



# **Mary E. Finn School**

## **Parent Handbook**

### **2024-2025**

**<http://finn.nsboro.k12.ma.us>**

**60 Richards Rd. Southborough, MA 01772**

**Clayton T. Ryan, Principal**

**Phone 508-485-3176**

**Fax 508-229-4449**

**[CRyan@nsboro.k12.ma.us](mailto:CRyan@nsboro.k12.ma.us)**

#### **School Hours:**

#### **Kindergarten & First Grade**

**9:10am - 3:25pm**

#### **Preschool**

**4 Half- day class - Monday through Thursday**

**Morning Session: 8:30-11:00am; Afternoon Session: 12:00- 2:30pm**

**4 Full day class - Monday - Thursday 8:30 am-2:30pm**

**5 Full day class - Monday - Friday 8:30am- 2:30pm**

## **Message From the Principal**

As we begin the 2024-2025 school year, I want to welcome you and extend a commitment on behalf of all Finn faculty and staff to work with you to make this year a very happy and productive one for your child(ren).

Each child in our school is unique. As parents, you know your child best. We invite you to share your expertise and insights about your child with us. Together, we will share the joys and responsibilities of helping your child learn and grow. Regular communication and a partnership between home and school will enhance the quality of every child's educational experience. The exchange of information will be key to the success of our mutual efforts.

A Finn School web page is available for you at <http://finn.nsboro.k12.ma.us/pages/Finn> so please visit us on the web for current information and updates. The web page includes a welcome video, staff listing, lunch menus, special events, teacher web pages and educational links to assist students' with academic progress.

I wish to emphasize our commitment to providing a strong and balanced educational program. We sincerely want you to join us in the educational process in the hope that our mutual effort will make the Finn years stimulating and enjoyable for your child.

Yours truly,

Clayton T. Ryan

**SOUTHBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION**

53 Parkerville Rd.  
Southborough, MA 01772  
(508) 486-5115

Gregory Martineau  
Superintendent of Schools

Stephanie Reinhorn  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Keith Lavoie  
Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations

Rebecca Pelligrino  
Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance

Marie Alan  
Director of Student Support Services

Deborah Lemieux  
Assistant Director of Student Support Services

Helene Desjardins  
Assistant Director of Student Support Services

Kate Clark  
Assistant Director of Student Support Services

Selvi Oyola  
Director of English Language Learning

Heather Richards  
Director of Human Resources

Cathleen Carmignani  
Director of Instructional Technology and Science

## **SOUTHBOROUGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

CHAIR: Chelsea Malinowski  
VICE CHAIR: Roger Challen  
SECRETARY: Laura Kauffmann  
Alan Zulick  
*Vacancy*

## **SOUTHBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

It is the Mission of the Public Schools of Southborough to maximize academic achievement, social responsibility and lifelong learning by attending to the intellectual and developmental needs of individual students in supportive classroom environments.

### **CORE VALUES**

- Quality education is best realized with highly motivated, skilled and supportive teachers.
- Active involvement of the family and community is essential to successful student learning.
- Respect for the diversity and dignity of individuals and groups is embraced.
- Learning is dynamic. Students relate new information to previous knowledge and make lasting connections between school experiences and their world.

### **CORE PRINCIPLES**

- All students will have access to high quality and diverse learning experiences.
- Teaching will bring together several subject areas, encouraging students to connect related information.
- Teaching will include a variety of strategies and methodologies to meet the needs of all students.

## **MARY FINN SCHOOL- PAST AND PRESENT**

The Mary E. Finn School is named in honor of a former Southborough teacher who taught for more than 50 years prior to her retirement in 1963. In 1965 the school was built to serve as a neighborhood school, housing grades 1 through 6. In 1996 the citizens of Southborough voted to approve special funding to finance a major renovation and addition to the Mary E. Finn School. The renovated building was completed in 2002 and housed pre-K through grade 2. With the opening of the Woodward school in 2003, grade 2 moved to Woodward, resulting in our current grade configuration: pre-K through grade 1.

### **ABSENCES**

If a child is to be absent from school, parents are requested to call the Finn School office at Finn 508-485-3176 (ext. 100) to report the absence. Voice mail will be activated at 4:00 p.m. daily and remains on until the school office opens at 8:00 a.m. In addition, parents can send an email to [finnattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us](mailto:finnattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us) Please do not email the student's teacher to report absences.

If reporting your child absent please include the following information in your voicemail or email; the child's name, dates of absence, reason for absence and the parent's or guardian's name. Generally, absences due to any of the following reasons will be considered excused:

- Illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Religious Holidays
- Court appearances
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal) If

a student is absent and the school has not been notified, Parents will be contacted via phone.

Please refer to the **HEALTH** section of this handbook for guidelines on children returning to school after they have had a communicable illness.

### **ATTENDANCE**

It is essential that children be assisted in developing habits of regular attendance and punctuality if they are to make continuous progress in school. When an absence due to illness is expected to be of unusual duration, parents should notify the school office so that the possibility of the need for home instruction can be considered.

If a student is absent from school and a parent/guardian has not informed the school of the basis for the student's absence within three (3) calendar days of the absence, the parent/guardian will be contacted by the school.

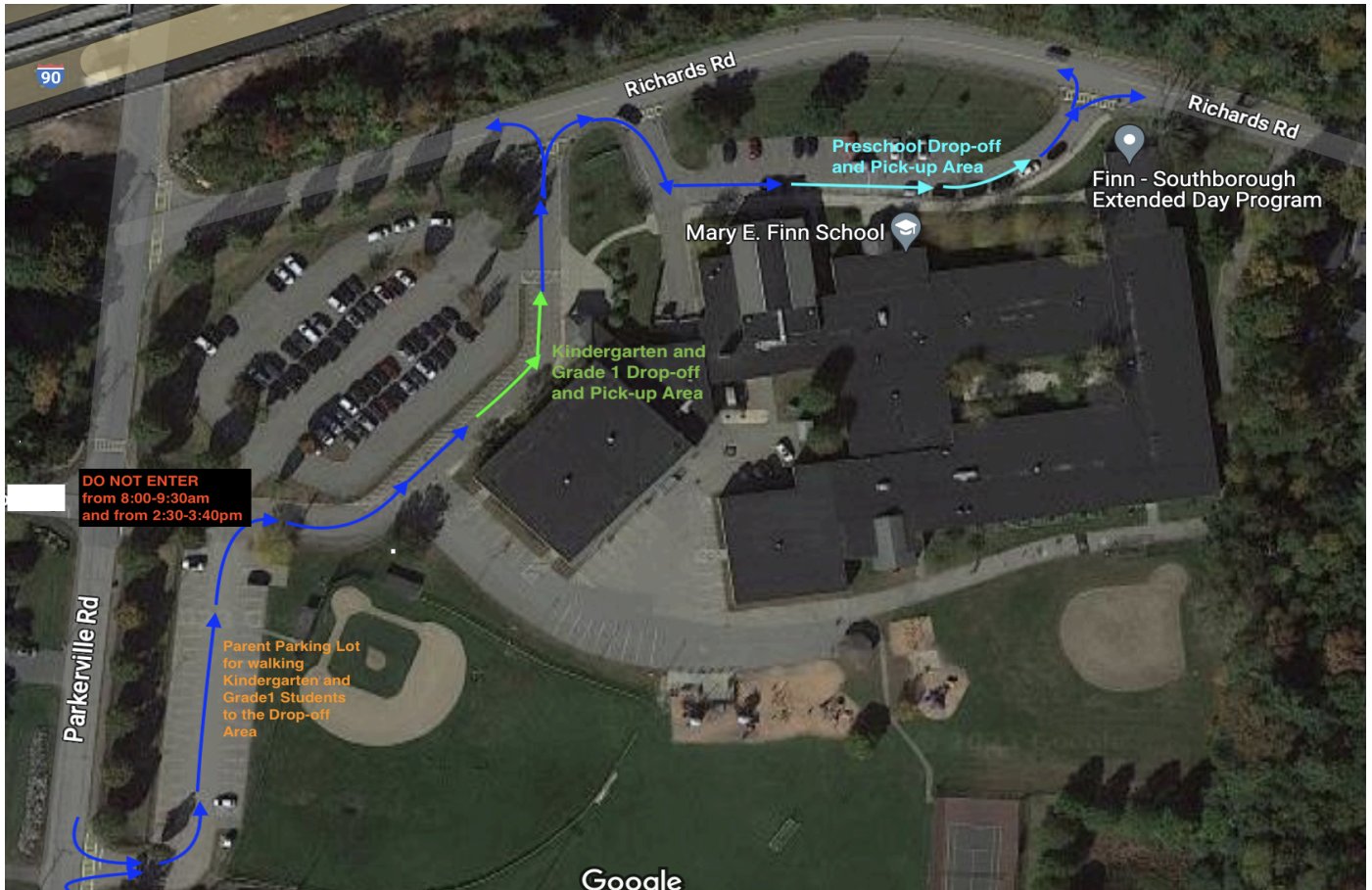
The Principal or designee will notify a student's parents/guardians when the student has accumulated **five** (5) or more unexcused absences in the school year or has missed two (2) or more classes over five (5) cumulative school days in the school year due to unexcused tardies. Under such circumstances, the Principal may meet with the student and the student's parents/guardians to develop action steps to improve the student attendance. The parties may also seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human services, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

In the event that a student is absent without valid excuse in excess of ten (10) consecutive school days, the student will be subject to disenrollment from the District. Prior to a student's disenrollment, an Exit Interview Meeting will be conducted with the student and parents/guardians in accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts law. M.G.L. c. 76, § 18.



## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

(please refer to photo of designated areas below)



### **STUDENT ARRIVAL- BUSES (8:55am- 9:10am)**

Students who arrive to school via school bus will exit their bus under the direction of the bus driver, who will dismiss students according to row, starting with the first row and proceeding back. Students will then proceed through one of two main doors of the main entrance of the Finn School and will proceed directly to their classrooms. Finn students should be seated in the front third of the bus. Woodward students in the middle and Neary students in the back third. Based on seat availability.

### **STUDENT ARRIVAL- STUDENT DROP-OFF (8:55am- 9:10am)**

Parents who opt to drive their children to school need to enter the student drop-off loop (see attached photo). Once your vehicle has entered the student drop-off loop, is at the designated “Drop-off Zone” (red painted curb area), and Finn staff are present, your child will be allowed to exit your vehicle curbside and proceed on the sidewalk, entering the Finn School via the gym entrance doors. Staff are no longer allowed to unbuckle students from their carseats or enter your vehicle for any reason. Once inside the building, students will be directed to proceed to their classrooms.

Students who arrive at school at **9:10am or later** are considered tardy and we ask that you park your vehicle in the lower parking lot and walk your child to the main entrance of the school. Once at the main entrance of the school, parents must signal their arrival through our intercom/security system. Parents will then be allowed entry into the waiting area (space between main and secondary doors) where they will need to sign the Finn arrival/dismissal form and wait for a Finn school staff member to receive the student and transition the student to their classroom.

### **STUDENT DISMISSAL- STUDENT PICK-UPS (3:25pm)**

Those students who are not riding the bus and who are having a designated adult picking them will be called down to the pickup check-in area by grade. There they will be asked to identify themselves (parents, please practice first and last name with your child) and proceed to sectioned off areas of the gym, where they will wait until their designated adult has arrived to pick them up.

### **STUDENT DISMISSAL- BUSES (3:25pm- 3:45pm)**

Students who take the bus home each day will be dismissed at 3:25pm and gather in the cafeteria according to bus number. As each bus arrives in the outer loop in front of the school, the bus number will be called and students will then transition out to their bus.

**Please remember that all changes in student dismissal plans may be made via phone or email ([finnattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us](mailto:finnattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us)) to the main office by 2:00pm the day of the change. Please do not email the teacher as they do not always have a chance to check email during the school day.**

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If a student needs to be dismissed earlier than the end of the scheduled school day, parents need to park in the parking lot and proceed to the Main Entrance of the school. Once at the main entrance of the school, parents must signal their arrival through our intercom/security system. Parents will then be allowed entry into the waiting area (space between main and secondary doors) where they will need to sign the Finn arrival/dismissal form and wait for a Finn school staff member to bring the student to the waiting area. At this time there are no unauthorized visitors allowed in the school.

**All students are assigned to a bus so if your student will not be taking the bus, you must notify the office in writing of their dismissal plans.** If a change to the regular dismissal schedule for a child is anticipated, parents must notify the school office in writing. Children will not be released to other adults unless authorization has been given by the parents. This is a safeguard for all children and it will not be compromised.

For the safety and welfare of our students, we would remind you that Massachusetts law prohibits the prolonged idling of motor vehicles on school grounds. M.G.L. c.90, §16B. Violators will be subject to a fine.

### **PRESCHOOL STUDENT ARRIVAL**

**PK Preschool drop off for all morning and full-day sessions is at 8:30- 8:45am.**

**Afternoon half-day session arrival drop off is at 12:00pm.**



PK students who arrive at school at 8:45am or later are considered tardy and we ask that you park your vehicle in the main parking lot in front of the school and walk your child to the main entrance of the school.

Parents who drive their children to school need to enter the PK Student Drop-off loop (see attached front of the school-main entrance driveway). PK Student Drop-off is designated in RED along the main sidewalk of the Finn School. There will be two active lines for drop off and pick up. Cars will be to the far right of the driveway loop, closest to the curb. Vans will be in the outer lane to the left of the cones.

Once your vehicle has entered the PK Student Drop-off loop and you have proceeded to a RED section of the sidewalk you may allow your child to exit your vehicle on the passenger's side of your vehicle, curbside (It is your responsibility to unbuckle your child and get them ready to exit your vehicle. Parents should stay in their car, and school staff will open the car door and help your child exit the car). There your child will be met by a PK staff member and escorted into the school.

### **PRESCHOOL STUDENT DISMISSAL- PARENT PICK-UPS**

**Morning half-day session dismisses at 11:00am.**

**Full day session dismisses at 2:30pm.**

**Half day afternoon session dismisses at 2:30pm.**

At your child's designated dismissal time PK students will transition out of their classrooms and wait in two designated waiting areas for the child's name to be called and escorted out to the adult picking them up.

Prior to picking up your child and pulling into the pickup loop, you should hang the name placard issued to you, with your child's name printed on it.

At dismissal Finn staff will be outside at the arrival/dismissal area, relaying to staff which parents are in line to pick-up their child. Once you enter the active pick up area (as denoted by signs and a red curb) and see your child walking towards the car, please exit the car and assist your child in getting buckled into his/her care seat. Please DO NOT exit your car until you are in the active pick up area. Once the child is safely in the vehicle and buckled, the vehicle must proceed through the line and exit the loop. If the designated person picking up your child is someone other than a parent in a different vehicle, please be sure to make a second sign with your child's name on it for that adult's vehicle.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Children are requested not to distribute invitations to their birthday parties at school. Due to confidentiality, teachers may not provide lists of names, addresses or phone numbers. However, Southborough Organization for Schools, SOS does publish an opt-in student school directory. Please see their website <https://www.southboroughsos.org/> for specific information.

Your child's birthday will be honored in the classroom with a **non-food celebration**. If parents prefer that their child not participate in school birthday celebrations, the child's teacher should be contacted.

### **SNACKS**

Every class has snack time once a day, either in the morning, depending on their lunchtime. Snacks are the responsibility of the parent. There is no school provided snack. In classrooms with food allergies, there is no peanut/nut snack allowed. We encourage snacks to be healthy and nutritious. Please contact our school nurse if your child has any food or allergies we should be aware of.

### **BUSES**

The bus schedule is listed on the district website ([www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/pages/Northboro-Southboro](http://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/pages/Northboro-Southboro)), in mysouthborough.com, The Villager, and the MetroWest Daily News and in a mailing that goes to all homes in Southborough from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, prior to the opening of school each fall.

### **WAITING FOR THE BUS**

Students should be on time for the bus. Bus drivers will not wait for students who are not at the stop on time. All students should adhere to the following when waiting for and transitioning to the bus.

Observe all safety precautions while waiting for the bus:

- Do not play in the roads
- If possible, avoid crossing streets
- Do not push, pull, or chase any other students
- Avoid trespassing on private property
- Keep voices to a minimum

As your bus approaches, line up at least six feet off the roadway, and do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door.

### **LOADING THE BUS**

- Get on your bus in a single-file manner, one after the other
- Be seated, face forward, and put your seat belt on
- Remain seated and keep aisles and exits clear
- Listen carefully and obey any directions issued by the driver

### **BEHAVIOR WHILE RIDING ON THE BUS**

- Observe classroom conduct, and obey the driver promptly and respectfully
- The use of profane language, eating food, and drinking of any type is prohibited on the bus
- Do not throw or pass objects on, from or into the bus
- Hazardous materials, objects, and animals are prohibited on the bus
- Leaving and boarding the bus at locations other than the assigned home stop or assigned school is not allowed without permission from the building administrator

- Putting head, arms, or objects out of bus windows is forbidden. In case of serious or recurring misconduct, the bus driver will describe the violations in writing on the appropriate forms to the school administrator designated to deal with discipline

### **SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE REPORT**

Students who do not abide by the rules on the bus will receive a school discipline report written by the bus driver and may be issued the following consequences.

*First Offense:* Student spoken to and reminded of bus rules by school administrator

*Second Offense:* Student spoken to and assigned designated seat (directly behind bus driver)

*Third Offense:* Student suspended from the bus for three days -School attendance required

*Fourth Offense:* Student suspended from the bus for five days - School attendance required *Fifth*

*Offense:* A meeting between student, parent, and school administration to determine action to be taken

The Southborough Public Schools reserves the right to discipline students for any school bus violation noted above. Please speak with your child concerning appropriate bus behavior for their safety and the safety of all of its passengers. The school administrators have the right to permanently remove a child from the buses if necessary to enforce safety.

Children may not take any bus other than their regularly assigned one. Parents are responsible for their child's transportation to and from social, athletic or other activities.

School bus students and their parents are reminded that the privilege of riding school buses to and from school, if abused, can be revoked.

School bus drivers will not drop children off without an adult present. If there is no adult at the bus stop, children will be brought back to the Finn School. Parents will be responsible for picking up their child at the Finn School.

### **CALENDAR**

The annual school calendar is made available to all parents in the month of August. The calendar lists days when school is not in session, early release days, vacation days, conference days, and the kindergarten changeover at the half year. Please refer to the inside cover of this handbook for specific Finn events.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

In the spring of each year, classroom teachers meet by grade level to make student groupings for the following year, taking into account students' all around functioning and ability. Our goal is to establish viable classes that are heterogeneous regarding academic proficiency, special needs/aptitudes, learning styles, peer relationships, leadership qualities, artistic and athletic strengths, cultural heritage, race and gender. We believe that students learn better in a learning environment that is diverse.

The administration and teachers who work with your child determine class placement. Over the past few years, we have found that multiple requests from parents regarding friendships have complicated an already complex placement process and have created added distractions that take away from student

learning. Our teachers have a clear understanding of your child's needs, learning style, and social and emotional growth. This information, coupled with our thoughtful placement process, will yield classrooms that are well balanced and designed to support the needs of each learner.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is an essential aspect of an active and effective partnership between school and home. Therefore, the Finn administration and faculty encourage regular communication, active involvement in the school, and shared decision making and problem solving. Parents should feel free to contact the school whenever there is a question or concern. A child's teacher is the best person to answer parent questions and one should always start with him or her.

