



# UTICA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## GRADES 7-8 PARENT and STUDENT HANDBOOK 2022-2023



Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

A UCS education empowers students to succeed. With a range of academic and extra-curricular options, students pursue their passion, find a sense of purpose, and grow individually and socially.

High expectations, effort and accountability on the part of our students remain essential in this endeavor. This handbook details the policies and procedures that drive this success and provides our students and staff with a safe and positive learning environment. This remains a priority for Utica Community Schools; we want our students to feel a sense of purpose and belonging.

UCS will continue its tradition of forging strong partnerships with parents toward this goal. To do this, your help is essential. We ask you to familiarize yourself with the information, policies and procedures in this handbook and discuss its contents with your child. It is only through partnership between school and family that we can meet our expectations for your child.

Please stay in touch. Our teachers and administrators stand ready to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have.



Mary K. Thomas, Ph.D.  
President, Board of Education



Robert S. Monroe  
Superintendent of Schools

### **Board of Education**

Mary K. Thomas, Ph.D., President  
Denyeal Nesovski, Vice President  
Michele Templeton, Treasurer  
Kelli Rankin, Secretary  
Kimberly Becker, Trustee  
Steven R. Meyer, Ph.D., Trustee  
Adrienne Rubel, Trustee

Robert S. Monroe  
Superintendent of Schools

## Grades 7 and 8 Table of Contents

<b>Off to a Good Start</b>	1	Excessive Absences	5
<b>School Safety and Security</b>	1	No-Go List	6
Visitors	1	Avoid the No-Go List	6
New Student Registration	1	<b>In the Classroom</b>	6
Immunization Requirements	1	School Supplies	7
Emergency Information in PowerSchool	2	Homework and Makeup Work	7
Notify the School of Changes in Parent Contact Information	2	Grading Scale	7
Students Who Move	2	Semester Grades	7
Accidents	2	Courses Taken for High School Credit	7
Concussion Awareness	2	Grade Changes	7
COVID-19 Self-Screening	2	Tests and Exams	7
Persons with COVID-19	2	Standardized Tests	8
Persons Exposed to COVID-19	3	<b>Keeping in Touch</b>	8
Advance Notification of Pesticide Application	3	Between School and Home	8
Student Records	3	PowerSchool	8
Directory Information Disclosure	3	Progress Reports	8
Media Release	3	Report Cards	8
Bad Weather Procedures	4	Parent-Teacher Conferences	9
Emergency School Closings	4	Parental Involvement in Education	9
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>4</b>	Curriculum Review/ Classroom Visitation	9
Student Responsibility	4	Protection of Pupil Rights	10
General Expectations	4	Opting Out of Certain Surveys and Exams	10
Student Illness During the Day	4	Inspect Certain Material	10
Early Dismissal	4	Health Education	
Pre-arranged Absence	4	Exclusion Disclosure	10
Absence and Missed Work	4	Discuss Concerns	10
Parent/Guardian Responsibility	4	<b>Student Services</b>	10
Report an Absence	4	Counseling	10
Correcting an Unexcused Absence	5	Newcomers/English Learners (EL)	11
Early Dismissal	5	Section 504 Notice	11
Pre-excused Absence (Vacation or Travel)	5	Special Education	11
Extended Absence	5		
Help Your Student Avoid Excessive Absences and the No-Go List	5	Child Find	11
		For children under age three	11

## Grades 7 and 8 Table of Contents

For children over age three	11	Freedom of Expression	20
Vision Screening	11	Student Dress and Grooming	21
Lost and Found	11	Unacceptable Behaviors	21
Extracurricular Activities	12	Disciplinary Action	22
Assemblies and Events	12	Restorative Practices	22
Evening Programs	12	Detention	23
School Dances	12	Special Work Projects	23
Athletics	12	Suspension	23
Athletic Eligibility	13	Principal Suspension	23
Acceptable Use of Technology	13	Superintendent Suspension	23
Technology Guidelines	13	Superintendent Expulsion	23
Technology Users Will	14	Board of Education Expulsion	24
Technology Users Will Not	14	Transfer of Disciplinary Records	24
Non-School Issued Electronic Communications Devices	14	Hazing	24
Electronic Device use Protocol for Statewide Testing	15	Bullying and Cyberbullying	24
Food and Nutrition Services	15	Substance Abuse	25
Health and Wellness	15	Student Smoking and Use of Tobacco	25
Free and Reduced-Price Meals	16	Student Gangs	26
Menus	16	Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure	26
Allergies	16	Reporting Concerns	26
Meal Payment 2022-2023	16	Weapons, Criminal Sexual Conduct, Arson and Physical Assault of an Employee	26
Breakfast	16		
Lunchtime	16	Weapons on School Property, in School Settings, in School Vehicles or at School-Sponsored Events	27
Lunchroom Expectations	16	Dangerous Weapon Defined	27
Bus Transportation	17	Firearm Defined	28
Bus Guidelines	17	Physical Assault Defined	28
Citizenship	17	Arson Defined	28
Student Conduct	17	Criminal Sexual Conduct Defined	28
Hallway Regulations	18	Reinstatement	28
Lockers	18	Non-Discrimination Policy	28
Search of Locker Contents	18	Report Violations	29
Seizure of Illegal Items	18		
<b>Discipline</b>	<b>19</b>		
Due Process	19		

## **Off to a Good Start**

This handbook is your guide to information about the district's seventh and eighth grade junior high school program and Utica Community Schools in general. Inside you will find policies and procedures that enable UCS to provide and manage a positive school environment for all students. Look for the school calendar and other information on your school's website, in school newsletters and mailings, the UCS website [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org), UCS social media sites, UCS-TV channels 15 and 22 and the district newsletter, *Focus for the Community*.

## **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.

### **Visitors**

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 identify themselves 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.

### **New Student Registration**

Students who are new to Utica Community Schools should register at their school as soon as possible upon becoming a district resident. For your convenience, registration can be done online at [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) under the New Student tab.

For out of district families seeking schools of choice enrollment, please refer to the Schools of Choice tab. You will need the following information to upload into the application:

- Child's birth certificate
- Parent's Michigan driver's license, Michigan ID or appropriate employment picture ID

- Lease agreement, real estate closing document or property tax bill
- Immunization records detailing the month, day and year your child was vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DTaP/DT/Td/Tdap), chicken pox (varicella), polio and hepatitis B. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine is also required for seventh grade entrance.

Once you complete and submit the registration, you will be emailed directions on how to set up an account through our online student management system, PowerSchool Parent Portal/Unified Classroom. The email response will come from [Enrollment@uticak12.org](mailto:Enrollment@uticak12.org).

Contact your school or call 586-797-1120 if you need further enrollment information. After you complete the registration process, you will be asked to provide your new UCS school with your child's most recent report card to assist with grade and class assignment. School officials will contact your child's previous school for his/her complete transcript.

### **Immunization Requirements**

At enrollment, the state law requires parents/guardians to provide written, detailed immunization records with the day, month and year their student was vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DTaP/DT/Td/Tdap), chicken pox (varicella), polio, hepatitis B, and for seventh grade entrance, meningococcal conjugate.

Students who are not in compliance with the immunization law or whose parent/guardian fails to file a waiver will be excluded from school. Waivers are available only through the Macomb County Health Department. Immunization records or a waiver are required prior to the first day of school.

