

Sterling Middle School



Student Handbook 2008-2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to Sterling Middle Schoolpages 2 – 10

School Spirit Page 2

Student Behavior

Subjects Taught

Grading

Homework

Homework Continued.....Page 3

Progress Reports/Interim Reports

Promotional Policy

Release Days

Guidance

Breakfast/Lunch Programs.....Page 4

Field Trips

Attendance Policy

Attendance Procedures

Attendance Procedures Continued..... Page 5

Tardiness Procedures

Health Services

Dismissals

Appropriate Dress

“No School” Announcements.....Page 6

Telephone Messages for Students

Fire Alarm or Emergency Evacuation

School Bus or MBTA Bus

Locker

Conduct

Conduct Continued.....Page 7

Safety and Security

Sterling’s Non-Negotiable Rules

Sterling’s Non-Negotiable Rules Continued..... Page 8

Quincy Public Schools Calendar Page 9-11

Welcome to Sterling Middle School

You are about to encounter a new experience in your life. Sterling Middle School is a place which provides special programs and a special atmosphere to guide your academic and personal growth. It tries to be a bridge between elementary school and high school, and between childhood and adolescence. Its goal is to help you become a self-fulfilled individual, citizen and worker. Its mission is the personalized education of emerging adolescents.

Your teachers and administrators wish you success. We hope this Student Handbook will help you and your family become more familiar with our school, its programs, services and the rules necessary for proper behavior. We also hope you will develop pride in your school by doing your best and exemplifying the importance of education.

School Spirit

School spirit may be divided into three categories:

1. Respect - toward teachers, fellow students, custodians, cafeteria workers, office staff, bus drivers and officials of school athletic activities.
2. Pride - in everything our school tries to accomplish and has accomplished.
3. Sportsmanship - the ability to win and lose gracefully. School spirit means loyalty to the school. A loyal student supports the school and does his/her best to do the right thing.

Student Behavior

Everyone has the right to receive an education. Racial discrimination by speech or behavior will not be tolerated. All students are expected to respect each other at all times.

You should act in a reasonable and appropriate way when on school grounds or in the building. Loud noises, name-calling, pushing, shoving, tripping, fighting, swearing and obscene language or gestures **will not** be tolerated. Disciplinary measure will result from these types of behaviors. Students must accept consequences for their actions.

Subjects Taught

All middle schools continue to focus instruction on the basic subjects of language arts, social studies, mathematics, science, reading and world languages. In addition, a wide program of general education is provided in music, art, drama, technology, health and physical education.

Grading

Computerized report cards are issued three times a year. The letters (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or F) represent the quality of work in most subjects. The letter E (excellent), S (satisfactory), or U (unsatisfactory) may also be used. A teacher comment section provides additional information. The report card also is a record of conduct, attendance and tardiness. All report cards, except the last one which is mailed home, must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to school.

Homework

Homework assignments are designed to support the learning process. Homework assignments may differ, depending upon the student's ability, potential and need. You are expected to complete assignments carefully in order to reinforce and enrich classroom learning experiences.

What you and your parents can expect:

1. Homework is assigned on a regular basis.
2. Homework is usually discussed in class, collected and graded within reasonable time for each student, normally within a week.
3. A record is kept of homework grades and assignments completed.
4. Students have reasonable notice of long-term assignments. Time must be planned for these assignments.

Grade 6 will receive 15-20 minutes per subject per night

Grade 7 will receive 20-25 minutes per subject per night

Grade 8 will receive 25-30 minutes per subject per night

“Vacations provide an important break in the school year for students, families, teachers and staff. Homework assignments, including test preparation, given prior to an officially scheduled vacation period should allow students sufficient time to accomplish their assignments while allowing quality vacation time with family. Similarly, assignments that require a group of students to work together on a project should not be assigned to be completed over a vacation.”

Progress Reports/Interim Reports

Progress reports may be issued at any time. These are meant to inform you of how you are doing in a particular class.

Interim Reports will be mailed directly to your home three times a year (halfway through each term). They may indicate either satisfactory or unsatisfactory work (possibility of failing). These reports must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to school.

Promotional Policy

The school administrators and the staff are concerned with your progress in learning and your maturity level. If a student fails two or more subjects for the year or is absent twenty-eight or more days, he or she may not pass to the next grade unless an agreed-upon summer program, approved by the principal, is successfully completed. The principal will notify the parent or guardian as soon as poor classroom performance and/or attendance indicates there is a possibility that the student will not be promoted to the next grade.

