

**AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH  
SCHOOL Student and Family  
Handbook 2024-2025**



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# OVERVIEW

*The Student and Family Handbook* contains all the policies and expectations governing Amherst Regional High School for SY 2024-2025. The school administration reserves the right to amend all policies, pending notification to the school community, exclusive of those determined by Massachusetts General Law and the Amherst Regional School Committee.

“ The Amherst-Regional School District, The Amherst Public Schools, and the Pelham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, political party, and disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment by its programs and activities” ([Amherst Regional School Committee, Policy AC](#)).

## ADMINISTRATION

### Regional School Committee

**Sarahbess Kenney** (Chair) Pelham

**William Sherr** (Vice-Chair) Pelham

**Anna Heard** Shutesbury

**Bridget Hynes** Amherst

**Deborah Leonard** Amherst

**Sarah Marshall** Amherst

**Irv Rhodes** Amherst

**Jennifer Shiao** Amherst

**Tilman Wolf** Leverett

### Central Office Staff

**Dr. E Xiomara Herman** Superintendent

**Jennifer Ortiz** Human Resources Administrator

**Doreen Reid** Director of Student Services

**Jerry Champagne** Director of Information Systems

**Marta Guevara** Director of Student & Family Engagement

**Doug Slaughter** Director of Finance

**Rupert Roy-Clark** Director of Facilities

**Michael Gallo O’Connell** Director of Food Services



# Amherst Regional High School

## Administration

[Talib Sadiq](#) Principal 413-362-1701

[Miki Gromacki](#) Assistant Principal 413-362-1715

[Samantha Camera](#) Assistant Principal 413-362-1714

[Victoria Dawson](#) Athletic Director 413-362-1746

## Dean's Office

[Mary Custard](#) Dean of Students for Grades 9 & 11 413-362-1708

[Diego Sharon](#) Dean of Students for Grades 10 & 12 413-362-1756

[Julie Woynar](#) Assistant to the Deans 413-362-1722

## Offices

[Main Office](#) 413-362-1700

Principal's Office [Lireydaliz Rodriguez](#) 413-362-1706

Registrar [Erika Lisle](#) 413-362-1703

Nurse's Office 413-362-1743

Attendance Office [Julie Woynar](#) 413-362-1718

Guidance Office [Wilnelia Melendez](#) 413-362-1720

Master Schedule [Judi Dellamarco](#) 413-362-1714

## Department Heads

[Jeff Stauder](#) Art Department 413-362-1584

[Nat Woodruff](#) Engineering and Technology 413-362-1541

[Sara Barber-Just](#) English 413-362-1508

[Ashleigh Sayer](#) English Language Education 413-362-1520

[Ella Stocker](#) Library 413-362-1772

[Jane Mudie](#) Mathematics 413-362-1563

[John Bechtold](#) Performing Arts, Physical Education, and Health 413-362-1502

[Krista Larsen](#) Science 413-362-1545

[Lisa Zephyr](#) School Counseling 413-362-1784

[Simon Leutz](#) Social Studies 413-362-1527

[Raloon Bialek](#) Special Education 413-362-1573

[William Roundy](#) World Language 413-362-1577

## Contacting School Personnel

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to talk directly with teachers and other school staff when they have questions or concerns. Parents/guardians can best reach teachers directly by emailing or by telephoning the school during school hours (Monday-Friday 8:15am-3:45pm) to leave a voicemail. Parents and guardians should expect to receive a response within two school days. Please refer to the [ARHS Staff Directory](https://arps.org/arhs/staff-directory/) for a complete list of contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers.(<https://arps.org/arhs/staff-directory/>).

If a parent/guardian is not sure who to speak with regarding a specific or general concern about their child, please use the grid below to determine the appropriate faculty and/or staff member.

Concern	Who to Contact
Student's performance/behavior in a particular course.	Classroom Teacher
General questions about curriculum, course sequence, or grading system for a particular department.	Department Head
Student's overall performance.	School Counselor
Personal concerns affecting performance.	School Counselor
If you have contacted a teacher or counselor and you feel your concern has not been adequately resolved.	Administrator
If you have spoken to an Assistant Principal and you feel your concern has not been adequately resolved.	Principal
If you feel that your concern has not been resolved adequately at the building level.	Superintendent of Schools
Student's school records.	Registrar

Please refer to the [ARHS Staff Directory](https://arps.org/arhs/staff-directory/) for a complete list of contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers (<https://arps.org/arhs/staff-directory/>).

# CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

*High Achievement ★ Best Practices ★ Social Justice*

- 1. The high school administration, faculty, and staff believe in promoting high achievement for all students.**
  - We develop and implement a developmentally appropriate, challenging and diverse curriculum based on national and state standards;
  - We emphasize high expectations for all students in all fields of endeavor;
  - We maintain inclusive and diverse educational environments that promote success for students with diverse challenges and learning styles.
  
- 2. The high school administration, faculty and staff believe in working from research-based best practices that promote student achievement.**
  - We collaborate with colleagues to regularly develop curriculum and assessment, incorporate known best practices to support effective instruction and classroom innovations, and to ensure high professional standards in our work.
  - We create effective ways of gathering and analyzing data from student performance and use it to monitor individual student progress and inform instruction within and across departments;
  - We build partnerships with academic institutions and community organizations that enrich students and staff and add value to our school system.
  
- 3. The high school administration, faculty and staff believe that an education in diversity and social justice is essential for all members of our community. We believe that these values help us to recognize our civic responsibilities and the potential we share to make a positive difference in and beyond the school.**
  - We develop curricula that educate students about the historical injustices suffered by people because of their identity;
  - We create a learning environment where students can grow personally, acknowledge their identities, and express difference while nurturing acceptance and respect for self and others;
  - We provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff in diversity training and social justice education;
  - We celebrate the diversity within our community and affirm the bond we share as human beings.

# SECTION I: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REQUIREMENTS

## Attendance

### Statement of Belief

ARHS is committed to ensuring the success of all students. The school's policies and procedures are designed to facilitate this success. The most basic of these concerns attendance. The purpose of this section is to provide students and families with all the information about the ARHS attendance policy necessary for them to make sound decisions regarding attendance.

The most basic piece of information is this: unless they have a valid excuse, students must attend each of their scheduled classes on time..Both [Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 1](#) and [Amherst Regional Public Schools Policy JH](#) require daily attendance of all students. In addition to law and policy, the most important reasons for daily attendance are educational.

We strongly believe that what occurs in class is central to student learning. Ultimately the classroom is the centerpiece of the academic experience. The richness of the classroom environment - the exchange of ideas with peers and teachers, the opportunity to explain, defend and receive feedback on one's thinking, and learning to work collaboratively with one's peers - is irretrievably lost when a student is not present in class. Some academic experiences can be made up; these cannot.

### Role of Parents and Guardians

[Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 2](#) directly addresses the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure their children's consistent attendance. As it is derived from Massachusetts General Law, we hope and expect that parents and guardians support the ARHS attendance policy and encourage their children's daily attendance.

An important way parents and guardians can support ARHS's attendance policy is to inform the school about the reasons for absences, dismissals, and tardies (see [How to Report an Excused Absence](#), [How to Report an Early Dismissal](#), and [How to Report a Tardy](#)).

When it is possible for parents and guardians to do so, they should make every effort to provide advance notice of any absence, particularly when an absence may be an extended one.

At times, the school and parents and guardians will disagree about what constitutes a legitimate excuse. The school will work to be fair and reasonable in its judgments, but ultimately retains the right to make these determinations.

## **Absences**

Success more readily comes to students who are in class, on time, every day. Families and students need to be mindful of the accumulating total of absences in each of a student's courses, as exceeding the absence limit may result in the loss of course credit.

### **Absence Limits and Loss of Course Credit**

Students are allowed up to ten (10) absences per semester course, or five (5) absences per quarter course. If a student exceeds these absence limits, the student will receive a grade but no credit for the course and is required to schedule and attend an [attendance meeting](#). All [Category II](#) and [Category III](#) absences will count toward the absence limit, as do tardies.

Three (3) tardies are equal to one absence. So, for example, if a student was absent from class seven (7) times and was also tardy to the same class six (6) times, equal to two absences, then the student's absence total would be nine (9).

The school will mail home absence total reminders when students accumulate five (5) and ten (10) absences in any of their classes.

## **Types of Absences**

There are three categories of absences. Each category bears differently on the potential loss of course credit. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between each of them.

### **Excused Absences - Category I**

The following absences do NOT count towards a loss of course credit. Generally these absences are beyond the control of students and families (see [How to Report an Excused Absence](#) for more information).

#### **School Related Absences**

*These absences do NOT require students or families to submit any supporting documentation.*

- School-sponsored field trips
- School-sponsored foreign exchanges
- In-school meetings with college representatives for juniors or seniors [limit of three (3) per school year]
- School suspensions

## **Non-School Related Absences**

*These absences require students or families to submit supporting documentation.*

- Observation of religious holidays
- Quarantine or physician-documented long-term illness, injury, or physician authorized recurring appointments
- Death in the immediate family, family illness, or serious emergency
- Mandated court appearances
- College visits for juniors or seniors [limit of three (3) per school year]

## **Excused Absences - Category II**

The following absences count towards a loss of credit. Generally, students and families retain a degree of control over these circumstances (see [How to Report an Excused Absence](#) for more information).

- Short-term student illness;
- Early dismissals (see [Early Dismissals](#) for more information)
- Medical appointment\*
- Family vacation
- Driver's license test
- College visits beyond the three (3) school day limit
- In-school meetings with college representatives, beyond the three (3) period limit

\*For students who have regularly scheduled appointments with health care professionals, parents should request that these appointments be scheduled outside of school hours.

## **Unexcused Absences - Category III**

The following absences count towards a loss of credit. Generally students and families retain complete control over these circumstances.

- Missed school bus
- Traffic or car trouble
- Student oversleeps
- If a student is driven to school by a parent/guardian, sibling, or friend and that ride is late or did not show up

## **Notification of Absences**

If a student is absent from first period class, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified via email and a computer-generated phone call. If an absence note is received within 48 hours, the

absence will be re-categorized as excused. If an absence note is not received within 48 hours, the absence will be considered unexcused and the student will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

### **Making Up Work After an Excused Absence**

For each day a student is out with an excused absence, they have two school days to make up any missed work and/or to schedule the completion of that work with their teacher. Teachers may extend this two day grace period at their discretion. If a student misses work that is unique to the classroom experience and cannot be made up, they may be given an alternative assignment. Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Flex Block to meet with teachers and get back on track following an absence of any length. Students with extended absences (greater than ten (10) school days) should plan to meet with their school counselor upon return to facilitate this process.

Students with unexcused absences are encouraged to complete any missed work with the understanding that teachers are not obligated to give credit for work missed due to an unexcused absence.

### **Other Absence Related Issues**

- **Extended Absences for Medical Reasons**

If a student is absent from school because of an extended illness or surgery, a doctor's note at the time of diagnosis must be sent to the office. If the student is absent from school for more than 14 consecutive days for medical reasons, the student is eligible for home/hospital tutoring services.

- **Extended Absences for Non-Medical Reasons**

In the event of an extended absence, the parent/guardian should notify the student's guidance counselor as soon as possible.

- **Missing Substantial Class Time**

If a student misses twenty (20) minutes or more of any given class period for any reason (including early dismissals and tardies), the student shall be considered absent for the entire period.

- **Seniors**

Are required to attend all classes through Friday, May 30, 2025.



## How to Report an Excused Absence

In order to report an excused absence for a student, please follow the following procedures. Only parents or guardians may report an absence. **Students who are 18 years or older may write absence notes for themselves only if they are emancipated and living on their own, as designated by a court of law.**

If the absence is excused by same day phone call or a note within 48 hours (two school days), the absence shall be considered excused and the student will have the opportunity to make up all work missed during the absence for credit.

If an absence is not reported by same day phone call or an excused absence note is not received within 48 hours (two school days), the absence will be considered unexcused. Any absence reported after 48 hours (two school days) must be approved by the Dean of Students. Approval will be granted only under extreme circumstances.

### Phone Call - Day of Absence Only

- Parents may report an absence by calling the Attendance Line at 413-362-1718 on the day of the absence. *Next day phone calls will not be accepted.*
- If a same day call is made to excuse an absence, the student is not required to bring in a note when they return to school.

### Parent/Guardian Note upon Return to School

- If no same day phone call is made to excuse an absence, the student is required to bring a note signed by a parent or guardian that informs the school that the student was absent with the knowledge of the parent/guardian.
- Students and families have two school days to submit a note. For example, if a student was absent on a Monday and returns to school Tuesday, they have until the close of the school day on Wednesday to submit their note.

## Early Dismissals

The purpose of an early dismissal is to allow a student to schedule a critical appointment that cannot be scheduled after school, such as a court summons. Dismissals should not be requested on a regular basis. Students who are dismissed from school and miss 20 minutes of a class period due to an early dismissal will be considered absent for the entire period. Upon returning to school from a dismissal, a student must check in to the main office and receive a pass to class.

## How to Report an Early Dismissal

In order to receive an excused absence for a planned early dismissal, students must:

- Bring a signed note from a parent/guardian to the Main Office stating the date and time of the dismissal *prior* to leaving the building. Photos of signed dismissal notes may also be submitted via email to [arhsoffice@arps.org](mailto:arhsoffice@arps.org) by the parent/guardian. Notes from student email addresses will not be accepted.
- Early dismissal notes must include:
  - The time of the dismissal
  - The purpose of the dismissal
  - A signature from a parent or guardian

## Unexcused Early Dismissals

Students who leave school without following these dismissal policies and procedures will be considered as having cut school and will receive an unexcused absence. They will be assigned disciplinary consequences and will for an unexcused absence and not receive credit for any missed work.

## Student Athletes & Student Performers

If an in-season student-athlete is dismissed early, they must present a note from a parent/guardian to the Athletic Director in order to be eligible for participation that day. Student athletes who leave school grounds without permission are ineligible to compete or practice. The same policy applies to students participating in Performing Arts rehearsals and performances. These students must present a note from a Parent/Guardian to the Performing Arts department head.