Throughout the school year, workshops and programs will be offered to all parents related to children's learning and development in school and at home. There will be programs that address curriculum issues, as well as, information regarding how parents can help their children at home. A very important event for all parents is the Open House/Curriculum Night which occurs the afternoon of the day before the first day of school.

Weekly communication containing important school information is sent out from your child's teacher and by school administration and is also on our webpage. This communications contain valuable information about school and Southborough Organization for Schools, S.O.S., activities, which often require parent responses. Individual classroom teacher messages to parents happen weekly.

### **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

Please refer to the below stated policy regarding parent concerns:

- Begin by talking with the classroom teacher.
- If matters discussed remain unresolved, parents may contact the principal.
- If still not satisfied, parents may call the Superintendent of Schools for an appointment.
- If parental concerns or questions are not resolved at this level, a hearing with the School Committee may be scheduled.
- For bus related concerns parents should contact the main office directly.

### **CONFERENCES**

Formal conferences with every parent are typically scheduled in October and in April. Conferences may also be requested by parents or faculty at any time throughout the year (Also, see section on **REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS**).

### **CURRICULUM**

The Mary Finn School curriculum emphasizes the development of the whole child. Classroom programs are designed to foster academic, physical, social and emotional development. It is acknowledged that all children are functioning at different levels and have differing needs and interests. Teachers seek to cultivate strengths and incorporate varied learning styles.

Teachers aim to develop students' critical and creative thinking skills via curriculum that is based on inquiry, problem solving, discovery and application of skills and concepts. Instruction is through thematic and interdisciplinary units of study, which help students to make connections within and across disciplines.

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

On occasion there will be early release days. On these days, the children in Preschool are dismissed at 11:30 and students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 are dismissed at 12:20 p.m. No lunch is served on Early Release Days. Early release days provide the opportunity for teachers to prepare for the Curriculum Night presentation and to hold parent/teacher conferences. In addition, the days before Thanksgiving, the winter break, and the last day of school are early release days.

### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORMS**

Student Information Forms are an essential part of your child's file. These forms must be filled out promptly and accurately and returned to school to ensure the well-being of each child. If a child is injured or becomes ill, or if there is an emergency closing, a parent or the parent designee will be called to pick up the child. If a parent is not available, an Emergency Contact will be called. Emergency Contacts, like parents/guardians, should be people who are able to be at the Finn School within 30 minutes of a call being made to them. All Emergency Contacts need to be easily reached. This information **MUST** be kept current at all times. Please notify the school if there is any change in this vital information, which includes home address, phone number, work number, child's doctors, and other individuals authorized to pick up a child from school.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Educational field trips are taken by each grade as an extension of the curriculum. All information regarding field trips is sent home with a permission slip. Permission slips must be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to school prior to the trip. Although field trips are heavily subsidized by Finn S.O.S., each family is also asked to contribute a small amount to help cover costs. Any family with a financial need may contact the principal in confidence. Students will be transported by school bus and chaperoned by teachers and parent volunteers. A nurse will also accompany the students.

### **GIFTS TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

From time to time or on occasions such as holidays or at the end of the year, parents may wish to show appreciation for their child's teacher or another staff member. We ask that parents and community members follow the gift giving guidelines established by the state of Massachusetts.

<https://www.mass.gov/news/ethics-commission-reminds-public-employees-about-restrictions-on-gifts>

In addition parents may want to recognize their child's teacher in a special way, the following suggestions might be helpful:

- Have your child make a card for his/her teacher.
- Have your child make a homemade gift.
- Bake a treat with your child to give to the teacher.

- Make a contribution in honor of your child's teacher to the Southborough Education Foundation.
- Contribute to the class with items such as film, puzzles, games, jump ropes.
- As an alternative, there is a notebook in the school office entitled "Teachers' Wish List" in which teachers have identified supplies and items needed in their classrooms. Parents should feel free to come in and look at the notebook at any time.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

[Southborough Wellness Policy J-320](#)

[Northborough Wellness Policy J-320](#)

A registered school nurse is available on campus during regular school hours 8:30am- 3:25pm. School nurses provide care for all students, including first aid, emergency care and assessment, the management of chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, seizures, food allergies, etc), support for mental health concerns, preventive services, and communication with the school team, families and community providers.

## **HEALTH INFORMATION**

It is imperative that parent or guardian and emergency contact information, including phone numbers and electronic mail addresses, be kept up-to-date. **Parent(s) or guardian(s) should update this information at the beginning of each school year by completing the PowerSchool returning student online form.** The PowerSchool returning student form must be up to date for students to go on field trips or participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Please ensure the returning student form includes information about significant medical conditions and medication taken at home. Throughout the school year, it is essential to inform the nurse of any changes or updates in your child's medical history or medication changes.

If a student has medical needs and is staying after school for extracurricular clubs or activities, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to inform the nurses and club advisor.

## **IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL EXAM**

Proof of up-to-date immunizations is required by state law before entrance into The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough Public School district per the [Northborough School Immunization Policy](#) [Southborough School Immunization Policy](#).

The school is required to have proof of a physical exam upon entrance into school and every three to four years thereafter. An updated physical exam is required prior to entry into 4th grade.

Immunization records and physical documentation can be provided to the school nurse as a secure document via email [\*\*tfrutman@nsboro.k12.ma.us\*\*](mailto:tfrutman@nsboro.k12.ma.us), via fax **508-229-4449** , or a hard copy can be brought to the school's Health Office.



## **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

Students who become ill while at school should access the Health Office for an assessment. The nurse will evaluate the student and contact the parent or guardian to discuss the proper disposition. If your child contacts you directly for dismissal from school for illness/health reasons, and they have not yet been seen at the Health Office, please direct your child to the Health Office for an evaluation. A Health Office visit is required before dismissal for the dismissal to be medically excused. In case of serious illness, injury, or emergency during the school day, all attempts will be made to contact a parent or guardian first. Then, emergency contacts will be called.

## **MEDICATION AT SCHOOL**

Under Massachusetts law, a licensed nurse must have a current medication order from a licensed prescriber to administer any medication, whether a prescription or an over-the-counter medication. The following policy applies in The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough.

- Prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications, and inhalers to be administered under the above conditions must be brought to the nurse by the parent or guardian in the original properly labeled container.
- School policy prohibits students from carrying medications on their person or having them in their possession without the prior approval of the school nurse.
- No medication will be administered in school without a written order from a licensed prescriber and parent or guardian permission if under 18. This written order must be signed and dated for a closed period of time and include instructions for dispensing.
- A Medication Administration Plan (MAP) signed by a parent or guardian, or student if over 18 years old, must be submitted to the nurse concerning the dispensing of medication.
- For short-term prescription medication requiring administration for ten (10) school days or less, the pharmacy-labeled container may be used in lieu of a licensed prescriber's order. If the nurse has a question, she may request a written order from a licensed prescriber.
- Each school calendar year requires a new written order from the licensed prescriber and a new Medication Administration Plan (MAP) for the dispensing of the medication.

For more information, please refer to [105 C.M.R. 210](#).

## **HEALTH SCREENINGS**

Massachusetts mandates the following screenings be completed in the elementary grades:

- Vision - Grades K-5
- Hearing - Grades K-3

- Postural screenings: Grade 5
- BMI (Body Mass Index): Grades 1 and 4

The parent or guardian may request in writing that a student be excused from screening. A separate request is required for each screening.

When vision, hearing, and postural screenings are complete, the parent or guardian will be notified if a referral is necessary.

**[KEEPING YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL](#)** (click on the link)

**When ill and wondering if you should stay home or not, please follow the recommendations in **RED**.**

**Fever** (>100.0° Fahrenheit or higher):

- **Remain home until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.**

**Respiratory Viruses ( Influenza, RSV, COVID-19)** - Respiratory virus symptoms may include, but are not limited to, runny nose, sore throat, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, fever, malaise, and headache. If symptoms are associated with a fever or do not readily improve, please consult your healthcare provider. Sometimes, symptoms can be serious, especially for immunocompromised individuals, infants, and older adults.

- **Remain home for at least 24 hours and until both are true:**
  - **Your symptoms are getting better (and you will have the stamina to make it through the school day)**
  - **You have been fever-free for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medications)**

**Persistent cough, difficulty breathing, wheezing, shortness of breath -**

- If not associated with a pre-existing condition, consult your healthcare provider.
  - **Remain home until evaluated by a healthcare provider and the individual has the stamina to make it through the school day.**
- If associated with a pre-existing condition
  - **Remain home until the individual has the stamina to make it through the school day.**

**Sore throat -** A sore throat with a fever, headache, or stomach ache may indicate **strep throat**.

- If diagnosed with strep throat, remain home until both are true:
  - a minimum of 12 hours after antibiotics have started
  - fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications

**Hand, foot, and mouth (Coxsackie virus)** - usually begins with mild fever, poor appetite, malaise, and sore throat. One or two days after the fever starts, sores develop in the mouth, usually on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks. A skin rash, usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the

feet, with flat or raised red spots and sometimes blisters, develops over 1–2 days. Individuals may attend school with the rash; there is no need to exclude anyone feeling well enough to attend school.

- Remain home until fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications, and the individual has the stamina to make it through the school day.

**Conjunctivitis (pink eye)** – Some signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis are when the white part of the eye is red; eyes are itchy and produce a yellow or green crusty discharge. If suspected, contact your physician. If conjunctivitis is suspected while your child is at school, you may be asked to pick up your child to decrease the potential spread.

- Remain home until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment starts or when cleared by a healthcare provider (if no antibiotic treatment is needed).

