any given topic beyond that included in a textbook.

In grades 5-8, instruction is presented in the form of interdisciplinary themes, linking social studies, English and Reading. At each grade level in the middle school, three themes are covered during the school year. The themes are as follows:

Grade 5 --North America

- Explorers to North America (Unit 1)
- Colonial America (Unit 2)
- American Revolution (the lead up to the war) (Unit 3)

Grade 6—Ancient World

- From the Nomads (Unit 1)
- From the Pyramids (Unit 2)
- From Ancient Cultures (Unit 3)

Grade 7—U.S. History

- Creating a Nation (Unit 1)
- Challenges and Expansion (Unit 2)
- Reform and Division (Unit 3)

Grade 8—Civics

- Where Do I Belong? (Individual and Society) (Unit 1)
- With Power Comes Responsibility (Unit 2)
- Playing by the Rules (Unit 3)

Throughout middle school, assignments in English, Social Studies and Reading are consistently interrelated and linked to the themes (above) being covered. In grade seven, for example, as students in social studies research the seemingly insurmountable struggles the colonies went through to gain independence, English and Reading teachers would cover reading and writing assignments related to the struggles each adolescent goes through seeking more and more independence.

MATHEMATICS

**Ms. Rose Sember, DIRECTOR
K-12 MATH AND SCIENCE**

Philosophy

The Abington Heights Middle School mathematics curriculum is influenced by *Foundations for Success* (The National Mathematics Advisory Panel, 2008) and aligned to *Curriculum Focal Points* (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 2006). The vision for mathematics curricula is a balance between fluency, problem solving, and conceptual understanding.

The emphases of the mathematics curriculum at the middle school are to facilitate mastery of arithmetic and increase students' algebraic thinking as a foundation for more advanced mathematics at the secondary level. Students also develop flexible number sense, estimation and mental arithmetic, and good judgment about using calculators. Students in seventh and eighth grade may be placed in Pre-Algebra and Algebra I.

Cognitive science reveals students enter school with a great deal of mathematical knowledge and understanding. Instruction is built upon this prior knowledge in a challenging curriculum that comprises manipulatives, models, mathematical tools, real-life contexts, and discussions to expand students' conceptual development.

Course Offerings:

- Grade 5 - Everyday Mathematics
- Grade 5 - Saxon Mathematics
- Grade 6 - Big Ideas Mathematics
- Grade 6 - Saxon Mathematics

Grade 7 – Big Ideas Mathematics
Grade 7 – Big Ideas Plus Mathematics
Grade 7 - Saxon Mathematics
Grade 8 - Algebra I
Grade 8 - Pre-Algebra
Grade 8 - Saxon Mathematics

SCIENCE

**Ms. Rose Sember, DIRECTOR
K-12 MATH AND SCIENCE**

Philosophy

The Abington Heights Middle School Science Program is influenced by the philosophy to allow the development of the “whole child” using research-based teaching methods that align with current understanding of how student learn. For instance, social interactions are recognized as a medium for learning; this means discourse is essential in the classroom. The goal of middle school science instruction is not to deliver a large volume of facts. Instead, the goal is to provide students a thinking curriculum so they leave middle school enjoying science and prepared for the future they face.

The middle school science curriculum framework is adopted from the Full Options Science System (FOSS). The middle school science curriculum emphasizes the skills and thinking processes students need for the 21st century. These thinking processes include: observing, communicating, comparing, organizing, relating, and culminating with inferring. Student engagement in the curriculum will reveal scientific understanding of how the natural world works.

Successful completion of the middle school science curriculum will provide students with conceptual understanding of fundamental science concepts and skills needed for high school science. Each grade will engage in scientific inquiry in Life Science, Earth & Space Science, Physical Science, and Scientific Reasoning and Technology.

Science Curriculum Framework

Fifth Grade

- Environments
- Mixtures and Solutions
- Solar Energy
- Models and Designs

Sixth Grade

- Weather and Water
- Electronics
- Diversity of Life

Seventh Grade

- Earth History
- Force and Motion
- Populations and Ecosystems

Eighth Grade Framework

- Chemical Interactions
- Planetary Science
- Human Brain and Senses

WORLD LANGUAGES

SEVENTH GRADE

Students in the seventh grade receive world languages instruction in French, German, Russian, Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin). Instruction is provided for a period of seven weeks in each language, with two classes per week. A letter grade of O (outstanding), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory) is given for each language segment.