## Dismissal Due to Illness

Students who become ill during the school day should inform their teacher and report to the Nurse's Office with a pass from the teacher. The school nurse will assess the student and attempt to contact the parent/guardian before making a judgment as to whether or not the student is to be released from school.

Students are permitted to leave school due to illness only with clearance from the nurse and after proper arrangements have been made with a parent/guardian.

## **Attendance Meetings**

When a student exceeds the absence limit total of ten (10) days for a semester-long course or five (5) days for a quarter-long course, they will be placed on non-credit status. This means they are eligible to receive a grade, but not credit, for the course.

Once a student is placed on non-credit status, they must schedule an attendance meeting. The school assumes that exceeding the absence limit is an opportunity disguised as a problem. The absence meeting provides an opportunity for the school and family to collaborate on a plan to improve the student's attendance pattern. If there is no evidence of extenuating circumstances, the prospect of losing credit is a real one, however, the goal of the meeting is to ensure consistent attendance by resolving the issues that prevent it.

### **Scheduling an Attendance Meeting**

The school will notify families when a student exceeds the absence limit in any particular course. This notification will not wait until the end of the semester, but will come as soon as the student has exceeded the absence limit. This letter will direct parents and/or guardians to contact the Office of the Deans of Students to make an appointment for a meeting (413-362-1722).

### **Meeting Process**

Attendance meetings must be attended by both the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s). If a student or parent/guardian is unable to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled. The student's school counselor will be invited to attend, as will the liaison if the student has an IEP.

At the meeting, students and parents/guardians must be prepared to present documentation and describe circumstances that the school may not be aware of that they believe explains the attendance pattern. Assertions without documentation will not be looked upon favorably.

### **Possible Outcomes of Attendance Meeting**

- The permanent loss of credit.
- The restoration of credit.
- The loss of credit with conditions to meet before credit is restored.

The school principal or their designee will preside over attendance meetings and make all final decisions. These decisions are not subject to appeal.

If the evidence does not support the restoration of credit, the student will NOT be guaranteed the opportunity to make up the course. A number of considerations may preclude this: the

course may not be offered; the course may be offered only at a time in the day that conflicts with another course in the student’s schedule; and there may not be available seats in a particular course. If a course is fully enrolled, the enrollment ceiling will not be raised to accommodate students who need to retake the course due to absences.

## **Tardies**

In addition to being present in class, the school believes that the start and end of class are critical. Students should make every effort to arrive on time for the school day and to be on time for each of their subsequent classes.

### **Tardy to School**

Students are considered tardy to school if they are not in their first period classroom when the bell rings at 9:05 am. If a student is late to school after 9:25 am, they must report to the Main Office before going to class. Students who arrive after 9:25am are ineligible to participate in any school-sponsored activities on that day, including athletic practices/games , rehearsals/performances, and club meetings unless their notes are approved by the Athletic Director or the moderator of the activity.

### **How to Excuse a Tardy**

Students may submit a note to the main office upon arrival specifying the reason for their tardiness. Note that unlike an absence, tardies cannot be excused by a phone call to the main office or the absence line. Tardy excuse notes will be accepted in the following cases:

- **Medical Appointment/Emergency:** The student must bring a note from a parent/guardian identifying the time and date the student was seen or a doctor’s note stating the same.
- **Court Appearance:** The student must bring a note from a parent/guardian identifying the time and date of the appearance.

In the case of other urgent or extenuating circumstances, the Dean of Students is authorized to engage students and families in a conversation to better understand the circumstances and make a final decision about whether consequences will be waived. Traffic jams or the alarm clocks not going off are not considered “urgent or extenuating”.

### **Tardy to Class**

Students are marked tardy to class when they are not inside their assigned classroom when the bell rings at the start of the period. As noted in the absence policy, three (3) tardies are the

equivalent of one (1) absence in that course and count towards the potential loss of credit in that course.

## **Time Out of Class**

Students are expected to be in class for the entirety of the class period. As noted in the introduction to this section, the classroom experience is the most valuable part of the school day. While some academic experiences may be replicated elsewhere, the classroom experience cannot be. In addition to absences, tardies, and early dismissals, special consideration has been given this attendance expectation.

All students are expected to follow these policies:

- Only one student may be out of class at a time
- Students may not be out of class for more than five (5) minutes in any given class period
- Students may not leave class during the first five (5) and last ten (10) minutes of any class period
- Students may not take unsupervised breaks
- Students must carry a hall pass with them at all times when out of class
  - Any adult may ask to see a student's hall pass at any time
  - If an adult staff member asks a student for their name or destination, the student must tell them

Students who fail to meet these expectations will be written up and may be required to meet with Deans and/or Administrators in addition to other consequences.

## **Administrative Withdrawal**

When a student who is 16 years or older has exceeded the absence limit and cannot earn credit, an administrative withdrawal may be in their best interest. This is a potential option the student and their family may want to explore with the school. The student and their parent/guardian will be encouraged to re-enroll the student for the following semester with a support plan developed with the student's school counselor and an Assistant Principal.

# Grades and Exams

## Uniform Grade Policy

The following uniform grade policy has been developed to ensure that students and their parents/guardians understand how letter and number grades are defined, as well as the definitions for all course designations and performance achievement levels. Students are responsible for learning and understanding the grading practices for each of their courses and are encouraged to speak with their teachers early if they have questions or concerns about a specific grade or course policy.

## Course Designations

CP: College Prep

AP: Advanced Placement

HON or H: Honors Courses

ALPs: Alternative Learning Programs

## Letter and Number Grade Ranges and Conversions

Letter Grade Conversion to Numerical Grade		Numerical Grade Conversion to Letter Grade	
A+ 96.5 – 100	C+ 76.5 – 79.49	A+ 98	C+ 78
A 92.5 – 96.49	C 72.5 – 76.49	A 94.5	C 74.5
A- 89.5 – 92.49	C- 69.5 – 72.49	A- 91	C- 71
B+ 86.5 – 89.49	D+ 66.5 – 69.49	B+ 88	D+ 68
B 82.5 – 86.49	D 62.5 – 66.49	B 84.5	D 64.5
B- 79.5 – 82.49	D- 59.5 – 62.49	B- 81	D- 61
	F 59.49 and below		F

## Letter Grade Performance Achievement Level Definitions

A = Superior  
B = Good  
C = Fair  
D = Passing  
F = Failing  
S = Satisfactory

INC = Work Incomplete  
DRP = Drop Passing  
DRF = Drop Failing  
WDP = Withdrawn Passing  
WDF = Withdrawn Failing

EXC = Excused  
IP = In progress  
P = Passing  
AUD = Audit  
U = Unsatisfactory

### Incompletes (INC)

In case of illness or other excused absences, students may be given a grade of Incomplete to give the student time to make up any missing work. Incompletes may also be used by a teacher when a student has demonstrated the ability to complete a course, has made a good faith effort to do so, and needs additional time. Any other reason for an Incomplete must be approved by the Assistant Principal. A grade of Incomplete will not be given to students who cut class or fail to make-up work.

Students have two weeks from the end of the term to hand in missing work. If work is not submitted, the “incomplete” assignment grades will be changed to a failing grade (F) and the final grade will be calculated.

Students will be notified by teachers individually no later than the day that grades are submitted if the student has received an Incomplete.

### In Progress Grades

In Progress (IP) is used when a student cannot complete a course by the end of the semester because of a major illness or other serious obstacles. An agreement is made between the student, parent, and teacher with the approval of the assistant principal to extend the time allowed to complete work. A specific date for completion must be identified.

*Note for Seniors: Incomplete and In Progress grades will not be granted to seniors during the second semester since final credit checks and grade point averages must be completed before the graduation ceremony.*

### Pass/Fail Grades

In some situations, it may be appropriate for a student to take a course with the grade of Pass (P) or Fail (F). A student who will need significant modifications to take a particular class may be eligible to use the Pass/Fail option. To request the use of a Pass/Fail grade a student or parent should discuss the issue with a counselor. If the request is appropriate the counselor will contact the teacher for input and the Assistant Principal for approval. This process must be

completed by the end of the drop add period at the beginning of the course unless there are significant extenuating circumstances. A Pass/Fail grade may not be requested after a course is completed. In addition, all students taking an Alternative Learning Project (ALPs) for Community Service or School Service credit will receive a Pass/Fail grade.

### **Honor Roll**

The high school Honor Roll will be published at the end of each semester. Only semester grades will be used to determine eligibility for the Honor Roll. Every student whose report card includes at least three graded classes with no grade lower than B- and no U (Unsatisfactory) or INC (Incomplete) grades will be included on the Honor Roll. Grades in all classes including ALPs, Physical Education, university and college courses will be used to determine Honor Roll eligibility. Students taking ungraded courses or ALPs must receive a pass in those classes. Students who receive incomplete grades will not be eligible for the Honor Roll unless the incomplete is completed within two weeks of the end of the semester and a grade is submitted to the registrar. Courses dropped must be dropped with a passing grade (DRP).

### **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

GPA is calculated for each student at the end of each semester. All academic subjects completed in grades 9-12 at Amherst Regional High School are included with the following exceptions:

- ALPs which do not have a written curriculum or are not graded by an ARHS teacher
- Courses taken outside of ARHS (including college classes)
- Academic support courses

Note that all grades at ARHS are unweighted and class rank is not calculated or reported for ARHS students except to determine the valedictorian and salutatorian. Class ranks are also provided to students who are applying for merit scholarships. Students must have completed two full school years and 44 credits counted in GPA to be considered for valedictorian. The Class of 2026 will be the last graduating class with valedictorians and salutatorians.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty and integrity are important to our school community and our community. The values of honesty and integrity are the cornerstones of academic success and life-long learning habits. To this end, students have the responsibility to acknowledge the work of others and to take credit only for work that is solely their own. Using the words or ideas of others without giving them credit (plagiarism), cheating on tests or attempting to cheat, not crediting the work of each participant in a group project, copying assignments, using AI without explicit



permission to do so, or sharing work in any way not directly permitted by the teacher are forms of academic dishonesty. Giving or receiving help on tests or projects unless specifically permitted by the teacher are also forms of cheating. Theft of academic materials such as teacher's editions of textbooks, teacher notes, and any assessments (e.g., quizzes, tests, labs, etc.) that provide students with an academic advantage over other students will also be treated as an academic honesty violation. The use of electronic devices to copy academic materials will be considered both a theft and an academic honesty violation, and both sets of consequences will apply.

Plagiarism, cheating, attempts at cheating, and falsification of materials (including written, audio-visual, Internet, and other computer technologies) will meet with the consequences itemized below.

- **First Offense**

Zero/no credit for the assignment, parent/guardian - teacher communication, loss of eligibility for honor roll for the semester in which the infraction occurred, and if applicable, loss of membership in the National Honor Society or loss of eligibility to apply for the remainder of the school year.

- **All Subsequent Offenses**

Zero/no credit for the assignment, parent/guardian - administrator conference, loss of eligibility for honor roll or National Honor Society for the remainder of the school year; notification of all colleges to which the student applies.

To provide students with an incentive to make the right decisions in this domain, once a teacher declares that an assessment has begun, any student that has an unauthorized electronic device out, visible or in their hands will receive a zero on that assessment.

## **School to Home Communication**

### **Report Cards**

Classroom teachers update grades regularly in PowerSchool, and they can be accessed by students and their families. Final grades are issued at the end of each quarter, for most electives and at the end of each semester for most core classes. Hard copies of Report Cards will be issued by request only. Please contact the main office by phone 413-362-1701 or email [arhsoffice@arps.org](mailto:arhsoffice@arps.org) to request a hard copy of the Report Card or if you need the login information to PowerSchool.

## **Progress Reports**

At the end of the first/third quarter and the midpoint of the semester, students receive an electronic progress report. This will include the student's grade at that moment. Comments are required only if a student has below a C average in that course.

## **Interim Communications**

Beyond report cards and progress reports, circumstances may necessitate additional communication with parents and guardians. Specifically, faculty are obliged to initiate communication when there are significant changes in a student's behavior or academic performance. These communications would be sent via email and be copied to the student's guidance counselor and/or special education liaison. However, as a matter of course, faculty will not notify families about missing assignments or attendance. This information is readily available via the Parent Portal on PowerSchool. To learn how to access the Parent Portal, parents or guardians should contact the Main Office at 413-362-1700 or [arhsoffice@arps.org](mailto:arhsoffice@arps.org).

## **Flex Block**

Flex Block is a period at the end of the day intended for students to get additional academic support in the classes where they need it most. Flex Block also provides opportunities for clubs and student groups to meet, performing arts groups to practice, as well as student athletes who need to leave early for games to do so without disruption to the core academic school day. The typical student will likely attend 3-4 academic support Flex Blocks each week and 1-2 extracurricular Flex Blocks. Students are strongly encouraged to consider their coursework, upcoming or missing assignments, and current grades when considering how to schedule their Flex Blocks in a given week. Academic needs should always be prioritized over other options during Flex.

## **Flex Block Attendance**

Students are required to attend the entirety of Flex Block every day. Students should remain in the same flex for the entire period.

An unexcused absence or skip from Flex is considered with the same weight and seriousness as skipping any class and will have similar consequences.

## **Flex Block Grades**

Students will receive a grade for Flex Block, based on their attendance: "S" for satisfactory attendance and "U" for unsatisfactory attendance. This grade will go on student transcripts.

## Senior Flex Block Exemption

The Senior Flex Block exemption is designed to encourage students to stay academically focused during their last semester at ARHS. The Flex Block exemption is optional and all Seniors are encouraged to attend Flex Block if it is advantageous for them to do so.

Seniors who meet the criteria will be exempt from attending Flex Block during the 4th Quarter ONLY. The eligibility criteria for senior Flex Block exemption will also be modified in accordance with any specific IEP or 504 stipulations.

