

Utica Community Schools



Elementary School

Parent and
Student
Handbook

2016-2017

UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Elementary

Parent and Student Handbook 2016-2017

*Welcome to Utica Community Schools,
where your child's education is our first priority.*

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Providing your child with a high-quality educational experience in a safe, nurturing environment is the goal of the Board of Education and staff of Utica Community Schools.

We invite you to share this responsibility by monitoring your child's academic progress and gaining a clear understanding of the standards we have for our

Sincerely,

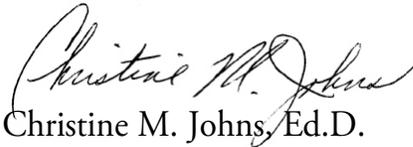
students – standards that are vital to advancing the learning process.

We ask that you take time to review the important information and expectations contained in this parent and student handbook with your child. Working together, we can ensure every child has the opportunity to reach his or her highest potential.



Carol Klenow, Ed.D.

President, Board of Education



Christine M. Johns, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Utica Community Schools BOARD OF EDUCATION



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Utica Community Schools



Core Values

- Every child can learn and achieve.
- Parents and guardians are partners in the learning process.
- Being “smart” can be achieved through persistence, hard work and effective effort.
- Excellence is expected and celebrated.
- Data is used to guide our decision-making.
- All UCS employees will exemplify ethical behavior; exhibit a strong work ethic; and continue to develop their leadership, performance and service skills.
- Technology supports and enhances instruction, business operations, research and communications.
- The Board of Education, district educators and staff, parents, community members and business leaders must collaborate and work as a team to enhance educational opportunities for student success.

District Vision

All children have the right to a rigorous, high-quality education which meets their individual needs. Utica Community Schools will respect, encourage and empower each and every student to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to be successful, contributing members of a diverse community and global society.

District Mission

We are committed to exemplary teaching and learning in order for our students to be prepared for success in the 21st Century. We will achieve this commitment by engaging the entire community to focus on each child’s achievement, with the expectation that every student will pursue some type of post-high school educational endeavor.



Internet Use Agreement

When students log onto district computers, they accept a commitment to be good digital citizens. Below is the acceptance agreement.

As a responsible digital citizen, I accept this opportunity to learn through researching, collaborating, gathering information and publishing digitally using the resources of my school and Utica Community Schools (UCS). I agree to do so in accordance with all guidelines established by my school and the district, including but not limited to, those included in the UCS Parent and Student Handbook.

I acknowledge that I am responsible for:

- Following the UCS Board of Education Responsible Use of Technology Policy, Administrative Rules and Regulations and school procedures when using UCS technology and networks.
- Using privately-owned information technology devices at school only with permission of a district staff member.
- Appropriate conduct on the district network and understanding that I may not connect or network privately-owned information technology devices to district technology without permission of a district staff member.
- Respecting the intellectual property rights of others. I will follow copyright laws.

I accept and agree to practice proper digital citizenship and responsible use of technology as a Utica Community Schools student.

I Accept



Welcome to Utica Community Schools

We are proud of our outstanding educational programs. The district's elementary curriculum is designed to guide students in experiencing the joy and satisfaction of discovery and accomplishment. We celebrate our students' varied ethnic and racial heritage and wide-ranging abilities. Here your child can excel in a nurturing environment of understanding, acceptance, encouragement and high expectations.

Because learning takes place best in a calm and orderly environment, your child's good conduct will help him or her get the most out of school. This handbook offers guidelines, policies and practical advice for UCS parents, teachers and administrators to use in working together to help students blossom into confident, capable and caring young adults.

Enrolling Your Child

Children reaching their fifth birthday on or before September 1 of the enrollment year and living within the Utica Community Schools attendance area are eligible for kindergarten in the district. Schools of Choice enrollment for out-of-district Macomb County residents may also be offered, based on available space. All children must be registered for school by their sixth birthday.

Summer registration at the elementary schools begins two weeks before the start of classes.

Parents are required to bring the following documents at the time of enrollment:

To enroll your son or daughter, you must present:

- his/her certified birth certificate
- his/her immunization record
- parent/guardian photo ID
- accepted proof of residency: lease agreement, closing document or current tax bill

To find out which elementary school your child will attend, please contact the UCS Pupil Services Office at 586.797.1120. When registering, please notify the school if your child receives specialized services. School officials will request transcripts from your child's previous school.

Immunization Requirements

At enrollment, the state law requires parents to provide the school with detailed immunization records providing

the month, day and year your child was vaccinated against:

- measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- chicken pox (varicella)
- polio
- hepatitis B
- diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus (DTaP, DT, Td or Tdap)

Waivers are available only through the Macomb County Health Department.

Hearing and vision screenings are required for kindergarten entrance. These can be done by the child's doctor or the Macomb County Health Department, 586.412.5945.

In addition, all students in sixth grade, regardless of when they entered the district, are required to meet the current immunization requirements for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR); diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus; chicken pox (varicella); polio; hepatitis B and meningococcal conjugate vaccines and provide a written record of having received these immunizations.

Students who do not comply with the immunization law or who fail to file a waiver will be excluded from school. For more information about immunization, call the health department at 586.469.5372.

Kindergarten Options

In addition to full-day kindergarten at all 25 of its elementary schools, Utica Community Schools offers a Montessori program at Messmore Elementary. Parents of children coming from outside the school's attendance area must provide their own transportation.

Learning Is Elementary

Student achievement is the number one goal in Utica Community Schools. Students are challenged to reach their highest potential and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. The elementary-level curriculum is briefly outlined below:

Language Arts

The language arts curriculum enables students to develop and achieve independent and strategic oral and written communication skills necessary

for the 21st Century. Daily classroom instruction includes:

- Reading – Students receive literature and informational-based reading and writing instruction with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, fluency, phonics and reference and study skills.
- Writing – Process writing is taught through the Writer’s Workshop framework. Students develop writing skills for different writing types: opinion/argument, informative/explanatory and narrative and practice the the 6+1 Traits of Writing across the grades to build their writing fluency in all content areas.
- Word Study/Spelling – Students learn strategies that enable them to recognize, spell, use, apply and understand words presented in all content areas.
- Handwriting – Students begin with printing and move to cursive writing, generally in second and third grades.

Mathematics

The elementary mathematics curriculum features hands-on learning strategies and techniques such as sorting, collecting data, measuring, computing, graphing and calculating. These strategies help students:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Acquire a deep understanding of how mathematics works by applying math to all subject areas and all areas of their lives.
- Connect mathematics instruction at all grades to algebraic thinking through appropriate math experiences at each grade level.