Parents of students new to the district will be asked to sign a release to allow or decline sharing immunization information with the Macomb County Health Department. For information, call the Macomb County Health Department School Immunization Clinic at 586.466-6840.

## **Emergency Information in PowerSchool**

At the start of every school year, parents/guardians will complete or update their child's emergency information in PowerSchool. The information you provide will enable the school to notify you in the event of your child's sudden illness or injury or an emergency school closing.

You must provide your home and cell telephone numbers and the names and phone numbers of both parents' workplaces. 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.

You are asked to immediately update your PowerSchool account when any changes occur in your child's emergency 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.

## **Notify the School of Changes in Parent Contact Information**

To facilitate communication between school and home involving attendance, please make sure your contact information is up to date in PowerSchool.

## **Students Who Move**

Students who are moving are asked to check out through the counseling office. Any change of address or phone number should be given to the office as soon as possible.

## **Accidents**

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, the parent 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/ 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 can be found at [www.uticak12.org](http://www.uticak12.org) under forms in the athletics tab. Contact your building principal if further information is needed.

## **COVID-19 Self-Screening**

To promote a safe school environment for all, you are asked to follow the COVID-19 self-screening process each day before sending your child to school.

## **Persons with COVID-19 (Macomb County Health Department update on 8-25-2022)**

Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 (PCR or antigen test) or who display COVID-19 symptoms (without an alternative diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test) should isolate at home regardless of vaccination status.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include the following. These symptoms should be new or different/worse than baseline for any existing chronic illness. Any one of the following: cough - shortness of breath - difficulty breathing - new loss of smell - new loss of taste OR two or more of the following: subjective fever (felt feverish) or measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher - chills or rigors (shaking or exaggerated shivering) - muscle aches without another explanation - headache - sore throat - nausea or vomiting - diarrhea - fatigue - congestion or runny nose.

Students and staff may return to school/work if: at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may last for weeks or months and need not delay the end of isolation)

Students and staff who never had symptoms but who test positive for COVID-19 may return to

school/work if at least 5 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test (provided no symptoms appeared during the 5-day period).

Day zero (0) is the day of symptom onset or the day the positive test specimen was collected (if there were no symptoms). The isolation period ends at midnight on the last day of the isolation period. The last day of isolation is usually day 5 but may be a later day if symptoms have not improved or fever has not resolved for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Wearing a mask around others for days 6-10 after an isolation period of 5 days is recommended.

### **Persons Exposed to COVID-19**

Persons (regardless of vaccination status) exposed to someone who is positive for COVID-19 should: conduct symptom monitoring for 10 days and test (if possible) at least 5 full days after exposure and if symptoms develop and consider wearing a mask around others for 10 days from the date of last exposure.

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

UCS provides advance notice to parents in the event 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 can request a first-class mailing for a three-day advance notification of application by contacting their school principal.

### **Student Records**

A cumulative student record is maintained by Utica Community Schools for the benefit of the student. This record reflects 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 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 the records. Upon written request from parents for a hearing on the contents of their student'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 Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

### **Directory Information Disclosure**

UCS may, upon request, release the following directory information: student's name, address, participation in school activities, dates of school attendance, honors and awards, weight and height of athletic team members, information generally found in yearbooks and students' names, addresses and telephone numbers when requested by military recruiters, only.

Parent or students who are 18 or older who do not wish this information made public, should notify the principal in writing by October 1st.

### **Media Release**

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

### **Bad Weather Procedures and Emergency School Closings**

In the event of severe inclement weather and/or 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) 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.

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 channels 15 and 22.

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance and active participation in class are integral parts of a student's total education. Students can achieve optimal educational benefits only through regular class attendance and a serious commitment to an educational program. Attendance rules have been developed to reduce/prevent chronic absenteeism. The U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection defines chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10% of school days in a year.

### **Student Responsibility**

**General Expectations:** A student is to attend, be on time and be prepared for each scheduled class.

**Student Illness During the Day:** A student who becomes ill during the regular school day, must report to the building-assigned health room and a parent/guardian will be called.

**Early Dismissal:** A student must remain in school until the end of the school day or permission for an early dismissal has been gained from the main office.

**Pre-arranged Absence:** A student is responsible for making arrangements in advance for a pre-arranged absence from a particular class. This involves obtaining permission from the office for outside activities, such as doctor and dental appointments, and obtaining permission from the teacher whose class will be missed for in-school activities, such as attending a counseling appointment, participating in student government activities or completing a class assignment. It also involves arranging to make up any missed work.

**Absence and Missed Work:** When absent from a class, a student should make arrangements for make-up work. With the exception of pre-arranged absences where work may be due upon return, students will be given at minimum the same amount of time to make up the work missed as the amount of time they are absent.

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibility**

**In General:** Encourage the student to attend, be on time and be prepared for each scheduled class.

**Report an Absence:** When a student is going to be absent, parents/guardians should report the absence before the school day begins. Calls to the attendance line can be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will be received by an answering machine during non-school hours.

The following reasons for an absence will be accepted as an excused absence: student illness, hospitalization, doctor ordered bed rest, mandatory court appearance that has been pre-arranged, death in the immediate family, family vacation that has been pre-arranged and approved, medical appointments and administrative permission. All other absences will be unexcused.



**Correcting an Unexcused Absence:**

Parent/guardian will be contacted about unexcused absences through the school's automated system. If the absence is due to one of the reasons in the excused list, the parent/ guardian has until the end of the next school day to correct an absence.

**Be aware** that a student with an unexcused absence may lose participation points or be given a zero on the day's assignment.

**Early Dismissal:** Should a student need to leave school before the end of the school day, the parent/guardian should contact the attendance office prior to removing student from school. The parent can contact the office by note or by phone call.

Verification by the office may be required before the student is released. Please note that in order for the early dismissal to be considered excused, the reason for the early dismissal must be listed under the excusable absences (see above under Parent/Guardian Responsibility).

**Pre-excused Absence (Vacation or Travel):**

Vacation or travel during school days is discouraged. Families should seek permission from a building administrator for an excused vacation absence prior to making any travel arrangements. The request should be made in writing at least one week prior to the vacation. Vacation absences of more than 10 days in a semester will not be approved. Vacation absences that would cause a student to be placed on the No-Go list will not be approved for excusal. Vacations taken without approval will be marked as unexcused absences. Arrangements should be made with the student's teacher in advance as to timelines for completing class work. Homework may be requested and requires 24 hours to process. Work at the secondary level may be due upon return from vacation or travel.

**Extended Absence:** A parent/guardian of a student who will be absent (10 or more consecutive days) from school for extended periods of time due to physical disabilities or illness should contact the school to make home study arrangements.

**Help Your Student Avoid Excessive Absences and the No-Go List:** Excessive absences is defined

as more than 10 in a semester. Please be aware that excessive absences can lead to a student being placed on a No-Go list and possibly referred for truancy.