Seniors must meet ALL of the following criteria to be eligible for the Flex Block Exemption:

- The Senior must have an average of B- or above for the 3rd Quarter.
- The Senior must have no more than five (5) absences and/or three (3) tardies in any class during the Spring Semester. If more than five (5) days are missed, regardless of the reason, the student's eligibility will be revoked.
  - Only absences that come at the request of the school do not count toward this total and are limited to:
    - AP exams
    - MCAS testing
    - Court appointments
    - Three excused college visits
    - School-sponsored foreign exchange trips
    - School-sponsored field trips
    - School-sponsored athletic events
  - All other absences count towards the absence limit for the Senior Flex Exception.
- The Senior must have NO unexcused absences in Semester 2.
  - An unexcused absence in one class will disqualify the student from the Flex Block exemption in all classes.
- Disciplinary infractions or violations of the Code of Conduct may result in a loss of eligibility for the Flex Block exemption at any time.
- Students who qualify for exemption and are NOT attending a Flex Block are expected to leave the building.

Please see the section on [How to Excuse an Absence](#) to ensure that all excused absences are reported correctly.

To avoid any last-minute surprises, students are encouraged to use the PowerSchool portal to monitor their attendance throughout the semester.

Seniors are required to attend all classes through Friday, May 30, 2025.

## Final Exams

All courses may include a cumulative experience designed to evaluate student achievement. Exams or similar culminating activities will be included in the grade for each course. The weight of such grades will be determined by each department within a range of ten to twenty percent of the semester grade. The weight of exam grades will be consistent within each course regardless of teacher but may vary between courses or departments (e.g. the same weight will be used for all Chemistry classes, all Algebra classes, etc.).

## Exam Period Policies

Exam periods will be scheduled at the end of each term. Attendance in Exam Periods is required for all students.

- All exams are to be taken during the regularly scheduled exam period for the course. Students are not permitted to take exams before their class is scheduled to take them. There are no exceptions.
- Students who have an unexcused absence will receive a zero (0) for all missed exams. A student who has an excused absence will receive an incomplete (INC) on his/her report card.
  - In Semester 1 and Quarters 1, 2, and 3, students who miss exams due to an excused absence must complete their missed exam within the first two weeks of the new quarter/semester. Students who do not complete final exams during this time will receive a zero (0) for the final exam grade.
  - In Semester 2 and Quarter 4, students who miss exams due to an excused absence must complete their exam during the summer and will be supervised by a teacher, counselor, or administrator by appointment. Students must take their exams before the second week of the new school year. If they do not, their grade will become a zero (0) for the final exam.

# Graduation Requirements and Procedures

## Graduation Requirements

Each year, a student must take at least four (4) blocks each semester, earning up to 32 credits for the year. The equivalent of a 4-credit subject may be two quarter long classes or one semester long subject, an ALPs program, or a no-credit audit as long as the student is in daily attendance in the course. To receive a diploma from Amherst Regional High School, current 12th grade students must have earned a total of 96 credits.

Most one-semester courses in grades 9-12 earn 4 credits. Most quarter long courses in grades 9-12 earn 2 credits. Only credits earned during grades 9-12 count toward graduation. The following distribution of credits by subject is specified:

Subject	Credit Distribution and Required Courses
English	16 credits required <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Four-credit semester courses in 9th-11th grades</li><li>● 2x two-credit courses in 12th grade, one of which must be a literature course</li></ul> Students must be enrolled in an English course every school year even if they have already earned 16 credits
Physical Education/Health	4 credits - There are 2x required two-credit courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Physical Education Adventure Challenge - (Grade 10)</li><li>● Health Education - (Grade 9)</li></ul>
Social Studies	12 credits <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Four-credit required U.S. History (Grade 10)</li><li>● 2x additional four-credit courses in Grades 9 and 10</li></ul>
Mathematics	8 credits
Science	8 credits in laboratory science

Most one semester courses in grades 9-12 earn four (4) credits. Most quarter long courses in grades 9-12 earn two (2) credits. Some courses, such as work study programs and ALPs, may be variable based on hours worked or other factors.

## **Participation in Graduation Ceremony**

In order to participate in the graduation ceremony, students must have satisfied all graduation requirements by the last day of classes for seniors. All work must be turned in before that date.

## **Early Graduation**

Each student needs to think carefully about early graduation. Considering the rich and varied course offerings, most students can find interest and challenge in our curriculum for four years.

It is important to note that most competitive colleges and universities do not view early graduation as a plus in the admissions review, unless the student has exhausted the high school curriculum, and place more weight on the quality of a student's academic program than on other factors in the admissions process.

### **Process**

To be considered for an early graduation plan, a student must complete the process outlined below during a student's junior year. The school will not support a request for early graduation from a student who has not followed this process:

- Meet with parent/guardian and counselor to review graduation status, college/career and future plans.
- Discuss with parents/guardians and agree that an early graduation is a reasonable option to consider.
- Independently investigate college/career interests and the implications of early graduation.
- Write a letter to the School Counseling Department Head outlining the following:
  - Describe the reasons for requesting early graduation.
  - Explain how they will use the time between the completion of high school classes and the June graduation ceremony. Include evidence that arrangements for this time have already been made, or are well-developed.
  - Describe their future plans and the implications of early graduation.
  - A parent/guardian must co-sign the letter.
- Meet with the School Counseling Department Head and a parent/guardian to discuss a plan.

If the plan is approved, the student will then need to meet with their school counselor to adjust course requests by June of junior year and then confirm in August before their senior year that their schedule is accurate.

Students should also discuss their plans for early graduation with a college counselor during their junior year college-counseling meeting.

## **Credit or Partial Credit**

As a general policy, partial credit will not be given for courses that have not been completed. Exceptions to this policy have been allowed for students graduating early. If a student wishes to receive less than full credit for a course and desires to petition for an exception to this policy, the following conditions need to be satisfied.

- Decisions of this nature need to be resolved in advance. If a student and teacher wish to contract for less work than might be required for full course credit, the option is available under ALPs. Enrollment in a course assumes that the student will complete all requirements for that course.
- Partial credit petitions will be accepted only from students desiring to graduate early or leaving our school. Students in residence will be expected to complete all course requirements.
- “Ex post facto” decisions on course credits will not be approved. Issues regarding partial credit must be approved by the Assistant Principal.

## **Change of Student Programs**

Families should choose courses carefully during the registration period. Students will receive their course schedule for both semesters in August. Students and families will be asked to carefully review their course schedule for and be informed about the Course Change Request process if there is a need for any change. Any Course Change Request should be communicated to the student’s school counselor as early as possible.

## **Add/Drop Process**

Students have the first five days of the school year to request to add or drop a course. It is important for students to look carefully at all quarters of the year, as changes are often not possible later in the year and will only be made when absolutely necessary.

Priority will be given to:

- Students missing major academics
- A placement error (for example: Spanish 1 v. Spanish 2)
- Students with unbalanced schedules (fewer than 3 academics in one term)
- Students who have failed courses and/or completed summer school

Requests that will be considered but cannot be guaranteed:

- Students who did not get their first choice electives regardless of subject

Schedule changes will not be made for the following reasons:

- Students seeking a specific teacher, period, or term for particular class
- Students seeking a revision to an already balanced schedule
- After the designated first semester Add/Drop period, only teacher-initiated, course-level changes will be honored.

### **Senior Schedule Changes**

Seniors should make sure that their schedules for both semesters are accurate when they are received in late August. Any errors or other special requests for changes should be made before the end of the Add/Drop period at the beginning of the school year. No record of the course change will appear on the student's permanent record if the course is officially dropped during the official Drop/Add period.

Once transcripts have been mailed to colleges, no change to a student's schedule will be made until they meet with the school counselor to determine if those colleges need to be notified of the changes.

### **Changing Levels**

When a student moves between an honors or AP course and a college prep course, an adjustment will be made to ensure that the final grade reflects the student's achievement at the level of the course that will appear on the transcript. This applies to changes made after the end of the drop/add period at the beginning of a course and before the last three weeks at the end of the course. The sending teacher will calculate a grade-to-date and indicate what material has been completed and provide this to the receiving teacher and the department head. The receiving teacher will use this to help determine the student's grade. Greater weight will be given to the work done in the receiving teacher's course since this course will appear on the transcript, assuming the student completes the course. No record of the sending teacher's grade will be indicated on the transcript assuming the student completes the course. Any concerns should be brought first to the receiving teacher and then to the department head.

Please note that changes between levels cannot always be accommodated and are only approved on a space available basis. No changes can be made during the final three weeks of a semester.



## Transferring Schools

If a student is planning to transfer from Amherst Regional High School to another school, the following procedures must be followed:

- A school counselor must be consulted
- A transfer or withdrawal form must be obtained from the Registrar
- Any academic work not completed must be brought up to date prior to the move
- Teachers must verify in writing that all work has been completed
- All school and library books must be returned
- The locker must be emptied
- All bills must be paid before transcripts are sent to another school

## Release of School Records

Parents/guardians of students transferring should sign a Student Record Release Form which gives the Registrar permission to send copies of those materials that have been indicated, e.g. transcript of grades/attendance, health records, test information, verification of birth date, etc.

## Full-Time Enrollment

To be considered full-time enrolled, a student in Amherst Regional High School must be enrolled in a minimum of four (4) blocks each semester, earning a total of 24 credits for the year.

For juniors and seniors, in addition to regularly scheduled courses enrollment might include the following:

- ALP activity
- Course work at one of the Five Colleges or an approved correspondence course
- Working as an aide for a department in the school
- Work study programs

Any activity must be approved in advance by the School Counseling Department Head. Students wishing a reduced course load must present a written request from their parents/guardians in advance to the Assistant Principal. This request should be developed in consultation with the student's guidance counselor.

Students should note that under [MIAA](#) eligibility requirements students with a reduced course load may not be eligible to participate in the interscholastic sports program.

## **Re-Enrollment of Students Over 18**

Regular education students 18 years of age or older must have the permission of the principal to enroll or re-enroll.

## Alternative Academic Experiences

### Alternative Learning Programs (ALPS)

The Alternative Learning Program (ALP) allows students to earn high school credits for experiences that make sense for their own intellectual development. The ALP should supplement the standard high school curriculum and is designed to replace other electives in the student's schedule. In order to be approved for an ALP, students must demonstrate readiness for independent work and develop a plan of study that is not available to them in the regular ARHS high school curriculum. For example, students may conduct an independent study utilizing the knowledge and expertise of members of the community, take a course at one of the Five Colleges, complete a comprehensive community service project, or work with a faculty advisor or mentor to complete independent research or a project that facilitates deeper learning than can be accomplished through the regular ARHS curriculum.

Under the Alternative Learning Program, there are five categories in which students can design an ALP for high school credit:

Type of ALP	Type of Grade	Credits	Included in GPA?
College Course	Variable based on course	Variable based on course	No
Online/Extension Course	Variable based on course	Variable based on course	No
Community Service	Pass/Fail	1	No
School Service	Pass/Fail	1	No
Independent Study	Pass/Fail	1	No

In order to be approved for an ALP, students must complete the following:

- Complete the ALP Request Form, obtained from their School Counselor, and attach a description outlining the specifics of their plan of study/service
- Students must obtain permission from the faculty or community member supervising their ALP. They should be sure that the expectations for coursework and the criteria for evaluation are clearly outlined and understood by all parties.

- Students enrolling in a college or other course of study outside of ARHS must receive prior approval through the ALP Request Form in order to receive ARHS credit for the course. See more in the section on [College Courses](#).
- Students should have alternate courses in their schedules in the event an ALPS is not approved. Once the ALP is approved, the alternate course will be dropped from the student's schedule.
- Students must submit a completed and signed ALP Contract five school days before the start of the semester in which the ALP is being completed (or by the end of the Add/Drop period for the first semester only). ALP Contracts are available through the student's school counselor once the ALP has been approved.

No ALP application will be approved unless the entire application has been completed and signed. Any changes or modifications in the ALP activity must be approved by the assistant principal supervising ALP contracts.

A student who wishes to design more than one ALP in a semester must have special permission from the Assistant Principal supervising ALP contracts. The administration reserves the right to limit the total number of ALP credits and the type of ALP credit earned toward an ARHS diploma.

## **Work Study - Occupational & Vocational Programs**

The Work Study Program consists of three main components:

- **Academic Component:** The student is required to take four major subjects throughout the year. They must also fulfill the Physical Education and Health Requirements.
- **Work Component:** The student is required to begin their paid hours before 3:30pm at least three days a week. They must be able to document these hours, signed off by their work supervisor. Students must work at least seven hours a week to receive two (2) credits per semester.
- **Counselor Component:** The student is required to maintain ongoing contact with their school counselor and to submit monthly time cards with their work supervisor's signature and evaluation review. . This counseling component ensures that the work situation and the academic schedule are meeting the needs of the student, that the student is fulfilling their responsibilities, and that the student is considering their future beyond high school.

For additional information about the Work Study Program, please see the [2024-2025 ARHS Program of Studies](#).

## College Courses

Seniors in good academic standing are able to take courses at the local colleges and the University provided those courses are not equivalent to Amherst Regional High School courses and do not conflict with high school responsibilities. Such enrollment must be approved by the Assistant Principal and by officials at the college and/or university. In addition, parents or guardians must agree to provide appropriate transportation and assume the responsibility for the expenses associated with the enrollment.

Credits earned on the college level can be used to satisfy high school graduation requirements if arrangements are made in advance with the Assistant Principal. The number of course credits may vary and should be confirmed in advance.. Those courses are not computed in a student's grade point average. Students may obtain an application for college courses only after first meeting with their school counselor.

## Expectations for Enrollment

- Students are expected to be enrolled high school students.
- They are required to take a minimum of three classes in high school each semester.
- Students should look for classes that meet in the afternoon and block out appropriate time slots for the term.
- Students will not be allowed to miss part of any of their regularly scheduled high school courses to attend university courses.
- Students must meet all of the graduation requirements in their regular high school program.
- University courses should supplement a high school program. Students may not take courses that are the same as courses offered in the high school.
- During the time periods when the college is not in session and ARHS is, students may not be at ARHS unless by prior arrangement made through the Assistant Principal.

## Responsibilities for Enrollment

The privilege of taking college courses indicates that a student is mature enough to take on these certain responsibilities.

