



# Elementary Handbook

2020-2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Utica Community Schools is committed to excellence for all students. This excellence means preparing them for success in both academics and their lives. High expectations and accountability will allow our students to recognize their full potential and excel in the many educational options available in Michigan's second largest school district.

The information in this handbook provides a framework for these expectations. While we begin this year in a remote and virtual setting, the policies and procedures listed in this handbook remain an important part of maintaining our district focus on student success.

The district's partnership with families strengthens our students' academic success. This handbook lists many of the important ways we can keep the lines of communication open throughout the entire year. Please read the information in this handbook carefully and share any concerns you may have immediately with your school staff.

We wish you and your student the best for a successful 2020-2021 school year.

Robert Ross, Ph.D.

President, Board of Education

Robert S. Monroe

Interim Superintendent

UCS Board of Education

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Mr. Robert S. Monroe  
Interim Superintendent

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## 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 the diversity and the wide range of abilities of our students. 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

Students who are new to Utica Community Schools should register at their elementary school as soon as possible as they become a district resident or are approved through Schools of Choice. To confirm the school your student will attend or to begin the enrollment process when school is not in session, call Pupil Services, 586.797.1120.

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

Utica Community Schools will request official records from your student's previous school. Class scheduling will be simplified if you bring your student's most recent report card or unofficial transcript when you register. Parents with children who have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) should also bring a copy to registration.

### 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. Parents of children in Kindergarten, seventh grade or new-to-the-district will also be asked to sign a release to allow or decline sharing immunization information with 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. 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.

Immunization records or a waiver are required prior to the first day of school. 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 Macomb County Health Department at 586.469.5372.

### Montessori Program

In addition to full-day kindergarten at all 25 of its elementary schools, Utica Community Schools offers a Montessori program at Messmore Elementary School.

### School Age Child Care (SACC)

School Age Child Care is available before and after school, offering quality child care and supervision. In remote learning, the service is available at select locations. The program 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 UCS Community Education for information and fees.

### 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

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member; a person serving on the Board of Education; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task; a person serving on an official committee or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks; or any other person as defined by law. 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 responsibilities.

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, if the records are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of a student's privacy rights. 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). To file a complaint, parents/guardians and eligible students may fill out the form located at <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint> and send it to: U.S. Department of Education, Student Privacy Policy Office, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20202-4605 or FERPA.Complaints@ed.gov.

### **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.

### **Media Release**

Students may 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.

### **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 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.

### **Learning Is Elementary**

Utica Community Schools is committed to academic excellence for all students. 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. Daily classroom instruction includes:

- Reading – Students receive literature and informational-based reading and writing instruction with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, fluency, phonemic awareness and study skills.
- Writing – Process writing is taught through the

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Writer’s Workshop framework. Students develop writing skills for different writing types: opinion/argument, informative/explanatory and narrative, and practice 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.

### **Science**

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
- 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 to guarantee technology is used only to support educational goals.

Emphasis is placed on developing learners through integration of the “4Cs” skills:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Collaboration

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- 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. Utica Community Schools continues to be recognized as one of the nation's Best Communities for Music Education.

### ***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 & Child Find Notice**

Utica Community Schools has a duty to locate, evaluate and identify any child residing in the District who qualifies for Special Education services. Children eligible for special education include those children with disabilities who have autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional/behavior disability, hearing impairment, mental disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, or developmental delay and who, because of such an impairment, need special education services. If you suspect your child has a disability please contact your school principal for additional information.

An integral part of the Special Services Department is to provide evaluation services for students suspected of having a disability. Free evaluation Child Find services are conducted by a team of educational specialists. Child Find seeks to identify and refer individuals with special needs, birth through age 25, for evaluation and possible special assistance. Any parent or caregiver who has a concern about their child's development may contact Child Find. There is no charge for evaluations or services.

### **For children under age three:**

If you have concerns about your child you may contact Child Find at the Macomb Intermediate School District at (586) 228-3321, or visit their website at <http://www.misd.net/ac/child-find.html>. Free evaluations are offered through Macomb Intermediate School District in the areas of:

- Audiology (hearing)
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychology

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- Speech and Language

### **For children over age three:**

Utica Community Schools provides evaluation and referral services for students between the ages of three to five years of age. These services are provided through the through the Utica Community Schools Early Assessment Center. Children suspected of delays in communication, cognition (thinking), socialization, and global development. If you have concerns about your child's educational development in school, please contact the Special Services Department at 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312, or (586) 797-1020.