Release Days

Every second and fourth Tuesday unless otherwise noted are release days for Middle School children. This allows the Quincy Public Schools to enhance our Middle School through staff workshops. A schedule of release days will be available at the beginning of the school year.

Guidance

Sometimes, you may need to talk to someone. If you need information, need help in making decisions, or need support, our guidance counselors are available to help you. They can assist you in understanding your personal and school problems. Your counselor will keep track of your progress, organize standardized testing, keep records, offer advice in the important choices of subjects for ninth grade, and introduce career choices.

Breakfast/Lunch Programs

Under government law, breakfast and lunch are provided either free or at a reduced-price. In order to determine who can receive either free or reduced priced meals, all students are given a form at the beginning of the year for their parents or guardians to complete.

Field Trips

Teachers schedule field trips as part of the curriculum to provide on-site learning experiences. The same rules that apply in the school, the classroom, and on the bus apply during a field trip. Signed parent or guardian permission slips are required for each field trip.

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance at school is required by state law. Truancy or willful, deliberate absence from school is not allowed and will result in disciplinary action. Regular attendance is the foundation of success in school.

Any student absent for 28 days or more may be recommended for summer school or a program established by the principal/designee. The student may be retained in his/her current grade at the principal's discretion.

Family vacations during the school year are **strongly discouraged**. Following an absence, the student is expected to make-up missed work at the discretion of the teacher.

Parent/guardian must call the school before 9:00 A.M., on the day of the absence. If a call isn't received, our attendance aide will call that home to be sure the student is home sick. All absences require a note from the parent/guardian. An absence is only excused with documentation from a doctor, agency or court official. Extended absences will also require formal documentation. Students are responsible for completing all make-up work due to absences. Make-up work will be provided routinely for absences of three days or more.

Attendance Procedures:

Middle school administrators and staff use many strategies, programs, and incentives to promote regular attendance. For students who exhibit a pattern of excessive absenteeism, the following procedures **may** be taken at the discretion of the principal:

- “A Parent’s Guide to School Attendance”: is distributed to parents/guardians in September.
- The attendance aide shares accumulative absences with the assistant principal/guidance counselor.
- The nurse/counselor follows up on consecutive absences or after a pattern of absences by speaking to the student individually and to the parent/guardian.

Proactive Attendance Plan

- A letter may be sent to parent/guardian after **four** days of unexcused absences per term.
- A parent/guardian meeting may be held.
- A follow-up letter may be sent to parent/guardian after **seven** absences per term.
- An attendance hearing may be held with supervisor of attendance.
- The supervisor of attendance may visit the home.
- A referral to outside counseling may be recommended.
- A referral to the “Family Assistance Conference” may be made.

In extreme cases:

- A referral to the Department of Social Services may be made.
- A CHINS petition may be filed with the court by the supervisor of attendance.
- A “Failure to Send” petition may be filed with the court by the supervisor of attendance.

Tardiness Procedures:

All tardies require a note of explanation from the parent/guardian.

- Unexcused tardies may result in detention.
- A letter may be sent to the home at the discretion of the principal.
- Repeated tardies may necessitate an attendance/suspension hearing.
- Interventions may include a home visit by the supervisor of attendance.
- A referral to outside counseling may be recommended.
- A referral to the “Family Assistance Conference” may be made.
- Excessive tardies may effect your child’s perfect attendance.

Health Services

The school nurse provides a broad range of health services including acute, episodic and emergency care. The school nurse is responsible for the management of health assessment, mandatory screenings, monitoring student’s immunization status and maintaining health records for students. The school nurse will only dispense prescription medication in an emergency or in coordination with the students’ physician.

Dismissals

Steps to follow:

1. A parent or guardian must write a note to the Principal stating the date, time and the reason for dismissal. The parent or guardian has the responsibility of picking a student up from the school. **We do not allow students to leave on their own at any time during the school day.**
2. Students who become ill during school can only be dismissed by the school nurse or the Principal.

A student is not permitted to leave school grounds during the school day without permission. Failure to follow the correct dismissal procedure will be considered a truancy.

Appropriate Dress

Your appearance and dress must not present a problem in the area of health, safety, or learning in the classroom. Whenever any clothes or accessories are questionable and may disrupt the learning environment, the principal has the authority to resolve the matter. Hats are not allowed.

“No School” Announcements

If school is cancelled for any reason by the Superintendent, announcements will be made over AM radio station WBZ (1030), and television stations 4, 5, 7, & 22.

