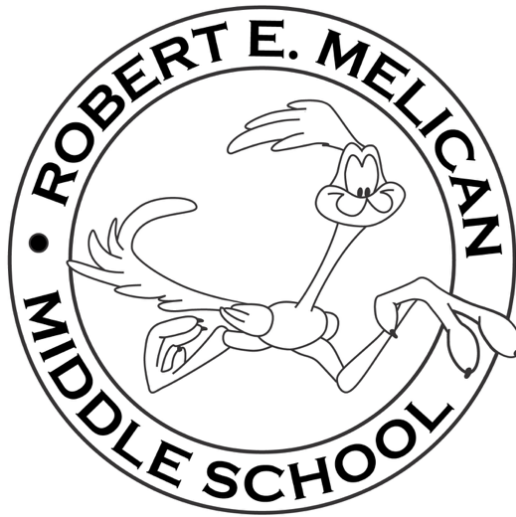


ROBERT E. MELICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK
2025-2026

Michelle T. Karb, Principal
Gretchen M. Bean, Assistant Principal



Robert E. Melican Middle School
145 Lincoln Street
Northborough, MA 01532
Phone: 508-351-7020
Fax: 508-351-7006

<https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican>

Mission Statement of the Robert E. Melican Middle School.....5

Belief Statements..... 5

School Structure & Curriculum..... 5

General Information, A-Z..... 6

 Absence (Including Extended Absences).....6

 Academic Integrity.....6

 After School Activities..... 7

 Arrival and Dismissal..... 7

 Assault Policy Overview.....8

 Athletics..... 8

 Athletics - Medical Requirements and Safety Responsibilities - Interscholastic Sports..... 8

 Medical Exams/Permission Forms.....8

 Athletic Injuries.....8

 Accident/Injury Report Procedures.....9

 Return to Participation..... 9

 Concussion Protocol.....9

 Backpacks..... 9

 Band/Band Sectionals..... 9

 Bathroom Procedure.....10

 Bicycles..... 10

 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy..... 10

 Bus Procedures..... 17

 Cancellation of School (Refer to School Closings and Delayed Openings)..... 18

 Canvas Information..... 18

 Cell Phones..... 18

 Chorus..... 18

 Chromebooks..... 19

 Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy..... 19

 Conferences (Refer to Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences)..... 19

 Contact Information..... 19

 Curriculum Content..... 19

 Delayed School Opening (Refer to School Closings and Delayed Openings)..... 20

 Detention (Refer to Guide to Mutual Respect)..... 20

 Discipline (Refer to Guide to Mutual Respect).....20

 Dismissal (Refer to Arrival and Dismissal)..... 20

 Dress Code..... 20

 Dropping Off Items Procedure..... 20

 Drugs and Alcohol..... 20

 Early Dismissal..... 21

 Early School Closing (Refer to School Closings and Delayed Openings)..... 21

 Electronic Devices..... 21

Elevator Use.....	21
Emergency Contact.....	21
Emergency Response Plan.....	21
Financial Assistance.....	22
Financial Obligations.....	22
Field Trips.....	22
Fire/Evacuation Drills.....	22
FLEX Blocks.....	22
Guidance Counselors.....	23
Guide to Mutual Respect (Refer to the Guide to Mutual Respect).....	23
Half Days/Early Release Days.....	23
Harassment.....	23
Hazing Law Overview.....	23
Health Services.....	23
HEALTH INFORMATION.....	23
IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL EXAM.....	24
ILLNESS AND INJURY.....	24
MEDICATION AT SCHOOL.....	24
HEALTH SCREENINGS.....	25
KEEPING YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL (click on the link).....	25
ALLERGIC REACTION AND EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTOR USE.....	26
Homework.....	27
Immunizations (Refer to Health Information).....	27
Internet Use.....	27
Late Bus.....	27
Locks and Lockers.....	27
Lost and Found.....	28
Lunch and Brain Break.....	28
Make-Up Work (Refer to Absences).....	28
MCAS Testing.....	28
Medication (Refer to Medication at School under Health Information).....	28
No School (Refer to School Closings and Delayed Openings).....	28
Office Hours.....	28
Open House.....	29
Parent/Caregiver Concerns.....	29
Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).....	29
Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences.....	29
Parking Lot Protocol (Refer to Arrival and Dismissal).....	29
PowerSchool Information.....	30
Preparation for Class.....	30
Professional Development Days.....	30