The UCS science program encourages students to ask questions about – and understand and appreciate – the world around them. It also teaches students to develop solutions to problems through hands-on activities and digital content based on the “5E” instructional model:

- Engage
- Explore
- Explain

- Elaborate
- Evaluate

Social Studies

The UCS social studies curriculum encourages students to become self-directed, responsible and thoughtful citizens by establishing the connection between them and their families to local, state, national and international governments. The curriculum covers:

- History
- Geography
- Civics
- Economics
- Culture

Media Center

At the heart of each UCS elementary school is a technology-rich media center in which students can seek, access, summarize, organize, analyze and evaluate information. Media center teachers guide students in independent and classroom-related projects using:

- A literature and information-rich library collection featuring a wide range of authors, writing styles, genres and formats
- Media center technology, including computers networked with classroom computers
- Carts of laptop computers that can be accessed by all classrooms
- Video equipment
- Digital Citizenship
- Coding

Technology

Technology has a key role in all UCS elementary instruction to familiarize students with the tools and skills necessary to succeed throughout their schooling and into the future workplace. UCS has established authorization and usage policies (see page 21) to guarantee technology is used only to support educational goals. Emphasis is placed on developing 21st Century learners through integration of the “4Cs” skills:

- Critical thinking
- Communication

- Collaboration
- Creativity

Physical Education

The primary goal of the UCS elementary school physical education program is to help students develop and practice positive lifelong habits. Students are introduced to healthy lifestyle choices through games and activities that highlight:

- Physical activity
- Fitness and wellness knowledge
- Motor skills
- Positive personal/social attitudes and skills
- Teamwork

Art

The UCS art curriculum celebrates each student's individuality by exploring the many creative approaches to a given situation. Beginning with basic color and shape recognition in kindergarten, the elementary art program connects with other areas of the curriculum through various media and introduces students to:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Print making
- 3-D
- Art history
- Influence of art on world culture

Music

Grade-appropriate song and rhythm instruction creates a framework for all students to learn different music styles, grow their talents and develop a lifelong interest in and appreciation of a variety of musical activities. Sixth grade students are exposed to instrumental and vocal music instruction.

English Learners (EL)

An intensive program is provided for K-12 students enrolled in Utica Community Schools who have limited or no English language skills. Students' skills are brought to a level of fluency that will enable them to take part

in the regular classroom program. After completing the initial program, elementary students may continue to receive support as needed.

Special Education

Each elementary, junior high or senior high school provides special education programs and services for students who qualify according to the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education. Additional services are available as needed through the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD). The UCS Special Services department has special education teachers to provide specialized instruction, as well as speech and language therapists, social workers, psychologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists to provide support services according to each eligible student's individual needs.

An integral part of the Special Services Department is to provide evaluation services for all students suspected of having a disability. Child Find evaluation services are conducted by a team of educational specialists. If you have concerns about your child's educational development in school, please contact your building administrator for further information.

Standardized Testing

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress

(M-Step): The State of Michigan summative assessments designed to measure student growth effectively for today's students. English language arts and mathematics will be assessed in grades 3-6, science grade 4 and social studies grade 5.

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA):

All kindergarten through sixth grade students will take the NWEA assessment three times during the school year to assist educators in determining and supporting each learner's instructional needs.

- Grades K-2 are assessed in reading and mathematics
- Grades 3-6 are assessed in reading, mathematics and science

MI-Access: An alternative assessment given to students with disabilities is stated on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). MI-Access measures reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies skills.

World Class Instructional Design and Assessment

(WIDA): Tests English learner (EL) students in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

MI-Access: An alternative assessment given to students with disabilities if stated on the Individualized Education Program (IEP). MI-Access measures reading, writing, math, science skills and social studies skills.

Michigan's Graduation Requirements – Preparation Begins in Elementary School

Elementary school is the time for your child to begin preparing for success in junior and senior high school and beyond. Beginning with the class of 2016, Michigan public high school students are required to successfully complete four credits in English Language Arts, four credits in Mathematics that include Algebra I and II and Geometry, three credits in Science that include Biology and Chemistry or Physics, three credits in Social Studies, two credits in World Languages, one credit of Health and Physical Education and one credit of Visual, Performing or Applied Arts. Additional elective classes will be required to total the 22 credits necessary for graduation.

Extracurricular Activities

UCS elementary schools offer many before- and after-school activities and evening events. Students can challenge their creativity and problem-solving skills by taking part in a variety of programs such as Academically Talented and Gifted, Geography Bees, Destination Imagination, Science Olympiad, Math Olympiad, Social Studies Olympiad, Lego Robotics and Chess Club. In addition, Community Education enrichment programs as well as scouting and youth sports programs are often centered at the schools.

Flyers and school newsletters provide participation details. Parents are responsible for their children's transportation to attend activities apart from the regular school day. Safety patrol and adult crossing guards are not on duty for students attending after-school functions.

No Child Left Behind

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 established a legislative framework intended to close

achievement gaps and ensure equivalent educational opportunity in all of our nation's public schools. Utica Community Schools functions in compliance with the requirements of this legislation.

Managing Our Schools

To protect students' safety and well-being at school and when traveling to and from school, Utica Community Schools enforces basic rules regarding attendance, school closings, transportation, lunchroom and playground conduct, care of school property and appropriate attire.

Emergency Information Card

At the beginning of every school year, parents/guardians will complete an information card to help the school notify you in the event of your child's sudden illness or injury or an emergency school closing. You must provide information including your home and cell telephone numbers and the name and phone number of your workplace and your spouse's workplace. You must also provide the names and phone numbers of adult relatives or friends available during school hours who have agreed to assume temporary care of your child if a parent cannot be reached.

Parents/guardians: You are asked to immediately inform the school of any changes in your child's emergency card information.

If a student requires emergency medical treatment and the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the school will call 911 to transport the child to the hospital by ambulance. A staff member will ride with the child and remain at the hospital until the parent/guardian arrives.

Absences

For students to get the most out of school, regular and punctual attendance is important.

If your child is too ill to attend class, please notify the school as soon as possible. Each school has a 24-hour attendance line to take parent calls. The school should be notified each day the child is absent. If a teacher recognizes that an attendance or tardiness problem is developing, the student's parent/guardian will be notified.

Your child will be excused from class for illness, bereavement, recognized religious holidays

and medical or dental treatment that cannot be scheduled after school or on weekends. Your child is responsible for makeup work. Homework requests may be made for an absence of two or more days in the case of both excused and pre-excused absences. Homework requests require 24 hours to process.

Absence for family travel during scheduled school days is discouraged. However, should family travel be necessary, parents must submit a written request to the teacher for a pre-excused absence at least one week in advance. Arrangements to complete classroom assignments can be made with the teacher.

You can arrange for home study through the school principal should your child be absent from school for an extended period due to physical disability or illness.

If a student arrives late to school, the parent must accompany the student into the office, and the student must be signed in before he or she can go to class.