**Excessive Absences:** The school will notify the parent/guardian about excessive absences in the following ways:

- Absences are recorded daily by the teacher and/or attendance secretary at each school. When an absence is not excused, an automated phone call will be made to the primary contact number as listed in PowerSchool. A parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the school office if this phone number or any other contact information changes. A parent/guardian will have until the end of the next school day to correct any errors in attendance.
- Students and parents are responsible to track and review student attendance in PowerSchool on a regular basis to monitor student attendance.
- When a student has accumulated between seven and 10 absences\* in any one class per semester, the student's assistant principal will meet with the student. The assistant principal may use this opportunity to warn the student for any class that is at five absences or more. A letter signed by the student and assistant principal will be scanned and emailed home (U.S. mailed if no email address on file).
- When a student has accumulated 11 absences\* in any one class over the course of a semester, a letter will be sent via email (or U.S. mail if no email address on file) stating that the student's absences have become excessive, which may result in a referral to a truancy officer. In addition, the letter will notify that the student has been placed on the No-Go List.

\*The following absences will be exempt from this absence total: school approved absences (field trip, student government activity, etc.), death/funeral of an immediate family member (mother, father, brother or sister), court appearance when documentation is submitted, suspensions, and absences where a parent/guardian has submitted medical

documentation supporting the absence within five school days of the absence will not be considered in these totals.

Chronic medical conditions can be reflected in a doctor's note indicating the student has an ongoing medical condition that can cause them to be absent from school.

Between 14 and 16 absences: the assistant principal will call the home to discuss the excessive absences.

Twenty unexcused absences will initiate a referral for truancy.

### **No-Go List**

The No-Go List is a list of students who are not allowed to attend or participate in after school activities such as dances, sports (as participant or fan) and clubs. This does not include co-curricular activities where a grade is attached to participation. For the purpose of the No-Go list, every three tardies will count as one unexcused absence.

All students are limited to ten (10) parent-excused, unexcused or truant absences per class period each semester. Upon the eleventh absence in any class period, the student will be placed on the No-Go list for that class. The student may be placed on the No-Go list for multiple classes.

The school will notify the parent/guardian of excessive absences. When a student has accumulated 11 absences\* in any one class over the course of a semester, a letter will be sent via email (or US mail if email not on file) stating the student must follow the process and meet the criteria to be removed from the No-Go List.

\*The following absences will be exempt from this absence total: school approved absences (field trip, student government activity, etc.), death/funeral of an immediate family member (mother, father, brother or sister), court appearance when documentation is submitted, suspensions and absences where a parent/guardian has submitted medical documentation supporting the absence within five school days of the absence will not be considered in these totals.

Chronic medical conditions can be reflected in a doctor's note indicating the student has an ongoing medical condition that can cause them to be absent from school.

Students who have exceeded 10 days of absences can earn forgiveness hours (absence reduction) by participating in eligible programs. Availability of these programs may vary by the school the student attends. One hour of time is equal to one absence reduction in one class. Examples of programs include:

- Attend Homework Lunch for two days (whole lunch) for one-hour absence reduction.
- Attend after school tutoring at school with a teacher for one-hour absence reduction.
- Attend Saturday School for a three-hour absence reduction. Students who have been assigned Saturday School for other reasons, cannot use attendance on those days towards absence reduction (no "double dipping").

Students will be required to provide verifiable documentation to the office in order to be removed from the No-Go list. The basic idea is one hour of time allows for one hour of absence reductions. Each school will publish their absence reduction options at the beginning of the year in the school newsletter and/or school website. Other options for absence reduction may be available with prior administrator approval. Students cannot bank absence forgiveness in anticipation of future absences.

A student who is placed on the No-Go List for a class due to excessive absences may appeal that action to the assistant principal if they have documented evidence that the absences should not have counted against them.

**Avoid the No-Go List:** A student should avoid being placed on the No-Go List for accumulating more than 10 absences in any class. If placed on the No-Go List, students should take the necessary steps to be removed from the No-Go List.

### **In the Classroom**

Students should arrive on time for class and be seated when the bell rings. Students are responsible

for bringing materials needed for each class. During class, a student may leave the classroom only if issued a pass from the teacher. The bell is a signal to the teacher that the class period is over. Students will be dismissed by the teacher according to the established classroom rules and safety procedures.

### School Supplies

Essential supplies necessary to meet course requirements will be furnished. Additional supplies may be available for purchase at some schools.

### Homework and Makeup Work

When absent from a class, a student should make arrangements for make-up work. With the exception of prearranged absences where work may be due upon return, students will be given at minimum the same amount of time to make up the work missed as the amount of time they are absent.

### Grading Scale

UCS junior high teachers average a student's grades on tests, projects, homework and class participation to arrive at a letter grade. The percentage value given the four grading areas is determined by each individual teacher.

In cases of extended student absence, an incomplete grade may be given. A student has the same number of days as his/her excused absence in which to make up the work. An incomplete becomes a failure if the work is not made up within the next marking period.

Although daily classroom grading systems may vary among teachers, at the 10-week and semester marking periods, percentage scale or letter grade systems will adhere to the UCS districtwide grading scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	College Prep Course GPA	AP/IB Course Exams GPA
A	94-100	4.00	4.50
A-	90-93	3.67	4.17
B+	87-89	3.33	3.84
B	83-86	3.00	3.50
B-	80-82	2.67	3.17
C+	77-79	2.33	2.83
C	73-76	2.00	2.50
C-	70-72	1.67	2.17

D+	67-69	1.33	1.83
D	63-66	1.00	1.50
D-	60-62	0.67	1.17
F	*50	0.00	0.00

\*50% is the lowest grade that may be given for an F on a quarter grade.

### Semester Grades

The school year is divided into two semesters of 20 weeks each. Each semester is comprised of two 10-week marking periods. Semester grades in seventh and eighth grades are calculated as follows:

10 weeks =	45%
10 weeks =	45%
<u>Final Exam =</u>	<u>10%</u>
Final Grade =	100%

### Courses Taken for High School Credit

For courses taken in seventh or eighth grade for high school credit, semester grades will be determined using the following criteria:

10 weeks =	40%
10 weeks =	40%
<u>Final Exam =</u>	<u>20%</u>
Final Grade =	100%

For High School Credit courses, any combination of two failing marks within the semester will result in a failing grade (i.e., 1st 10 weeks = F, 2nd 10 weeks = C, final exam = F will result in a final grade of F).

### Grade Changes

Grade means the grade given for a final examination or at the conclusion of a marking period or semester. The proponent of a grade change must submit a written request to the principal, setting forth the reasons for the grade change. This must occur within 30 days after the student received the grade.

If the teacher who gave the grade does not concur with the grade change proposed, the principal, after consulting with the teacher who gave the grade and the proponent of the grade change, may cause a review panel to convene to consider a grade change.

### Tests and Exams

Students quickly discover testing is a fact of life, as they

are tested regularly to determine their achievement progress. Final exams are given at the end of each semester. Students also take state and national standardized tests to determine their ability and learning progress.

### **Standardized Tests**

The following standardized tests are administered at certain grade levels:

- Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT): Eleventh graders are tested on reading, writing and language and math. Scores are also used for the National Merit Scholarship program.
- Preliminary SAT (PSAT 10): Tenth graders are tested on reading, writing and language and math.
- Preliminary SAT (PSAT 8/9): Ninth graders are tested on reading, writing and language and math.
- Michigan Merit Exam (MME): The State of Michigan suite of summative assessment, includes SAT, M-Step and WorkKeys assessments.
- Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-Step): Seventh graders will be assessed in English language arts and mathematics. Eighth graders will be assessed in science and social studies.  
This assessment is designed to measure academic growth effectively for today's students.
- Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): All eleventh graders take the SAT, which measures achievement in reading, writing and language and math. The assessment also includes an optional essay. This test is required for all students anticipating acceptance into a four-year college program directly out of high school.
- ACT WorkKeys: All eleventh graders take the ACT WorkKeys, which is a skills assessment that helps employers select, hire, train, develop and retain a quality workforce. The assessment measures foundational and soft skills.
- MI-Access: An alternative assessment given to students with disabilities if stated on the student's Individuals Education Program

(IEP). MI-Access measures reading, writing and mathematics skills.