**Rash** – A rash is usually a symptom of an underlying condition or disorder; a rash can be caused by a viral illness or exposure to an irritant.

- Remain home for any unusual rashes or a rash associated with a fever, and contact your healthcare provider.

**Vomiting and Diarrhea** – There are many causes for vomiting and diarrhea, including viruses. Take extra care with handwashing on return to school, especially after using the bathroom.

- Remain home until symptom-free for 12 to 24 hours and at least two regular meals have been consumed without symptoms returning.

## **ALLERGIC REACTION AND EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTOR USE**

- Parents or guardians must provide the Health Office with an epinephrine auto-injector and related physician orders/allergy action plans for students with known allergies. If no allergy action plan is provided, the standing orders for epinephrine administration from the school physician will be followed.
- If a student without a known allergy experiences an allergic reaction, the standing orders from the school physician will be followed.
- If an epinephrine auto-injector is administered to any individual, the individual will be transported to the nearest hospital via ambulance, and the parent or guardian will be notified of the transport.

In all cases requiring the transport via ambulance, the parents or guardians will assume the cost of the ambulance.

## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

The Southborough school community supports homework that provides meaningful follow-up to what has been taught, that helps prepare students for what will be taught, that enriches students' grasp of the curriculum, and that allows parents to play an active role in their child's education. As students progress through the K-8 system, homework builds year to year in complexity, expectations and time. Students within each grade level will receive homework that reflects a consistent knowledge/skill base.

Homework goals and expectations are clearly established by classroom teachers and communicated with parents and students at the beginning of the school year. Individual student capabilities are always respected.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

### **School Closing Announcements**

When school closings need to be announced, the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough will make use of several different communication tools for notifying students and their families: our website, *ParentSquare*, and local television and radio stations.

#### **1. The Web Site of the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough**

Cancellations, delays and early dismissals will be posted first on the front page of the district web site, <http://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us>. This will be the earliest notification of school closings, posted at the very top of the front page.

#### **2. Phone Notification via *ParentSquare***

Through *ParentSquare* a message will be sent out to all households of school-attending students. These calls will be sent out at 5:30 AM for high school households and 6:00 for elementary and middle school households. Cancellation phone announcements made prior to schools opening in the morning will be made to households only.

How does *ParentSquare* work? As an example, at 5:00 AM on a snowy school morning the superintendent makes the decision to cancel school. The superintendent creates a message within *ParentSquare* and within minutes every household of students in the district receives a phone message announcing schools are closed for the day. It's that immediate!

#### **3. Announcements via Local Television and Radio Stations**

We will continue to post cancellation announcements through local media, as we traditionally have done in the past.

We encourage you to use a combination of the web, phone, television and radio to ensure that you are aware of weather-related closings in a timely manner.

### **Delayed Openings:**

During some inclement weather, there may be a two hour delayed opening. This means that school would start two-hours (2 hours) later, at **10:50 a.m.** Please DO NOT drop off children any earlier than the two-hours added on to our start time. Faculty and staff will not be in the building before that time; therefore, there will not be any supervision for children who arrive early. Parents are advised to continue to listen to their radio or TV after a delayed opening announcement since non improving weather conditions may necessitate a later announcement of "no school." There are no morning Preschool Sessions when the district has Delayed Openings.

### **Early Closings**

When schools must close early due to emergency conditions, the announcement will be posted on the district web site, sent to local media stations for announcement, and sent directly to you by phone through *ParentSquare*. Because many parents work, this *ParentSquare* message will be sent to all home, work and cell phone listings found in the contact information you have given your child's school.

When schools close early, students will be bussed from their school to their regular afternoon after-school destination, unless you have given your child's school office different instructions specifically for early closings.

### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

Registration for children entering kindergarten takes place in January for the upcoming school year. Any family listed on the town census with a child who will be five years of age by the following August 31st will automatically be contacted regarding registration.

### **KINDERGARTEN SCREENING**

Public Schools are required by Chapter 766, the Massachusetts Special Education Law, to conduct a screening of all kindergarten students. Typically, this screening takes place in the fall but can take place at any point during a student's kindergarten year. The purpose of screening is to identify those children who may benefit from further evaluation to determine if they have special needs. Kindergarten screening is a brief check of a child in the following domains:

- personal and social development
- speech and language skills
- reasoning skills
- eye-hand coordination
- small and large muscle control
- hearing

### **MEDIA LAB/LIBRARY**

#### **Media Lab/Library Classes:**

Classrooms visit the Media Lab/library each week. During this class, students learn about genres of books and how technology can be used to support literacy. Students also listen to a story and choose a book to check out. They learn how to take care of library books and how to find a book in the library. Students are expected to be responsible for their library books by returning them on time and in the same condition as when they were checked out.

#### **Lost and Overdue Books:**

If a book is several weeks overdue, parents will receive notices until either the book is returned, or a note is written confirming that the book is lost. If a library book is lost, the family will be billed for the replacement cost (\$15.00) per School Committee Policy.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Parents are advised to label their children's belongings and to refrain from sending any valuable items to school. Lost cash or jewelry will be kept in the office. Other items will be placed in the "Lost and Found Box" which is located on the stage in the school cafeteria. Parents are urged to look through the lost and found box periodically throughout the year. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity after an appropriate length of time.

### **LUNCH**

All full-day students are entitled to a free school lunch through. If this changes families will be notified by the District. Menus are available online on school and district websites. Students may purchase an additional lunch with milk (\$3.00), or milk may be purchased separately (.60). The fee for milk or the hot lunch is set at the beginning of the school year.

(The following information is only applicable if the District returns to charging students for lunch)

The school system provides free and reduced cost lunches to children whose family income falls within certain guidelines. Information regarding this program is sent home at the beginning of the year and is available on request through the school office. For your assistance, there is a link on the Finn website to pre-pay your lunches. <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/domain/92>

### **PARKING**

Parking space is extremely limited at the Finn School and the safety of all children is the first priority. **Parking or stopping of cars along fire lanes is not permitted.** If you need to park and enter the school, please use the designated parking areas out in the front of the building, across from the gym, or adjacent to Mooney Field.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Over the course of the school year there are 4 full days scheduled for staff professional development; there will be no school on two of these days. Professional development opportunities are mandated by the Department of Education and provide staff the opportunity to enhance their teaching skills by participating in workshops and courses. Please refer to the calendar for the designated dates.

### **REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS**

Written progress reports on all students are prepared by all classroom teachers. Reports on kindergartners and first graders are sent home in January and on the last day of school in June. (Also, see section on **CONFERENCES**).

### **RECESS**

First graders and Kindergarten students have a 30 minute recess during the day, prior to or directly after lunch. Weather permitting; recess is held outdoors, even on cold days and when it snows. It is important



that children wear warm coats, mittens and boots in winter. In order to play in the snow, children must wear snow pants and boots.

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Finn School Council was established as a result of the Education Reform Act of 1993. The Council consists of parents, teachers, principal and a community representative. The School Council is charged with assisting the principal with the identification of the educational needs of the students, reviewing the annual school budget, adopting the educational goals for the school, and formulating a School Improvement Plan.

In the case of openings, the Finn School principal will solicit council membership. Typically, there are 2 positions per school grade, representing the Finn School parent community. In the event of multiple interested parents (more than 2 per grade) an election process, organized and run by Finn S.O.S. will take place. Terms are for one, two or three years. If elections are required, they typically take place in the early fall.

### **SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

Finn Southborough Organization for Schools, S.O.S. publishes a school directory each fall. Inclusion in the directory is voluntary. The following information about each student is included in the directory: name, address, telephone number, grade level, teacher, and parents' names. A family may choose to receive a copy of the directory without being listed.

### **SOUTHBOROUGH ORGANIZATION FOR SCHOOLS (S.O.S.)**

#### **General S.O.S.**

The Southborough Organization for Schools (S.O.S.) is a group of highly dedicated parents and town residents, working with the staff and students of all the Southborough Schools to provide programs of cultural and curriculum enrichment. S.O.S. also sponsors many parent/family workshops and school social events. Each of the schools has its own S.O.S. organization, operating under the umbrella of General S.O.S., a non-profit organization. <https://www.southboroughsos.org/>

#### **Finn S.O.S.**

The primary mission of Finn S.O.S. is to raise funds and coordinate activities that enhance the basic school curriculum. Members of Finn S.O.S. are teachers, principal and parents of Finn students. Every parent of a Finn student is a member of S.O.S. Meetings are held monthly and are open to all members. Minutes of all meetings are posted in the Finn lobby for general viewing.

Finn S.O.S. coordinates most of the volunteer activities in the school. Monies earned through S.O.S. fund-raising activities help support curriculum enrichment and cultural arts programs.

### **SPECIAL SUBJECTS**

All Kindergarten and Grade 1 students have the following special subjects once per week: Media Lab/library, Physical Education, Music, Spanish, and Art. First grade and Kindergarten students have Media lab/Library, Art, and Music once per week and Physical Education and Spanish twice per week. Preschool students attend specials when their schedule allows and at this time only full-day preschool students are able to take part in certain specials. Special subjects are taught by licensed specialists in their fields. Whenever possible, these specialists work with classroom teachers to integrate learning experiences in content areas with the arts and movement.

### **R.A.P.**

The Finn R.A.P. (Recreation After School Program) is a not-for-profit after school program, administered by its own Board of Directors through the Southborough Recreation Department. Sessions are held in fall and mid-winter and spring. Course offerings and registration information will be made available on our website and notifications sent via email before each session. Any family with a financial need may contact the principal in confidence.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES Student Services:**

State and federal laws provide for a full range of programs and services for children who have identified special needs. Before a student is referred for a special education evaluation, all efforts will be made to meet the child's needs in the regular education program. Referrals for evaluations of eligibility for special education services or disability-based accommodations may be made by a parent, teacher, counselor or physician. No evaluation will be conducted without written consent from a parent and no services will be delivered without such written consent. If a special need is determined by the evaluation, school staff will work with parents to develop an appropriate Individualized Educational Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan for the child.