### **Section 504 Notice**

Utica Community Schools has a duty to locate, evaluate and identify any child residing in the District who qualifies for Section 504 accommodations or services. Children eligible for Section 504 accommodations or services include those children who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. If you suspect your child has a disability and may require Section 504 accommodations, please contact your school principal for additional information.

### ***Standardized Testing***

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP): The State of Michigan summative assessments are designed to measure student growth effectively for today's students. English language arts and mathematics will be assessed in grades 3-6, science 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 and 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.

### **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. 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 and 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.

### **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.

### **Dress and Grooming**

Utica Community Schools takes pride in its students and encourages their development of good hygiene and grooming habits. Student dress and appearance that are

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neat and clean contribute to a positive school environment. Student appearance should not be disruptive to the educational process. Consider the following guidelines in selecting school clothing:

- Indecent, tattered or unsafe dress or footwear, or attire that calls undue attention to the wearer or has lettering or symbols that are disrespectful or derogatory are not allowed.
- Beach wear, low-cut tops, tank tops, sleeveless tops, muscle-shirts, see-through clothing, short skirts or shorts, tight clothing without proper coverage, pajamas and clothing exposing the shoulders or mid-section are not allowed.
- Knee length shorts and skirts are acceptable. Shoes must be worn.
- Outerwear – such as coats and hats – is not to be worn in school.
- Clothing that promotes illegal substances or drugs, illegal activities, violence, tobacco or alcohol is prohibited.
- Clothing or head coverings worn as group identifiers that promote a disruptive school climate are prohibited.
- Jewelry and accessories that may be deemed dangerous are prohibited.

### **Attendance**

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

### **Daily 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) or the breakfast program.

### **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 (SACC.)

### **Absences**

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. 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.

### **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



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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.

### **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 text or email. Depending on conditions, the calls/emails/texts 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 WJR-760 AM, WWJ-950 AM; on TV stations WJBK-2, WDIV-4 and WXYZ-7 and on the district's Website ([www.uticak12.org](http://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.

### **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 our 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, motorized scooters and skateboards 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. 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 ten 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 and keep all parts of the body inside the seating area.
- Eating, drinking and gum chewing are not allowed
- 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,

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harassment, hate speech or threats of violence are prohibited

- Use of electronic communication devices (such as cell phones or cameras) is not permitted
- There are 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.

### **Health and Wellness**

UCS is committed to providing a healthy school environment that promotes students' health, well-being and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Our child nutrition program complies with federal, state and local requirements and food safety standards. Please check the website for more details at <http://www.uticak12.org/foodandnutrition>.

### **Food Services**

A monthly menu is posted at the school and on the district cable channels and website at [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) menus can be found under the parent link. You can also find menus, allergen and nutrition information on [www.uticak12.nutrislice.com](http://www.uticak12.nutrislice.com) and available on the Utica Community Schools app.

#### *Breakfast*

A nutritious and affordable breakfast is available at all district schools. Pricing, service times and other breakfast information are available at [foodservice@uticak12.org](mailto:foodservice@uticak12.org).

#### *Lunch*

Elementary school lunchrooms are supervised by adults. Full-day students cannot leave school during the lunch period without advance permission. A monthly menu is posted at each school, on the district cable channels and at the district food service website, [foodservice@uticak12.org](mailto:foodservice@uticak12.org). Menus can be found under the parent link. All menu items meet government nutritional standards.

### *Elementary Lunchroom Expectations*

- Eat quietly, use good table manners and show respect for others
- Cooperate with cafeteria staff and lunchroom supervisors
- Remain seated until dismissed by the lunchroom supervisor
- Leave the table and floor in a clean condition for other students
- Deposit all trash and recyclable items in proper containers
- Return all trays and utensils to the designated area
- Do not bring glass containers into the building

Note: All applicable rules for unacceptable school behavior listed elsewhere in this handbook are in effect in the cafeteria.

### *Allergies*

Student safety is a priority for Utica Community Schools. If your student has any food allergies, please have your physician fill out the Michigan Department of Education Dietary Needs Form and return it to the school office or food service office. We are happy to work with parents and students to help accommodate your needs. For questions about food allergies and menu selections please call our office at 586-797-1180.

### *Free and Reduced Price Meals*

Families may be eligible for the federal free or reduced price meals program. For confidential and timely access to benefits, families may apply for the program online at <http://www.lunchapp.com>, or a hard copy application is available at the school office, which may take about two weeks for processing. Students are responsible for all meal charges until their applications are approved. All meals consist of five components: grain, meat/meat alternate, fruit, vegetable and milk. Students must take a minimum of three items, with one being at least ½ cup fruit or vegetable, for the meal to qualify under the free and reduced provision.