- World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA): All English Learners (EL) students are assessed in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
- Advanced Placement (AP) exams: Available to all students in grades eight through twelve. Students should see their counselor for information.

### **Keeping in Touch**

#### **Between School and Home**

A strong partnership between school and home lays the foundation for your child's educational success. Many teachers keep in touch with notes and phone calls to parents.

Email correspondence between teacher and parent can also be arranged through a prior written arrangement with the teacher. Progress reports, homework logs, student agenda books, report cards and parent-teacher conferences provide detailed information on your student's progress.

#### **PowerSchool**

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

#### **Progress Reports**

Because grades are put into the system regularly by teachers, parents can access grades and progress in PowerSchool any time during the marking period. At the end of the fifth week, teachers will have grades up to date, so parents can be aware of progress or if their student is in danger of failing. A parent-teacher conference may be required.

#### **Report Cards**

Report cards are issued every 10 weeks to provide parents and students with an understanding of the student's progress. Grades, citizenship marks and teachers' comments are included in the report. Citizenship marks are based on a student's classroom behavior, ranging from outstanding to

unacceptable.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parents/legal guardians are invited to meet with teachers to discuss their student's progress during scheduled conference days in the fall and spring. At conference time, teachers will usually present information on a student's homework record, classroom activity and test results.

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.

### **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 website access to the following:

- Annual Report information
- District events calendar
- Individual school websites
- Parent/Student handbooks (elementary, grades 7-8 and grades 9-12)
- District newsletter – *Focus for the Community*
- School newsletters

UCS provides information about school and district activities/updates on community access cable TV.

UCS shall coordinate and integrate opportunities for parental involvement with academic support programs and academic competitions.

UCS shall assess parent satisfaction with questions

included in the community survey. 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 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.

### **Curriculum Review/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.

### **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.

This includes 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 or ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parents
- 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.

### **Opting 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, 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 Schools 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 purposes.
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

### **Health Education Exclusion 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 a class or course of instruction in reproductive health and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). AIDS instruction is included in Health Education classes.

### **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.

### **Student Services**

#### **Counseling**

Each student is assigned a counselor to assist in

course selection and program planning. Counselors are also available by appointment to discuss academic issues, personal concerns or career planning. It is important for students and their parents/guardians to become acquainted with the counselor so that all can work together for the student's benefit.

Situations needing immediate attention will be promptly handled. Parents and teachers may request counseling services for a student. Counselors are available to meet with parents during the school day to discuss curriculum or individual student concerns.

The counseling department also offers Naviance, an interactive online college and career readiness resource available to students, enabling them to survey their own career strengths and interests and gain information about career fields and postsecondary education.

### **Newcomers/English Learners (EL)**

An intensive program is provided for 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.

### **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 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 information.

### **Special Education and 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 with disabilities such as autism, visual impairment, blindness, developmental delay, emotional/behavior

disability, hearing impairment, deafness, mental disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment or traumatic brain injury 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/guardian 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's development, you may contact Child Find at the Macomb Intermediate School District at 586-228-3321 or visit their website at [Child Find \(misd.net\)](http://ChildFind(misd.net)). The MISD offers free evaluations in the following areas:

- Audiology (hearing)
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychology
- Speech and Language

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

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

### **Vision Screening**

The Macomb County Health Department will provide vision screening to students in seventh and ninth grade or upon other referral.

## **Lost and Found**

Students should report lost items to the office. Any items found should be reported or brought to the office as soon as possible so the owner can claim them. Items not claimed at the end of the year are usually discarded or given to a charity.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Utica Community Schools encourages student participation in extracurricular activities as a beneficial part of the educational experience. Students who are involved at school tend to do better academically and have better attendance and fewer discipline problems. Taking part in an interesting new – and perhaps challenging – activity can enhance a student’s opportunities to learn self-discipline, build confidence and develop skills in handling all types of situations.

## **Assemblies and Events**

School assemblies, pep assemblies and athletic events take place at all junior high schools and students are encouraged to attend. The observance of school rules, particularly the display of good sportsmanship and respect, is expected at all such events. Spectators must be orderly and courteous. They should use applause only to show respect for the people involved in the events.

## **Evening Programs**

Normally, students should not attend after-school activities, such as concerts, plays or athletic events, unless they are accompanied by an adult or are participating in the program or event. Students on the No-Go List will NOT be admitted, even with a parent.

Note: Participation in extracurricular activities, including those above, requires a student to be in attendance at school for one-half of the school day on the day of the event.

## **School Dances**

Dances are scheduled periodically during the school year. Each junior high dance lasts approximately two hours. Students may not arrive late or leave early. Dance attendance is a privilege which may be affected by citizenship grades. All school policies and conduct regulations are in effect during dances. Guests from other schools will not be admitted.

## **Athletics**

Athletics can play an important role in rounding out the educational experience. In addition to developing physical skills, athletic participation encourages goal setting, organizational and time management habits and sportsmanship.

In UCS, athletic participation is not a right, but a privilege. A student may be removed from athletics for failure to meet the standards and requirements of the team, school, district or the Michigan High School Athletic Association(MHSAA).

A student must pass a physical examination and present a record of it before trying out for a team. No tryouts will be permitted without proof of a current year physical exam. Most schools arrange economical physical examinations for students each spring and fall.

Seventh or eighth grades students must have passed at least 50 percent of the previous semester’s classes and be passing at least 50 percent of his/her current classes in order to participate in sports.

To practice or play in a game, a student must be in attendance for three school hours that day.

A pay to participate fee is required for athletics. Contact the school’s athletic director for specific information. Depending on the sport, additional costs may be incurred.

Board of Education policy states that students are forbidden to use any performance-enhancing substances including, but not limited to, those banned by the bylaws of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and those that may be listed by the Michigan Department of Community Health. Discipline for students who violate this policy could range from warnings, detentions and suspensions up to and including expulsion. For more information, contact the school’s athletic director.

Game day transportation: District transportation for athletes will only be provided to the event (with the exception of football, because of equipment). Parents/guardians will be responsible for their child’s



transportation home.

### **Athletic Eligibility**

The following MHSAA eligibility rules apply to seventh and eighth grade students competing in athletic events.

1. Students must be enrolled in school by the fourth Friday after Labor Day or the fourth Friday of February of the semester in which student is competing.
2. A seventh grade student competing in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under 14 years of age. Exception: a student whose 14th birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year.  
An eighth grade student competing in any interscholastic athletic contest must be under 15 years of age. Exception: a student whose 15th birthday occurs on or after September 1 of a current school year is eligible for the balance of that school year.

There is no limit to semesters of enrollment or seasons of competition for seventh and eighth graders.