Parents or guardians are asked not to call the school. On days when school is in session despite inclement weather, parents are asked to use their best judgment about their child’s ability to attend school during the poor conditions.

Telephone Messages for Students

The school office is a very busy place. Please do not call in telephone messages to be given to your child **except in the event of an emergency.**

Fire Alarm or Emergency Evacuation

To evacuate the building:

1. The evacuation signal will be given by fire horn or loudspeaker.
2. Follow the exit directions posted in the area you are occupying when the signal sounds. Move quickly and quietly to your assigned outside area. Your teacher will take attendance.
3. If you cannot use your assigned exit, leave your area and the building by the nearest clear exit.
4. If the evacuation signal is given when you are not in class, leave the building by the nearest clear exit and go to the outside area assigned to your class.
5. When it is safe to return to the building, you will be directed to do so.
6. Any student who is proven to have set off a false alarm is subject to suspension. With the cooperation of the Quincy Fire Department, additional fines or penalties may be assessed against anyone in violation of this law.

School Bus or MBTA Bus

Riding the bus is part of the school day. It should be noted that all school regulations apply to students while on any bus. The Quincy Public Schools Bus Code must be followed.

Lockers

You are expected to go to your locker **only during designated times.** Backpacks must be kept in lockers due to space issues. Students are responsible for safeguarding their possessions.

Lockers are school property and are issued for student use. **The school administration has the right to inspect any locker without notice if there is reasonable cause.**

Conduct

The following conduct violates school rules before, after and during the school day.

1. Fighting
2. Gambling
3. Forgery/Cheating
4. Leaving school grounds without permission.
5. Trespassing in the school before or after school hours
6. Possessing explosives or fireworks
7. Carrying real or toy weapons, firearms, knives, and/or any materials capable of inflicting bodily harm.
8. Selling, using and/or possessing smoking paraphernalia, alcoholic beverages or illegal or non-prescription drugs on school property or at school-sponsored events.

9. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices is not permitted in school. All such devices must be turned off and remain in students' lockers during the school day.

10. Causing destruction and damage to school property or the property of another person. Writing, drawing or placing graffiti on school property or the property of another person.

11. Harassment - the unwanted physical or verbal attention toward a student or employee of Quincy Public Schools; or any harassment based on sex, color, national origin, religion or disability.

(The Massachusetts Education Act of 1993 gives principals the authority to expel a student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school related events in possession of a dangerous weapon or controlled substance, or a student who assaults school personnel on school premises or at school sponsored or school related events. Rules and regulations concerning conduct are fully addressed in the Quincy Public Schools' pamphlet entitled: Students' Rights and Responsibilities.)

Safety and Security

We continually review and practice our safety and security procedures. **We are monitored by video cameras and our doors are kept locked at all times. Entry for all visitors must be by ringing the front door bell and identifying oneself.**

All visitors must report to the office. Identification badges are provided and must be worn by any visitor within the building. Other than staff personnel, no one may visit or enter any classroom without the permission of the Principal.

Sterling's Non-Negotiable Rules

1. Respect

- Yourself
- All your peers
- All adults
- At all times

2. Come to school every day.

3. Attend school on time and be sure to get to every class on time.

4. High Five Rules: Be prepared for all classes: homework, books, pencils and pens. Be sure you attend class on time.

5. Be Polite!

- Use thank you and please
- Hats, head coverings or jackets are not allowed to be worn in the school building

6. During school hours stay healthy:

- No gum, candy, caffeine or tobacco products.
- **Walk** to your classes, and do not poke, push, shove, punch, slap, jump or run. We don't want accidents.
- Eliminate rough housing or fighting – these are not allowed to and from school or during school. **Remember, the school is responsible for you from the time you leave your house in the morning until you return home in the afternoon. All school rules apply inside and outside the building during this time.**

- Do not use dangerous/harmful substances. These cannot be brought to school. This includes whiteout, toxic magic markers and mouth spray.
- Do not bring your cologne/perfume to school. Many students have allergic reactions and due to the misuse of these, they could become ill.

7. It is vital to be involved in co-curricular activities. Please get involved in these school-wide activities and exemplify school spirit and Sterling Pride.