Truancy officials will be contacted in the event of a student's excessive tardies or absences.

Visitors

Utica Community Schools maintains a safe and secure environment. For this reason, every visitor, including parents, must first sign in at the office and be issued a visitor's badge.

Visitors who have legitimate business at the school are always welcome. **All visitors are subject to Board of Education policies and must leave promptly when their business is completed.**

Early Arrival

General supervision begins 10 minutes before the start of school. Students should not come to school before that time, unless enrolled in School Age Child Care (SACC).

Illness Dismissal

The school will use your child's emergency card information to attempt to notify you if he or she becomes ill during the day; thus it is vital that parents/guardians keep the emergency card information updated.

Early Dismissal

If it becomes necessary for you to have your child leave the building during the school day, please conform to the following:

- If possible, notify the office by phone or note beforehand of the reason for and time of dismissal.
- At the designated time, the parent/guardian or other person designated on the child's emergency card must come into the office to sign the child out of school. All adults must be prepared to show photo ID.
- The child will be called out of class when the parent or emergency card designee arrives.

Please avoid scheduling appointments during standardized testing assessments, such as M-STEP testing, unless absolutely necessary. Parents will be notified in advance of testing windows.

Daily Dismissal

Students are expected to be picked up promptly at dismissal time, unless they are involved in a parent-authorized, supervised activity or enrolled in School Age Child Care.

School Age Child Care (SACC)

SACC is available before and after school, offering quality child care and supervision. SACC typically operates from 7:00 a.m. until school begins and after school until 6:00 p.m. Hours may vary at some schools. Contact the school office for information and fees.

Emergency School Closing

In the event of severe inclement weather; loss of electrical power, heat or water; or other emergency, Utica Community Schools may: close the school(s) for the entire day; open the school(s), but without bus transportation; delay bus transportation and start time(s) by one hour; or dismiss students early.

Parents will be notified of emergency school closings by an automated telephone calling and/or email system. Depending on conditions, the calls/emails may go out the night before or the early morning of a closing. Please be sure the school has your correct phone number(s) and

email.

Emergency closings will also be broadcast on radio stations WOMC-104.3 FM, WJR-760 AM, WWJ-950 AM; on TV stations WJBK-2, WDIV-4 and WXYZ-7 and on the district's Web site *www.uticak12.org* and UCS-TV cable stations 22 (Comcast) and 15 (WOW).

If students must be dismissed early, efforts will be made to contact a parent or emergency card designee. Please make sure your child knows your family's plan for emergency dismissal.

Student Records

A cumulative student record is maintained by Utica Community Schools for the benefit of the student. This record reflects the scholastic and physical growth of each student. Access to this record is restricted to parents/guardians, eligible students (18 years of age or older) and school officials with legitimate educational interests.

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member; a person serving on the Board of Education; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task; or a person serving on an official committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Appointments to review your child's records can be made through the building principal or counselor. Parents/guardians and eligible students shall have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the contents of their child's school records. Upon written request from parents for a hearing on the contents of their child's records, the principal will set a time and date convenient to both the parents and school.

Parents/guardians and eligible students shall have the right to file a complaint concerning alleged failure by the school district to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Complaints may be sent to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

Directory Information Disclosure

Utica Community Schools may release directory information such as: student's name, address, participation in school activities, dates of school attendance, honors and awards, information generally found in yearbooks, height and weight of athletic team members, and students' names, addresses and telephone numbers when requested by military recruiters, only. Parents or students, 18 years or older, who do not wish this information made public should notify the principal in writing by October 1.

Protection of Pupil Rights

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) gives parents and students who are 18 or older or emancipated minors (eligible students) certain rights regarding Utica Community Schools' conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes and conduct of certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- **Consent to federally funded surveys concerning protected information.** If the U.S. Department of Education funds a survey in whole or in part, a student's parents or an eligible student must consent in writing before the student may provide information relating to the following categories:
 - Political affiliations
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
 - Sexual behavior or attitudes
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior
 - Critical appraisals of student's family members
 - Privileged or similar relationships recognized by law, such as with attorneys, doctors and ministers
 - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent
 - Income other than that required by law to determine program eligibility.

A survey that concerns any of these points is called a protected information survey.

- **Opt out of certain surveys and exams.** Parents and eligible students will receive notice of any

of the following activities and will have the right to opt out of them:

- Activities involving collection, disclosure or use of personal information obtained from students for purposes of marketing or selling or otherwise distributing the information to others
- Any protected information survey, regardless of funding
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent and scheduled by the school, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student or of another student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law.
- **Inspect certain material.**
 - Parents and eligible students have the right to inspect the following, upon request, before Utica Community School administrators use them:
 - Protected information surveys of students (including any instructional materials used in connection with the survey)
 - Documents used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purpose.
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.
- **Discuss concerns.**

Parents and eligible students who have questions or concerns regarding pupil rights may contact the Executive Administrator of Schools at 586.797.1000.
- **Report violations.**

Parents and eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605.

Walking to School

Students walking to and from school should follow such common pedestrian safety rules as:

- Walking on sidewalks wherever possible

- Crossing streets at corners, except where otherwise designated
- Obeying crossing guards

Crossing guards are the responsibility of your local municipality and are positioned at certain major intersections.

Riding Bikes to School

Each elementary school establishes and communicates its own student bike riding procedure. UCS prohibits mopeds and motorized scooters on school property.

Bus Transportation

UCS uses Michigan State Board of Education guidelines to determine student eligibility for bus transportation, based on the distance from home to school, as well as safety conditions for walkers. Ask the principal if your neighborhood or street is on a district busing route. Routes may be altered early in the school year to accommodate enrollment changes. **Bus transportation is a privilege. Students may be denied this privilege for misconduct on a bus or at a bus stop.**

Students are dropped off and picked up in designated bus lanes near the school entrance.

Parents who drive their children to school must keep bus and fire lanes free by parking or standing only in designated areas.

Students should be at their assigned bus stops approximately five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. **For the first two weeks of school, kindergarten and first grade students riding the bus should wear a tag indicating their name, address and bus number.**

Student conduct while riding to and from school should be an extension of good classroom behavior. Whether at the bus stop or on the bus traveling to and from school or on an off-site field trip, students are expected to behave appropriately.

Bus Guidelines:

- Obey the bus driver, show respect to the bus driver and fellow passengers
- Remain seated at all times
- Eating, drinking and gum chewing are not allowed
- Keep bodies and other objects to themselves and inside the bus

- Hold all carry-on items, such as backpacks, musical instruments, etc. in your lap
- Board and exit the bus in an orderly manner at assigned bus stop
- Name calling, vulgarity, profanity, abusive or derogatory comments or gestures, bullying, harassment, hate speech or threats of violence are prohibited
- Use of electronic communication devices, (cell phones, cameras and pagers) is not permitted
- No preferential seat assignments – although bus driver or administrator may assign seats

Only students eligible for transportation may ride home with another student. The students must have a permission note from both sets of parents and signed by the principal. Seating space is reserved for assigned riders.