The District is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of their strengths or weaknesses. Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to enable them to make effective progress in school. Parents/guardians or teachers may refer students for an evaluation of the student's eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and/or M.G.L. c. 71B. Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Upon receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted, and a Team meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

Additionally, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") requires a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to any qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise

qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . “

Individuals who have complaints regarding the District’s compliance with Section 504 may bring suit in federal district court or file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA 02118. In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, parents/guardians may file a hearing request with the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals at 14 Summer Street, 4th Floor, Malden, MA 02148.

Along with specialized services, every attempt is made to modify programs in the general education classrooms to conform to the Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) and 504 Plans.

### **Southborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC)**

The mission of the Southborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC) is: "...to serve the community by providing support, information and training to families and teachers of students who have special needs in any of the following areas: developmental, intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, communication, physical, specific learning, health." More information can be found at the NS <https://www.nspac.org/>

The Southborough SPED PAC holds monthly meetings to address topics of concern such as parent training, education reform, new educational techniques and special services for children. There is also a resource library for parents to borrow special education books and brochures. A semi-monthly newsletter announces meetings and events. Parent volunteers are always needed to help with events and fund-raisers.

The SPED PAC is a wonderful way to get to know other parents whose children may share needs similar to your own child. Sharing strategies and information can be a wonderful support for parents and children. Please join us at our next meeting. For more information please refer to the following website [NSPAC@msn.com](mailto:NSPAC@msn.com).

### **VISITORS**

In order to ensure the safety of the children at the Mary Finn School, the school is secure during school hours and visitors must ring the door buzzer at the Main Entrance of the school in order to be let in. Once in all visitors must report to the school office, state the purpose of their visit, sign in and wear a visitor badge. Parents are not allowed any where in the building without an appointment. Items for students must be left in the office and will be delivered by a staff member.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

There is a high level of parent and community volunteerism at Finn School. If interested, there are many ways parents and community members can become involved. Parents may serve as room parents, lunch

helpers, helpers in the classroom, serve on Finn or General S.O.S., serve on the School Council and serve on system-wide curriculum committees or on interview committees.

A volunteer orientation is held in the fall of each year. At the orientation meeting, specific guidelines which all volunteers must follow are reviewed. All volunteers for the school must have an active CORI on file. A CORI check is good for 3 years, at each of the Southborough Schools. Parents/guardians that have not completed a CORI form will not be permitted to volunteer in classrooms or to chaperone on a field trip.

## **Public Schools of Northborough-Southborough Massachusetts Acceptable Use Policy for Technology - I-120 (6134)**

### **Overview**

The Northborough, Southborough, Northborough/Southborough Regional School Districts are very pleased to bring Internet access to our districts. Our goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in our schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. The purpose of this agreement is to support research and education in and among academic institutions by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of this access must be in support of education and research consistent with educational objectives.

### **Background**

The Internet is a vast collection of computers and users that have the ability to share information. Each computer that is connected becomes part of this global network. This allows individuals to quite easily send electronic letters, voice and video messages, pictures, and programs. Internet use enables teachers to bring experts right into the classroom and provides immeasurable resources with which to enhance the curriculum.

### **Guidelines**

Inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of Internet use and other disciplinary action deemed appropriate by officials. The administration determines what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. The School District has in place an Internet safety policy that includes the operation of a technology prevention measure that protects against Internet access for both adults and minors to visual depictions that are obscene, child pornography, and, with respect to use of the computers by minors, harmful to minors and includes monitoring the online activities of minors. An administrator, supervisor, and other authorized person may disable the technology protection measure, during use by an adult, only to enable access for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

- Users are expected to abide by the guidelines listed below for acceptable use of technological resources including the Internet. The user is personally responsible for his or her actions in accessing and using the school's computer resources.

- Computers, peripherals, and other technologies, such as personal assistants, are to be used for legitimate educational activities
- Use the Internet only to access educationally relevant materials
- Use e-mail for educational purposes only
- Illegal activities, including violation of copyright or other contracts, and unauthorized access including “hacking” are strictly forbidden
- Respect the rights of copyright owners and do not plagiarize work that you find on the Internet

### **Acceptable Use Policy for Technology**

Cite your sources - the MLA style for electronic sources is recommended (<http://www.mla.org>)\_

- Use appropriate language and do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language
- Do not participate in “chat rooms” or “instant messaging”
- Do not knowingly post or forward any information that is not true.
- Do not post private information about another person or post personal communications without the author's consent.
- Do not use the network or hardware to engage in bullying or harassment of others.
- Do not send any material that is likely to be offensive or objectionable to recipients
- Do not reveal your personal address or phone number or the personal address or phone number of other students, faculty, or administrators
- Do not trespass into anyone else's files, folders, or work
- Do not share your personal account with anyone or leave the account open or unattended
- Do not use an account assigned to another user
- Promptly disclose to the administration or designee any message you receive that is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Do not download any files or execute attachments that you did not request or did not expect to receive
- Do not do anything to damage any computer, software, system, or service that you are using and never send anyone else a file or command that may damage theirs

- Network storage areas may be reviewed by Network Administrators to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the students are using the system responsibly
- Computer storage space is not private and contents may be viewed at any time

**Resources:** Acceptable Use Policies from the Hampton-Dumont Community Schools, Florida Institute of Technology, University Liggett School, Shrewsbury Public Schools, Classroom Connect Internet site and Lightspan.com.

Adopted: February 11, 1997

Revised: May 10, 2000

Revised: February 13, 2002

### **E-MAIL GUIDELINES**

E-mail communication is common practice for many people. School personnel all have e-mail accounts and do their best to check messages once a day. However, most school employees have very little time during the day to access and respond to e-mail messages, as they are working with students. If your message is of urgent need, please call our main office: 508-485-3176.

Parents are asked to keep the following guidelines in mind as they write e-mail messages to school staff:

- E-mail sent through a public account is not considered private communication between parties and as such, nothing of a personal or sensitive nature should be disclosed in e-mail messages
- Please also keep in mind that although this form of communication is convenient, quick, and easy, it needs to be used carefully since the tone and intent can be misunderstood due to the lack of facial or voice cues.
- E-mail communications should be brief, concise, and if warranted, should be a request for a personal contact (phone call or note) if feedback is necessary
- E-mail is not a substitute for a conference, nor should it be a problem-solving tool, especially when children and their learning issues are the topic
- Timely information should not be included in e-mail messages as teachers may not be able to read or pass along within the expected timeframe, information that has an impact on a child's daily routine
- E-mail communication should be used as needed - It should not be a daily messaging tool used as a convenience

Messages sent that violate these guidelines may not get a response. At times, teachers and teaching teams may establish e-mail protocols with families that are mutually agreeable and which support students. It is important that we manage this technology so it remains a tool and not a replacement for individual conversations about students and their issues.

The guideline offered for checking whether e-mail messages are appropriate remains, "Don't write anything you wouldn't want to see printed on the front page of the newspaper."



## **MASSACHUSETTS STATUTES: STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE**

### **Disciplinary Due Process: Suspension and Expulsion**

The Administration has ultimate discretion to determine the proper disciplinary actions for any misbehavior. Depending upon their severity, certain violations of school rules and district policies may result in loss of social privileges, in-school, out-of-school suspension or, where authorized under Massachusetts law, expulsion from school.

Any specifics given in the policy are only guidelines; they are not absolute rules. The guidelines support the administration's collaboration and discretion on determining the best course of action to support student growth and development, as well as whole school safety. Disciplinary outcomes are specific to the student and the situation. Repetitive infractions of the same or similar behaviors will result in progressive discipline. All students and families will be provided with due process aligned with Massachusetts General Laws prior to the imposition of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

There are three statutes under Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) that govern student discipline in Massachusetts public schools. Those statutes are:

M.G.L. c.71, §37H  $\frac{3}{4}$  which includes school discipline not covered in 37 H and 37 H  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

M.G.L. c.71, §37H  $\frac{1}{2}$  which includes felony complaint or conviction

M.G.L. c. 71, §37H which includes possession of dangerous weapons, possession of controlled substances, and assaults on school staff.

Below is a detailed description of what each statute consists of:

M.G.L. c.71, §37H  $\frac{3}{4}$  - Suspension on Grounds other than Those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H  $\frac{1}{2}$

- (a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.
- (b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem-solving. The principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school- or

district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however, that school- or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.

- (c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.
- (d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.
- (e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian

of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

- (f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

For further information, please refer to M.G.L. c. 71, s. 37H3/4 and 603 CMR 53.00

### **Basic Student Discipline Definitions**

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (M.G.L. 603 CMR 53.00): means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten consecutive school days, or no more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes.

SHORT TERM SUSPENSION (M.G.L. 603 CMR 53.00): means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

LONG TERM SUSPENSION (M.G.L. 603 CMR 53.00): means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten consecutive school days, or for more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. No student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than 90 school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.

WRITTEN NOTICE: Written correspondence sent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent/guardian.

*PRINCIPAL*: The primary administrator of the school or the Principal's designee for disciplinary purposes. For purposes of proceedings conducted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and /or 37H1/2, however, the Principal shall not delegate responsibility for conducting the hearing to a designee.

SUPERINTENDENT: The Superintendent of the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough or the Superintendent's designee. For purposes of disciplinary appeal proceedings conducted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and /or 37H1/2, however, the Superintendent shall not delegate responsibility for conducting such appeals to a designee.