Quincy Public Schools
Quincy, Massachusetts
Calendar September 2008 – June 2009

September 2008					
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
School Opens Sept. 3 20	XX	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12
	15	/	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	/			

February 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
2	3	4	5	6	15
9	X	11	12	13	
XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	
23	/	25	26	27	

October 2008					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
		1	2	3	22
6	7	8	9	10	
XX	X	15	16	17	
20	21	22	23	24	
27	/	29	30	31	

March 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
2	3	4	5	6	22
9	X	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	/	25	26	27	
30	31				

November 2008					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
3	4	5	6	7	17
10	XX	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
24	/	26	XX	XX	

April 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
		1	2	3	16
6	7	8	9	XX	
13	X	15	16	17	
XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	
27	/	29	30		

December 2008					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
1	2	3	4	5	17
8	X	10	11	12	
15	16	17	18	19	
22	/	XX	XX	XX	
XX	XX	XX			

May 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
				1	20
4	5	6	7	8	
11	X	13	14	15	
18	19	20	21	22	
XX	/	27	28	29	

January 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
			XX	XX	19
5	6	7	8	9	
12	X	14	15	16	
XX	20	21	22	23	
26	/	28	29	30	

June 2009					
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
1	/	3	4	5	12
8	/	10	11	12	
15	16	17*	18*	19*	
22*	23*				

XX = Vacation or Holiday
 Sept. 2 = Teachers Only
 Nov. 26 = Morning Session Only
 June 17 = Teachers Only

Approved by School Committee -

School Closes: June 16 (180 days)
 The Quincy Public Schools is required to indicate 5 make-up days in the event of school cancellations. Every Tuesday is an Elementary Early Release Day
 / = Middle School Early Release Tuesday
 X = Middle and High School Early Release Tuesday

**QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS**

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2008 – 2009

Monday, September 1	Labor Day. Schools closed.
Tuesday, September 2	All teachers report to their respective buildings.
Wednesday, September 3	School opens full day for students, grade 1 – 9 (Freshman orientation). Lunch will be served in all schools. A full day for all personnel.
Wednesday, September 3 Through Friday, September 5	Preschool/kindergarten Orientation Days.
Thursday, September 4	Full day for all students in grades 1 – 12.
Monday, September 8	Preschool/Kindergarten classes begin.
Monday, October 13	Columbus Day. All Schools Closed.
Tuesday, November 11	Veteran’s Day observed. All Schools Closed
Wednesday, November 26	Morning session only. No lunches served. Half day for all students and staff.
Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28	Thanksgiving recess. All schools will be closed at the end of the morning session, November 26. (All schools reopen on Monday, December 1st).
Tuesday, December 23	Elementary and Middle School Early release day. Full day of classes for high school students.
Wednesday, December 24 through Friday, January 2	Christmas recess. (All schools reopen Monday, January 5, 2009) New Year’s Day. All schools closed.
Monday, January 19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. All schools closed.
Wednesday – Friday January 21- 23	High School Mid-year examinations. Full structured learning day for all high school students, grade 9 – 12.
Monday, January 26	Chinese Lunar New Year.
Monday, February 16 Through Friday, February 20	February recess. All schools close at the end of the regular session on Friday, February 13. All schools reopen on Monday, February 23. (Presidents’ Day observed on the third Monday in February, the 16 th .)

2008 – 2009 QPS SCHOOL CALENDAR (continued)

Friday, April 10	Good Friday. All schools closed.
Tuesday, March 31	Elementary - NO early release due to MCAS ELA Long Composition testing.
Monday, April 20 through Friday, April 24	April recess. All schools closed at the end of the regular session on April 17. All schools reopen on Monday, April 27. (Patriots' Day is observed on the third Monday in April, the 20th.)
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day. All schools closed.
Tuesday, May 26th	Final day for high school seniors in good standing as determined by principals. To be considered in good standing, a senior must have met all school obligations, including course work and attendance. Full day for seniors. (165 days).
Monday, June 1	Graduation NQHS.
Tuesday, June 2	Graduation QHS
Wednesday, June 3	Rain Date, NQHS Graduation.
Thursday, June 4	Rain Date, QHS Graduation.
Friday, Monday and Tuesday June 12, 15, & 16	High School Final Examinations, Grades 9 – 11. Full structured learning day for all high school students, grades 9 – 11.
Tuesday, June 16	Day 180 for students
Wednesday, June 17	Last Day for teachers. Day 182.
Tuesday, June 23	Day 185. The Quincy Public Schools is required to indicate 5 make-up days in the event of school cancellations.
Wednesday, June 24	Last day for Teachers, in the event of five school cancellation days.