It is hoped that favorable attitudes toward foreign cultures will be developed and intelligent decisions concerning future language study will be made as a result of the exposure to the languages offered in the Abington Heights School District.

EIGHTH GRADE

Students in the eighth grade are encouraged to select one of the following languages: French, German, Russian, Spanish or Chinese (Mandarin). Language instruction is provided in three forty-five minute periods each week.

Basic grammar structures and the most commonly used idiomatic expressions are learned, simple conversational patterns are used, proper pronunciation is stressed, and an introduction is provided to cultural elements associated with the language studied.

Spanish I Honors will be available for a select group of highly motivated 8th grade students. The intent of this program is to serve those students with an interest in the Spanish language and culture and to better prepare them for high school Spanish.

The selected students will meet five days per week and will complete the same Spanish I Honors curriculum as offered at the high school. Students qualifying for Spanish I Honors will be forfeiting their activity period on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Philosophy

In the Middle School, observation and experience will provide the student a way to understand the importance of the elements and principles of design. The use of good design is basic to art activity.

Through art expression in a variety of forms, the student can develop organizational skills, stimulate creative thinking and form an appreciation of good craftsmanship. Learning through art can become an on-going approach to life.

Instructional Time

Fifth and sixth grade students are required to take three units in art during both grades. Units are offered for 4-1/2 weeks. Unit classes meet daily for 40 minutes.

Seventh and eighth grade students are required to take one unit in art during both grades. Units are offered for 4-1/2 weeks with daily classes of 45 minutes. Some units are offered for nine weeks with 50 minutes classes two times per week.

Guidelines

1. Fifth and sixth grade students will work in all of the units indicated as a requirement.
2. Seventh and eighth grade students are allowed to select several courses in which they wish to participate during the year. Schedules are then made individually based on their choices to plan the program they will actually take. Therefore, the art program for these grades is not the same for all students.

3. Students are placed in heterogeneous groups for art classes. Students with special needs are mainstreamed into these groups and should be noted by the teacher.
4. Emphasis on planning work should be used in art classes as a help to encourage successful completion of a project. Relying on talent is helpful, but not necessary. An attitude described as “plan your work, work your plan” is of great help.
5. In the Middle School, there is a planned curriculum to be implemented. Time allocated to art contests is not a replacement for class work.
6. In seventh and eighth grade, students may repeat a selected course offered if they choose, but the expected level of achievement and the projects are not the same from seventh grade to eighth grade. Expectations are raised.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCE

Philosophy

The students in the Middle School will have the opportunity to explore various aspects of Family and Consumer Science. Through practical experiences, they will observe basic techniques and be exposed to both familiar and unfamiliar materials. This program is exploratory in nature. Through project experiences students will be given the opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop skills in various phases of home living—sewing, cooking, relationships to others, crafts, child care, consumerism, and home decorating. The program should be an enjoyable and high interest experience for the students, with the courses providing benefits related to the home living aspects of the students’ daily lives.

Fifth and Sixth Grades

Students are required to take three courses in grade five and six. The courses are offered for 4-1/2 weeks. One of the required courses in 5th, 7th, and 8th grade is our LIFE SKILLS Training course. This program uses a scientific approach and a combination of coaching with peer-interaction and provider-led activities to address the critical factors found to promote substance abuse. This highly interactive program strengthens student skills in the following areas.

1. Personal Self Management – Students develop skills that enhance self-esteem help with problem solving, reduce stress and anxiety, and help to manage anger.
2. General Social Skills – Students gain skills to meet personal challenges such as overcoming shyness, communicating clearly, building relationships, and avoiding violence.
3. Drug Resistance Skills – Students build effective defenses against pressures to tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Seventh and Eighth Grades

Students are required to take one course in both grades seven and eight. The courses are offered for 4-1/2 weeks with daily classes of 45 minutes. Some courses are offered for 9 weeks with 50 minute classes two times per week.

Guidelines

1. Fifth and sixth grade students will work in all of the units indicated as a requirement.
2. Seventh and eighth grade students are allowed to select several courses in which they wish to participate during the year. Schedules are then made individually based on their choices to plan the program they will actually take. Therefore, the program for these grades is not the same for all students.

3. Students are placed in heterogeneous groups for classes. Students with special needs are mainstreamed into these groups and should be noted by the teacher.
4. In seventh and eighth grade, students may repeat a selected course offered if they choose, but the expected level of achievement and the projects are not the same from seventh grade to eighth grade. Expectations are adjusted according to the students' needs.