### **Emergency Removal**

Emergency Removals pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4: A Principal may remove a student accused of a school rules violation from school temporarily, and on an emergency basis, when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such a case, the Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student.

The emergency removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the Principal shall:

1. make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal,
2. the reason for the emergency removal;
3. the disciplinary offense;
4. the basis for the charge;
5. the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
6. the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the Principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing;
7. the date, time, and location of the hearing; and

8. the right of the student and the student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate

Before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent/guardian, the Principal must provide the student and parent/guardian an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with either the short-term suspension due process or long-term suspension due process procedures, as applicable.

Additionally, the Principal is required to render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of notice of the decision for short-term suspension or long-term suspension as set forth in this Handbook, whichever is applicable.

A Principal shall not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation.

M.G.L. c.71 §37H ½ - This statute includes a felony complaint or conviction of a student and Right to Appeal

- (1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the suspension.

- (2) Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may expel said student if such principal or headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive

written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

The student shall have the right to appeal the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student under an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

M.G.L. c.71 §37H – Possession of dangerous weapon, controlled substances, and assaults of school staff

- (a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
- (c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

- (d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a

hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

(e) Any school district that suspends or expels a student under this section shall continue to provide educational services to the student during the period of suspension or expulsion, under section 21 of chapter 76. If the student moves to another district during the period of suspension or expulsion, the new district of residence shall either admit the student to its schools or provide educational services to the student in an education service plan, under section 21 of chapter 76.

(f) Districts shall report to the department of elementary and secondary education the specific reasons for all suspensions and expulsions, regardless of duration or type, in a manner and form established by the commissioner. The department of elementary and secondary education shall use its existing data collection tools to obtain this information from districts and shall modify those tools, as necessary, to obtain the information. On an annual basis, the department of elementary and secondary education shall make district level de-identified data and analysis, including the total number of days each student is excluded during the school year, available to the public online in a machine readable format. This report shall include district level data disaggregated by student status and categories established by the commissioner.

(g) Under the regulations promulgated by the department, for each school that suspends or expels a significant number of students for more than 10 cumulative days in a school year, the commissioner shall investigate and, as appropriate, shall recommend models that incorporate intermediary steps prior to the use of suspension or expulsion. The results of the analysis shall be publicly reported at the school district level.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

Any student who is disciplined pursuant to the statutes above shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, makeup assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the School's Education Services Plan. M.G.L. c. 76, §21

## **Discipline Procedures and Students with Disabilities**

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require that additional provisions be made for:

- Students who have been found eligible for special education services under the IDEA.

- Students who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for special education services. The school is deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:

(1) the student's parent/guardian expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel, or the student's teacher, that the student is in need of special education and related services; or

(2) the student's parent/guardian requested an evaluation of the child; or

(3) the student's teacher, or other school personnel, expressed specific concerns directly to the director of special education or to other supervisory personnel about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The school is not deemed to have knowledge of a disability if (1) the parent/guardian has not allowed an evaluation or has refused special education and related services, or (2) the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability.

- Students who have been found to have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

These students are generally entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short-term removals that exceed ten (10) school days in a given year.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a student's eligibility for special education services during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services beyond those that the student may be entitled to under M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

The following additional requirements apply to the discipline of students with disabilities:

- Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for ten (10) school days or less in the school year to the extent that such disciplinary sanctions would be applied to all students. Within ten (10) school days of any decision to exclude a student with a disability from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive days in a given school year or to impose a disciplinary sanction that would result in a disciplinary change in placement for a student with a disability, building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination).

- If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties



applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with IEPs. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment. Eligible Section 504 students shall be entitled to receive alternative education services in accordance with the school's Education Services Plan during any suspension or expulsion in excess of ten (10) consecutive days.

- If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further removal or exclusion from the student's current education program for the incident of misconduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parents/guardians consent to, a new placement, or unless the school obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) or a court authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.

- If a student with a disability possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon on school grounds, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the school may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to forty-five (45) school days regardless of whether the conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to forty-five (45) school days.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School Principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

*Family Policy Compliance Office*

*U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20202-5920*

## **Summary of Massachusetts Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Student Records**

### **A. Inspection of the Student Record**

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old (eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The parent and/or eligible student has the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating materials. The record must be made available to the parent or eligible student no later than ten (10) calendar days after the request unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and/or eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them. Please note that electronic and other communications relative to an individual student that are not printed and placed in the student's record or deliberately saved to an electronic file with the student's name or other personal identifier are not records or documents maintained by the District and are not student records.

### **B. Rights of Non-Custodial Parents**

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 34H and 603 CMR 23.07 specify detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please contact the Principal's office

### **C. Confidentiality of Student Records**

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent(s), student, and authorized school personnel are eligible to access information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or the student. One such exception is the authority

of the school district to forward, without consent, the complete student record to schools or school districts to which a student transfers or enrolls.

#### D. Amendment of the Student Record

Eligible students and/or parents have the right to add additional information, comments, data, and/or other relevant material to the student record. Eligible students and/or parents also have the right to request in writing that the student record be amended. Any such request should be directed to the principal. The building principal will render a written decision on such a request within one week. A denial of a request to amend a student record may be appealed to the Superintendent

#### E. Destruction of Student Records

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed within seven (7) years of a student's transfer or graduation. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and eligible student must be notified, and provided with the opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed

#### F. Directory Information

Federal and state regulations authorize school districts to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the

Northborough-Southborough Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent.

If you do not want directory information from your child's education records disclosed without your prior written consent, please notify the Principal in writing. The Southborough Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Email address
- Photograph

- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade Level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

The above is only a summary of some of the more significant provisions of the laws and regulations pertaining to student records. If more detailed information is desired, a copy of the regulations may be obtained from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These state regulations are designed to ensure parent and student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records. The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that the student may be individually identified. The applicable regulations may be found at 603 CMR 23.00.

### **State Law on Student Records Access for Non-Custodial Parents**

M.G.L. c.71, §34H: Noncustodial parents; receipt of information for a child enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools; notice to the custodial parent.

- A. Each public elementary and secondary school shall provide student records, including, but not limited to, the following information, in a timely and appropriate manner to the parents of a child enrolled in the school if the parents are eligible for information under this section and request the information in the manner set forth in this section: report cards and progress reports; the results of intelligence and achievement tests; notification of a referral for a special needs assessment; notification of enrollment in an English language learners program established under chapter 71A; notification of absences; notification of illnesses; notification of any detentions, suspensions or expulsion; and notification of permanent withdrawal from school. Each school shall also make reasonable efforts to ensure that other written information that is provided to the custodial parent but not specified in the preceding sentence be provided to the requesting parent if that parent is eligible for information under this section. All electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either the work or home locations of the custodial parent shall be removed from the information provided under this section. Receipt of this information shall not mandate participation in any proceeding to which notification pertains, nor shall it authorize participation in proceedings and decisions regarding the child's welfare, which are not granted through the award of custody. For purposes of this section, any parent who does not have physical custody of a child shall be eligible for the receipt of information unless: (1) the parent's access to the child is currently prohibited by a temporary or permanent protective order, except where the protective order, or any subsequent order which modifies the protective order, specifically allows access to the information described in this section; or (2) the parent is denied visitation or, based on a threat

to the safety of the child, is currently denied legal custody of the child or is currently ordered to supervised visitation, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation. All such documents limiting or restricting parental access to a student's records or information which have been provided to the school or school district shall be placed in the student's record.

- B. A parent requesting information under this section shall submit a written request to the school principal.
- C. Upon receipt of a request for information under this section, the school shall review the student record for any documents limiting or restricting parental access to a student's records or information which have been provided to the school or school district and shall immediately notify the custodial parent of the receipt of the request. Notification must be made by certified mail and by first-class mail in both the primary language of the custodial parent and in English. The notification shall also inform the custodial parent that information requested under this section shall be provided to the requesting parent after 21 days unless the custodial parent provides to the principal of the school documentation of any court order which prohibits contact with the child, or prohibits the distribution of the information referred to in this section or which is a temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to the child in the custodial parent's custody from abuse by the requesting parent unless the protective order or any subsequent order which modifies the protective order, specifically allows access to the information described in this section.

#### **Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment ("PPRA")**

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S.

Department of Education (ED)-

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student's parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law;
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

1. Protected information surveys of students;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Northborough-Southborough Public School District has developed and adopted policies in consultation with parents regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Northborough- Southborough, Public Schools will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Northborough-Southborough Public Schools will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office

## **CIVIL RIGHTS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Northborough-Southborough Public Schools, in accordance with federal and state laws, prohibit discrimination in their operations and provide equal employment and educational opportunities to all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, marital status, homelessness, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, pregnancy related conditions, pregnancy status, national origin, genetic information, ethnic background, ancestry, disability or any other class protected by state or federal law. Northborough-Southborough complies with all applicable State and Federal Laws, including but not limited to, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151C, c.76, §5, and c. 71B.

Harassment, discrimination, and retaliation in any form or for any reason are prohibited. This includes harassment or discrimination by administrators, personnel, students, vendors, and other individuals in school or at school-related events. Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or discrimination to the attention of school officials or who has participated in an investigation of a complaint under this Policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Public Schools of Southborough.