3. A record of a current physical examination given on or after April 15 of the previous school year must be in the school files.
4. A student may not be a junior high or middle school graduate and must have earned credit in 50 percent of the previous semester's work. A student must be passing 50 percent of current work within seven days of a contest.
5. A student-athlete may not accept ANY award valued at more than \$40. A student may not accept money, gifts, loans, merchandise, membership, privileges, services or other valuable consideration for participation in any form of sports, athletics, games or interscholastic athletic contest officiating, except as allowed in the MHSAA Handbook Interpretations, listed within Regulation I, Section II.

6. A student may not compete in an outside event during the season in which that athlete competed for the school in the same sport. Three-on-three basketball tournaments are included in this regulation.

Note: In all sports except football, during the junior high/middle school season (from a student's first participation in a contest or scrimmage until the last day of competition for that student) a member of the school team in that sport may participate in a maximum of two (2) events not sponsored by his/her school in that sport while not representing his/her school. An event held on not more than three (3) consecutive calendar days is considered a single event for the purposes of this section, only.

For a complete understanding of the MHSAA athletic handbook, please contact your school's athletic director.

### **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. Misuse of technology will result in disciplinary action, up to and including loss of computer privileges, suspension or expulsion.

### **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.
- Illegal/inappropriate activities of any kind are forbidden.

- Students shall not use district technology for online purchasing or any other non-UCS education/personal purposes.
- Nothing will be placed on a building web page without prior approval of the building principal or 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.
- Notify the appropriate Utica Community Schools staff member immediately of a webpage that contains questionable content.
- Use networks and technology in support of education, consistent with the goals of the district.
- Keep all passwords confidential.
- Obey all copyright laws.
- Report any malfunction of equipment immediately to a UCS staff member.
- Report any misuse of networks and technology to the building administrator or teacher.
- Use equipment responsibly and respect individual work, files and programs.
- Return any borrowed equipment when requested by an authorized UCS staff member.

#### **Technology Users Will Not:**

- Tamper with computer or network components in a way that will make them either temporarily or permanently inoperable.
- Access the district network through unauthorized technology.
- 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 of which they do not have ownership.
- Use district networks and/or technology to download and/or store games, videos, music or pictures that are not part of an educational/district project.
- Use district technology to send, receive, print or display messages that are inflammatory, harassing in nature, sexist, racist or otherwise inappropriate. When using district technology, appropriate and polite language and behavior is required.
- Use UCS technology to distribute material that: violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; jeopardizes the health and safety of students; is pornographic, obscene 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.

#### **Non-School Issued Electronic Communications Devices**

The personal use of non-school issued cell phones or other electronic communications devices (ECDs) by students is prohibited at any time while in school or in a district vehicle. Students may carry ECDs during the school day, but they cannot be displayed or used without permission from a teacher or administrator for educational purposes.

Personal use of the device shall be limited to the time before and after the school day and only when students are outside the building. ECDs shall not be used during instructional time, lunch, passing time between classes or on any school bus without permission of a school official.

The use of an ECD's picture-taking or internet connection capability is not permitted without

permission of a teacher or administrator. Utica Community Schools will not be responsible for the theft, loss or damage of any ECD.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against students who violate the policy regulating ECDs.

### **Electronic Device use Protocol for Statewide Testing**

Students are required to only use district-provided electronic devices during testing sessions. Students are not permitted to access personal, non-testing electronic devices when in an active testing session or while on break.

#### Electronic Device Examples

Examples of electronic devices include, but are not limited to:

- Any electronic device that can be used to record, transmit, or receive information, not used for testing computer tablets, iPads, e-readers (for example: Kindle)
- Smart watches (for example: Fitbits; Apple, Garmin, Samsung watches; any watch with access to other applications or the internet) smart phones and cell phones
- Bluetooth headphones, smart earbuds (for example: Beats, iPods), or any headphone with access to other applications or the internet)
- Smart glasses (for example: Google Glass)
- Desktop computers, laptops, not used for testing

#### Protocols for Students

All personal student devices are to be left at home or will be kept in a secure location as determined by the building administrator for all state assessments.

Students are not permitted to use, wear, or access any personal, non-testing electronic device during testing or while on a break when any active testing session is in progress. These electronic devices include but are not limited to smartphones, cell phones, smartwatches, Bluetooth headphones, headphones that allow access to voice assistant technology, and computers and/or tablets not being actively used for testing purposes. If any personal electronic device is brought into the testing environment, the staff member will collect, power down the device, label it

with the student's name and place it in a secure location.

If an electronic device is medically necessary for a testing student, the device must be left with the test administrator, or the test must be administered to the student in a one test administrator-to-one student setting, and the student must be actively monitored at all times while testing.

#### Additionally

- Students are not allowed to access the device used for testing for any other purpose than to complete the test during the test session.
- A student may not access any additional websites or applications during testing, or for any other purpose after testing, while in the testing room.
- Staff is to ensure that all testing devices are configured properly and that all background applications are disabled before testing begins.
- No pictures or videos may be taken during testing.

Students bringing additional electronic devices into the testing room or accessing these devices during testing will have their test invalidated.

#### Student Consequences for Violating the Protocols

If a student has access to a non-test electronic device and/or "wearable" technology at any point during a test session even if the student has exited or submitted their test, that student's test has been compromised and will be invalidated due to prohibited behavior, even if the student did not use the electronic device. The student is to be removed from the testing environment and the parent or guardian will be informed of the incident. In addition to violating this policy, students will be subject to school discipline up to and including suspension or expulsion for violating the District Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Food and Nutrition Services**

#### **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 [www.uticak12.org/foodandnutrition](http://www.uticak12.org/foodandnutrition).

### **Free and Reduced-Price Meals**

We will return to paid, free and reduced priced meals for the 2022-23 school year. Families must fill out our free and reduced meal applications to qualify for free or reduced priced meals as well as other programs and discounts, such as pay-to-play sports, low-cost internet, low-cost AP exams and college application fees and more. For confidential and timely access to benefits, families may apply for the program online at <http://utica.familyportal.cloud> or complete a paper application available at the school office. The paper application may take about two weeks for processing.

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 of fruit or vegetable, for the meal to qualify under this provision.

### **Menus**

A monthly menu is posted at school. 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.

### **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. We cannot act on your request without this form filled out properly. For questions about food allergies and menu selections please call our office at 586-797-1180.

### **Meal Payment 2022-2023**

As stated above, all breakfasts and lunches will return to paid, free and reduces priced meals for the 2022-23 school year. We are happy to report that UCS will pick up the cost of reduces-priced meals this year! Paid breakfasts are \$1.75 and reduces and free breakfasts are no cost. Paid lunches are \$2.95 and reduces and free lunches are no cost. 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 of fruit or vegetable, for the meal to qualify under the free provision. All a la carte items, bottled beverages, snacks and second meals must be paid for by the student and do not go with the meal. Parents can utilize the cafeteria's automated pre-pay system for these a la carte purchases. It enables parents to pre-pay an amount into an individual account for their child with cash, check or online at <http://utica.familyportal.cloud> There is a service fee for online pre-pay. The student then can deduct purchases from the account with a personal ID number. The system also allows parents to monitor account activity and all accounts are confidential. All students are eligible to access their account through the automated system.

Should a student's meal account reflect a zero or negative balance, the student can charge up to five meals to allow time for families to properly fund their student's meal account. Prompt repayment is expected. Students whose account remains negative will have restricted purchasing privileges and will be offered a regular, alternate meal. If a student has a zero or negative account balance, they will not be allowed to make any a la carte or beverage purchases. Please check the website for details:[www.uticak12.org/foodandnutrition](http://www.uticak12.org/foodandnutrition).