MUSIC

Philosophy

Music is a performing art, and the best way to study music and to learn to appreciate music is through a working knowledge of the elements of music. We believe each student should have the opportunity to become involved with music. The music curriculum will allow each student to participate in a musical experience regardless of his degree of musical talent.

School wide, over fifty percent of the students elect to participate in a performing organization, either band, chorus or orchestra. The participation in a performing experience is the best way to study and appreciate music. The present music curriculum along with the small group performance classes offer the band and orchestra students instruction which makes it possible for their participation in performing organizations the perfect balance.

Additionally, we will offer courses which will be of interest to those students who do not wish to participate in a performing situation. These courses will provide the student with the opportunity to discover and to work with the elements of music. They will consist of singing, playing basic percussion instruments, exploring band and orchestra instruments, and creating with musical devices. All of these require the student to become actively involved with the elements of music.

Another facet of our music curricula involves music appreciation courses which will simply expose students to music. These courses will center around listening to music through recordings and live performances, and involve discussions of such topics as music personalities, music of the past to modern pop music, and listening to music.

Description

The music program in grades five through eight is a combination of music courses and the performing groups of band, chorus and orchestra. In grades five and six, students take eighteen weeks of music (90 classes) or general music (pre-band or orchestra). In grades seven and eight, students take two of three offered courses (40 to 50 classes) or participate in a performing group (chorus, band or orchestra).

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Philosophy

Physical education contributes to the overall well-being of our students through a curriculum which addresses the physical, mental, social, and emotional needs of youth. It is part of all the learning experiences the school offers and contributes uniquely to physical development and fitness through physical activities. It promotes:

Physical Fitness which permits the individual to live more effectively.

Physical Development which takes place through exercise.

Social and Emotional Growth which depend on wholesome associations through small/large group interactions in group activity.

Optimum Health which permits the individual to live constructively and to contribute to the resources of the nation as a healthy citizen.

Recreational Activities which are creative, relaxing, or stimulating and provide for worthy use of leisure time.

Self-esteem through feeling better about who you are as a person.

Description

There are twenty-three courses which comprise the physical education program for grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. The activities are geared to the students' abilities and progress with skill expectations increasing each year.

Each student will have the opportunity to utilize the skills taught in each course in a game-related or skill-related activity. As a result of active participation each student will have the opportunity to improve both his/her skill level and his/her health-related fitness levels.

Fifth and sixth grade students participate in seven different activities over eighteen weeks. Seventh grade students participate in four different activities over nine weeks. Eighth grade students participate in a minimum of two activities over nine weeks. The selection of the courses for seventh and eighth grade students are student selected at the end of their sixth and seventh grades.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

The Technology Education Program is exploratory, comprehensive, and integrated among the grade levels. This program provides special hands-on experiences with tools, processes and resources of major technological systems. Attention is given to the input, process, output, feedback and modification of each system.

Technology Education focuses on a systems approach to develop technological literacy. The systems of communication, construction, manufacturing, power and transportation provide a broad content areas of study. Technology Education provides a vital link in the Math/Science/Technology triangle to assist with understanding, living and working in our advanced technology/information era.

Each student is actively involved in classroom/laboratory activities which develop knowledge and skills and attitudes regarding industry and technology. Emphasis is given to nurturing leadership, communication, social interaction, problem-solving and manipulative skills. Personal and social growth is fostered through interaction with other students in the laboratory setting

ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Enrichment Program of the Abington Heights School District is to enhance and extend rather than to accelerate the education of children who have been identified as gifted. It is designed to complement the school district curriculum and the enrichment activities provided by the regular classroom teacher by providing additional services which offer opportunities, resources, and encouragement to qualified students.

An essential ingredient of the Enrichment Program is communication both with the regular classroom teacher and with parents. Frequent informal conferences between the enrichment teacher and the classroom teacher provide opportunities for ongoing evaluation of the program and monitoring the progress of individual students. Letters from the enrichment teacher outlining goals and achievements are sent to parents periodically. An end of the year evaluation by parents and classroom teachers is an important tool for assessing the program and revising it on a regular basis.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

Students with special educational needs are mainstreamed in the Middle School with all other students. They are divided into groups according to age, size, ability, etc., and placed in appropriate

team areas. The special education teacher provides instruction in language arts and math. Instruction takes place either in the special education resource room or in the team area, depending on the preference of the teachers and students. For all other activities and subjects, these students participate with all other students within their assigned team.

LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM

Students who have been identified as having a disability that interferes with their learning are provided with individualized instruction. A learning support specialist provides the student with instruction ranging from one hour per week to a maximum of two hours per day depending on the severity of the disability. The learning support specialist also serves as a resource person—consultant to the academic team teacher in whose classroom the student has been mainstreamed.

REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

Report cards are issued to parents of students every 45 days (1 per quarter). Academic subjects and special subject courses are evaluated according to the following guidelines:

A = Outstanding Progress	Grade Range = 90 - 100
B = Commendable Progress	Grade Range = 80 - 89
C = Average Progress	Grade Range = 70 - 79
D = Needs Improvement	Grade Range = 60 - 69
U = Unsatisfactory Progress	Grade Range = 59 - below
NG = No Grade	
I = Incomplete	

7th grade World Language grades are evaluated according to the following criteria:

O = Outstanding
S = Satisfactory
U = Unsatisfactory

GUIDELINES

1. Individual conferences should be scheduled whenever a child is having difficulty progressing academically, emotionally, or socially. Teachers will issue progress reports to students half way through each quarter.
2. The Abington Heights Middle School teachers may determine that a student is eligible to earn a grade of "Incomplete" for a course when a student has not completed required assignments due to illness, a death in the immediate family, or other extenuating circumstances. Students with an "Incomplete" grade must complete and submit any missing work within ten school days after the end of the marking period. Students who do not complete the missing work within that time frame may earn an "Unsatisfactory" grade.

Other Information

Near the bottom of the report form you will find information regarding your daughter or son's year to date attendance.

POLICIES

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

PREFACE

This policy including its rules, regulations, and guidelines is a coordinated effort by the Abington Heights School District to openly and effectively respond to the potential and current uses and abuses of drugs, alcohol, and mood-altering substances by members of its entire student population.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Through the use of a revised curriculum, classroom activities, community support and resources, a strong and consistent administrative and faculty effort, and rehabilitative and disciplinary procedures, the Abington Heights School District will work to educate, prevent, and intervene in the use and abuse of all drug, alcohol, and mood-altering substances by the entire student population.

PURPOSE

The use, possession, transportation, sale or distribution of drugs will not be tolerated in the Abington Heights School District. Drugs are in direct contradiction to our purpose and negates our ability to provide a safe and healthy educational environment. It is clearly the intent of the Abington Heights School District to exclude students who violate the rules from the school community in accordance with suspension and/or expulsion procedures.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

1. Drug/Mood-Altering Substance/Alcohol - shall include any alcohol, any drug listed in Act 64 (1972) as a controlled substance, chemical, abused substance or medication for which a prescription is required under the law and/or any substance which is used with the intent to alter mood.
2. Middle Assistance Team - is a multi-disciplinary team composed of school personnel including teachers, administrators, nurses, counselors and other members of the community. This team has been trained to understand and work on the issues of adolescent chemical use, abuse, and dependency and will play a primary role in the identification and referral process of students coming to their attention through the procedures outlined in this policy.
3. Distribution - deliver, sell, pass, share or give any alcohol, drug, or mood altering substance, as defined by this policy, from one person to another or to aid therein.
4. Possession - possess or hold any alcohol, drug or mood- altering substance determined to be illegal or as defined by this policy.

GUIDELINES

1. An investigation will begin when the possible use of drugs, alcohol or mood-altering substances by a student is indicated, but there is no evidence of violation of law or school regulations.
 - a. Referral will be made to the Middle Assistance Team to investigate.
 - b. The student will be informed of available help and encouraged to seek assistance.
 - c. The parents will be notified of the student's behavior and/or performance, if warranted.
 - d. An intervention conference will be held if the Middle Assistance Team feels it is indicated by the data.

2. An investigation will begin when a student is found to be in possession, use, or under the influence of drugs, mood-altering substances or alcohol when on school property or attending any school-sponsored function.
 - a. During the investigation, the school administrator(s) may inspect lockers, books, personal effects and pat search the individual.
 - b. If a drug is found, contact will be made with the student's parents.
 - c. Police will be contacted if there is a need for identification of the substance or if the substance is illegal.
 - d. The parents will be required to have an immediate drug screening of the student if drug usage is suspected or possession is evident. The screening will be performed by a licensed drug and alcohol screening agency.
 - e. If a student is in possession of a drug or evidence of use is confirmed, the student will be suspended from school with due process for a period of one (1) to ten (10) days.
 - f. A report of the incident will be filed with the superintendent. The superintendent will notify the Board of School Directors who will take whatever course of action they may deem appropriate.
3. Following an absence from school due to exclusion or treatment, (self-referral or other) the student and his/her parents will be afforded the service of the school's counseling staff, referred to the Middle Assistance Team, as well as advised of counseling agencies outside the school. Every effort will be made to support the student's re-entry into school.