Persons who engage in harassment, discrimination, or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion, or other measures as determined by school administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements. The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough implements grievance procedures to ensure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of membership in any of the above protected classes. Those grievance procedures may be accessed through the District's website, the principal's office, and/or the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Northborough-Southborough has a duly appointed individual responsible for the overall monitoring, auditing and ensuring compliance with this policy as it pertains to students attending the Northborough-Southborough Public Schools. For compliance issues, or in the event that individuals believe they have been discriminated against in any of Northborough-Southborough's educational activities, please contact Marie Alan, Section 504 Coordinator, 53 Parkerville Road, Southborough, MA 01772 (508-486-5115). Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools or directly to the United States Department of Education, Region 1 - Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02110.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough does not discriminate on the basis of sex and strictly prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. The District does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions in its educational programs and

employment activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; M.G.L. c. 151B; M.G.L. c. 151C; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5. The District's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admissions, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

The District has adopted and implements a Title IX Grievance Procedure to ensure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment. A copy of the District's Title IX Grievance Procedure may be accessed on the District website at the following link: <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/school-committees> or through the office of the Title IX Coordinator.

The District has also designated certain staff members to serve as Confidential Employees with whom a student or employee may discuss a report of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, informally and without concern for further disclosure, unless such further disclosure is requested. Contact information for those Confidential Employees is available at the following link: <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/human-resources/human-resources>

For questions related to the District's non-discrimination policy or grievance procedure, to make a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, or for information relative to accommodations and services for individuals based on pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, please contact Heather Richards, ESq., who serves as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Heather Richards, ESq., Title IX Coordinator

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough  
53 Parkerville Road  
Southborough, MA  
01772  
Phone: 508-486-5115  
[\[hrichards@nsboro.k12.ma.us\]](mailto:hrichards@nsboro.k12.ma.us)

Inquires or complaints relative to sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, may also be directed to the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights:

U.S. Department of Education  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: (617) 289-0111  
Facsimile: (617) 289-0150  
[Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

Any employee or student found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary



proceedings in accordance with procedures set forth in Student Discipline section of this handbook and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Staff members determined to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to professional discipline including possible termination of employment.

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough is committed to maintaining school environments free of sexual harassment. For the complete District policy, please click [A-190 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

### **FINN CODE OF CONDUCT**

The goal of Mary Finn School is to build a school climate where children respect their peers and staff with the themes of the CARE (Compassion, Acceptance and Respect for Everyone) program guiding their way. All teachers and students have the following rights:

- To work in pleasant, safe and orderly surroundings
- To be free from insulting or abusive treatment
- To work in an atmosphere that encourages learning

Children are expected to maintain appropriate behavior in classroom and non-classroom settings, including in the cafeteria, on field trips and on the playground. The administration and school staff will communicate and teach expectations and routines on an on-going basis. In addition, each teacher develops his/her own set of classroom guidelines and expectations with their individual classes and reviews these regularly with students. These rules and expectations are consistent across grades and all expected behavior is reviewed at whole school gatherings and at grade recesses and lunches. We use a variety of strategies to enhance our students' behavioral and social and emotional growth. Below is a list of strategies we may use to help students develop their ability to understand and follow school rules and expectations (not necessarily in order of implementation):

- Direct teaching
- Reminders through verbal and non-verbal means
- Social stories
- Peer to peer processing and mediation-- talk it out, apologize, etc.
- Student/parent meetings
- In-house suspension (remain in designated area for the day)
- Suspension -- one to ten days depending on the offense
- Expulsion

Most school rules are a matter of courtesy and safety and are emphasized as such. The school personnel reinforce the importance of self-discipline, good manners and acceptable behavior. The following rules have been adopted to reinforce positive conduct:

- Respect yourself and others by treating others as you would want to be treated
- Include all that want to be included
- Respect the belongings of others and all school property
- Be fair, kind, and honest
- When inside, use indoor voices
- Listen when others are talking
- Be the best you can be while learning and playing

### **Dress Code:**

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough's dress code supports equitable educational access and does not reinforce gender stereotypes. The dress code will be enforced in a non-discriminatory manner consistent with the laws that protect students on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, household income, gender identity, or cultural observance.

Students should be dressed appropriately for school in attire that does not interfere with the educational process by causing disruption or disorder within the school. The school district and individual schools are responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student. Parents/guardians will be contacted if a student's appearance or dress is of concern.

Clothing with messages or labeling that advocate or promote drugs, alcohol, violence, discriminatory slurs, are examples (but not an exhaustive listing of all possible examples) of clothing that may be judged to cause disruption or disorder in the school.

As students are still developing their self-regulatory and impulse control skills, inappropriate behavior is brought to student's attention in a manner that helps create self-awareness and the impact individual behavior has on others. This being the case, threatening remarks toward another student or teacher will be brought to the Principal's attention, and appropriate individuals will be notified. Depending on the severity of the situation, the child may be suspended from school. Each disciplinary incident will be evaluated on an individual basis. We know parents understand the importance of providing a safe school environment, so please take the time to speak with your child about the seriousness of their actions and words, real or pretend

, and stress the importance of self-monitoring while at school. We appreciate your help in this very important matter. If a student's misbehavior in school is of a more serious nature (use of unacceptable language, physical or verbal abuse of another child, etc.) the procedure will be as follows:

First Offense – Teacher will discuss the problem with all students involved.

Second Offense – There will be an appropriate consequence for the behavior (time-out to stop the behavior in the moment, written explanation of offense, etc.) and the teacher will inform the Principal and parents.

Third Offense – Parents will be contacted and an appropriate action will be taken with input from the teacher, parents and the Principal. The safety of our students and staff is a priority and therefore, we must react to each and every incident.

## **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**

### **Southborough Public Schools**

### **Parent Resource Guide**

It is important that you read the following information about bullying. After reading, if you believe that your child has been the target of bullying, you may file a written report. Written reports are considered serious allegations that will be addressed through school administration. Please be aware that [St.2010.c.92](#) Bullying in Schools law also requires that legal action be taken against those who file false reports or who make unfounded accusations.

We encourage open communication between parents and school staff. Anonymous reports will be investigated, but follow-up may be impossible.

### **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**

It is the policy of the Northborough and Southborough Public School District to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Allegations of bullying based on a protected classification under state or federal law, shall also be investigated and responded to in accordance with the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure and/or Title IX Sex Discrimination Grievance Procedure which may be accessed on the District's website at the following links:

<https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/human-resources/human-resources>

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, may be accessed at the following link: [A-150 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy](#). A copy of the District Plan may also be obtained from the Principal's office.

The following is a summary of the student-specific portions of the District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan:

A safe learning environment is one in which every student is provided with the opportunity to develop emotionally, academically, and physically in a supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse. Bullying of any type has no place in our schools. The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough expect that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

As a school district we are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the educational process in our schools. While any student could be subject to

bullying and harassment, the District recognizes that certain students, may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough have taken specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to avoid and respond to bullying. These steps include, but are not limited to: 1) regular surveys of students on school climate and school safety issues; 2) collecting and analyzing building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of bullying; incorporating specific information and instruction in the District's anti-bullying curriculum and professional development trainings regarding vulnerable student populations and facilitating the prevention of bullying, harassment, and teasing of these potential student targets. At least once every four years beginning with the 2015/16 school year, the District will also administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the District will annually report bullying incident data to the DESE.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, in school-related activities, or that occurs outside of school and creates a hostile school environment for the targeted student. We will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action to restore a safe learning environment for students who are bullied and to prevent further bullying or harassment by students who are identified as perpetrators of bullying.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying, cyberbullying and retaliation that may compromise the safe learning environment for any student. The District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to address and prevent bullying and harassment within our schools. We have established this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough will maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. It shall be a violation for any student or school staff member to bully another individual through conduct or communication of a bullying nature and/or to retaliate against any individual for reporting bullying or cooperating with an investigation thereof. Individuals who engage in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation will be subject to a range of disciplinary sanctions including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, including termination of employment or other sanctions as determined by the school administration. Students who engage in bullying shall also be required to participate in customized activities designed to develop the skills and proficiencies necessary to avoid engaging in further bullying behavior(s).

For purposes of this plan, bullying is prohibited:

- 1) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school sponsored or school-related activity, function or program (whether on or off school grounds), at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a school district or school, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by a school district

or school; and

- 2) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by a school district or school, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. This prohibition shall not be construed, however, as requiring district schools to staff or supervise any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also strictly prohibited and may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

### **Definitions**

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

**Cyberbullying:** Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying shall also include (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (i) to, inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

**Hostile Environment:** A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the target's education.

**Target/Victim:** A student who has been subject to bullying or retaliation by another student or group of students.

**Aggressor/Perpetrator:** An individual who engages, either individually, or as part of a group, in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

**Local law enforcement agency:** local police department

**Principal:** The administrative leader of any of the 10 Northborough/Southborough Public Schools or his/her designee for the purposes of investigating and responding to reports of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.

**Retaliation:** Intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

## **I. Complaint and Investigation Procedures**

### **A. Reporting bullying or retaliation**

Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff

member shall be recorded in writing. Reports made by students, parents, guardians, or other individuals who are not school or school district staff members, may also be made anonymously, although no student shall be subject to discipline solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough will have a variety of reporting options available to the school community including, but not limited to, a written Incident Reporting Form, an online Incident Reporting Form, and email

communication. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report.

Every School in the Northborough Southborough School District will include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents and will post a copy of the Incident Reporting Form on the school's website. Incident Reporting Forms will also be available in the school's main office, and other locations determined to be appropriate by the principal or designee. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the primary language of the student's household.

#### **1. Reporting by Staff**

A staff member will promptly report to the principal any instances of bullying or retaliation witnessed by the staff member or that is reported to the staff member by a student, parent, or other individual. The requirement to notify the principal shall not, however, limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

#### **2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others**

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough expect students, parents, guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal. Any individual who wishes to file such a complaint may request, and shall be provided with, assistance from a school staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. The filing of a false or fabricated complaint of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation is strictly prohibited and shall result in disciplinary or further action.