### **Breakfast**

A nutritious and affordable breakfast is available at district schools. Pricing, service times and other breakfast information is available on the website.

### **Lunchtime**

All UCS schools operate a closed campus during the school day. Students must remain in the building during the lunch period. A nutritious, reasonably priced lunch is available in the school cafeteria. Students may purchase a complete lunch or bring lunch and purchase milk.

### **Lunchroom Expectations**

Students are expected to remain in the building during the lunch period and observe the following cafeteria rules:

- Deposit all trash in the trash containers.
- Return all trays and utensils to the designated area.

- Leave the table and floor clean for others to use.
- Do not take food from the cafeteria.
- Do not bring glass containers into the building.
- Cooperate with cafeteria staff and lunchroom supervisors.

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

### **Bus Transportation**

UCS Board of Education policy and Michigan State Board of Education guidelines are used to determine student eligibility for bus transportation, based on the distance from home to school. Safety conditions for walkers are also taken into consideration. Your school office will know if your street is on a district busing route. Routes may be altered during the school year to accommodate enrollment changes.

**Bus transportation is a privilege. Students may be denied the privilege of riding the school bus for misconduct on a bus or at a bus stop.** Student conduct on the bus should be an extension of good classroom behavior. All district and school rules and regulations apply. Students are expected to use their assigned bus stops, arrive 10 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive, wait in an orderly manner and be alert to traffic when entering or leaving the bus.

### **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 your 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 your 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 (such as cell phones or cameras) is not permitted.
- There are no preferential seat assignments, although the 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 signed by both sets of parents and signed by the principal. Seating space is reserved for assigned riders.

For UCS Transportation, call 586-797-7100.

### **Citizenship**

Good citizenship is essential to the educational process. Citizenship marks may determine attendance and participation at assemblies, dances, club meetings, athletic events and other activities. Students who receive poor citizenship marks may be excluded from special school events.

### **Student Conduct**

Well-behaved students help make school an effective place of learning. Students' safety and welfare depend on their compliance with the following guidelines, which apply while students are in school, on school property, going to or from school or at any school activity.

Students are expected to be courteous and show respect for ALL classmates and ALL adults. Student language and attitude must be respectful to all.

Students must identify themselves when asked by staff members. Students must address adults as Mr., Miss, Mrs. or other appropriate title. Students are also expected to carry out the requests of all staff members, including substitute teachers and other adults serving the building.

Disciplinary action may vary depending upon the situation. Consequences used at the secondary level to deal with rule infractions include, but are not limited to detention, special work projects, suspension, expulsion or social probation. If a law has been broken, local law enforcement will be contacted. Once law enforcement officers are involved, their actions may include physical restraint or arrest, if necessary.

## **Hallway Regulations**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly and courteous manner in the hallways. Students who are in the hallways during class time must have teacher passes or their student agendas.

## **Lockers**

Every student is issued a locker and combination at the beginning of the school year. All lockers assigned to students are the property of Utica Community Schools.

At no time does the school relinquish its exclusive control its lockers.

A student who uses a locker that is the property of Utica Community Schools is presumed to have no expectation of privacy in that locker or that locker's contents.

The school principal or his/her designee shall have custody of all the combinations to all lockers and/or locks.

Students are prohibited from placing locks on any locker without the advance approval of the school principal or his/her designee.

The school assigns lockers to its students for the students' convenience and temporary use. Students are to use lockers exclusively to store school-related materials and authorized personal items such as outer garments, footwear, grooming aids or lunch.

Students shall not use lockers for any other purpose, unless specifically authorized by the school principal or his/her designee, in advance of the student bringing the items to school.

Students are solely responsible for the contents of their locker and should not share their locker with other students or pre-set locker combinations or divulge locker combinations to other students, unless authorized by the school principal or his/her designee.

If the principal or his/her designee assigns more than one student to a locker, the locker or locker combination should not be shared with anyone other

than the assigned locker partner.

## **Search of Locker Contents**

Random searches of school lockers and their contents have a positive impact on deterring violations of rules and regulations, ensure proper maintenance of school property and provide greater safety and security for students and personnel. Accordingly, the Board of Education authorizes the school principal or his/her designee to search lockers and locker contents at any time, without notice and without parent or guardian consent.

The school principal or his/her designee shall not be obligated, but may request the assistance of a law enforcement officer in conducting a locker search. Local law enforcement may also use the assistance of a canine unit. The principal or his/her designee shall supervise the search.

In the course of the school principal or his/her designee shall respect the privacy rights of the pupil regarding any items discovered that are not illegal or against school policy and rules.

## **Seizure of Illegal Items**

When conducting locker searches, the school principal or his/her designee may seize any illegal or unauthorized items, items in violation of Board of Education policy or rules or any other items reasonably determined by the school principal or his/her designee to be a potential threat to the safety or security of others.

Such items include, but are not limited to, the following: tobacco products, vaping paraphernalia, drug paraphernalia, firearms, explosives, dangerous weapons, flammable material, illegal controlled substances or controlled substance look-alikes or other intoxicants, contraband, poisons and stolen property.

Law enforcement officials shall be notified upon seizure of dangerous items or seizure of items that schools are required to report to law enforcement agencies under the Statewide School Safety Information Policy.

Any items seized by the school principal or his/her designee shall be removed from the locker and held

by school officials for evidence in disciplinary proceedings and/or turned over to law enforcement officials. The parent/ guardian of a minor student, or a student eighteen (18) years of age or older, shall be notified by the school principal or his/her designee of items removed from the locker.

## **Discipline**

A student's right to a public education carries with it a responsibility to know and observe school rules. The primary objective of student discipline and control is to produce a safe school environment in which complete attention may be directed to the teaching-learning activities. Discipline may be defined as the control of conduct by the individual or by external authority.

Board of Education (the external authority) policies and in some instances, state law, establish behavioral expectations and consequences for violations. The goal of discipline is for students to become responsible, productive and self-disciplined citizens within and outside of school by assuming personal responsibility (individual authority) for their own behavior.

Utica Community Schools treats discipline as an individual matter for each student. Students must be dealt with as individuals according to their age and maturity, disciplinary history, whether the student is a student with a disability, experiences, abilities and interests, and values. 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.

Disciplinary action may vary depending upon the issues. The discipline procedures used to deal with rule infractions include but are not limited to restorative practices, detention, suspension (exclusion from school), and expulsion. 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 as necessary to maintain order and control a school or school-related setting for the purpose of providing an environment conducive to safety and learning.

The best discipline is preventative in nature. School personnel along with parents working together can help students develop self-control and self-discipline.

## **Due Process**

Due process is a fundamental right of all individuals. Therefore, constitutionally and legally sound procedures have been implemented in the district. For discipline that results in restorative practices, detention, or exclusion from school for less than five days, parents may request an appeal hearing with the principal. The principal will hold the hearing within five days of the request. The principal will issue a decision within two days of that hearing. The principal's decision is final.

Based on state and federal laws governing education, building principals in Utica Community Schools are delegated the authority to temporarily separate or suspend (exclude) a student from school. In such actions, the following procedures shall be in effect:

Prior to exclusion, students shall be informed of the charges brought against them including the rationale for the action and the condition of time and termination. Students will be given the opportunity to discuss the charges brought against them.