Drug and Alcohol Policy and Administrative Guidelines adopted by the Board of School Directors 11/9/88.

BOARD POLICY ON WEAPONS IN THE SCHOOLS

PURPOSE: The Board of Education shall provide for a safe environment for the operation of the educational program. Weapons on school property or at school functions present a danger to those present and a direct disruption to a safe and orderly environment. For this reason, students will not be permitted to possess or use any weapon at any time, in any school district building, on school property, on any school van or bus, or at any school function.

DEFINITIONS: For the purpose of this policy, these terms are defined as follows:

- The term "possess" shall include but not be limited to having possession of, to control, to have on one's person, being concealed in one's clothing or belongings, in a locker or in a vehicle.
- The term "school property" shall include but not be limited to all buildings and grounds owned, leased or used by the school district, and any school vehicle or school bus.
- The term "school function" shall include but not be limited to any regular educational program, extra-curricular activity, athletic event, field trip, dance, concert, fund raising activity or other activity, sponsored or co-sponsored by the school district whether on or off of school property.
- The term "use" shall include but not be limited to display, handle, load, operate, point, discharge or threaten to do one or more of the above actions.

- The term "weapon" shall include, but not be limited to any instrument or object capable of inflicting harm in its normal or intended use. It shall include but not be limited to any bomb, grenade, machine gun, sawed off shotgun, firearm especially made or especially adapted for concealment or silent discharge, blackjack, sandbag, metal knuckles, dagger, knife, razor, or cutting instrument, or any other implement which may be used for the infliction of serious bodily injury.

RESPONSIBILITY: Under the direction of the Superintendent, the district administrators shall implement the following procedures.

KNOWLEDGE OF A WEAPON

- Any student discovering, without previous plan or knowledge, that he/she is in possession, in transport, or in maintenance of a weapon as defined in this policy will immediately report the weapon to a properly authorized adult.
- All district employees will report to the principal the knowledge of any weapon as defined in this policy.

POSSESSION OF A WEAPON

- The weapon will be confiscated.
- The law enforcement agency will be notified.
- Parents will be notified.
- The student will be immediately suspended for up to ten (10) days.
- A required meeting with the principal, student and parents will be held.
- A recommendation may be made to the Board that expulsion be considered.
- Professional counseling may be required as a condition of reentry to school.

USE OF A WEAPON

- The weapon will be confiscated.
- The law enforcement agency will be notified.
- Parents will be notified and requested to come to the school.
- Criminal charges will be filed immediately.
- The student will immediately be suspended for up to ten (10) days.
- A required meeting with the principal, student, and parents will be held.
- A recommendation will be made to the Board for expulsion.

EXCEPTIONS: Exceptions to the policy are the following:

- The possession and use of the weapon is required as part of an authorized course.
- The possession of the weapon is part of a display, such as in a history class.
- The possession of the weapon is authorized as a stage prop.

- The possession and use of the weapon is part of an interscholastic sports activity.
- The possession violation is deemed by district administrators to be technical in nature and non-threatening in the school environment. This situation may result in implementation of some, but not necessarily all, of the procedures called for under Responsibility.

A written request, with documentation, for each exception must be submitted in advance to the superintendent or building principal for approval.

STUDENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

RATIONALE

The Civil Rights Act Title IX of the Federal Education Amendments prohibits sexual and racial discrimination against students in school settings. Sexual harassment is defined by Title IX as a form of sexual discrimination.

PHILOSOPHY

Abington Heights Middle School is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Therefore, we prohibit sexual harassment and will not tolerate it in any form.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to sexually harass any other student. We will investigate all formal and informal, verbal and written complaints of sexual harassment. Any student who is found to have sexually harassed any other student will be disciplined.

DEFINITION

Sexual harassment consists of verbal, written, or physical conduct of a personal or sexual nature not related to the educational function of the school, including both non-consensual and consensual behaviors, during all times when students are under the jurisdiction of the school.