Call the UCS Transportation Department at 586.797.7100 with busing questions or comments.

Lunchtime

Full-day students cannot leave school during the lunch period without advance permission.

Your child can purchase a complete lunch that meets government nutritional standards from the school cafeteria. The monthly menu is posted at school and on the district cable channels and Web site. Lunch orders are taken one day in advance. Students can also bring a lunch and purchase milk.

A nutritious, reasonably priced breakfast is also available at some schools. Check with your school for more information.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

Families who cannot afford to buy breakfasts or lunches may be eligible for the federal free and reduced price meals program. Applications for the program are available by request in the school office or at www.lunchapp.com. Applications take about two weeks to process.

Lunch Pre-Pay

A computerized register system that eliminates the

need for students to bring cash daily to purchase lunch is utilized at all UCS elementary schools. The system allows parents to deposit funds into their child's lunch account and will automatically deduct funds as the child purchases meals. It enables parents to pre-pay an amount into an individual account for their child with cash, by check or online at sendmoneytoschool.com. (There is a service fee for online pre-pay). The system also allows parents to monitor account activity and all accounts are confidential. Students who qualify for federally-assisted meal benefits also have computerized accounts. For more details, go to www.uticak12.org and click on Food Service.

Lunchroom Expectations

Elementary school lunchrooms are supervised by adults. Students are expected to:

- Eat quietly and use good table manners
- Remain seated until dismissed by an adult supervisor
- Place all trash and recyclable items in proper containers
- Leave the table in a clean condition for other students
- Show respect for others

Glass containers and knives are not allowed. Students are not permitted to take food or beverages outside the lunchroom.

Parents will be notified if certain foods cannot be brought to school because of other students' allergies or health concerns.

Wellness

UCS is committed to providing a healthy school environment that enhances student learning and development of lifelong wellness practices. Our child nutrition program complies with federal, state and local requirements and food safety standards.

The district will promote nutrition education, offer physical education activities and encourage students to make healthy food and beverage choices. Nutrient density and portion size will be considered before permitting an item to be sold to students during the

school day.

Playground Guidelines

Fresh air and exercise are proven to enhance a child's physical and educational growth.

Recess is an important part of the Utica Community Schools elementary program and is supervised by authorized school personnel. A doctor's note is required to excuse a student from recess for more than two days. Your child should come to school dressed for outdoor play, even in the winter months.

During especially inclement or bitterly cold weather, recess will be held indoors.

Proper Attire

Good hygiene and appropriate dress and grooming are important in creating a positive school environment.

Help your child dress appropriately by avoiding:

- Beachwear, short skirts and shorts, tight clothing without proper coverage, clothing that exposes undergarments, shoulders and/or midsection (longer-length shorts/skirts are acceptable)
- Outerwear, such as coats and hats, worn as indoor attire
- Clothing that is tattered or indecent, bears derogatory or disrespectful lettering or symbols or is designed to promote illegal substances or activities
- Clothing and accessories that, by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark or other attributes, give the impression of gang membership
- Inappropriate footwear – footwear should be age-appropriate, comfortable, safe and suitable for indoor or outdoor play

School Property

Your child is responsible for the care and safekeeping of all textbooks and related learning materials provided by UCS. Parents will be charged for items that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear and tear.

Your child's personal school belongings should be labeled with his or her name. Money, other than what may be needed for lunch or another specific purpose, should not be brought to school. Parents are reminded that the lunch pre-pay program is available.

Creating a Winning Team

One key to helping your child receive a quality education is a strong partnership between home and school based on two-way communication, cooperation and trust. As your child's first teacher, you have tremendous influence over his or her intellectual growth and learning achievements. Sharing your insights about your child's strengths and weaknesses, interests, accomplishments and family traditions with teachers can bridge the educational gap between home and school. Get to know the principal, teachers and staff who work with your child each day and take part in school events and activities whenever possible.

Staying in Touch

Utica Community Schools is committed to sharing important news specific to your child's progress, as well as the school and district in general, through:

- Student progress reports and report cards
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Notes or telephone calls from teachers
- Email correspondence between teacher and parent, which can be arranged through a prior written agreement with the teacher
- School and district newsletters
- An automated phone calling/email system that may be used to notify parents about school closings, events and activities
- Various types of digital communication
- Board of Education meetings generally held the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Joan C. Sargent Instructional Resource Center, 14201 Canal Road in Sterling Heights
- Utica Community Schools TV on channels 15 (Comcast) or 22 (WOW)
- The district Web site www.uticak12.org
- Local media coverage

PowerSchool Online Parent Portal

Parents/guardians of upper elementary students can view their child's progress online using the Parent Portal in PowerSchool, the UCS student information system for attendance, grades, etc. Contact the school for directions on how to access your child's information.

Parental Involvement in Education

The involvement of parents and community members is an essential component to nurture students and ensure their success. Utica Community Schools will make every effort to invite and consider parent and community input to ensure the success of our students. Parent involvement in Title I schools will be governed by Rules and Regulations #5510 Title I Parent Involvement.

Utica Community Schools shall maintain Web access to the following:

- Annual Report Information
- Individual School Web sites and School Newsletters
- District Newsletter – *Focus for the Community*
- Parent/Student Handbooks (Elementary, Junior High, Senior High)

Utica Community Schools shall also provide to parents online or print versions of the following:

- District Newsletter – *Focus for the Community*
- School Newsletters
- Parent/Student Handbooks (Elementary, Junior High, Senior High)

Utica Community Schools provides information for parents regarding school activities and district updates on community access cable television

Utica Community Schools shall coordinate and integrate opportunities for parental involvement with:

- Academic Support Programs
- Academic Competitions

Utica Community Schools shall assess parent involvement by including questions on the Community Survey. The information from the survey will be used to develop strategies to improve parental involvement.

Parents can be involved in school activities by:

- Volunteering at the school
- Helping their children with homework
- Attending open houses
- Attending parent/teacher conferences
- Joining a parent organization

Utica Community Schools will do the following to build the capacity for strong parental involvement in our schools:

- Help parents understand the state's academic content standards, academic achievement standards, state and local assessments and the requirements of Title I, Part A
- Make available opportunities for parents to monitor their children's progress and work with educators
- Make available materials and resources for parents to help them work with their children to improve their children's academic achievement
- Educate administrators and staff members on how to reach out to and communicate and work with parents as equal partners
- Coordinate parental involvement activities with state and federally funded programs available to students
- Ensure that information related to school and parent programs is sent to parents in an understandable and uniform format, including an alternative format, upon request

Media Release

Students may sometimes be interviewed by local news media reporting on the district's instructional programs. Utica Community Schools Board of Education policy governs media relations that affect students. News media representatives are required to report to the Office of School – Community Relations or the building principal for prior approval before interviewing students involved in instructional programs.