- Parents or guardians shall be notified by telephone or personal contact if the student is to be excluded from school. At the time of exclusion, parents will be notified of the right to appeal (appeal procedures are explained below)
- Verbal notification shall be followed by written communication to the parents/ guardians stating the charges, reasons, and conditions of the exclusion.

Appeal procedures available to parents or guardians include:

- As a first step, parents may request an appeal hearing with the principal within the period of exclusion from school. The principal shall affirm, modify or reverse disciplinary action within two school days of the conference date.
- If the exclusion is for more than five (5) days or a recommendation for something greater than ten days, the parents(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within five (5) school days from the principal's decision to exclude the student. Within five (5) school days of the appeal request, the Superintendent or designee will hold an appeal hearing.
- The Superintendent shall affirm, modify or reverse the decision of the principal within three school days from hearing the appeal. Recommendations for more than ten days may result in a Superintendent's Suspension (11-59 days of exclusion) or a Superintendent's Expulsion (60-180 days of exclusion). The Superintendent's decision is final.
- If the recommendation is for permanent expulsion, the parents(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within five (5) school days from the principal's decision to exclude the student. Within five (5) school days of the appeal request, the superintendent or designee will hold an appeal hearing. The superintendent shall affirm, modify, or reverse the recommendation of the principal within three school days from hearing the appeal. If the superintendent affirms the recommendation of permanent expulsion, the parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal to the Board of Education. The Board of Education's decision is final.

### **Freedom of Expression**

Students have the right to exercise freedom of speech. This includes the right to distribute or display written material, petitions, buttons, badges, signs or other insignia subject to reasonable times, places and

manner.

Exceptions include information that is:

- Obscene to minors.
- Libelous.
- Pervasively indecent or vulgar (for secondary schools) or contains any indecent or vulgar language (for elementary schools).
- Advertises any product or service not permitted to minors by law.
- Constitutes insulting or fighting words, the very expression of which injures or harasses other people (i.e. threats of violence, defamation of character or of a person's race, religion or ethnic origin).
- Presents a clear and present likelihood that either because of its content or the manner of distribution or display, it will cause a material and substantial disruption of school or school activities, a violation of school regulations, or the commission of an unlawful act.

Distribution and/or display of material in any of the above categories is prohibited on school premises at any time or at any school-related or school-sponsored event whether on or off campus.

Any student wishing to distribute or display non-school sponsored material must first submit for approval a copy of the material to the building principal at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the desired distribution/display time, together with the following information:

- Name and contact information of the student or organization.
- Date(s) and time(s) of day of intended display or distribution.
- Location where material will be displayed and/or distributed.
- Grade(s) of students to whom the display and/or distribution is intended.

Student publications are also sponsored to provide students the opportunity to learn – under adult direction – the rights and responsibilities of the press in a free society.



Publications and related advertising will be prohibited that are:

- Grossly prejudicial to an ethnic, religious, racial, or other delineated group.
- Libel any specific person or persons.
- Seek to establish the supremacy of a particular religious denomination, sect or point of view over any other religious denomination, sect or point of view.
- Advocate the use or advertise the availability of any substance or material which may reasonably be believed to:
  - Constitute a direct and substantial danger to the health of students.
  - Contain obscenity or material otherwise deemed to be harmful to impressionable students who may receive them.
  - Incite violence, advocate the use of force or urge the violation of law or school regulations.

Publications will also be prohibited that:

- Fail to identify the student or organization responsible for distribution.
- Solicit funds for non-school organizations or institutions when such solicitations have not been approved by the Director of Community Relations.
- Promote, favor or oppose any candidate for election to the Board, or the adoption of any bond issue, proposal or question submitted at any election.

Non-compliance with the above guidelines will be halted and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with procedures established in this handbook. For more information, please see policy 6100.

### **Student 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 is neat and clean contributes to a positive school environment. Student appearance should not be disruptive to the educational process. Consider the following guidelines when 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 is 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.
- Clothing consistent with religious or cultural beliefs is acceptable.
- Jewelry and accessories that may be deemed dangerous are prohibited.

### **Unacceptable Behaviors**

Behaviors which 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. Students must not damage books, supplies and furniture supplied by the school. Students must not litter or mark on furniture, walls, lockers, texts, etc. or tamper with fire alarms and extinguishers. Students will be assessed repair and replacement costs of damaged or lost textbooks. A student who damages or destroys school property will be expected to pay for it. Other disciplinary action may be taken to ensure school facilities are appropriately maintained.
2. Per state law, smoking or the possession of tobacco in any form is forbidden to all students. This rule 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

buildings owned or operated by Utica Community Schools.

3. Possession or use of electronic cigarettes, hookah pens, vaping paraphernalia or other similar devices.
4. Gambling, participating in games of chance or skill for money or profit and extortion are illegal and prohibited.
5. Physical contact and displays of public affection, such as hugging, handholding, kissing, etc., are prohibited.
6. Name calling, intimidation, bullying, profanity, vulgarity, "hate" speech, use of abrasive or derogatory comments or gestures or threatening to do harm to staff or other students.
7. Planning to fight, harassment, threatening of other students or fighting (which may include pushing, punching, wrestling or physical assaults) or otherwise assaulting another student or employee is prohibited.
8. Student behavior should not offend or endanger others. Students should not run in the halls, throw objects or trigger false fire alarms. Possession or the use of matches, lighters, firecrackers, fireworks, stink or smoke bombs, knives, metal finger armor, explosives or weapons is forbidden. Students also may not possess paintball guns, squirt guns, pea shooters, electric shock devices or other disruptive or harmful objects.
9. Threats of any kind (harm, kill, shooting, bomb, etc.) in any form (verbal, nonverbal, written, drawn, etc.) toward students and/or staff and/or Utica Community Schools property.
10. Intoxicants, narcotics, depressants, stimulants, look-alike drugs or illegal substances are not allowed on school property. Any infraction will result in referral to parents and police.
11. Students are not permitted to operate or park motor vehicles, including motorcycles and mopeds, on school property.
12. Students are not permitted to use skateboards, rollerblades, 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.

13. Pornographic and other inappropriate materials are prohibited.
14. Students may not sell or buy any item from another student in school, except as authorized by the principal for sale by the student store.
15. Eating food outside the cafeteria is forbidden. Glass containers are not permitted.
16. Theft, forgery, cheating and all forms of plagiarism are prohibited.
17. Unauthorized use of telephones is prohibited.
18. Students may not be in unauthorized areas.
19. Any use of electronic communications devices is prohibited without permission of an administrator – this includes use of cell phones, text messaging and camera usage.
20. Smoking of any kind, the possession/use of vaping devices and alcohol is prohibited.
21. Use of electronics with recording/photographic capabilities are prohibited in restrooms. In addition, restroom stalls are intended for the use of one person; two or more people in a stall is prohibited.

Violations will result in school and legal consequences.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action may vary depending upon the situation. The first step in the disciplinary process is for the appropriate staff member to discuss the situation with the student. Parents are also informed of the situation.