Sexually harassing behaviors can include but are not limited to:

- touching (arm, breast, buttock, etc.).
- sexual games or dares.
- verbal or written comments (about parts of the body, sexual orientation, clothing, looks, etc.).
- name-calling or profanity.
- spreading sexual rumors.
- leers and stares.
- sexual or "dirty" jokes.
- cartoons, pictures, and pornography.
- gestures with the hands and body.
- pressure for sexual activity.
- cornering, blocking, standing too close, following.
- conversations that are too personal.
- "rating" an individual,
as for example on a scale from 1 to 10.
- obscene T-shirts, hats, pins.
- pulling, tugging, grabbing at others' clothing.
- sexual assault and attempted sexual assault.
- rape.
- touching oneself sexually in front of others.
- graffiti.
- making kissing sounds or smacking sounds.

- howling, catcalls, whistles, barking.
- repeatedly approaching someone when he or she isn't interested.
- facial expressions (winking, kissing, etc.).
- "making out" in the hallway.
- suggestive, full-body, or unwanted hugging.

Response and reporting procedures

School personnel must report and/or investigate all incidents of sexual harassment and take appropriate action, whether they personally observe incidents or are made aware of them by some other means. Reporting, investigation, and action must occur even if the victim doesn't file a formal complaint, and even if the victim doesn't express any overt disapproval of the harassment. In the eyes of the law, teachers function as supervisors, which makes them legally liable for incidents of sexual harassment.

Staff members will intervene immediately or in a timely fashion to address the behavior. The intervention will consist of identifying the inappropriate behavior, debriefing the student(s) about his or her role, and may include a referral to the administration. Repeated or severe incidents of harassment require a mandatory referral to the administration. Information concerning any complaints of sexual harassment shall be treated confidentially.

Suggested teacher interventions

1. Stop the behavior.
2. Debrief rules.
3. Discuss why the behavior is inappropriate.
4. List the consequences for the behavior.
5. Conference with the student(s).
6. Make a parent contact.
7. Arrange for apologies, both verbal and written.
8. Initiate a counselor referral.
9. Initiate an administrative referral.

Procedures after an administrative referral

1. An immediate investigation will be completed, which may include verbal and written statements for witnesses. All facets of the investigation will be documented and all information will be kept confidential.
2. All parties and their parents will be notified that:
 - sexual harassment is illegal and will not be tolerated in the school.
 - consequences will occur for inappropriate behavior.
 - retaliation against victims or witnesses will not be tolerated.

In addition, the following information will be discussed.

- the types of behaviors which constitute sexual harassment.
- the rights and responsibilities of the individual to prevent sexual harassment from happening.

3. Consequences will be assigned which may include the following:

- a verbal warning/reprimand.
- a written warning/reprimand, entered in the student's file.
- suspension.
- an apology to the victim.
- counselor referral.
- a parent/student/administrator conference.
- police involvement.
- loss of the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities for a specific period of time.
- community service.
- other consequences deemed appropriate by the school or district.

ABINGTON HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bullying Protocol

Michael Elia, Principal

Eduardo Antonetti, Assistant Principal

Rationale

The House Judiciary Committee amended and approved SB71. The bill requires each school to adopt a bullying policy by June 30, 2007. Each bullying policy must prescribe disciplinary consequence for bullying and may include programs for intervention, prevention, and education. School bullying policies must be published on school district Web sites and distributed with each school's student code of conduct. SB71 was amended to require districts to post a copy of the policy in all classrooms and to review the policy with students at least twice during the school year.

Philosophy

The Abington Heights School District is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for all students. Therefore, we prohibit bullying and intimidation and will not tolerate it in any form.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully or intimidate any other student. We will investigate all informal and formal verbal and written complaints of bullying and/or intimidation. Any student who is found to have bullied and/or intimidated another student will be disciplined.

Definition

A person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on part of one or more persons (Olweus, 1986, 1993). Students may bully a particular student on the basis of the student's appearance, national origin, interests, academic achievements, economic status, or any number of other factors.

The behavior of bullying occurs in four forms: physical, verbal, emotional or exclusion, and cyber-bullying.

a. **Physical Bullying**- hitting, kicking, or any physical aggression.

b. **Verbal Bullying**- Teasing, name calling, put downs, or other behavior that would deliberately hurt others' feelings or make them feel bad.

c. **Emotional or Exclusion Bullying**- starting rumors, telling others not to be friends with someone or other actions that would cause someone to be without friends.

d. **Cyber-bullying**- Using electronic device mediums such as but not limited to computers, cell phones, and pagers to bully (bullying defined above) others through methods such as

posting comments, statements, or pictures on blogs or websites, text messaging, instant messaging, and email.