Parents/guardians are asked to complete a media release form giving Utica Community Schools and the news media permission to interview/photograph their child in connection with school activities. The signed form is kept in the school office and remains valid as long as a student is enrolled in the district. If at any time a parent chooses to exclude a student from participating

in media interviews, the parent must notify the principal in writing.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents/legal guardians are invited to meet with teachers to discuss student progress during scheduled conference days in the fall and spring. Parents/legal guardians are also encouraged to call the teacher at school or schedule a conference if special issues need to be discussed. Email correspondence between teacher and parent can also be arranged through a prior written arrangement with the teacher. School personnel are willing to work with parents to resolve any situation affecting a student's education.

Volunteer Opportunities

You can volunteer your time and talents through the elementary school parent group or by helping in your child's classroom or the school's media center. The principal of your child's school can help you get involved.

Background Check for Volunteers

To protect students' health, safety and welfare, every volunteer must have a Volunteer Request form (available from the teacher or school office) on file well in advance of volunteering at school or school-related events. UCS conducts criminal background checks on volunteers through the Michigan State Police. **All volunteers are required to sign in and out at the school office and obtain a badge every time they enter the building.**

Curriculum Review and Classroom Visitation

The Board of Education has always recognized and respected the rights of parents and legal guardians to determine and direct the care, teaching and education of their children.

The Board welcomes and encourages the involvement of parents/guardians in the schools and is committed to a partnership to develop each student's intellectual capability and skills in a safe and positive environment.

Parents/guardians of enrolled students may, upon request, review curriculum, textbooks and other teaching

materials. They may also visit a classroom to observe instructional activities of their student, if the student is enrolled and present. Instructional activities do not include testing. Contact your principal to make a request, schedule a visit and sign appropriate paperwork.

Health Education Disclosure

According to Public Act 226 of 1977, parents/legal guardians have the right to review materials to be used in courses in which reproductive health is taught. They have the right to excuse, without penalty, their son/daughter from participation in this class or course of instruction in reproductive health and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) instruction. AIDS instruction is included in the seventh and ninth/tenth grade health classes.

Setting the Stage for Success

Success Skills

Utica Community Schools is dedicated to helping students grow and succeed personally, as well as academically. One way is to emphasize the Success Skills (below), designed to help students in kindergarten through high school build character and self-esteem:

- Show **respect** by treating others as they want to be treated
- Show **responsibility** by being accountable for what they say and do
- Demonstrate **positive communication** by being considerate with their words and actions
- Do their **personal best** by putting forth their best effort
- Show **integrity** by being truthful and trustworthy

Fostering Positive Choices

You can help your child make positive lifestyle choices by:

- Understanding children's developmental stages so

you can put his or her behaviors into the proper perspective

- Offering encouragement that builds confidence and self-esteem; provide opportunities for your child to make age-appropriate decisions and praise his/her accomplishments
- Listening with undivided attention to both what your child says and how he or she is feeling
- Helping your child recognize and accept feelings such as happiness, anger or frustration and demonstrating how to constructively talk about them
- Teaching your child good communication skills, including honesty, respect, clear language, good timing, trust and consistency
- Setting clear expectations and consequences with consistent follow through.
- Helping your child to learn responsibility by experiencing the results of his/her own decisions

Let your child know that decisions do not always work out as planned by talking about your own decision-making experiences, discussing both the positive and negative outcomes and sharing the lessons you learned.

Help Your Child Learn

Helping your child develop good study habits and providing the proper tools and work environment are vital to academic success. You can help your child develop good, consistent study skills by:

- Setting high expectations for learning and behavior
- Establishing and enforcing study rules and routines
- Creating a quiet, comfortable place for reading and studying
- Providing materials such as a dictionary, thesaurus, encyclopedia and school supplies
- Asking about schoolwork and reviewing homework assignments
- Making him or her responsible for knowing what the assignment is, bringing home the textbooks and school materials necessary to complete work, understanding the teacher's directions, concentrating during study time, asking for signatures on notes or assignments that must be returned to school, completing all

assignments, even if your child thinks they are not important, reading to your child – or having your child read to you – each day and letting him or her see you reading

- Helping your child select fiction and non-fiction books from the library or bookstore
- Encouraging your child to reflect and to write about what he or she has read or learned

Help Your Child Stay Healthy

Inform the School of Any Serious Health Concerns

The parents of a student with a serious health concern, such as diabetes or a life-threatening allergy, must inform the school of the condition and make certain the teacher(s) and principal know how to quickly respond to the child's needs.

Health Services

UCS helps students remain physically and medically fit for education through routine no-cost health services such as:

- An in-school health room for minor sicknesses and/or injuries
- Instruction about nutrition, drug abuse prevention and other health-related topics
- Vision and hearing tests and referrals through the Macomb County Health Department

Medication

Students should not take medication at school unless it is absolutely necessary. Parents/guardians must file an Authorization for Medication form with the school office in order for students to receive over-the-counter or prescription medication in school. The form can be obtained in the principal's office and must be signed by the parent/guardian and the child's doctor. All medicines must be in their original containers and will be kept in the office.

Preventing Illness

The best way to prevent illness is to encourage healthy habits such as:

- **Hand Washing** – dirty hands are a primary cause of infection. Children should always wash their

hands before eating and after using the bathroom or wiping their nose. Make sure your child thoroughly washes all surfaces of his or her hands vigorously with soap and water, rinses them well and dries them with a paper towel.

- **Good Nutrition** – eating nutritious food, especially at breakfast, helps children concentrate.
- **Rest and Sleep** – most children need at least eight hours of sleep each night.
- **Exercise** – physical fitness is important to good health. Children can get their exercise through outdoor play, organized sports or family activities.
- **Good Hygiene** – children are more comfortable and have a better attitude about themselves and their schoolwork when they are clean and neatly groomed. Check your child's appearance before he or she walks out the door.

Recuperating at Home

When is your child too sick to attend school? The following guidelines, along with the advice of your family doctor, will help you decide when your child should stay home:

- **Cold and/or cough** – a child with deep mucus that causes a cough and heavy nose drainage cannot function at school.
- **Fever** – fever is a warning that something is wrong. A child should remain at home for 24 hours after the fever is gone.
- **Rash** – a rash, spots or blotches on the skin can be the first sign of many illnesses. Keep your child home until your doctor says it is safe to return.
- **Stomach Ache/Upset** – a child who is vomiting or has diarrhea should be kept at home.
- **Head Lice** – a child with head lice must remain at home until treatment is complete and school officials confirm he or she is free of lice. Check your child's head before school begins in the fall and routinely during the school year or if he or she complains of an itchy scalp. Look around your child's ears and back of the neck for nits, which are tiny, white, oval-shaped lice eggs

that are attached to the hair near the scalp. Nits may look like dandruff or scalp flakes, but nits do not move and are difficult to dislodge.