### Students are responsible for:

- Completing an application for permission from the high school
- Registering for and paying for courses and materials at the college
- Meeting with their school counselor to work out an academic program and schedule and complete ALPs forms to receive credit
- Learning and understanding each college or university's procedures, policies, and costs

- Providing any/all transportation required for the completion of the college course

#### **The School is responsible for:**

- Through the school counselor, assisting the student in designing an academic program that makes sense for the student and meets the school's expectations
- Approving applications for students for whom college work is appropriate
- Working with students, colleges, and universities to identify ways for students to take college classes at reduced costs

### **Availability**

The colleges and universities do not guarantee that space will be available in the desired courses. Students must be flexible and work with them to find the best course(s) placements.

- **Amherst College** offers a limited number of spaces free of charge.
- **UMASS and Community Colleges** charge tuition and fees, though family members of employees of the state college and university system get some costs waived.
- We have a unique relationship with **Greenfield Community College** for students who need to complete high school in a different setting.

### **Student Records**

Any student who has reached their fourteenth birthday or entered the ninth grade may see their student records. The principal or designee must let a student see their record within two business days of the request. Copies of records will be provided for a reasonable fee. Students of any age have the right to receive a copy of their transcripts.

After graduation, the school is required to keep student records for five years. After three years, students may request the original records.

### **Withdrawal and Re-Enrollment Procedures for Families on Sabbatical**

When a family has finalized its plans for sabbatical leave, the schools ask that the parents or guardians of students notify the school counselor and the registrar.

Several weeks prior to departure, parents should request transfer forms, clearance cards, and information release forms. These forms must be completed, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the Registrar before the student's last day of attendance.

An explanation of these procedures is available in the registrar's office, and the [2024-2025 Program of Studies](#).

## **Auditing a Course**

The purpose of auditing a class is to learn about a content area of interest without receiving a grade or credit for the course. A student may do this to experience a more challenging curriculum or a new content area without the pressure of a grade. The teacher, counselor, and Assistant Principal must approve an audit before the end of the [Add/Drop](#) period.

### **Criteria for Auditing**

- The course must be in addition to a student's four (4) major academic classes
- The student must have a good attendance record
- The student must obtain the permission of the teacher, counselor, and Assistant Principal before enrolling in the audited course
- Students requesting to take a course for credit will be given priority over those requesting to audit the same course

### **Expectations for Auditing**

- The student must maintain excellent attendance
- The student is must do all work necessary to participate in class, including any reading and/or homework assignments
- The student must participate in class activities
- The student is not required to take tests or be evaluated on other work
- The student will not receive credit
- The student must fulfill any additional expectations outlined by the teacher

Students who meet these expectations will receive a grade of "S" (Satisfactory). Students who fail to meet these expectations will receive a grade of "U" (Unsatisfactory).

## SECTION II: CODE OF CONDUCT

### Disciplinary Philosophy

#### Overview

Every student has the right to an education free of physical and psychological disruption. Several dimensions inform ARHS's work to make this a reality for all students: Restorative Justice practices, Massachusetts General Law [Chapter 222], and Equity Advancement.

#### Restorative Justice (RJ)

The Restorative Justice (RJ) program at Amherst Regional High School was created to uphold the Amherst Regional School District and ARHS's commitment to diversity, equity, and community through restorative justice education by challenging traditional approaches to discipline. The central idea of RJ is to work proactively to develop relationships that build communities grounded in mutual respect. When those relationships are fractured, restorative practices (RP) rely on the strength of communication to repair those relationships. An essential part of RP is conferences where all involved parties work together to repair harm.

#### Chapter 222 (Massachusetts General Law)

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 22 discourages an over-reliance on suspension as a response to students' inappropriate behavior and, instead, encourages schools to develop responses that limit the number of time students are out of class. Suspension remains an option, but only as a last resort in cases of extreme behaviors that significantly disrupt the learning environment or threaten the well-being of the school community.

ARHS is currently working with the Community Responders for Equity, Safety & Service (CRESS) department to create meaningful alternatives to suspensions. This may include opportunities for students to perform community service in lieu of being suspended from school. The adults at ARHS want to provide students with a range of interventions designed to enable students to reflect on their behavior and develop more productive choices for the future. This work is a coordinated effort, shared by the guidance department, the Dean of Students, ARHS administration, CRESS, and ARHS families. Interventions are a broader, more comprehensive response, ones that could include the assigning of consequences, but are not limited to it. Again, the intent here is to achieve a better balance between holding students accountable for their behavior and supporting them to find ways to make better decisions in the future.



## **Equity Advancement**

Equity advancement refers to ARHS's ongoing work to ensure that both school-wide and classroom climates are safe and inclusive. The foundation of this work is the acknowledgment that bias can privilege some individuals and groups over others. Advancing social justice allows ARHS to create a learning environment that welcomes and supports all members of the school community.

## **The Right to Due Process**

In any disciplinary situation, a student should expect the following procedural protections:

- To be informed of the allegations against them
- To be given the opportunity to present their version of the incident
- To be given the opportunity to confirm or deny the allegations
- To be informed of the evidence/rationale for any disciplinary consequences

In situation involving infractions which may result in the imposition of suspension from school, a student should expect the following additional procedures:

- An attempt to notify parent/guardians within the first hour of the incident investigation
- An offer to have a school-based adult of the student's choosing present during the investigation
- Formal, written notification of parent/guardian regarding any disciplinary consequences
- The right to appeal suspensions to the building Principal and/or the Superintendent of Schools

In situation involving infractions which may result in the imposition of long-term suspension from school for more than ten days or expulsion, a student should expect the following additional procedures:

- Written notification of allegations sent to student and parent/guardian
- Adequate time to prepare for a hearing, including presenting evidence and witnesses on their behalf and securing the assistance of counsel
- The right to appeal disciplinary decisions to the Superintendent of Schools
- A Manifestation Determination hearing will be held for students with Individualized Education Plans or 504 Plans to determine if the infraction was a direct result of the student's documented disability.

## **Student Expression**

Students may exercise their freedom of expression in mature and responsible ways, as long as they do not cause a material disruption to the school. The right to free expression does not include obscene or libelous material or fighting words. Student produced material, and material that is not produced by students but is intended to be distributed, published, or broadcast within the school or on school grounds, must first be submitted to the Principal for approval. Only after the in-school distribution of material that is libelous, obscene, or causes material disruption may the school discipline a student.

Students planning to assemble during non-school time are advised to consult with the Principal for an appropriate time and space. Students do not have a right to assemble while classes are in session.

All displays, bulletin boards, leaflets, and notices for the Morning Announcements must be approved and submitted by a club advisor, a teacher, or a school administrator. Morning Announcements are read during the second period of the day and are also sent out by email.

Emergency announcements are read over the public address system only with the approval of an administrator. Announcements outside of the Morning Announcements will not be made for bake sales or club/class council events.

# Disciplinary Protocols

## Overview

The District reserves the right to discipline for conduct not mentioned below in the lists of infractions when such conduct disrupts or interferes with the educational program or infringes on or interferes with the health and safety of any member of the school. Acts that are dangerous, destructive, and/or illegal shall be considered a violation of this Code of Conduct.

## Suspension

Suspension is a disciplinary consequence wherein a student's right to attend school is temporarily revoked. All suspensions are served externally.

A suspension that begins prior to the lunch block will be counted as a beginning that day; a suspension that begins during or after the lunch block will be counted as beginning the next school day. Snow days or other school cancellations will not count toward serving a suspension.

Students may be given the opportunity to participate as an alternative to suspension activity. These activities include community service in the school or in the local community, and/or a study hall. These activities will occur on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM, and will be supervised by members of CRESS.

## Making Up Missed Work

Students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons will be given the opportunity to make up all academic work such as papers, quizzes, tests, and readings. Students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons and who miss labs or other work unique to the classroom experience may be given readings or other independent assignments as a substitute for classroom learning.

## Participation in School Activities

During the term of their suspension, students suspended from school for disciplinary reasons may not be on the grounds of any of the Amherst-Pelham schools unless participating in a scheduled administrative appointment. They may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored activity, including but not limited to:

- Athletic practice or game
- School dances, activities, or events
- Club meetings
- Rehearsals or performances

## **Responsibilities**

In cases involving suspension, the school shall be responsible for the following:

### **Deans and Administrators**

- Follow due process procedures
- Contact parent/guardian regarding disciplinary consequences
- Process referral form and re-entry plan
- Notification of student's guidance counselor, teachers, administrators, liaison, athletic director, or club advisor as necessary regarding the terms of the suspension
- Request that academic assignments be forwarded to the main office for parent/guardian to pick-up
- Schedule a re-entry meeting to include student, parent/guardian, dean, school counselor, and other appropriate staff
- Arrange for translation at meetings for students and/or parents/guardians whose primary language is not English

### **School Counselors**

- Follow up with teachers to verify that assignments have been brought to the main office or Dean's Office
- Notify parent/guardian regarding availability of assignments in cases of external suspension.
- Participate in re-entry meetings

### **Teachers**

- Promptly provide academic assignments to the main office for parent/guardian to pick up in cases of external suspension.

## **Re-entry Procedures**

Upon their return to school, students who have been suspended may be required to have a re-entry meeting before being re-admitted.

Students returning from the suspension may also be required to participate in monitoring meetings, counseling, community service, and/or other activities related to improving behavior and becoming contributing members of the school community.

## Expulsion

Expulsion is a disciplinary consequence wherein a student's right to attend school is permanently revoked. Per [Massachusetts General Law \[Chapter 71, Section 37H1/2\]](#) the following shall be considered grounds for expulsion:

- A student found to have been in possession of a controlled substance or a dangerous weapon or to have assaulted a member of the school staff may be subject to long-term suspension and/or expulsion.
- A student charged with a felony that occurred off school grounds may be subject to long-term suspension and/or expulsion if the Principal determines that "the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school".

## School Safety & Discipline Report (SSDR)

The School Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR) collects information on all drug, violent and criminal offenses that occur on school property, as well as the discipline action (suspensions, removals, expulsions) served by the student offender. Non-drug, non-violent and non-criminal offenses that result in the student offender being removed from class or school are also collected.

## School Safety Infractions

Listed below are the infractions that all schools are required to report directly to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The state considers these the most serious of infractions. The state's reporting requirement includes both the nature of the infraction and the consequence assigned by the school.

[Massachusetts General Law \[Chapter 71, Section 37H\]](#) specifically addresses three of these infractions. During the school day or while on school property or attending a school-sponsored event, students who assault a staff member, possess a weapon, and/or possess a controlled substance will be subject to the following consequences:

- Suspension from school
- Possible long-term suspension or expulsion
- Referral to the ARHS School Counseling department
- Referral to Amherst Police Department

For all other infractions listed here, the school's response relies on the judgment of the Dean of Students. The Deans have a range of response options at their disposal, including both consequences and interventions.

As noted in the [Philosophy](#) section above, the District’s goal is to maintain a safe and orderly school climate without loss of school time. Intervention options seek to modify behavior without a loss of class time, whereas consequences may or may not involve loss of class time. Suspension always remains an option, especially for, but not limited to, repeat offenders.

Interventions		
Warnings	Conferences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Verbal</li> <li>● Parent/Guardian contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● with Counselor</li> <li>● with Dean of Students</li> <li>● with Restorative Justice Coordinator</li> <li>● with Parent/Guardian</li> <li>● with Administrator</li> </ul>	
Consequences		
Loss of Privileges	Restorative Practices	Punishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Removal from sports team</li> <li>● Removal from extra-curricular activities</li> <li>● Removal from school bus</li> <li>● Phone confiscation</li> <li>● Loss of computer privileges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Apology, verbal and/or written</li> <li>● School and/or community service</li> <li>● Mediation/Conflict Resolution</li> <li>● Restitution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community Service</li> <li>● Restitution</li> <li>● Suspension</li> </ul>

**List of SSDR Infractions - School Safety**

These infractions are listed alphabetically and are not ranked by seriousness. The infractions correspond with how the Educator’s Handbook, the district’s software that tracks student discipline, is organized.

Infraction	Definition
Alcohol--Possession and Use	Possession: Having alcoholic beverages in pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.  Use: Drinking alcoholic beverages.

Arson	The unlawful and intentional damage, or attempt to damage, any school property by fire or incendiary device. Includes firecrackers, fireworks, and trash can fires.
Assault of a Staff Member	See <a href="#">MGL, Chpt 71, Section 37H</a>
Bomb Threat	The delivery of a message of possible explosive materials being on campus, near campus, and/or pending explosions.
Bullying	<p>The repeated use by one or more students of a written, oral or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at another individual.</p> <p>Only administrators or designee will enter Bullying into Educator’s Handbook, once an investigation and determination have been completed.</p> <p>To report bullying, students may speak to a Dean, their School Counselor, or any trusted adult at school. They may also fill out the form found on the ARHS website at this link: <a href="http://arps.censeoschool.com/public/">http://arps.censeoschool.com/public/</a></p>
Drugs: Possession and Use	<p>Students are in possession of or are using illegal drugs/substances or imitations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Marijuana Possession: Possession of marijuana in one’s pocket(s), bag(s), car, locker, etc.</li> <li>● Marijuana Use: Smoking, vaping, or otherwise using marijuana.</li> <li>● Other Illegal Substances Possession: Possession of other illegal substances including prescription medication.</li> <li>● Other Illegal Substances Use: Illegal use of other substances excluding alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco.</li> </ul> <p>See <a href="#">MGL, Chpt 71, Section 37H</a></p>
Drugs: Intent to Sell or Sale of Illegal Drugs	Students are in possession of illegal drugs with the intent to sell and/or the sale of illegal drugs.