### *Meal Pre-Pay*

Parents can utilize the cafeteria's automated pre-pay

## Sending a Sick Child Home from School or if a Student has been Sick at Home

Student presents with the following or has had the following symptoms:

Fever >100.4

Cough, Shortness of Breath, Difficulty Breathing, Sore Throat, Congestion or Runny Nose

Chills, Muscle/Body Aches, Headache or Fatigue

Nausea/ Vomiting/ Diarrhea

New Loss of Taste or Smell



To Return to School:

1.) Student must remain out 10 days from first symptoms **AND** be at least 24 hours fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND** have improving symptoms

**--OR--**

2.) Provide a physician's letter and/or a negative result from a COVID-19 test (rapid test results cannot be accepted)

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system. It enables parents to pre-pay an amount into an individual account for their child with cash, by check or online at <http://www.sendmoneytoschool.com>. (There is a service fee for online pre-pay.) The student may then deduct meal purchases from the account with a personal ID number. The system also allows parents to monitor account activity. All accounts are confidential. Students eligible for the free or reduced-price meal program can also access their accounts through the automated system.

Should a student's meal account activity create a negative balance, credit for up to five meals will be issued to allow time for families to fund their student's meal account. Prompt repayment is expected. A student whose account remains negative will have restricted purchasing privileges and will be offered a regular, alternate meal. The student with a zero or negative account balance will not be allowed to make any a la carte or beverage purchases. Please check the website for more details.

### **Recess 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 appropriately dressed for outdoor play, even in the winter months.

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

### **Help Your Child Stay Healthy**

#### ***Inform the School of Any Serious Health Concerns***

For any health conditions that may require medications at home or at school, require dietary accommodations or limit activity, please have your physician complete a UCS Health Care Plan annually before the start of the school year. These forms are available on the UCS website at <http://www.uticak12.org/healthforms>.

#### ***Health Services***

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

- 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.

Utica Community Schools will acquire or purchase and maintain at least two functioning epinephrine auto-injectors for and at each school building it operates.

### **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.

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## ***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 without the use of medication.
- Rash – a rash, spots or blotches on the skin can be the first sign of many illnesses. Rashes require a physician release stating they are not contagious.
- Stomach Ache/Upset – a child who is vomiting or has diarrhea should be kept at home and may return 24 hours after the symptoms are gone.
- 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 website <http://www.uticak12.org> under the forms section of the athletics tab. 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.

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.

## ***Advance Notification of Pesticide Application***

Utica Community Schools provides advance notice to parents in the event that a pesticide is being applied for the purpose of preventing or managing weeds or common indoor or outdoor pests, such as ants. The notice will include the area being treated, date of application, purpose and contact information. The notice will be placed on the entrance of the school being treated and the front page of the building's website.

Parents can also contact their school at any time to review historical information regarding the school's pest management program and records. Parents also

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can request a first-class mailing for a three-day advance notification of applications by contacting their school principal. Parents can also contact their school at any time to review historical information regarding the school's pest management program and records

### **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/text system that may be used to notify parents about school closings, events and activities
- School and district social media pages
- Board of Education meetings, generally held the second and fourth Monday of the month at the Joan C. Sergent Instructional Resource Center, 14201 Canal Road in Sterling Heights
- UCS-TV cable stations 22 (Comcast) and 15 (WOW)
- The district Website at [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org)

- Local media coverage

### ***PowerSchool Online/Unified Classroom 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 Websites and School Newsletters
- District Newsletter – Focus for the Community
- 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

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 contact, 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

### ***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. 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 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.

### ***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

praise his/her accomplishments

- Listening with undivided attention to both what your child says and how he/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.

## **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

## **School Safety and Security**

Utica Community Schools maintains a safe and secure environment. All doors to all UCS school buildings are locked. Designated entrances are monitored by cameras. All visitors including parents, must provide identification to office personnel before being buzzed into the building and proceeding to the office to sign in 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.

### **Weapons on School Property, in School Settings, in School Vehicles or at School-Sponsored Events**

UCS prohibits any person from possessing, storing, making or using a weapon in any setting that is under the control and supervision of the Utica Community Schools including, but not limited to, property leased, owned or contracted for by UCS, a school-sponsored event, or in a UCS-owned vehicle.