## B. Procedures for Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation

### 1. Preliminary Determinations

Upon receiving a complaint, the principal will confer with the complainant to obtain an understanding and statement of the alleged facts. If, based on the facts alleged, the principal determines that the conduct complained of would not constitute bullying as defined by M.G.L. c.71, §370\* and District policies, the principal shall document that determination on the Incident Reporting Form and shall take no further action with regard to the complaint.

If the Principal determines that such facts, if true, would constitute bullying, as defined above, the principal will promptly commence an investigation of the complaint. Upon commencing an investigation, the principal will make a preliminary determination as to the need for immediate interventions to protect the safety of the alleged target. Such interventions may include, but are not limited to, creating a personal safety plan for the target; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal may take additional steps deemed necessary by the school administration to protect the safety of the target and any witnesses while the investigation is ongoing.

### 2. Notice to Law Enforcement

At any point after receiving a report of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency if the principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. Notice to law enforcement agencies will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and other applicable state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to student records and privacy. In making this determination, the principal may consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

### 3. Notice to Another School or District

If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

## C. Investigation Procedures

### 1. Investigation

Upon receipt of a report or complaint that would, if true, constitute bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal will promptly commence an investigation.

In investigating any such complaint, the principal or designee will interview students, staff, and any witnesses to the alleged conduct. To the extent practicable and consistent with the

principal's obligation to promptly and thoroughly investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process and shall not disclose unnecessary or confidential information to interview subjects. During any such interviews, the principal will inform the target, aggressor and all witnesses that retaliatory treatment of any individual for reporting or cooperating with an investigation of bullying will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion from school.

## 2. Determinations

Within fifteen (15) school days of the principal's receipt of the complaint of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal's findings and determinations shall be documented in writing on the Incident Reporting Form.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student will be subject to disciplinary action.

## 3. Notice of Investigative Findings

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor of the investigation findings. While prior notice of an investigation shall not be required, the principal shall not be precluded from notifying the parents of a target or aggressor prior to completion of the principal's investigation.

In notifying the parents of a target or aggressor of an investigation or the principal's findings thereon, the principal shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any individual or child who is not the child of the parents to whom the notice is provided. The principal shall ensure that any notice to the parents complies with applicable state regulations including, but not limited to, 603 CMR 49.00, and shall not report specific information to the target's parent(s) about the disciplinary action taken against an aggressor unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations or except in the event of a health or safety emergency as determined by the principal.

The notice to the parents or guardians of the target shall include information about the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's ("DESE") problem resolution system and the process for seeking assistance or filing a claim through the problem resolution system. The parents of the victim should be provided the following contact information: Program Quality Assurance Services, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906, Telephone: 781-338-3700; TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370.

## D. Requests for Reconsideration

If either the complaining party or the individual against whom the complaint was made is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, that person may request, in writing, a



reopening of the investigation or reconsideration of the investigative findings. The written request shall state the reasons for request and shall be delivered to the Superintendent of the Northborough and Southborough Public Schools within ten (10) school days of the parents/guardians receipt of notice of the investigative findings. Within five (5) school days of receipt of any such request, the superintendent shall decide whether or not to reopen the investigation and shall provide written notification of that determination to the appealing party and to the other party involved.

The filing of a request for reconsideration or a reopening of the investigation shall not stay the imposition of disciplinary sanctions or the implementation of any safety interventions determined to be appropriate by the principal.

## E. Responses to Bullying

### 1. Education and Skill Building

In determining the appropriate response to an incident of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal shall consider a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c.71, §370(d)(v)<sup>2</sup>. Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include, but are not limited to:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula;
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel;
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals;
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.

### 2. Disciplinary Action

If the principal determines that disciplinary action is warranted, the disciplinary sanction will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) and the individual needs of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Students found to have engaged in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation may be subject to a range of disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to, reprimand, detention, suspension, expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the principal. Any such disciplinary sanctions shall be imposed in accordance with the due process requirements of applicable laws, regulations, and District policies.

A staff person found to have engaged in bullying of a student shall be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension and termination in accordance with applicable laws and procedures.

### 3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal shall, in conjunction with relevant school personnel, consider what adjustments or interventions, if any, are needed in the school environment to ensure the target's safety and that of any witnesses. Any such adjustments or interventions to be provided for the target shall be documented in writing in an Individual Safety Plan.

### 4. Referral to Outside Services

Where appropriate and consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, students found to have engaged in or been the victim of bullying may also be referred to outside agencies and/or service providers. It shall be the responsibility of the principal or designee, through consultation with staff, community service organizations, and district administration to identify resources and services available to such students.

### 5. Monitoring of Interventions

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and implementation of customized and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

### **Additional information about bullying:**

A leading researcher, Dr. Dan Olweus, identifies three critical aspects of bullying:

1. Power: The power relationship is inherently unequal. Frequently the bully gains more power and influence among others from his behavior.
2. Frequency: Bullies target children for a number of reasons, often because they can. However, they generally do not stop this behavior with particular children unless adults intervene. It is a recurring, often constant problem for the target.
3. Intent: Bullies mean to do what they do; generally, they intend to harm, embarrass, or victimize.

Bullying can take many forms; boys and girls tend to bully differently, for example, and generally their methods target whatever the aggressor's group values the most. Boys are often physical and threatening; girls will attempt to alienate the target from their social groups.

### **Causes:**

In general, bullies are using behavior that they have determined will gain them status and feelings of control. They usually seek out victims they can successfully bully. Victims do not "ask for it" but there is a group of victims who are not socially successful, and may annoy others, perhaps in an attempt to gain attention from their peers. Bullies use this annoying behavior to justify their own actions. To many bullies, their victims were "asking for it."

For more information on Bullying, please visit the following websites:

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center MARC: [www.bridgew.edu/MARC/](http://www.bridgew.edu/MARC/)

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: [www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)

Stop Bullying Now: [www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids)

Ryan's Story: [www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org/](http://www.ryanpatrickhalligan.org/)

**Hazing Law Overview:** Hazing is not an acceptable means of encouraging bonding with an organization, club, or athletic team. It is a crime in the State of Massachusetts. If a student organizes or participates in hazing, M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17-19.

### **CUSTODY AGREEMENTS/ PROVIDING INFORMATION TO NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

It is important that our Main Office have all legal binding custody agreements to ensure all designated parties have access to your child's educational records. Massachusetts state law imposes certain conditions on schools and parents with respect to access to student information by non-custodial parents. Under Massachusetts law we can only share educational information with non-custodial parents (defined as parents who do not have physical custody, even if they share legal custody) after we have followed this process:

1. The non-custodial parent must request in writing that the school provide information. That request must indicate that certain criteria are met by the non-custodial parent.
2. After receipt of the request, the school must notify the custodial parent of the request.
3. The custodial parent has 21 days to respond with any contradictory information. If no response is forthcoming, then the school can share information.

This is obviously a significant burden for both you as a parent and us as a school. However, we are obligated to follow this process. If you have any questions or would like to fill out the forms for next year, please contact the office at (508) 485-3176.

### **Summary of Massachusetts Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Student Records**

#### **I. Inspection of the Student Record**

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old (eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The parent and/or eligible student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating materials. The record must be made available to the parent or eligible student no later than ten (10) calendar days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and/or eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

#### **II. Rights of Non-Custodial Parents**

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 34H and 603 CMR 23.07 specify detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. The Northborough-Southborough Public Schools are in compliance with these regulations and while we encourage parents to be involved and informed about their children's education, we must protect the rights and safety of all parties. For more information, please contact the Principal's office.

## **II. Confidentiality of Student Records**

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent(s), student, and authorized school personnel are eligible to access information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or the student. One such exception is the authority of the school district to forward, without consent, the complete student record to schools or school districts to which a student transfers or enrolls.

## **III. Amendment of the Student Record**

Eligible students and/or parents have the right to add additional information, comments, data, and/or other relevant material to the student record. Eligible students and/or parents also have the right to request in writing that the student record be amended. Any such request should be directed to the principal. The building principal will render a written decision on such a request within one week. A denial of a request to amend a student record may be appealed to the Superintendent.

## **IV. Destruction of Student Records**

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed within seven (7) years of a student's transfer or graduation. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and eligible student must be notified, and provided with the opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed.

## **V. Directory Information**

Federal and state regulations authorize school districts to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Southborough Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent.

**If you do not want directory information from your child's education records disclosed without your prior written consent, please notify the Principal in writing. The Southborough Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:**

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Email address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

The above is only a summary of some of the more significant provisions of federal and state regulations pertaining to student records that relate to student and parent rights. If more detailed information is desired, a copy of the regulations may be obtained from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These state regulations are designed to insure parent and student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records. The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that the student may be individually identified. The applicable regulations may be found at 603 CMR 23.00.

### **MASSACHUSETTS NON-SMOKING LAW**

*As written in the Massachusetts State Ed Reform Act of 1993, Section 37H, the superintendent of every school district shall publish the districts policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Smoking and the use of tobacco/nicotine products on school grounds is strictly prohibited,*

**Dear Parents/Guardians;**

**The Mary E. Finn School Handbook is now posted on the Finn website. This handbook contains important school guidelines and procedures. It also contains important school district policies. It is very important that you read the information contained in this document and discuss appropriate material with your child/children. The document will remain on the website throughout the school year so that you may refer to it whenever necessary. The handbook is reviewed and updated annually.**

**The sign off sheet below needs to be signed and returned to school after you have read the handbook information. This must be returned to the child's classroom teacher as soon as possible indicating that you have reviewed the handbook information. Each child will need to return their own individual form to their classroom rather than one per family.**

**I have reviewed the Finn School Handbook online:**

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**Parent Signature**

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**Date**

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**Student Name/Grade**

**OR**

**If you would prefer to have a hard copy of the book please sign on the line indicating your request.**

**I am requesting a hard copy of the Student handbook:**

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**Parent/Guardian Name**

---

**Date**