	See <a href="#">MGL, Chpt 71, Section 37H</a>
Felony or Felony Charges	A student charged with a felony for behavior that occurred off school grounds may be subject to long-term suspension and or expulsion if the principal determines that "...the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school."  See <a href="#">MGL, Chpt 71, Section 37H1/2</a>
Fighting	Mutual participation in an offense involving physical violence.
Harassment	Non-Sexual Harrassment: The delivery of disrespectful messages in any format related to gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, religion, disability, physical features, or other protected class. Multiple instances will prompt bullying investigation.  Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other physical or verbal conduct or communication of a sexual nature, including gender-based harassment that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment.
Hazing	Student engages in conduct or method of initiation which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of another student.
Homicide	
Kidnapping	
Physical Aggression/Attack	Student engages in actions involving serious physical non-mutual contact where injury may occur (e.g. hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching, etc.)
Property Damage/Vandalism	Student participates in an activity that results in the destruction or disfigurement of property.
Robbery Using Force	



Sexual Assault	
Theft	The unlawful taking of property belonging to a school, a staff member, or a student without threat, violence, or bodily harm.
Threat of Physical Assault	Threat of physical attack; includes bullying, harassment, or intimidation.
Tobacco: Use and Possession	<p>Student is in possession of, or using, tobacco.</p> <p>Use: Smoking, chewing, or otherwise using tobacco (cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vapes, cigars, pipes, or smokeless tobacco).</p> <p>Possession: Student is in possession of tobacco.</p>
Weapons: Use and Possession	<p>Student possesses a knife, gun (real or look-alike), or other objects readily capable of causing bodily harm.</p> <p>Knife: The weapon involved was a knife or cutting instrument.</p> <p>Handgun, Rifle, Shotgun: All three are covered under this statute.</p> <p>Gun/Firearm-Other Firearm—The weapon involved was another type of firearm excluding handguns, rifles, and shotguns, but including zip guns, starter guns, and flare guns.</p> <p>Explosive or Incendiary Device—The weapon involved was a bomb, grenade, rocket, missile, mine or other incendiary devices.</p> <p>Other Weapons—The offense involved a weapon other than those described above, such as firecrackers or fireworks.</p> <p>See <a href="#">MGL, Chpt 71 , Section 37H</a></p>

## Non-School Safety Infractions

Below is a list of more common disciplinary infractions. The possible administrative interventions and consequences available to the Dean of Students for these infractions are the same as those listed in the section above.

Infraction	Definition
Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism	Academic honesty infractions including plagiarism, cheating, attempts to cheat and falsification of materials.  See <a href="#">Academic Honesty Policy</a> .
Defiance/Insubordination	Insubordination or failure to comply with staff/faculty requests to provide name or follow instructions.
(Inappropriate) Displays of Affection	Long hugs or kisses
Disrespect	Disregard for someone's feelings, verbal abuse/insults
Disruption	Includes, but not limited to: play-fighting, tripping, throwing food or other objects, and the use of water guns and water balloons, cafeteria food fights
Dress Code Violation	The dress code guidelines encourage individuals to dress, groom, and conduct themselves so that they can participate in, benefit from and access the educational environment. These guidelines respect the rights of all and are based on <a href="#">MGL, Chapter 71, Section 83</a> which establishes reasonable standards regarding health, safety, and cleanliness.  Amherst, Pelham and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools state that individuals should wear clothing that allows them to participate safely in all school activities including specialized learning spaces, such as the swimming pool, gymnasium, shops, etc. Individuals should wear shoes or sandals held securely on their feet for protection when on school grounds, aboard school buses, and at school events.

	<p>Amherst, Pelham, and Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools state that individuals have the right to freedom of expression through their clothing provided that such right does not cause any disruption or disorder within the school (per <a href="#">MGL, Chapter 71, Section 82</a>) or infringe on the rights of others. Disruption, disorder, and infringement of rights can include clothing that contains: words, symbols, suggestions or portrayals of violence, defamation, illegal acts, illegal substances, and/or unacceptable products (such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs).</p> <p>The Principal will make final decisions about the implementation of the dress code.</p>
Forgery	
Gang Affiliation Display	
Out of Bounds (Inappropriate Location)	<p>Amherst Regional High School is a closed campus. All students are expected to remain inside of the school building for the duration of the school day, except during lunch when students are authorized to be in the area by the picnic tables to the left of the cafeteria exit. Unless eating outside, during lunch students must remain in the cafeteria.</p> <p>The War Memorial Pool, the playground area, all parking lots, cars, Summit Academy, and the Middle School, including the road leading to it from the high school, are off limits.</p> <p>The roof of the school is also considered off limits. This is the case for both during and after school hours.</p>
Physical Contact	
Possession of Contraband (Lighters, Lasers, Drug Paraphernalia)	Includes but not limited to: Pipe or other items used as a pipe, vapes, rolling papers, and/or machines, scales, small bags or grinders.
Profanity	
Property Misuse	

Skip (Cutting Class)	See <a href="#">Attendance Policy - Unexcused Absences</a>
Tardy to School	See <a href="#">Attendance Policy - Tardies</a>
Technology Violation	<p>Any violation of the Acceptable Use Policy may result in temporary loss or termination of computer use privileges as well as other relevant disciplinary consequences. Possible violations include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use of computer technology for games, chat, music, and other programs not specifically assigned by a teacher</li> <li>● Using someone else’s account or allowing someone else to use your account</li> <li>● Changing the configuration of any workstation, installing games or other programs</li> <li>● Possession of or installation of programs which can be potentially harmful to the computer or the accounts of individuals</li> <li>● Physical damage to computers</li> <li>● Use of technology to produce inappropriate, derogatory or harassing material</li> <li>● Hacking’ into the PowerSchool account of faculty and staff</li> <li>● Hacking into or attempting to hack into the school’s computer programs.</li> <li>● Taking pictures or videotaping staff or students without permission</li> <li>● Posting pictures or videos taken during the school day without permission</li> </ul>
Truancy	

**School Climate Infractions**

This section includes infractions neither covered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s School Safety and Discipline Report expectations nor found in Educator’s Handbook. However, a safe and orderly school climate merits mentioning them here. The

possible administrative interventions and consequences available to the Dean of Students for these infractions are the same as those listed in the School Safety Infractions Section.

Infraction	Definition
Inappropriate or Unauthorized Use of Cell Phones	See <a href="#">Phone Policy</a> for details
Videotaping	Taking pictures or videotaping violence or other inappropriate or unsafe activities
False fire alarm or alarm to any Emergency Services	
Possession of pornographic or obscene materials	In hardcopy form or on an electronic device
Driving/Parking	<p>Unauthorized or improper parking, including parking in non-designated or faculty areas, parking in a fire lane, or without a permit.</p> <p>Unauthorized or improper use of motor vehicles, including driving vehicles during school hours and reckless driving.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Parking</a> section for details.</p>
Indecent Exposure	Sexual activity in school, during or after school hours; while on school-sponsored activities.
Identity Theft	Includes but is not limited to: posing for another student's ID picture, gaining access to or using another student's school accounts or passwords.

## Additional Disciplinary and Safety Policies

### Phones and Electronic Devices

- All electronic devices must be turned off and put in the designated area before the beginning of class.
  - 1st Offense: If students use electronic devices during class without teacher permission, or while in the hall during class time, the student's family will be contacted.

- 2nd Offense: The second time students use electronic devices during class without teacher permission, or while in the hall during class time, the device will be confiscated and left in the Deans' Office.
  - The first time a device is confiscated, students may pick up the device at the end of the day.
  - For the second and subsequent offense, parents/guardians will be called to pick up the device, and the student may be suspended, or given the opportunity to participate as an alternative to suspension activity. These activities include community service in the school or in the local community, and/or a study hall. These activities will occur on Saturday mornings from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM, and will be supervised by members of CRESS.
- Headsets and earbuds must be out of sight unless specified by a student's IEP/504.
- Electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom at all unless the teacher gives explicit permission to do so.
  - During class time, cell phones may be used for educational purposes. This is at the discretion of the teacher.
- Students may use electronic devices before and after school, in the hallway during passing periods, and during lunch for listening to music only.
  - During these times, use of electronic devices is confined to listening to music with headphones or earbuds.
  - Use of electronic devices is forbidden while class is in session. If a student takes a pass to leave the classroom for any reason, electronic devices must be left in the designated area.
- Use of electronic devices to audio, video, or photograph anyone without their permission, is forbidden.

### **Acceptable Use Policy**

These rules apply to all material posted by students to web pages regardless of the form of posting. This includes text on pages, blogs, comments, replies, and images, spike words in videos, and spoken words in audio files.

- Do not post pictures or videos of yourself or your schoolmates on your website.
- Do Not post text, pictures, videos, or music on your website that is sexually suggestive or obscene.
- Do not post text, pictures, videos, or music on your website that contains ethnic slurs or racist slurs.
- Do not post text, pictures, videos, or music on your website that discriminates against someone based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, handicap, or age.
- Do not post any material that harasses, threatens, or annoys another student, teacher, or staff member.
- Do not post any material that insults, makes fun of, or criticizes another student, teacher, or staff member.

- Do not post any material on your website that advocates the use of weapons, the use of illegal drugs, or the use of alcohol.
- To protect the privacy of students' work, do not give access to blogs.arms.org to individuals who are not registered users of blog.arms.org, or who have no legitimate reason to view web pages on blogs.arms.org.

## **Seniors - End of Year Responsibilities and Guidelines**

### **Senior Prom**

- If weapons, alcohol, or drugs are brought to the prom on either one's person or, in the case of alcohol or drugs, in one's bloodstream, then parents/guardians will be called to remove students from the prom.
- The right to attend other culminating events, exclusive of graduation, will be forfeited.
- As per the Discipline Code, other consequences for the possession or use of weapons, alcohol, or drugs will be assigned.

### **Senior Pranks**

Senior Pranks are not endorsed by the school. If they occur, they must meet these guidelines:

- No harm to others
- No damage to property
- No extra clean-up work for custodians
- No disruption to the school routine
- No targeting of specific individuals, either students or staff
- No accessing classrooms or teacher work spaces

If a prank does not follow these parameters, consequences may include being ineligible to attend Prom and/or other Senior Events. Disciplinary consequences not served before the last day of school need to be completed before participation in graduation is permitted.

## **School Bus Behavior**

All school rules described in the Code of Conduct are in effect while students are riding on the bus. Students engaging in inappropriate and/or unsafe behaviors may be suspended from riding the school bus as well as the application of other relevant disciplinary consequences. Any such suspensions will be assigned by a dean or administrator.

### **Waiting for the Bus**

- Be on time for the bus but do not arrive at your bus stop earlier than ten minutes before the time at which the bus usually arrives

- Do not allow younger children who are not yet attending school to accompany you to the bus stop
- Observe all safety precautions while waiting for your bus
- Do not play in the road
- If possible, avoid crossing streets
- Whenever you must cross a street, do so only if you are sure that no moving vehicles are approaching you from either direction
- Do not push, pull or chase any other students
- Avoid trespassing on private property and being noisy
- As your bus approaches, line up at least six feet off the highway and do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door. Again, avoid pushing others in the line.

### **Loading on the Bus**

- Get on your bus quickly and be seated at once
- Listen carefully and obey the bus driver's instructions

### **Riding on the Bus**

- Do not eat food while you are on the bus
- Do not throw anything while you are on the bus
- Do not extend your arms or any other parts of the body out of the window
- Do not change seats while the bus is moving
- Avoid shouting and other excessive noise that may distract your driver and lead to a serious accident
- Help to keep your bus clean and sanitary
- Be courteous to other students
- Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver

### **Unloading from the Bus**

- Do not leave your seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the door
- Again, obey any directions issued by the driver
- Leave the bus quickly but in a courteous manner without pushing any other students
- If you must cross a street as you leave the school bus, be sure to walk in front of the bus (never in back) at a distance of at least 12 feet from the bus. If you get too close to the front of the bus, the driver will not be able to see you, and a serious accident could occur



Be sure to observe all safety precautions as you travel from your bus stop to your home.

### Miscellaneous Other Discipline and Safety Policies

Infraction	Definition
Athletics	All athletic events are considered school sponsored events, including both home and away games.
Breathalyzer Policy	All students and their guests wishing to attend school events may be required to participate in an alcohol screening test prior to their entry into the event. This is a passive, non-invasive test where no mouthpiece is needed. Students may be asked to blow into the aperture of the instrument where a sample of breath is collected for analysis. If alcohol is detected, the student will not be permitted to attend the event and will be detained by on-site school personnel or police officers until a parent/guardian comes for him/her and they will be subject to disciplinary consequences described in the ARHS handbook. In the event that a student and/or their guest refuse to participate in the test and/or leave the premises, parents/guardians will be called immediately.
Elevator	Prior permission from the nurse is required for students using the elevator.
Metal Scanner Policy	<p>Any time a school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that a student is in possession of a dangerous weapon, they shall take steps to see that the student undergoes a hand-held metal detector search. This search shall take place as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The search will be conducted by a school official and at least one other school employee present for the search.</li> <li>● Any items that are found at any time during this process that are in violation of school policy will be confiscated.</li> <li>● The student will be informed that, in accordance with the school safety policy, s/he is about to be</li> </ul>

	<p>subject to a hand held metal detector search, and asked if s/he has any weapons or other metal objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The student will be asked to empty his or her pockets and to remove any metal objects.</li> <li>● The metal detector will be run over and across the student’s body and clothing in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.</li> <li>● If the metal detector sounds, indicating a metal object on the student’s person, the student will again be asked to remove any metal objects.</li> <li>● The search will proceed until all metal objects have been removed or identified as not being in violation of school policy.</li> </ul> <p>Any student refusing to cooperate with any part of this metal detector search process shall be subject to appropriate discipline, including suspension and/or expulsion, within the discretion of the Principal and/or the Superintendent under applicable law, and shall be so informed. If a weapon is found, the student will be subject to the consequences stated in <a href="#">MGL Chapter 71, Section 37H</a>.</p>
Parking on School Grounds	See <a href="#">Parking</a> for additional information.
Skateboards	Use of skateboards is not allowed on school property between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:00 pm.
Status of Students 18+	<p>If an 18-year-old student is emancipated, a legal status that can only be conferred by the courts and living independently on their own outside of the home of their parent or guardian, then they can exercise all the rights of a parent or guardian. This includes signing absence, tardy, and dismissal notes and providing permission to attend field trips or other school-sponsored events.</p> <p>If a student is 18 and still living with his or her parent or guardian, only the parent or guardian is authorized to excuse absences and tardiness, request early dismissals, and</p>

	<p>provide permission to attend field trips or other school-sponsored events.</p>
<p>Student Visitors</p>	<p>Arrangements for visitors must be made two (2) days in advance with the Principal, and written permission is required from all teachers using the form available in the Main Office.</p> <p>Visitors will not be permitted on Fridays, the day preceding a holiday or school vacation, or during examination periods. Visitors must wear the visitor pass issued by the office at all times. Visitors who arrive without prior permission will be assisted in arranging transportation home.</p>
<p>Valuables</p>	<p>Students should not come to school with valuable jewelry, electronic equipment, large sums of money, or credit cards in their possession. Under no circumstances should valuables be left in gym lockers, even those with locks attached.</p> <p>The school cannot assume responsibility for lost or stolen items. Students who lose valuable property in school should file a theft report in the Dean's Office. Students may also file a police report with the <a href="#">Town of Amherst Police Department</a>.</p>

## **SECTION III: ATHLETICS, CLUBS, and STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Philosophy**

School-sponsored activities are very much a part of ARHS's offerings. All students are encouraged to join at least one school organization during their time at ARHS. Except in unusual circumstances, students will not be dismissed from classes prior to the end of the scheduled school day to participate in extracurricular activities, including athletic events.