For purposes of this policy, the term "weapon" means any object which, in the manner in which it is used, is intended



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to be used, or is represented, is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm or property damage, as well as endangering the health and safety of persons. Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type, including spring, air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded) that will expel a BB, pellet, or paint balls, knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, and explosives or any other weapon described in 18 U.S.C. § 921.

This prohibition applies regardless of whether the person is otherwise authorized by law to possess the weapon in non-school settings, including if the person holds a concealed weapons permit.

The following are exceptions to this policy.

- A. weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel;
- B. items approved by a principal as part of a class or individual project or presentation under adult supervision, if used for the purpose of and in the manner approved (working firearms and ammunition shall never be approved);
- C. theatrical props used in appropriate settings;
- D. starter pistols used in appropriate sporting events;
- E. instruments or equipment as required by district operations,
- F. including school or district security.

Persons who knowingly violate this policy may be referred to law enforcement. Additional information is contained in Policy 6120 and can be found on the USC website.

## **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 depend 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. In accordance with district staff and state and federal laws governing schools, school administrators and staff in Utica Community Schools, when considering student discipline, will first consider restorative practices to remediate such offenses such as interpersonal conflicts, bullying, verbal and physical conflicts, theft, damage to property, class disruption, and harassment and cyberbullying. Restorative practices are practices that emphasize repairing the harm to the victim and the school community caused by the student's misconduct. Unless otherwise provided under the Revised School Code or the Policies adopted by the Board of Education, where required to do so, restorative practices will be considered in addition to suspension or expulsion.

Students who are eligible for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") or under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall have the district's discipline policies applied in a manner consistent with their rights under federal and state law.

## **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. Your child is responsible for the care and safekeeping of

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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. 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, vaping paraphernalia, 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.

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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 his/her designee. Short-term 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.

### ***Principal Suspension:***

A suspension is defined as an exclusion of a student from school and school district activities for disciplinary reasons by a principal for a period of ten school days or less. Such a suspension may be made pending an investigation of a student's conduct and recommendation of other disciplinary penalties. If a principal believes a suspension beyond ten school days is appropriate for the offense, the principal may make that recommendation in writing to the Superintendent who may exercise his/her discretion to grant or deny the principal's recommendation.

### ***Superintendent Suspension:***

A suspension can also be defined as an exclusion from school by the Superintendent for disciplinary reasons for a period of up to 180 school days.

Michigan Revised School Code Suspension. A suspension under Section 1310d of the Revised School Code means to exclude a pupil from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of fewer than 60 days. This definition applies to offenses under Sections 1310 (grade 6 or above physical assault against a pupil); 1311(1) (gross misdemeanor or persistent disobedience); 1311(2)(possession of dangerous weapons, arson and criminal sexual conduct); or 1311a (grade 6 or above physical assault against an employee, volunteer, or contractor; verbal assault, or bomb threat) of the Revised School Code.

## **Expulsion**

### ***Superintendent expulsion:***

A superintendent expulsion is an expulsion for up to 180 school days from school by the Superintendent for disciplinary reasons. 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.

### ***Michigan Revised School Code Expulsion:***

An expulsion under Section 1310d of the Revised School Code means to exclude a pupil from school for disciplinary reasons for a period of 60 or more school days. This definition applies to offenses under Sections 1310 (grade 6 or above physical assault against a pupil); 1311(1) (gross misdemeanor or persistent disobedience); 1311(2) (possession of dangerous weapons, arson and criminal sexual conduct); or 1311a (grade 6 or above physical assault against an employee, volunteer, or contractor; verbal assault, or bomb threat) of the Revised School Code.

## **Due Process**

The constitutional rights of individuals assure the protection of the due process of law. Therefore, the following constitutional and legally sound procedures are implemented by the district. 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. A student shall be also given the

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opportunity to discuss the events which occasioned the suspension/expulsion.

2. The parents or guardians shall be notified, as soon as possible by telephone or personal contact if the student is to be suspended from school. If the student is to be suspended for more than five (5) school days, the parents or guardians shall be notified of their right to appeal to the Superintendent. Written notification of such contact shall be placed in the student's discipline file.
3. Verbal notification shall be followed by written communication to the parents/guardians. A copy of the letter shall be placed in the student's discipline file.
4. Appeal procedures available to parents or guardians 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 (5) school days from the principal's decision and for suspensions for more than five (5) school days or a recommendation for expulsion, the parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal such a decision to the Superintendent of Schools or a designee.
  - c. The Superintendent shall affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the principal within three school days from hearing the appeal.
  - d. The Superintendent's decision is final.
5. 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. Michigan law requires that, with certain exceptions, there

is a rebuttable presumption that suspension or expulsion is not justified and requires schools to consider other factors and options before suspending or expelling a student. The Utica Community Schools will apply its discipline policies and procedures consistent with the requirements of Michigan law.