Notify the school office immediately if your child has head lice. Begin treatment immediately by contacting your doctor or purchasing over-the-counter medication from the drug store. To prevent spreading head lice, wash all infested garments, hair accessories, bedding and other surfaces with hot water and disinfectant. You must sign your child in at the office when he or she is returning to school after treatment for head lice.

Accident Care

Any student injured during school hours or while participating in school-sponsored activities or athletics, must report the injury to an instructor and/or the office immediately. An accident report is filled out and parents are notified when necessary.

If the injury requires professional medical attention, parents will be asked to pick up their child at school or at a medical facility. If a student must be transported by ambulance to a hospital, a school official will accompany him or her until a parent appears at the hospital. The hospital must have prior parent/guardian approval before treating a minor.

Concussion Awareness

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a fall, bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. A fact sheet about the symptoms and what to do if a concussion is suspected appears on the district Web site www.uticak12.org. Contact your building principal if further information is needed.

Student Insurance

Utica Community Schools provides a free basic accident insurance policy for students that covers them at school and while participating in school-sponsored events and traveling to and from school.

A student must report any accident to the school office immediately. To collect benefits, a parent or guardian

must complete a claim form. Only expenses not covered by family, employer or group insurance will be considered. Accident victims may be required to pay a deductible. The benefit period covers 52 weeks from the date of injury.

School Safety and Security

UCS has comprehensive safety and security plans in place for the well-being of students. These plans include teaching and practicing with students the appropriate steps to take should emergency situations occur. Each school holds fire, take-cover, security and bus evacuation drills during the school year.

Discipline

This section of the handbook deals with discipline policies and acceptable use of technology.

Not every situation is covered; however, students are expected to use reasonable judgment and avoid activities that might be viewed as prohibited by school officials. Student safety and welfare depends on compliance with these policies, which apply while students are in school, going to or from school or at any school activity on or off campus, such as off-site learning and student travel.

The district intends to keep its schools safe for students and staff. Please help in this effort by speaking with your child about the importance of reporting to a responsible adult any incident that he or she feels could be dangerous or threatening to themselves or others.

Due Process

The constitutional rights of individuals assure the protection of the due process of law. Therefore, the following constitutional and legally sound procedures have been adopted by the Board of Education. Based on state and federal laws governing education, principals in Utica Community Schools are delegated the authority to temporarily separate or suspend a student from school. In such actions, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. A student shall be fully informed of the charges brought against him/her including the rationale for the action and the conditions of time and termination.

2. The parents shall be notified, as soon as possible by telephone or personal contact, if the student is to be suspended from school. Written notification of such contact shall be made in the student's discipline file.
3. Verbal notification shall be followed by written communication to the parent/guardian. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the student's discipline file.
4. Appeal procedures available to parents include:
 - a. As a first step, parents may request a conference with the principal within the period of suspension. The principal shall affirm, modify or reverse disciplinary action within two school days of the conference date.
 - b. Within five school days from the principal's decision, the parent(s) may appeal such a decision to the Superintendent of Schools or a designee

The Superintendent

shall affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the principal within three school days from hearing the appeal. The Superintendent's decision is final.

- c. A recommendation for permanent expulsion by the Superintendent may be appealed to the Board of Education.

Disciplinary action may vary depending upon the issues. The discipline procedures used to deal with rule infractions include detention, suspension and expulsion.

The Board of Education prohibits corporal punishment as an acceptable method of disciplining students. A school employee, volunteer or contractor may use reasonable force upon a pupil as necessary to maintain order and control in a school or school-related setting for the purpose of providing an environment conducive to safety and learning.

Unacceptable Behaviors

A student's right to a public education carries with it a responsibility to know and observe school rules. These rules help minimize distractions which disrupt learning, and help to maintain a safe learning environment. Board of Education policies and, in some instances, state law, establish behavioral expectations and outline consequences of behavioral infractions. While all students have rights and privileges, all are expected to act in a reasonable manner at all times, going to and from school

and during all school activities.

Behaviors that are distracting or disruptive to the learning environment, or cause property or physical damage, may lead to disciplinary action. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Malicious destruction or theft of school property, including books, supplies and furniture; littering or marking on furniture, walls, lockers, texts, etc.; or tampering with fire alarms and extinguishers. Students will be assessed repair or replacement costs for damaged or lost textbooks. Any student responsible for damage or destruction of school property will be expected to pay for it. Other disciplinary action may be taken to ensure school facilities are properly maintained.
2. Smoking or possessing tobacco in any form by anyone under age 18, per state law. This is in effect at school-related activities, on school property and on school buses 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additionally, adults are not permitted to use tobacco products at any time in any building, facility or bus owned or operated by Utica Community Schools.
3. Possession or use of electronic cigarettes, hookah pens or other similar devices.
4. Gambling; participating in games of chance or skill for money or profit; coercion, blackmail and extortion.
5. Name calling, intimidation, bullying, profanity, vulgarity, “hate” speech, abusive or derogatory comments or gestures, harassment or threats of violence.
6. Planning to fight, harassment, fighting (which can be pushing, punching or wrestling) or physically assaulting another student or employee.
7. Defiant behaviors, ignoring rules or authority.
8. Physical contact and displays of public affection such as hugging and kissing.
9. Disruptive behaviors that interrupt the learning process or endanger the safety or health of others.
10. Possession or use of matches, lighters, firecrackers, stink or smoke bombs, explosives, knives, weapons or look-alike weapons or any object which might be used to inflict bodily harm.
11. Making a bomb threat.
12. Possession or use of intoxicants, narcotics,

depressants, stimulants, look-alike drugs or illegal substances on school property or at school activities.

13. Loitering in school buildings or on school grounds without authorization.
14. Students are not permitted to possess or use skateboards, roller blades, radios, cameras, laser pens, hand-held electronic games, MP3 players, iPods, tape recorders/players, video recorders/players, CD players or similar items or devices at school without administrative permission. These items will be confiscated and must be picked up by parents. If valuable items must be brought to school, they are to be checked in at the office. Utica Community Schools will not be responsible for theft, loss or damage to any valuables brought to school.
15. Possession or use of cell phones or other electronic communications devices (ECDs) by elementary students is prohibited at any time while in school or in a district vehicle unless permission has been given by an administrator – this includes text messaging and camera usage.
16. Selling or buying any item from another student in school, except as authorized by the principal or for sale by the student store.
17. Leaving school or grounds without proper authorization.
18. Committing theft, forgery, cheating or plagiarism.
19. Interfering with teachers or other school officials in the performance of their duties.