All rules regarding student behavior apply to the co-curricular program, including behavior on field trips and other school-sponsored events.

### **Athletics**

#### **Core Values and Beliefs**

Athletics is a critical element of the high school experience for many students here in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. Athletics promotes student achievement outside of the classroom and helps participating student-athletes become more well-rounded participants in our school community and our community at-large. It helps student-athletes understand their civic responsibilities as representatives of our school and community, and fosters positive civic engagement, teamwork, leadership skills, and physical and mental well-being. The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District takes pride in its athletic programs and the accomplishments of its student-athletes.

Tryouts for programs are open to all students providing they meet the standards of academic eligibility, school citizenship, and basic physical/health qualifications. Participation in the program, therefore, is a privilege earned by students who meet and maintain these standards. The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District provides nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in such a manner as is necessary to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation. The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District is, however, generally permitted to establish and utilize skill-based eligibility criteria for participation in extracurricular programs and activities (e.g., school-sponsored athletics) so long as the criteria are rationally related to the purposes and goals of the specific program or activity. The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District administrators, in their discretion, may deny or limit a student's access to co-curricular activities as a disciplinary sanction.

## **Student-Athlete Expectations**

Student-athletes must exemplify the core beliefs of the District both in the classroom and in competition. As a student-athlete, they are a student first. Athletics must never take priority over school responsibilities. Successful athletes are those who are able to balance their priorities as a student and teammate, and understand their role within the school, on the field, and in the community.

Amherst-Pelham student-athletes must be committed to upholding and demonstrating the highest ideals of character, including teamwork, integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect. Student-athletes, in a very public way, represent the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District and the community at-large. They must always play by the rules, honor the sport they play, and dignify the effort of their teammates and opponents. Student-athletes who commit themselves to the development of their team, including allowing themselves to be coached, building a strong, positive culture amongst their teammates, and promoting resiliency in times of adversity, will be winners. But being a competitive winner should never equate itself with demeaning an opponent, placing one's individual athletic goals above those of the team, or blaming an official.

While winning is a laudable goal, it should never be attained at the expense of student-athlete safety. The safety and well-being of each student-athlete will be the top priority for the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, including coaches, at all times. We expect each coach will look out for the safety of their student-athletes and we expect each student-athlete to look out for each other and themselves. Student-athletes should feel comfortable advocating for their safety and well-being.

Lastly, athletics should be fun. Enjoy this time with your teammates. We encourage student-athletes to challenge themselves and participate in a variety of sports across different seasons. Athletics is a wonderful way to create lifelong friendships and memories.

### **MIAA Handbook**

All student-athletes are subject to the rules included in the MIAA handbook in addition to the provisions of this Student-Athlete Handbook. A copy of the complete MIAA handbook can be found online at [MIAA Handbook](#). It is the student-athlete's responsibility to read the MIAA handbook and familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations.

### **Gender and Participation**

ARHS follows the guidelines on gender and participation set forward by the MIAA, summarized below. The full policy can be found in the [2023-2025 MIAA Handbook Section 43](#).

- No student shall be denied in any implied or explicit manner the opportunity to participate in any interscholastic activity because of gender.
- Separate teams may be established by gender provided the teams receive equal instruction, training, coaching, access to available facilities, equipment, and opportunities to practice and compete. If a school offers a single team in a particular sport, it may not restrict eligibility based on gender unless such a restriction is necessary to comply with Title IX.
- No student shall be excluded from participation on a gender-specific team that is consistent with the student’s bona fide gender identity.
- The school is responsible for verifying that students on gender specific teams are eligible to participate based on the gender listed on their official birth certificate or based on their bona fide gender identity.
- No student is entitled to selection of any particular team or permitted to transfer from one gender-specific team to another team of a different gender during a single sports season.
- The school will make a good faith effort to communicate with opponents as necessary about the gender-specific needs of their team to promote inclusion, for example to ensure that appropriate locker room facilities are available and that announcers use athlete’s correct pronouns.

## Sports Program

Sports are an integral part of co-curricular activities in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. Student involvement in athletics is a privilege, which can be a valuable and rewarding experience. Students have the opportunity to participate in the following sports during the fall, winter, and spring seasons.

Fall	Winter	Spring
Cross Country	Basketball	Baseball
Field Hockey	Hockey	Softball
Football	Wrestling	Tennis
Soccer	Alpine	Track & Field
Golf	Indoor Track	Lacrosse
Volleyball	Nordic	Ultimate

## Supervision: Safety and Security

### Responsibilities of Student Athletes

- Respect the authority of each coach. Coaches are responsible for the well-being of all student-athletes on their team and within their program during the season, and can best achieve this with student-athletes who are considerate and well-behaved.
- Never be in a locker room, weight room, or other school/athletic facility without a coach present. The coach is responsible for ensuring appropriate supervision during team activities.
- Know that coaches are expected to be in the locker room when student-athletes are using the locker room.
- Understand that all coaches and staff will give appropriate consideration to student-athlete privacy. Student-athletes seeking increased privacy when changing clothes/uniforms may utilize individual stalls and/or privacy curtains or screens where available and are encouraged to address any privacy related concerns with the coach or building principal.
- Hazing and bullying will not be tolerated. Any and all instances of bullying will be reported to the Principal. Any and all instances of hazing will be reported to the Principal, DCF, and local law enforcement. Consequences (ranging from playing time, suspension, termination, criminal complaint) will be determined by the severity of the behavior. The Principal may also suspend or terminate a player from a team as a disciplinary consequence whether or not the infraction was related to the team.
- Know that all coaches are mandated reporters and must immediately notify DCF if they suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected.
- All student-athletes, including team captains, are responsible for reporting any bullying, hazing, and/or any other safety or well-being concern to the coach or Principal.
- The physical and emotional well-being of student-athletes is a priority and teammates are expected to look out for each other.
- A strong athletic culture is the best and most preventive antidote against hazing, bullying, and other abusive behaviors. Culture is best communicated by the behavior and modeling of the coaches. All players, especially team captains, are expected to model decency and to take responsibility for the team's culture and reputation.

## **Locker Room**

The goal of the Athletic Department is to provide a safe environment for all of our student-athletes both in the facilities at each school within the District as well as at any/all off-site venues. The coaching staff shares responsibility for their team's activities and behaviors in the locker room and will discuss proper locker room behavior and protocol at the beginning of each season.

Only student-athletes whose teams are currently playing or are in season shall be permitted access and use of the locker rooms after school hours. Students may not access the locker room during the School Day unless as part of their regularly scheduled physical education courses. Locker room doors should never be propped open for any reasons and will be supervised by a supervising staff member whenever the locker room is in use. Student sports lockers are subject to the [Student Locker](#) policy. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in discipline.

## **Team Rules**

Team rules should be developed to ensure a common experience for each team member within the parameters and scope of the rules of the MIAA, the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, and the Amherst-Pelham Athletic Department. Team members, with the guidance and monitoring of the coaching staff, may construct a social contract to be followed for the sports season. This contract allows each team to define how they wish to act and be evaluated. All team rules will be clearly communicated to student-athletes.

Amherst-Pelham coaches will work to support team rules that emphasize student-athletes to be both competitors and upstanding members of the community off the field. Matters that affect only the team and its day-to-day operation are generally handled within the team structure under the guidance of the coach. Severe disciplinary actions, such as dismissal from the team or prolonged suspension, must be reported to the Athletic Director for the purposes of record keeping, consistency, and appropriateness. Please keep in mind, irrespective of team rules and team decisions, the Principal may also suspend or terminate a player from a team as a disciplinary consequence.

## **Transportation To and From Contests**

The school provides bus transportation, or a suitable substitute, to most “away” contests. All team members are expected to travel to and from these contests using the school provided transportation for student-athletes. Exceptions to this policy will be made in extenuating circumstances (i.e., family emergency). A student may travel home with a parent/guardian if the coach and Athletic Department are notified in writing. A coach should always accompany student-athletes on the bus to and from contests.

## **Attendance in School**

To be considered in attendance for the day (and be eligible for co-curricular activities, including practices and games) a student must be present in school before 9:25 a.m. (high school) and remain for the rest of the day. Exceptions may be made, such as college visits, family emergencies, or medical appointments. These all require a note and must be cleared by the Director of Athletics in advance, whenever possible. If a student athlete is dismissed by the



school nurse due to illness, they are ineligible to participate in athletics that day. If a contest is scheduled on a weekend day or over a school vacation, the student must be in attendance the preceding Friday in order to participate.

A student who is suspended out-of-school may not participate in a game, practice, event, or meeting held on that day.

Any exception to this rule can be made only by the administration or based on an individualized determination by the student's special education team or 504 team.

## **Concussion Policy**

Head injuries will be assessed in accordance with the [Amherst-Pelham Regional School District Concussion Policy](#) and the protocol detailed within.

## **Levels of Competition**

### **Sub-Varsity Teams**

The purpose of the athletic program is to develop athletes to their greatest potential and ensure ample participation. Not only is the goal to grow their athletic ability, but to develop good citizens of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District and the community at-large. The number of program participants must allow the coach to ensure reasonable participation.

Sub-varsity (junior varsity and freshmen) are geared towards growth of the fundamental skills needed to succeed at a more competitive level. In order to help all athletes develop in our programs, the following guidance will be followed:

- Coaches will attempt to give all student-athletes adequate playing time, but they also take into account commitment, attitude, effort, and game situations.
- At the Junior Varsity level, playing time may not be equal.
- At the Freshmen level, every effort will be made to provide equitable playing time.
- The success of our sub-varsity programs is based on the growth of the student-athletes, not on the wins and losses record.
- Student attendance and effort at practices may affect playing time.
- Student-athlete timeliness is imperative to the success of the team, and it is expected that athletes make a commitment to arrive at all practices and games on time.

### **Varsity Teams**

Varsity athletes are competing at the highest level possible in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. Highest level is defined not only by athletic ability but also attitude and

commitment to the program. Players, coaches, parents, and staff members are committed to the success of our varsity programs on and off the field, on the court, on the track, at the pool, or rink. To reach that goal, teams must compete to win as many contests as possible. In order to do this, there are many instances when the major burden of the contest will be carried by the most competitive, and most skilled team members; however, teams cannot be successful without committed substitutes. These student-athletes have to be ready at all times to step forward when needed. They have to practice as hard as they can to help make the teams as competitive as they can be. They also have to constantly strive to move up to a “starting” role. Our varsity athletes are chosen to represent Amherst-Pelham, both as athletes, and as high-standing members of the community.

Varsity athletes are expected to:

- Make a full and sincere commitment to the team experience and be in attendance and on time daily.
- Be committed to the team regardless of their playing time and/or assigned position.
- Work towards the common goal of achieving the highest level of competitiveness.
- Support the success and development of all teammates, both on and off the field.
- Set a good example for other student-athletes and exhibit the highest moral conduct on and off the field.

## **Tryouts**

Participation in athletics is a privilege; students try out voluntarily and, for some of our teams, risk being cut. During the tryout period the coach will provide an explanation of his/her expectations. It is the student’s responsibility to demonstrate to the coach that they can meet them. Students cut from one team may find opportunity with a non-cut sport providing there is space on that team. Students cut from a team may request an explanation from the coach as to the reasons for the cut. To the degree practicable coaches will maintain evaluative data from the tryouts that supports their tryout decisions

All students, including those with disabilities, must be given an equal opportunity to participate in athletics. This includes tryouts. Students must be provided with reasonable modifications and necessary aids and services to ensure their equal opportunity, unless it can be shown that doing so would be a fundamental alteration to the program. And even then, the school must see if another modification is available.

Not all students are guaranteed a spot on the team. Teams are permitted to require a level of skill to participate in a competitive sport. However, it is imperative that coaches provide all students an equal opportunity to participate.

## **Playing Time**

There are many benefits to be gained by participation in athletics at the high school level. Young people learn the values associated with discipline, performing under stress, teamwork, sacrifice, commitment, effort, accountability, citizenship, sportsmanship, confidence, leadership, organizational skills, participating within the rules, physical well-being and striving towards excellence. Although there are many measures of success in the minds of each participant, perhaps the most emphasis is put on “playing time” during contests. If a student has questions as to their “playing time” they are encouraged to discuss it with the coach at an appropriate time. See Communication with Parents/Guardians. In the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District, being a member of a team does not guarantee an equitable amount of “playing time.”

## **Attendance at Practices and Games**

It is extremely important that a coach be notified if a student is not going to be present at a practice or game if the student is not absent from school. The coaches in our program expect their athletes to be present at all team related activities and may suspend a team member from contests for absences or tardies. Students are excused from team activities for illness, injury, academic, family or religious reasons but prior notification and approval whenever possible is strongly recommended.

## **Team Captains**

It is a coaching decision as to how many team captains are selected. They may be elected by the team or appointed by the coach prior to the first regularly scheduled contest. Captains may also be elected or appointed on a game-by-game basis. It is expected that team captains be leaders of their team and should be ready to assume duties as outlined by their coach. They are expected to be more aware of team rules and student responsibilities. Captains are expected to communicate with the coach and team in the event of any problems that may affect the team or its members. Captains may be asked to meet with the Athletic Director during the school year to discuss the athletic program. Captains of teams may be relieved of their position for violation of team, athletic department, or school rules.