### **Restorative Practices**

School staff will always consider restorative practices instead of or in addition to exclusion from school (suspension/expulsion). Restorative practices may include victim-offender conferences that are initiated

by the victim; that are approved by the victim's parent or legal guardian or, if the victim is at least age 15, by the victim; that are attended voluntarily by the victim, a victim advocate, the offender member or the school community, and supporters of the victim and the offender; and that provide an opportunity for the offender to accept responsibility for the harm caused to those affected by the misconduct and to participate in setting consequences to repair the harm. The attendees, known as the restorative practices team, may require the pupil to do one or more of the following: apologize; participate in community service, restoration, or counseling; or pay restitution. The selected consequences shall be incorporated into an agreement that sets time limits for completion of the consequences and is signed by all participants. Restorative practices should be the first consideration (in addition to or in replacement of exclusion) to remediate offenses such as interpersonal conflicts, bullying, verbal and physical conflicts, theft, damage to property, class disruption, and harassment and cyberbullying. Other research based restorative practices, not described above may be used to resolve the issue.

### **Detention**

A teacher or the principal has the right to assign a student to before or after-school detention for disciplinary reasons or academic makeup work. A day's notice is given in all cases of detention and a student may be detained for a reasonable amount of time. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to arrange transportation for the student when detention is assigned.

### **Special Work Projects**

Special work projects may be assigned for improper conduct, as determined by the teacher or administrator. Such projects are intended to reinforce the importance of proper behavior.

### **Suspension**

School suspensions will be administered by the principal or his/her designee. Short-term suspensions may vary from one to 10 days, depending on the severity or frequency of the violation. When a suspension is necessary, parents or guardians shall be notified if the student is released from school before the end of the school day. Suspended students are not allowed on school district property or admitted to

any school function during the course of the suspension. Suspended students will be permitted to make up missed work following the guidelines listed previously in the handbook. Long-term exclusion up to and including permanent expulsion from school may be recommended by the building principal or designee to the superintendent.

### **Principal Suspension**

A principal's 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.

Parents/Guardians may appeal to the principal to reconsider the exclusion from school. For exclusions less than five days, the principal's decision is final. For exclusions more than five days, parents or guardians have the right to an appeal hearing with the superintendent or superintendent's designee. The superintendent's decision is final (See section on Due Process)

Such a suspension may be made pending an investigation of a student's conduct and recommendation of other disciplinary actions.

### **Superintendent Suspension**

The Michigan Revised School Code defines a Superintendent Suspension as an exclusion of a student from school and school district activities for disciplinary reasons for up to 59 days. This type of suspension is initiated when a principal recommends to the superintendent in writing that the student's action warrant an exclusion of more than 10 days. The superintendent may affirm that recommendation and assign a Superintendent's Suspension of 11 to 59 days for a Superintendent's Expulsion (see section later in the handbook), modify the recommendation to 10 days or less, or reverse the decision by removing the suspension altogether (see section on Due Process).

### **Superintendent Expulsion**

The Michigan Revised School Code defines a Superintendent Expulsion as an exclusion of a student from school and school district activities for disciplinary reasons for a period of 60 to 180 days. This type of suspension is initiated when a principal recommends to the superintendent in writing that the

student's actions warrant an exclusion of more than 10 days. The superintendent may affirm that recommendation and assign a Superintendent's Suspension of 11 to 59 days or a Superintendent's Expulsion (see section later in the handbook), modify the recommendation to 1 day or less, or reverse the decision by removing the suspension altogether. (see section on Due Process)

### **Board of Education Expulsion**

The Michigan Revised School Code defines a Board of Education expulsion as a permanent exclusion of a student from all Michigan public schools and activities. This type of exclusion is initiated when a principal recommends to the superintendent that the student's actions warrant permanent expulsion under district policy and the Michigan revised School Code. The Superintendent may affirm that recommendation and recommend to the Board of Education that the student be permanently excluded, amend the recommendation to a Superintendent Suspension or Expulsion or Principal's Suspension, or reverse the recommendation and remove all disciplinary action. The Board of Education may affirm the recommendation of the Superintendent and permanently exclude the student, amend the recommendation to a Superintendent Suspension or Expulsion or Principal's Suspension, or reverse the recommendation and remove the disciplinary action.

### **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 or moves.

### **Hazing**

The Board of Education has approved policies prohibiting hazing by both students and employees of the Utica Community Schools. Hazing is inherently hazardous and may place its victims at risk of physical or emotional harm. Consequently, hazing is absolutely prohibited.

As defined, hazing is any action or the coercion of another – including the victim – to perform any act that endangers physical safety of a student or employee, produces mental or physical discomfort, causes embarrassment or ridicule or degrades the student or employee, regardless of that person's willingness to take part.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who participates in hazing.

### **Bullying and 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, UticaCommunity 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 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's 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.

### **Substance Abuse**

Being under the influence, use or possession of alcohol, illicit drugs, controlled substances, drug paraphernalia, vaping paraphernalia, hookah pens and similar devices or a substance which is represented as a drug or look-alike drug on school property by students is prohibited.

The prohibition of these substances and/or items includes extracurricular or school-related activities that take place both at or away from school. Students who violate this policy will receive the following consequences:

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 required 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 or distribution of illicit drugs, controlled substances, look-alike drugs 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 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, seven 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."

Violation of this policy will result in the following consequences:

1. First offense: One day suspension. Parents must be contacted and informed of the offense and the 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.

### **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 (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.

### **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, 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 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 their parents or guardians. Students are encouraged to report any conduct that 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 the Superintendent's designee.

### **Weapons, Criminal Sexual Conduct, Arson and Physical Assault of an Employee**

Students in possession of a dangerous weapon in a weapon-free zone or who commit arson or criminal sexual conduct\* or, if in the sixth grade or above, 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 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.

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\*.
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 permanent expulsion of 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 UCS §921) in weapon-free school zone if both of the following are met:

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

Students permanently expelled as is permissible under Board 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 UCS 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.

### **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 UCS control and supervision 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 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:

- Weapons under the control of law enforcement personnel.
- 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).
- Theatrical props used in appropriate settings.
- Starter pistols used in appropriate sporting events.
- Instruments or equipment as required by District operations, 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 UCS website.

### **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 or rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a 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 UCS 921.

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

- A. The object or instrument possessed by the pupil was not possessed for use as a weapon, or for direct or indirect delivery to another person for use as a weapon.

- B. The weapon was not knowingly possessed by the pupil.
- C. The pupil did not know or have reason to know that the object or instrument possessed by the pupil constituted a dangerous weapon.
- D. The weapon was possessed by the pupil at the suggestion, direction or request or with the express permission of school or police authorities.

As permitted by Board policy and 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 or rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, a missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce, a mine or similar devices or any other weapon as set forth in 18 UCS 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 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.

**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 Executive Director 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, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Elliot-Larsen Civil Rights Act and Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act are:

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 Disabilities 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:

Executive Director 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 may discuss the grievance informally and on a verbal basis with the building principal or the Executive Director 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:

1. Step 1. A written statement of the grievance signed by the complainant shall be submitted to the Executive Director of Human Resources within five (5) business days of receipt of answers to the informal complaint. The Executive Director of

Human Resources shall further investigate the matters of grievance and reply in writing to the complainant within five (5) business days.

2. Step 2. A complainant wishing to appeal the decision of the Executive Director of Human Resources 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 Executive Director of Human Resources, upon 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 the notice is based may be found in the office of the Executive Director of Human Resources.

### **Report Violations**

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