Detention

A teacher or principal has the right to assign detention for disciplinary reasons. Parents will be informed if their child has detention. A student may be assigned detention before or after school, during lunch or during recess. Students assigned to detention must bring study materials and work silently. If detention occurs during the lunch period, the student will forego recess. A student who fails to report to detention and/or fails to adhere to the rules may be subject to a school suspension, but must also complete the assigned detention time.

Suspension

School suspensions will be administered by the principal or a delegated assistant. Suspensions may vary from one

to ten days depending on the severity or frequency of the violation.

When a suspension is necessary, the student's parents/guardians will be notified. Suspended students are not allowed on school district property or admitted to any school function.

Violation may result in a trespassing charge. Severity or frequency of violations is taken into consideration in determining the duration of the suspension.

Expulsion

Superintendent expulsion:

A Superintendent expulsion is an expulsion for up to 180 school days. The student is excluded from all school district activities. The decision of the Superintendent is final. There is no further appeal. The conditions for returning to school are outlined in the Superintendent's decision regarding expulsion. Unless restricted by law, the Superintendent can place any conditions deemed in the best interests of the school and/or school district.

Board of Education expulsion:

A Board of Education expulsion is defined as a permanent expulsion. The student is excluded from all school district activities. The decision of the Board is final and there is no further appeal. A student who is permanently expelled has the opportunity to apply for reinstatement at designated times depending on grade level and offense.

Transfer of Disciplinary Records

Michigan law requires school districts to record in the student's permanent record (CA60) permanent expulsions for violations of Michigan statutes prohibiting possession of a dangerous weapon, arson or criminal sexual conduct (380.1311(3); UCS Policy 5105). The same is required for students permanently expelled for physical assault against an adult or verbal assault or bomb threat (MCL 380.1311a(3); UCS Policies 5100 and 5105). Discipline recorded in the CA60 will be transferred to any private or public school to which a student is transferring and in which he/she is enrolling. Other suspensions and expulsions are recorded in the student disciplinary record and are available to the next school if a student transfers/moves.

Acceptable Use of Technology

Utica Community Schools encourages and strongly promotes the use of technology in the educational community. To ensure students, staff and parents can take full advantage of the technologies available, all use of technology in the school district must have proper authorization and adhere to district policy. All use of technology must be in support of, and consistent with, the purposes and stated goals of the school district.

Technology guidelines:

- Students shall not use technology unless authorized by appropriate school personnel.
- Only software legally owned by the district and authorized by a UCS administrator may be put on district computers.
- Students shall not use district technology for on-line purchasing.
- Illegal/inappropriate activities of any kind are forbidden.
- Nothing will be placed on a building web page without prior approval of the building principal or the district administrator. Web pages representing Utica Community Schools will only be placed on district authorized web servers.
- Establishment of web pages and/or distance learning activities must have an educational/management purpose related to an assignment, project, job or function that meets UCS goals.

Technology users will:

- Comply with district policies, rules and regulations.
- Use networks and technology in support of education, consistent with the goals of the district.
- Obey all copyright laws.
- Report to the building administrator or teacher any misuse of networks and technology.

Technology users will not:

- Tamper with computer or network components in a way that will make them either temporarily or permanently inoperable.
- Access or modify other accounts, data, files and/or passwords without authorization.
- Use district technology for commercial or for-profit purposes.
- Use district technology to obtain illegal copies of

software, printed materials or other materials to which they do not have ownership.

- Use district technology to send, receive, print or display messages that are inflammatory, harassing in nature, sexist, racist or otherwise inappropriate.
- Use district technology to distribute material that: violates the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act; jeopardizes the health and safety of students; is obscene, pornographic or libelous; causes disruption of school activities; plagiarizes the work of others; is a commercial advertisement; contains political lobbying or is not approved by the building administrator or web manager.

Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure

Sexual harassment of students by other students, or by employees of the Utica Community Schools District, is unlawful under both Michigan and Federal law and is contrary to the Board of Education's commitment to provide a stable learning environment. It is the Board's policy that all contact between students, teachers and other adult employees and others in the district be in keeping with respect for the individual student and be of a nature which does not make the student feel uncomfortable. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- unwelcome sexual advances
- subtle or overt pressure for sexual activity
- engaging in improper physical contact, such as patting or pinching, etc.
- making improper sexual comments, including sex-oriented kidding, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational learning environment
- the threat or suggestion that a student's education and/or advancement depends upon whether or not the student submits to sexual demands or tolerates such improper behavior

Reporting Concerns

Students who have concerns about any conduct or physical contact by a person employed by the district, by any fellow students or by any other person, should immediately report this concern to the building principal, to a counselor or to the Superintendent of Schools.

Students should also discuss their concerns with parents/guardians. Students are encouraged to report any conduct which makes them feel uncomfortable, is bothersome or is contrary to a stable learning environment. Any person who receives a complaint of conduct perceived to be sexual harassment should immediately report the concern to the building principal, Executive Administrator of Schools or Superintendent's designee.

Hazing

It is the goal of Utica Community Schools to promote an environment that fosters development of the self-worth and dignity of its students. Hazing activities are inherently hazardous and may place victims at risk of physical and/or emotional damage. Consequently, hazing in all of its various forms and practices is absolutely prohibited.

Hazing is defined as performing any act or coercing another, including the victim, to perform any act which endangers the physical safety of a student or employee, produces mental or physical discomfort, causes embarrassment or ridicule or degrades the student or employee, regardless of the willingness on the part of the student or employee to participate in any such activities. Appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken against students and/or employees who participate in hazing.

Bullying or Cyberbullying

In order to maintain a positive school atmosphere that fosters learning, promotes a safe school environment and develops the self-worth and dignity of its students, Utica Community Schools will not permit bullying behavior. Bullying in all of its forms and practices is absolutely prohibited.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against students who participate in bullying.

Bullying shall be defined as any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication, that is intended or that a reasonable person would know is likely to harm one (1) or more pupils either directly or indirectly by doing any of the following:

1. Substantially interfering with educational

opportunities, benefits, or programs of one or more pupils.

2. Adversely affecting the ability of a pupil to participate in or benefit from the school district or public school's educational programs or activities by placing the pupil in reasonable fear of physical harm or by causing substantial emotional distress.
3. Having an actual and substantial detrimental effect on a pupil's physical or mental health.
4. Causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying often occurs when a student is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students. Additional information is contained in Policy 5145 Anti-Bullying and can be found on the UCS Web site.