### **Expectations of Team Captains**

Captains, due to their position as role models for their teammates and visible representatives of our school in the community, are expected to demonstrate behavior, both in school and in the community, which is beyond reproach. If captains receive an out of school suspension or if their behavior in the community is brought to the attention of school authorities and determined to be detrimental to the standard of their position of leadership, the Athletic Director, in

conjunction with the appropriate coach, will render a decision to remove the captain from that position for the remainder of the year.

A team captain must be academically eligible during all semesters in his/her Junior and Senior year. Failure to be academically eligible at any time within their Junior or Senior year will result in loss of their captain status and/or prohibit them from being a candidate for a team captain during the next season.

Captains must also not have any MIAA violations for Chemical Health or Bona fide Team Rules anytime within their Junior or Senior Year.

## **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

It is the expectation of the coach to meet with the parents/guardians of student-athletes at the start of the season. These meetings can be organized at the discretion of the coach and can be held, but not limited to, after practice, after a game or in the evening. Coaches should work to create opportunities for all parents/guardians to have access to these meetings and may decide to run these more than once to meet the needs of scheduling constraints on families.

It is expected that all varsity coaches will meet before the season with the parents of the team captains of their respective teams. The parent group and coach will work together to support the goals of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District athletics and the MIAA for each student athlete. The coach and the parent group will work with the administration to publicly communicate and build recognition for each student athlete.

Our goal is to establish a chain of communication where the student-athletes are empowered to advocate for themselves, and take ownership of their experiences. For that reason, in the case of a conflict, the following protocol should be followed for student-athletes and parents/guardians:

- Step 1: Student communicates with their coach.
- Step 2: Student and their parent/guardian communicate with their coach.
- Step 3: Student and their parent/guardian communicate with the Athletic Director.
- Step 4: Student and their parent/guardian communicate with the Principal.

The athletic arena is highly emotional and often stressful. Because of this, conflicts and issues between a student-athlete and his/her coach may arise. It is imperative that any conflict and/or issue be addressed immediately and as directly as possible with the coach so that it can be addressed and hopefully resolved. If a concern should arise, the student-athlete should make every effort to resolve their concern by meeting with the coach. If the issue is not resolved at this level, the student-athlete and parent may approach the coach to discuss the issue. The

coach should be contacted to set up an appointment at an appropriate time. The coach should not be contacted at the conclusion of a game or practice. If after this meeting the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student-athlete and/or parent, the student-athlete and their parent may approach the Athletic Director to mediate the situation. In rare cases, the principal may become involved if the issue has larger implications. All complaints or grievances that may fall under another specific grievance procedure (i.e. Civil Rights) will be addressed following that procedure.

### **Communication Regarding Significant Behaviors**

In the event that an athlete is seeking to report any significant behavior, conflict or concerning matter to any school employee, the following communication chain should be followed immediately upon receipt of student-athlete complaint: Assistant Coach reports to the Head Coach and the Head Coach communicates in writing to the Athletic Director and Principal. It is important to note that a student may report any significant behavior, conflict, or concerning matter to any of the personnel named above at any time. Any school personnel outside of the athletic department who receives a complaint should immediately report it to the building principal and the Athletic Director. Training will be provided to coaches regarding the handling of significant behaviors.

Irrespective of the communication procedures above, all school staff, including coaches, must fulfill their responsibilities as a mandated reporter when required to do so under Massachusetts law.

### **Electronic Communication with Students**

A coach should not be electronically communicating (text, email, social media) with any student-athlete one-on-one. Sending out a text or email blitz to everyone on the team can be an effective way to instantly communicate with the team, however, coaches should not, except in emergency situations, engage in a one-on-one discussion via text, email, social media, or other electronic means. All contact and messages by coaches with team members should be sent to all team members or to team captains, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the athletic director, school principal or appropriate administrator. Contact should never be to an individual student only.

Coaches are required to allow the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District access to any and all electronic communications with students and should expect such sharing of communications to be routine. The use of Team apps is permissible only with the approval of the Athletic Director. Coaches must allow the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District to have access to the content of the app, including all communications with students.

## **Media**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District uses images and/or videos (“media”) of students and student work to showcase educational activities and programs (including athletics), as well as to inform the community of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District experience.

Photographs, videos, and/or the name of student-athletes may be included in publications (print or digital), news releases, and/or on District websites and/or social media accounts.

The District may also publish the image, weight, and height of members of athletic teams, class participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent.

Parents are permitted to opt their child out of the District using this information or media in any public display or presentation. If a coach is planning on using media to showcase their athletic program, they are required to consult with the Principal prior to any publication to ensure that opted-out student-athletes are not included.

However, such opt-out does not include the ability to opt-out of photographs or video of team events that are open to the public (e.g., a baseball or softball game). Moreover, the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District does not control the disclosure or use of photographs or videos taken by participants at events that are open to parents, community members, and/or the news media. Student photos and names from athletic events may be published by news media, regardless of whether a parent has opted the student out.

## **Out-of-Season Sports Participation**

Participation in out-of-season clinics, leagues, or other related sport activities is strictly up to the discretion of the student-athlete and their parents. While such participation may improve a student’s knowledge and skill, it is the student’s decision whether or not their wishes to become involved in such activities. Participation in such activities will have no bearing on a student-athlete’s participation on an Amherst-Pelham Regional School District athletic team. The Athletic Department encourages all students to take full advantage of the activities offered and become involved in more than one sport.

According to MIAA rules, “Neither a coach nor any other representative of the school may require an athlete to participate in a sport or training program outside of the MIAA defined sport season.” School-sponsored voluntary conditioning sessions supervised by coaches, which are open equally to all students in the school, and are entirely devoid of sports-specific activity, may be conducted, provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so. A “candidate” is defined as a varsity or sub-varsity athlete who participated in the high school program at some interscholastic level the previous year and has eligibility

remaining, a middle school student “selected” to play in an out-of-season program, or an eighth-grade student in a 9-12 high school or a sixth-grade student in a 7-12 high school.

Coaches are prohibited from communicating with their student-athletes about their attendance or participation in a specific out-of-season activity. Coaches may attend out-of-season sport competitions involving student-athletes on their team. Coaches may also be involved in the out-of-season activity of another sport during the summer. Coaches may offer private lessons, or may coach for another organization, provided candidates are not required to participate, the lessons/organization are available to all candidates, no candidate is given special consideration, school funds are not used, and candidates make up less than 50% of participants (e.g. no more than two basketball candidates can be on the court at once). Coaches should avoid any out-of-season sport camp that offers enticements. Coaches are prohibited from subsidizing out-of-season activities, this includes providing transportation.

Please see MIAA Rule 40 and Rule 41 for a more comprehensive overview of out-of-season participation.

## **Non-Discrimination**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status, homelessness, immigration status, or age. The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District believes that interscholastic athletic and co-curricular participation are valuable to student’s physical, intellectual, social, and/or character development and accordingly, we value inclusion. The District is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, pregnancy or parenting status, homelessness, immigration status, or age.

Additionally, [Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 5](#), which also protects students from discrimination based on sex, was expanded to protect students based on gender identification. As a result of this law, and consistent with the interpretive guidance offered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, students are entitled to be accepted by their schools as the gender with which they identify across all school programs. This means that athletic opportunities must be afforded to students in accordance with their identified gender, not necessarily their birth-assigned gender.

## **Participation of Students with Disabilities**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Accordingly, “[n]o otherwise qualified individual with a disability...shall, solely by reason of her

or his disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...” 29 U.S.C. § 794(a). Title II of the American with Disabilities Act provides similar protections.

As they pertain to extracurricular activities, including athletics (interscholastic, club, and/or intramural), both laws provide that qualified students with disabilities must be afforded an equal opportunity to participate with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate, given their needs. This does not mean that everyone is guaranteed a spot on the team. Schools are permitted to require a level of skill to participate in a competitive program. Even if the school offers separate and different athletic opportunities for students with disabilities (e.g., allied or unified sports), students with disabilities still must be allowed the opportunity to compete for teams that are not separate and different. Schools are required to make reasonable modifications to ensure the opportunity to participate, unless the school can show that it would fundamentally alter the nature of the program, or the modification would create an undue financial or administrative burden. Even still, schools are required to consider whether there are other modifications.

## **Academic Eligibility**

### **Amherst-Pelham Regional School District**

Participating in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District athletic program is a privilege. A student may not participate in the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District athletic program if the student has failed any course as of the date of their report card. The Fall Season will be based on the spring semester report cards. The Winter Season will be based on the fall progress reports. The Spring Season will be based on the fall semester report card. Note that dismissal from winter sports may occur in the middle of the season.

The MIAA sets a minimum academic eligibility standard which can be exceeded by the District. For the complete MIAA Rule 58 – Academic Eligibility, please see below.

### **Academic Eligibility**

- Student must be enrolled at ARHS
- Must be Academically eligible to participate in a school sport
- For additional details about eligibility, please reference the [MIAA Handbook](#) Section 58.



## **Chemical Health Policy (MIAA Rules for Alcohol, Tobacco Products, Smoking and Illegal Drugs)**

From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, vape pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; drug paraphernalia; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer,” inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one’s mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by their doctor.

For additional details about this policy and the penalties for violating this policy, please reference the [MIAA Handbook](#) Section 62.

## **Bullying & Hazing Policy**

### **Hazing**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional Public District will not tolerate any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 269, Section 17-19 sets the minimum requirements for addressing hazing, as set forth below:

#### **[Defining the Crime of Hazing \(MGL, c. 269 § 17\)](#)**

The term "hazing" means any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which wilfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. For more details about hazing use the link above.

#### **[Failure to Report Hazing \(MGL, c. 269 § 18\)](#)**

Anyone who knows that another person is the victim of hazing, to the extent that they can do so without endangering themselves or others, needs to report it to a trusted adult or law enforcement as soon as possible.

### [Duty to Issue a Copy of the Hazing Law to Teams \(MGL, c. 269, § 19\)](#)

Each school-sponsored club and team will receive a copy of the Hazing Law. Club Advisors and Coaches must make sure that all of the students they supervise are aware of the Hazing Law.

### **Bullying and Cyberbullying**

The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan may be found in the [Anti-Bullying Policy \(Policy JICFB\)](#). The plan covers all school-sponsored activities including athletics. It is the policy of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District to provide a learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying (similar policies exist and define discriminatory harassment and hazing). Coaches are explicitly prohibited from bullying any student and should take caution to guard against any bullying amongst their student-athletes. Coaches must also immediately report any suspected instance of bullying to the Principal or his/her designee.

Bullying is defined as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to themselves or of damage to their property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited: (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district or school and (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

## Retaliation

The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District will not tolerate retaliation against a person who reports hazing, bullying or cyber-bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or cyberbullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying or cyber-bullying. This includes any retaliation meted out within the context of athletics.

“Retaliation” is any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student or member of school staff who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. If harassment (unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion) is alleged, the school will utilize the district’s applicable harassment procedures to investigate.

## Clubs and Activities

### National Honor Society

National Honor Society (NHS) is a national organization that emphasizes scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Juniors and Seniors with a cumulative average in all subjects of B+ (or a GPA of 3.3) are eligible to apply for membership in the NHS.

Eligible students receive the following information from their school counselor or the NHS advisor.

- Letter of introduction
- Eligibility Questionnaire
- Performance Criteria Standards for scholarship, leadership, service, and character as written in the [National Honor Society Handbook](#)
- Notification of information session regarding completion of eligibility questionnaire and deadline dates
- The Academic Honesty policy

Information about NHS eligibility will also be sent to parents/guardians of eligible students.

### Application

Students complete the eligibility questionnaire indicating their interest in membership in the National Honor Society. Parents and faculty members also have an opportunity to provide written statements of support. An appointed Faculty Council reviews all the pertinent information to determine whether each eligible student meets the criteria for membership.

## **Clubs**

One of the school goals is to provide opportunities for all students that nurture their intellectual, social, and physical development. To this end, the school offers a range of student- and staff-led after school clubs.

All students are welcome and encouraged to participate in any club. Class Councils are made up of students who have volunteered to run and have been elected by their peers to represent their class. While all students are encouraged to run for Class Council leadership positions, only those elected may participate in Council meetings and activities.

An updated list of clubs and activities will be available on the ARHS website [www.arps.org/ARHS/](http://www.arps.org/ARHS/) once school begins.

## SECTION IV: HEALTH

### Nurse's Office Services and Staff

The Nurse's Office is staffed by a certified school nurse and a registered nurse, or licensed practical nurse. A school physician is available for consultation by telephone. Services include:

- First aid response and care
- Sick child assistance
- Nursing care for students with medical needs
- Medication administration
- Individual and class health education
- Counseling
- Linkage to and coordination of care with community services, health insurance, and health care providers
- Communicable disease control
- Compliance with immunization requirements
- [Health screenings](#) as required
- Environmental health and safety

### Health Screenings: Vision, Hearing, BMI, and Postural

Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires periodic screenings for vision, hearing, postural, and height and weight (BMI - body mass index). Any student or parent/guardian may request a screening if there are concerns. Parents/guardians will be notified if further evaluation is recommended. Ninth grade students are screened for scoliosis and other postural abnormalities. Tenth grade students receive vision, hearing, and BMI screenings. Parents/guardians may choose to opt-out of their student from any screening by providing a written note to the School Nurse.

### Additional Screening Information

Ninth grade students will also participate in the drug and alcohol-related SBIRT [Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment] screening. SBIRT focuses on prevention, early detection, risk assessment, brief counseling, and referral intervention that can be utilized in the school setting. This validated screening tool will enable school nurses and counselors to detect risk for substance use-related problems and to address them at an early stage in adolescents.

## **Visiting the Nurse's Office During the School Day**

Students must obtain a pass from a teacher to go to the Nurse's Office. Once there, the Nurse will perform an assessment and provide care as needed to determine when a student may return to class or if the student needs to be dismissed. If students need to be dismissed due to illness or injury, parent/guardian permission is required. Students who do not present to the Nurse's Office or leave without obtaining parent/guardian permission will be marked as unexcused for all classes missed.