Bullying/Intimidating behaviors can include but are not limited to:

- Taunting
- Name calling
- Rumor spreading
- Making up stories to get other children in trouble
- Telling other children not to be friends with a target child
- Kicking, tripping, or pushing another child
- Teasing other children and making remarks about their culture, religion, ethnicity, weight, physical appearance, disabilities, or medical conditions
- Intimidating others
- Taking other children's possessions or demanding money from them
- Damaging other children's property
- Hiding other children's books, bags, or other property
- Picking on other children, even when they're upset
- Making threats to other children
- Manipulating others, getting them to do things that they may not want to do

Response and reporting procedures

School personnel must report and/or investigate all incidents of bullying/intimidation and take appropriate action, whether they personally observe incidents or are made aware of them by some other means. Reporting, investigation, and action must occur even if the victim does not file a formal complaint, and even if the victim does not express any overt disapproval of the bullying/intimidating act.

Staff members will intervene immediately or in a timely fashion to address the behavior. The intervention will consist of identifying the inappropriate behavior, debriefing the student(s) about his/her role, and may include a referral to the administration. Repeated or severe incidents of bullying/intimidation require a mandatory administrative referral. Information concerning any complaints of bullying/intimidation shall be treated confidentially.

Bullying behavior can also be reported anonymously by (students, parents, community members, etc.) filling out an anonymous bully referral form and sending it electronically to the school. This referral is received by the school and is addressed in a timely fashion. This anonymous bully referral form is available online by logging onto the Abington Heights School District website, www.ahsd.org, find our schools, choose Abington Heights Middle School and clicking on the RED bullying link.

Suggested teacher interventions

- Identify Bully behaviors.
- Stop the behavior.
- Conference with the student or students
- Provide mediations for students engaging in bully behaviors.
- Review and apply consequences according to the school-wide bully behavioral rubric.
- Make a parent contact.
- Arrange for apologies, both verbal and written.
- Initiate a counselor referral.
- Initiate an administrative referral.

Procedures after an administrative referral

1. An immediate investigation will be completed, which may include verbal and written statement for witnesses. All facets of the investigation will be documented and all information will be kept confidential.

2. All parties and their parents will be notified that:

- Bullying and/or intimidation are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in school.
- Consequences will occur for inappropriate behavior.
- Retaliation against victims or witnesses will not be tolerated.

In addition, the following information will be discussed.

- The types of behavior which constitutes bullying/intimidation.
 - The rights and responsibilities of the individual to prevent bullying/intimidation from happening.
3. Consequences will be assigned which may include the following:
- Verbal warning/reprimand
 - Written warning/reprimand entered in student's file
 - Suspension
 - An apology to the victim
 - Counselor referral
 - A parent/student/administrator conference
 - Police involvement
 - Loss of privilege to participate in extracurricular activities for a specific period of time
 - Community service
 - Other consequences deemed appropriate by the school or district
 - Notification of Superintendent of Schools

References

Banks, R. (2000) What should parents and teachers know about bullying? *Focus Adolescent Services*. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the World Wide Web at <http://www.focusas.com/Bullying.html>

Bully Police USA (2004) Bully Police USA: A watchdog organization reporting on state anti-bullying laws and advocating for bullied children. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the World Wide Web at http://www.bullypolice.org/pa_law.html

Czys, K., Dwyer, C., Henze, B., and Parish, A. (2003) Bullying and Harassment. *Lancaster Middle School Bullying Policy- Lancaster, WI*. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the World Wide Web at <http://www.mhtc.net/~dharycki/Lancaster2003.html>

Identifying Bullying (2004) The National PTA Web Page. Retrieved July 22, 2004 from the World Wide Web at <http://www.pta.org/bullying/identify.asp>

Olweus, D. (1993) *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

FERPA NOTICE

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

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

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

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

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

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

USDE - December 23, 2008

Notice of Special Education Services and Programs - Child Find

To Parents who reside in one of the Twenty Constituent School Districts of the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit

Each school district, along with other public agencies in the Commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents and describes the parent's rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process.

The content of this notice has been written in English. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district (see Contacts) and request an explanation.

Identification Activity

Child find refers to activities undertaken by public education agencies to identify, locate, and evaluate children residing in the State, including children attending private schools, who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available. The types of disabilities that if found to cause a child to need services are: Autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment due to chronic or acute health problems, specific learning disabilities, speech or language, traumatic brain injury and visual impairment including blindness.