The Board of Education prohibits corporal punishment as an acceptable method of disciplining students. A school employee, volunteer or contractor may use reasonable physical 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.

### **Transfer of Disciplinary Records**

Michigan law requires school districts to record in the student's permanent record (CA-60) 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 CA-60 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.

### **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 district'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

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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 Elementary Curriculum and School 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, without regard to its subject matter.

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 Website.

### **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 all times.

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.

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**

The following behaviors, as defined under state law, are subject to permanent expulsion from all public schools in the State of Michigan:

1. Possession of a dangerous weapon\*\*;
2. Arson;
3. Criminal Sexual Conduct;

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4. Physical Assault at school by a student grade 6 or above against an employee, volunteer or contractor of the school

\*\*Michigan law requires the district to permanently expel a student for possession of a dangerous weapon at school unless there is clear and convincing evidence of one of the following:

1. The student did not possess the object for use as a weapon or for delivery to another person for use as a weapon.
2. The student did not knowingly possess the weapon.
3. The student did not know or have reason to know that the object constituted a dangerous weapon.
4. The student possessed the weapon at the suggestion, request or direction, or with the express permission of the school or police.

There is a rebuttable presumption that permanent expulsion is not justified for possession of a dangerous weapon other than possession of a firearm (as defined by 18 USC §921) in weapon free school zone if both of the following are met:

1. The Board determines in writing that at least 1 of the factors listed above has been established in a clear and convincing manner; and
1. The student has no history of suspension or expulsion.

Students permanently expelled as is permissible under UCS Policy and Michigan law, shall be referred to the local police agency and the appropriate county department of social services or community mental health agency. The parent or legal guardian and student shall also be notified of the referral.

**Additional information is contained in Policies 5100 and 5105 and can be found on the USC website.**

\*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***

Weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, guns of any type, including spring, air and gas-powered guns (whether loaded or unloaded) that will expel a BB, pellet,

or paint balls, knives, razors, clubs, electric weapons, metallic knuckles, martial arts weapons, ammunition, and explosives or any other weapon described in 18 U.S.C. § 921.

As permitted by Board Policy and the law, the district reserves the authority to permanently expel students.

#### ***Firearm Defined***

A firearm means any weapon (including a starter gun) 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 devices; or any other weapon as set forth in 18 USC §921.

#### ***Physical Assault Defined***

A physical assault means intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence.

#### ***Arson Defined***

Arson means conduct which otherwise would constitute a felony violation of Sections 750.71 through 750.80 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

#### ***Criminal Sexual Conduct Defined***

Criminal sexual conduct means conduct which otherwise would constitute a violation of Sections 750.520b through 750.520e, and Section 750.520g of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

#### ***Reinstatement***

Students permanently expelled for reasons covered in this policy may seek reinstatement. Such reinstatement is not a matter of right, but is discretionary with the Board of Education. 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 of Education.

- An individual who was in grade five or below at the time of permanent expulsion and who has been expelled for possessing a firearm or threatening another person with a dangerous weapon shall not

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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 permanent expulsion and who has been expelled for a reason defined in Section 1311(2) of the Revised School Code of the State of Michigan 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 permanent expulsion for an offense covered by Policy 5105 shall not be reinstated before the expiration of 180 school days after the date of expulsion.

The time limits and procedures for filing a petition for reinstatement and reinstatement shall be governed by the provisions of Sections 1311(6) and 1311a(5) of the Revised School Code of the State of Michigan.

Once action has been taken by the Board of Education on a Petitioner for Reinstatement, a petitioner regarding the same student may not be submitted again until 90 school days have passed.

Additional information is contained in Policies 5100 and 5105 and can be found on the USC website.

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, (6) the Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act, and (7) 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 and Transportation Services, Utica Community Schools, 11303 Greendale, Sterling Heights, MI 48312, phone 586.797.1000

The person who believes a valid basis for grievance exists may discuss the grievance informally and on a verbal basis with the building principal or the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, who shall in turn investigate the complaint and reply with an answer within five (5) business days.

The complainant 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



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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 and Transportation.