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to pick up their student and transport them to an appropriate facility if further medical attention is required. If emergency medical service is summoned, every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians using the emergency contact numbers they provide.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

At the beginning of the year, emergency contact information cards are distributed to each student. It is essential that the information requested on this card be completed accurately and kept up to date. There must be a way of reaching parents, guardians, or local alternates promptly should illness or accident occur at school. Please be sure that the local alternate that you list is willing and able to serve in this capacity. If the parents or guardians are students, please attach their class schedule to the emergency card with all appropriate telephone numbers.

## **Health Policies and Requirements**

### **Physical Examination**

To comply with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws and the Regional School District policies, students are required to receive physical examinations prior to entry into the tenth grade or prior to transferring from another school district at any grade. The physical examination must be conducted by a licensed medical doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. Documentation of the examination should be submitted to the health room prior to coming to school. It should include the date the exam was done, a statement regarding the general assessment of health, unusual finding or chronic health problems, treatments or medication administrations to be carried out in school, and any limitations to usual school activities.

## **Sports Examinations**

A physical examination form with sport participation clearance must be submitted to the nurse's office in order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity (including try-outs for a team). A sports physical terminates 13 months subsequent to administering and must be renewed immediately to maintain eligibility. Physical examinations must be performed by a registered physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner.

## **Immunization Requirements**

Massachusetts State Law requires that all students provide documentation indicating that they are properly immunized before entering school. Students who have a medical or religious exemption to any or all immunizations must submit written documentation on an annual basis. Medical exemptions must be written by the health care provider. Any student with medical or religious exemptions may be subject to exclusion from school if there is an outbreak of the specific disease. All immunization requirements for school attendance are set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## **Medication Policy**

Students using medications during the school day (prescription and over-the-counter) are required to bring them to the health room. They should be in their original containers, accompanied by parent/guardian consent for the school nurse to administer the medication, and a medication order written by a licensed healthcare provider.

Under limited circumstances, students may carry medications with them. These medications include "epinephrine auto-injector," inhalers, and diabetes care supplies. This also requires written permission from the parent/guardian, health care provider, and nurse at school.

The nurse at school cannot dispense medications unless the student's family provides them. We do not keep stock supplies of medication, except for emergency medications. Please see the nurse at school for consent and order forms and for clarification of these policies.

## **Other Health Policies**

### **Condom Availability**

In 1993, the Regional School Committee voted to make condoms available to students in the health office. Educational material on the use of condoms is available. Counseling and health education is available by school health personnel as needed or requested by the student. These services are provided confidentially.

## **Elevator Pass**

Students that request permission to use the elevator must submit a written request from their parent/guardian or health care provider. This request must contain the reason for elevator use and the length of time the pass is needed. Elevator passes are issued by the nurse.

## **Physical Education Excuses**

Written medical excuses are required for those students who cannot participate in physical education classes. A parental/guardian note will suffice for a one-week absence. If the student is to be excused for more than one week, a note from a licensed healthcare provider (MD, NP, PA) is required. This note must include diagnosis and length of expected absence.



## **SECTION V: USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES and SAFETY**

### **Emergency Procedures**

#### **Fire Drill Procedures**

At the sound of a fire drill bell or horn, students will stand at once, by their seats and wait for the teacher's instructions to file out. Courtyard exits should not be used unless other exits are blocked. Teachers will leave the room last. All windows and doors should be checked.

Students should walk quickly but not run and maintain single file lines. The first students through each exit should hold the doors until everyone has passed. Custodians will check rooms for stragglers.

In the event of a fire drill during the passing period, students should proceed without pushing to the nearest exit. Teachers are authorized to reroute students to the nearest safe exit and to break windows to facilitate an exit from the building.

#### **Shelter in Place**

Shelter in Place procedures are used when there is a potential threat – either internal or external - to the safety of the students and staff. Shelter In Place requires that everyone – students and adults, alike – are behind a locked door. During a shelter in place, school business should go forward. The only stipulation is that no one is allowed out from behind their locked door.

#### **Lockdown**

Lockdowns are procedures that are used when there is an immediate threat, either internal or external, to the safety of students and staff. Everyone must be behind a locked door and seated on the floor opposite the windows during a lockdown. In the event that a lockdown is called during a passing period, students should proceed to the closest classroom and not to their next scheduled class.

Parents/Guardians should NOT come to the school building during any emergency procedures. In case of an early dismissal due to one of these events, families will receive notification from the school, not individual students.

## **Closed Campus**

Amherst Regional High School is a closed campus. All students are expected to remain inside of the school building for the duration of the school day. Students may not have food delivered from off-campus or leave campus to pick up food, however parents/guardians may drop off food in the Main Office, which students may pick up during their lunch period. For the sake of clarity the following are also considered out of bounds:

- War Memorial Pool and playground area
- All parking lots and cars
- Summit Academy
- Amherst Regional Middle School, including the road leading to it from the high school

## **Cafeteria and Lunch**

Students are expected to remain in the Cafeteria or the outdoor seating area just outside the Cafeteria for the entirety of their lunch period. Other expectations for the lunch block and cafeteria are as follows:

- Students may only eat in the cafeteria or the area outside immediately to the left of the Cafeteria exit. Keep all food, trays, and utensils within these designated areas.
- Students may not eat in the library, classrooms, bathrooms, or other hallways.
- Students are expected to clean up after they eat
- Students are expected to be respectful of others eating the cafeteria with their actions and their words.
- Students must remain in the cafeteria, rotunda, or designated outdoor eating area until the end of the lunch period. Students found in other hallways during their lunch period without a pass from a teacher will be written up for being out of bounds.

## **Student Lockers**

Students are provided with lockers to store books, clothing, and personal belongings during the school day and while participating in extracurricular activities after school. Lockers should be kept locked. Articles that have been found in the building or on school grounds will be taken to the Lost and Found.

Lockers are the property of the Amherst Regional High School. School officials need only reasonable suspicion to initiate a search of a locker. When searching a locker, the student who has been assigned the locker may be given the opportunity to be present. Contraband found in the course of a search of a student's locker will be confiscated and turned over to the Amherst Police Department. Disposition of contraband is the responsibility of the police.

These policies apply to both hallway and sports lockers equally.

## **Student Parking**

Use of student parking at ARHS is a privilege, not a right. Parking for students is limited to the number of spaces available. Seniors will be given priority status, followed by juniors whose academic programs include courses taken at area colleges and internships that occur during the school day. Consideration will be given to students who are directly involved in after-school home care, responsible for supporting their family through a job, living independently and self-supportive, and students participating in the school choice program.

The following are the rules and policies regarding student parking. Students must abide by all school rules regarding parking and driving on school grounds. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

### **Parking Permits**

- All vehicles parked on school grounds must have a parking permit clearly displayed. Permits must be displayed on the rear-view mirror with the permit number facing the windshield. Cars without permits may be towed without warning.
- Parking permits are \$75 per year and are not transferable.
- Students should immediately report lost or stolen parking permits to the Dean's Office.

### **Authorized and Unauthorized Parking Areas**

- The parking lot is off-limits during the school day. Students may not go out to their cars during the school day.
- Students may park in the student parking section of the main parking lot or in the allocated spaces along the road next to the track. Student parking spaces are marked with white lines. Additionally, when there are no snow banks, students may park along the path facing the football field so long as they do not park on or block the sidewalk.
- Students may NOT park in the following areas:
  - Visitor parking (first row of the parking lot facing the building)
  - Faculty parking spaces marked with yellow lines
  - Along the back of the main parking lot
  - Either of the side lots
  - Bus drop off/pick up zone
  - Fire lanes
- Vehicles parked in unauthorized areas, regardless of permit, are subject to towing without notice.

## **Driving on Campus**

- Reckless driving will result in loss of parking privileges and may be reported to the Amherst Police Department.
- Students driving off school grounds without proper dismissal and/or transporting other students without proper dismissals will lose parking privileges for 10 or more days. The parking permit fee will not be refunded.

## **Lost, Damaged, or Towed Cars**

- The school is not responsible for loss or damage to cars. Please report loss/damage directly to the Police Department. Students with six or more tardies will lose parking privileges for 30 days.
- Cars towed are taken to North Amherst Motors, 78 Sunderland Road, Amherst, MA 01002. Call 413-549-7368 for retrieval and storage fees.
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## **Library**

The library and its resources are open to all ARHS students from Monday-Friday 8:45 am-4:00 pm. For a comprehensive list of library services, resources, and policies please visit the [ARHS Library website](#).

## **Visiting the Library During the School Day**

During the school day, students must have a pass from their current academic teacher to visit the library. No passes are required before or after school or during lunch, however, the library reserves the right to close to individual students, student groups, or classes at any time due to availability.

All students visiting the library on a pass or during lunch must sign in at the front desk with their name and reason for visiting the library. No exceptions will be made.

## **Behavioral Policy**

Students are expected to follow all school rules while in the library, whether they are with a class or on their own. They are expected to treat the library, its materials and resources, and all students and staff with respect. Students who are not able to meet these expectations will be asked to leave and may face more serious disciplinary consequences if warranted.

## **Food and Drink**

No food or drink except bottled water are permitted in the library at any time unless in the designated circle couch area. Students are expected to pick up after themselves and to leave the library cleaner than they found it.

## **Use of Computers**

Computers may be used to complete academic work. Students are expected to adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy while on school devices or wifi. Any other use of computers, either library desktops or personal devices, may result in being asked to leave the library.

## **Circulation**

### **Checking Out Library Materials**

- Students may check out up to five (5) books at a time.
- Books circulate for three (3) weeks unless on reserve for a class project.
- All library materials except those marked as reference or special collections may be checked out.
- All library materials must be returned or renewed by the end of the school year or the student and their family will be issued a “lost items” bill.

### **Overdue Library Materials**

- Library materials belong to our entire community. Students are expected to make every effort to return or renew loaned items to the library in a timely manner.
- Students who fail to return their library materials will be issued a succession of library overdue notices in school. After three (3) in school notices, parents or guardians will be notified.
- Students who believe they have received a library overdue notice in error are responsible for informing the library staff as soon as possible.
- The ARHS library does not charge fines for overdue library materials.

### **Lost or Damaged Library Materials**

- If a library loan fails to be returned or renewed after twelve months or the end of the student’s senior year, whichever occurs first, the material will be declared lost and the student billed for its replacement cost.
- Students and their parents/guardians may replace the item directly or pay the replacement fee.
- In the event that replacing the item creates an undue financial hardship for the student and their parents/guardians, special consideration will be given.

The same shall apply to damaged library materials.

## **School Murals**

Murals on the walls of the school should represent general standards of decency, positive attitudes toward diversity, and the general will of the school community. Murals should at all times and in all ways reflect the interest of the community in a positive way. Murals that advocate intolerance, and gratuitous violence or that violate state laws on harassment or hazing will not be considered as falling within these guidelines. The size, location, and nature of new murals will be determined by a mural committee appointed by the principal.

# Student Handbook Summary Sign-Off Sheet

*You are responsible for understanding and following the rules, policies, and procedures set forth in the Student Handbook. This sign off sheet summaries those policies for you and your parents/guardians. You and a parent/guardian must read carefully before signing and returning the completed final signature page to your Homeroom Teacher no later than **Friday 8/31/2024**.*

## Attendance Policies

**Students are expected to come to class on time every day.**

- A student earns an **absence** when:
  - They are not present in class
  - They miss 20+ minutes of class during the period (marked as a Q)
  - They earn three marks of tardy (e.g. 6 tardies in a class = 2 absences)
- 10+ absences in a semester class OR 5+ absences in a quarter class = **LOSS OF CREDIT**
  - **Excused** absences may count toward this limit
  - Students who have lost credit must schedule an **Attendance Meeting**. This can lead to the restoration of credit, particularly if there are extenuating circumstances.
- A student who has an **unexcused absence** from a class may earn a zero on all classwork that day, including tests

## Phone Use Policy

**Students are expected to be engaged in class without distractions.**

- Students must put their phones in the **phone caddy** BEFORE the bell rings.
  - Once there, the phone must stay in the caddy for the entire class period
- Consequences for students **using phones during class**, or in the hallways during class:
  - First offense: family contact
  - Second offense and beyond: **PHONE WILL BE CONFISCATED**

## Time Out Of Class

**Students should be out of class for as little as possible.**

- When students can leave class:
  - Only **one student may be out of class** at a time
  - Students may not leave class during the **first 5 minutes or the last 10 minutes**
- While in the hallway, **all students must carry a hall pass**

- Any adult may ask to see your hall pass at any time
- If an adult asks your name, you must tell them

## Academic Honesty

**Students are expected to do their own work.**

- Plagiarism, including copying from other students, copying sources on the internet, or the use of artificial intelligence (AI), is considered a **very serious offense**.
  - First offense: zero on the assignment, family contact, loss of honor roll eligibility
  - Second offense and beyond: same as above, PLUS notification to colleges

## Flex Block

**Flex Block is an important part of the day which students must attend.**

- Flex Block **attendance is taken every day**.
  - Students must stay in the same Flex Block for the whole period
  - Skipping Flex Block is equivalent to skipping class
  - A grade of S or U will be issued for Flex Block and appear on transcripts
- Seniors are **exempt from attending Flex Block during the 4th quarter only**. This exemption is conditional on signing up for the Flex Block Senior Exemption and:
  - Having having a B- or above in all classes
  - Meeting attendance requirements of no more than five total absences in Semester 2

## Discipline

**We believe in restorative practices and work to ensure a safe, welcoming, and effective learning environment for all students, in accordance with MGL Chapter 222.**

- Students are expected to:
  - Engage in Restorative Justice processes and proactively work to rebuild and repair relationships when harm is caused to individuals and/or property.
  - Take responsibility for their actions and words.
  - Comply with ALL disciplinary processes, procedures, and decisions as outlined in the Student Handbook.



## Signature Page

Please return this completed signature page to your Homeroom Teacher no later than Friday, August 30, 2024. This form will be kept on file for the entire school year.

### Student Signature

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name of Student) affirm that I have read and understand the above summary of the ARHS Student Handbook. I hereby agree that I will follow the rules, policies and procedures set forth in the Handbook.

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian Signature

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Name of Parent/Guardian) affirm that I have read and understand the above summary of the ARHS Student Handbook. I hereby agree that I will support my student in following the rules, policies and procedures set forth in the Handbook.

Signature of Parent / Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_