Student Smoking and Use of Tobacco

Smoking by students and adults is not allowed in school buildings, on school property or on school buses at any time (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Smoking is defined as:

- A student seen puffing on a lighted cigarette, cigar or using chewing tobacco.
- A student seen with a lighted or unlighted cigarette, cigar, etc.
- A student seen discarding a cigarette butt.
- A student acting as a "look-out."

1. First offense: One day suspension. Parents must be contacted and informed of the offense and the resultant disciplinary action.
2. Second offense: Two day suspension. A parent conference must be held before the student may re-enter school.
3. Third offense: Three or more day suspension. A parent conference must be held before the student may re-enter school.

District administrators are encouraged to notify the police when a student's violation of this policy may be a criminal offense.

Substance Abuse

Being under the influence, use or possession of alcohol,

illicit drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia (i.e. pipes, cigarette wrapping paper, roach clips, etc.), or a substance which is represented as a drug or look-alike drug on school property by students is prohibited. This prohibition includes extracurricular or school-related activities which take place both at and away from school. Students who violate this policy will receive the following:

1. First violation: 5 to 10-day suspension. The building administrator may reduce the suspension if the student seeks help through the school's substance abuse program or through an approved outside agency and follows their recommendations satisfactorily. Failure to complete the recommended program will result in the remainder of the suspension being imposed. A parent conference is required for re-admittance to school.
2. Second violation: 10-day suspension (no reduction). A parent conference is necessary for re-admittance to school.
3. Third violation: Immediate suspension pending further disposition. A recommendation for expulsion may be initiated through the Superintendent of Schools.

Note: Any student involved with the sale of illicit drugs, controlled substances and/or alcohol or possession of amounts that would reasonably indicate sales, may be automatically disciplined at the third violation level. In all cases, local police may be involved.

Student Gangs

Gangs and gang-related activities are prohibited on, and to and from, any premises owned or used by the district and at any district-related function. Gangs and gang-related activities are also prohibited to the extent they are related to or interfere, or threaten to interfere, with school or other district-related functions, even when they occur off school premises (for example, on the internet).

The term gang, as used in this policy, means a group of two or more persons whose purposes or activities include the commission of an illegal act(s) or a violation(s) of district policy, procedures or rules; or, the defense of its members against another gang or group of persons. District students are prohibited from engaging in gang or

gang-related activities, which include:

- Dressing or grooming in a manner which, in the reasonable judgment of a district administrator, teacher or student, communicates membership in or affiliation with a gang.
- Communicating, verbally or non-verbally (e.g., gestures, handshakes, tagging, etc.) in a manner which, in the reasonable judgment of a district administrator, teacher or student, conveys membership or affiliation with a gang.
- Committing an act(s) in furtherance of the interest of a gang or gang-related activity including, but not limited to: soliciting others for participation; membership or affiliation in any gang or gang-related activity; intimidating or threatening any person; or inciting any other person to use force, intimidation or threats.

Weapons, Arson, Criminal Sexual Conduct and Physical Assault of Employee

Students in possession of a dangerous weapon, or who commit arson or criminal sexual conduct* or if in the sixth grade or above who commit a physical assault against a school district employee, volunteer or contractor, on district grounds, in district buildings or at district or school-sponsored events, shall be permanently expelled from school and referred to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency system and the appropriate county department of social services or community mental health agency. The parent, legal guardian and/or student shall also be notified of the referral.

**Students should be aware that in Michigan, depending on the circumstances, it may be criminal sexual conduct to have consensual sex with anyone under the age of 16.*

Dangerous Weapon Defined

A dangerous weapon means a firearm (including a starter gun) or any device which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; any destructive device or any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, mine or similar device; a dagger, stiletto, knife with a blade over three (3) inches in length,

or pocket knife opened by a mechanical device; an iron bar or brass knuckles; or, any other weapon as set forth in 18 USC 921.

A student who possesses a dangerous weapon on school property must be expelled unless he/she can establish one of the following in a clear and convincing manner:

- The object or instrument possessed by the pupil was not possessed for use as a weapon, or for delivery to another person for use as a weapon.
- The weapon was not knowingly possessed by the pupil.
- The pupil did not know, or have reason to know, that the object or instrument possessed by the pupil constituted a dangerous weapon.
- The weapon was possessed by the pupil at the suggestion, direction, request or with the permission of school or police authorities.

The Board reserves the authority to permanently expel students.

Reinstatement

Students expelled for reasons covered in this policy may seek reinstatement. A Petition for Reinstatement must be completed in writing to the Board of Education through the Superintendent or designee. The final decision to reinstate is made by the Board.

- An individual who was in grade five or below at the time of expulsion and who has been expelled for possessing a firearm or threatening another person with a dangerous weapon shall not be reinstated before the expiration of 90 school days after the date of expulsion.
- An individual who was in grade five or below at the time of expulsion and who has been expelled for a reason other than possessing a firearm or threatening another person with a dangerous weapon shall not be reinstated before the expiration of 10 school days after the date of expulsion.
- An individual who was in grade six or above at the time of expulsion shall not be reinstated before the expiration of 180 school days after the date of expulsion.

Reference: Gun-Free School Act of 1994 as amended by PL 1103-382 and Michigan P.A. 250-1995.

Non-Discrimination Policy

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act, it is the policy of Utica Community Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, disability, height, weight or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any instructional opportunities, programs, services, job placement assistance, employment or in policies governing student conduct and attendance. Any person suspecting a discriminatory practice should contact the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312 or call 586-797-1000.

Grievance procedures for Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act, Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act:

Any person believing that the Utica Community Schools or any part of the school organization has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (2) Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, (3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (4) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, (5) Title II of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act, and the Persons With Disabilities Civil Rights Act may bring forward a complaint, which shall be referred to as a grievance to:

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312, phone 586.797.1000

The person who believes a valid basis for grievance exists shall discuss the grievance informally and on a

verbal basis with the building principal or the Executive Director of Human Resources, who shall in turn investigate the complaint and reply with an answer within five (5) business days.

If the complainant feels the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved, they may initiate formal procedures according to the following steps:

Step 1. A written statement of the grievance signed by the complainant shall be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources within five (5) business days of receipt of answers to the informal complaint. The Assistant Superintendent shall further investigate the matters of grievance and reply in writing to the complainant within five (5) business days.

Step 2. A complainant wishing to appeal the decision of the Assistant Superintendent of Human Services may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within five (5) business days after receipt of the Executive Director's response. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall meet with all parties involved, formulate a conclusion, and respond in writing to the complainant within ten (10) business days of this meeting.

The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, on request, will provide the complainant with a copy of the district's grievance procedure and investigate all complaints in accordance with this procedure.

A copy of each of the Acts and the regulations on which this notice is based may be found in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.