In the case of a child that is of preschool age, developmental delay. Each school district is required to annually provide notice describing the identification activities and the procedures followed to ensure confidentiality of personally identifiable information. This notice is intended to meet this requirement.

Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected as having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available. These activities are sometimes called screening activities. The activities include: Review of group data, conducting hearing and vision screening, assessment of student's academic functioning, observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior and determining the student's response to attempted remediation. Input from parents are also an information source for identification. After a child is identified as a suspected child with a disability, he or she is evaluated, but is not evaluated before parents give permission for their child to be evaluated.

Confidentiality

If after screening and a disability is identified, upon your permission your child will be evaluated. A written record of the results are called an education record, which are directly related to your child and are maintained by the school districts. These records are personally identifiable to your child. Personally identifiable information includes the child's name, the name of the child's parents or other family member, the address of the child or their family, a personal identifier such as social security number, a list of characteristics that would make the child's identity easily traceable or other information that would make the child's identity easily traceable.

The school district will gather information regarding your child's physical, mental, emotional and health functioning through testing and assessment, observation of your child, as well as through review of any records made available to the school district through your physician and other providers of services such as day care agencies.

The school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information by one school official being responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the records; training being provided to all persons using the information and; maintaining for public inspection a current list of employees names and positions who may have access to the information.

The school district will inform you when this information is no longer needed to provide educational services to your child and will destroy the information at the request of the parent, except general information such as your child's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance record and classes attended, grade level completed, may be maintained without time limitation.

As the parent of the child you have a number of rights regarding the confidentiality of your child's records. The right to inspect and review any education records related to your child at are collected, maintained, or used by the school district. The school district will comply with a request for you to review the records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding planning for your child's special education program (called an IEP meeting), before a hearing should you and your school district disagree about how to educate your child who needs special education, and in no case, take more than 45 days to furnish you the opportunity to inspect and review your child's records.

You have the right to an explanation and interpretations of the records; to be provided copies of the records if failure to provide the copies would effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review the records and; the right to have a representative inspect and review the records.

Upon your request, the school district will provide you a list of the types and location of education records collected, maintained, or used by the agency. [Editor note: if a district will charge a fee, then the following two sentences are necessary; if the district will not charge any fees, then this sentence is unnecessary] Additionally, the school district will charge a fee for copies of records made in response to your request for copies except it will not charge a fee if doing so will prevent you from inspecting and reviewing your child's records. The district will not charge a fee to search or retrieve information.

You have the right to request the amendment of your child's education records that you believe are inaccurate or misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of your child. The school district will decide whether to amend the records within a reasonable time of receipt of your request. If the school district refuses to amend the records you will be notified of the refusal and your right to a hearing. You will be given at that time, additional information regarding the hearing procedures and; upon request, the district will provide you a records hearing to challenge information in your child's education files.

Parent consent is required before personally identifiable information contained in your child's education records is disclosed to anyone other than officials of the school district collecting or using the information for purposes of identification of your child, locating your child and evaluating your child or for any other purpose of making available a free appropriate public education to your child. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Additionally, the school district, upon request, discloses records without consent to officials of another school district in which your child seeks or intends to enroll.

When a child reaches age 18, the rights of the parent with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information is transferred to the student. A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Division of Compliance
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

The Department of Education will investigate the matter, issue a report of findings and necessary corrective action within 60 days. The Department will take necessary action to ensure compliance is achieved.

Complaints alleging failures of the school district with regard to confidentiality of personally identifiable information may also be filed with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

The Abington Heights School District will provide ongoing screening services. If you wish to learn more, have questions, or believe your child may need to be identified, please contact:

Abington Heights School District
Mr. Sam Sica, Director of Special Education
585-8278

Early Intervention Identification

The PA Department of Education is responsible for providing EI programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the EI Services System Act. An "eligible young child" is a child age 3 to age of beginners, who has an identified disability or a developmental delay in the areas of speech/language, learning, motor, adaptive, social and/or behavioral and is in need of special education.

Developmental screening for thought to be eligible children is available through NEIU 19. To request a screening, call 1-800-228-1750, ext. 219 or 570-876-9219, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. All information gathered is confidential. There is no cost for programs and services. For additional information, contact NEIU 19, Ms. Kathryn Bonomo, 570-876-9255.

**Receipt of
Abington Heights Middle School
Student Handbook
2011-2012**

**This is to certify that I have received the Abington Heights School
District's Middle School Student Handbook.**

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Signature

Sign and return this page to your homeroom teacher by the second week of school.