Days are scheduled during the school year for teacher professional development. Students are not in attendance on these days.....	30
Pupil Absence Notification Program.....	30
Report Cards.....	30
Responsible Use Policy.....	30
Schedules.....	31
School Closings and Delayed Openings.....	31
School Council.....	31
School Transfers.....	31
Sexual Harassment Policy.....	31
Student Council.....	33
Student Recognition.....	33
Student Support Services, Special Education.....	33
Student Support Team (SST).....	34
Tardiness for Class.....	34
Tardiness for School.....	34
Teacher/Staff Communication.....	34
Team Structure.....	34
Telephone (Landline) Usage and Messages.....	34
Textbooks.....	35
Vacations.....	35
Visitors.....	35
Volunteers.....	35
Guide to Mutual Respect.....	35
Introduction.....	35
The Process.....	36
Category A – Classroom Management.....	37
Category B – Serious.....	37
Category C - Major Infractions.....	38
Massachusetts Statutes: Student Behavior and Discipline.....	39
DISCIPLINARY ACTION.....	39
DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS: SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION.....	39
BASIC STUDENT DISCIPLINE DEFINITIONS.....	42
DUE PROCESS UNDER M.G.L. 71 37H3/4.....	42
IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION.....	42
OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION - NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.....	43
PRINCIPAL’S HEARING.....	43
LONG TERM SUSPENSION APPEAL.....	44
EMERGENCY REMOVAL.....	44
ACADEMIC PROGRESS.....	45
DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.....	45

M.G.L. c.71, §37L.....46

Student Records - Notification of Rights Under FERPA.....47

Summary of Massachusetts Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Student Records..... 48

 I. Inspection of the Student Record.....48

 II. Rights of Non-Custodial caregivers..... 48

 III. Confidentiality of Student Records.....48

 IV. Amendment of the Student Record..... 48

 V. Destruction of Student Records..... 48

 VI. Directory Information.....48

Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).....49

Student Record Access for Non-Custodial caregivers..... 51

Mission Statement of the Robert E. Melican Middle School

The mission of the Robert E. Melican Middle School is to pursue the highest level of educational excellence for all students by embracing our district's core values and Strategic Plan.

Planning and implementing a thoughtful curriculum, grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework documents, whose standards serve as the foundation for all educational development is the goal of all Melican staff. A professional learning community, with student learning at the forefront of all decision-making, provides the optimal environment for the successful development of students' cognitive, academic, physical, social, and emotional needs as they travel this "in the middle" pathway from elementary school to high school.

Belief Statements

The Robert E. Melican Middle School community is a partnership among teachers, staff, administrators, caregivers/guardians, and students. These belief statements guide our work:

1. The Robert E. Melican Middle School is a professional learning community characterized by shared purpose, collaborative activity, continuous improvement and collective responsibility.
2. Students learn best in a safe environment characterized by a positive school culture which values respect, dignity and diversity.
3. A Standards-Based Curriculum model, with differentiated instructional experiences that offer multiple pathways for all learners to reach and exceed the Framework Standards, is the foundation for all classrooms.
4. Technological advances will continue to shape twenty-first century living; keeping practices current and understanding the impact on education is integral to our vision and success.
5. Communication between educators and caregivers/guardians must be ongoing and is vital for optimal student achievement.
6. Our ultimate goal is to prepare students to become self-sufficient adults and lifelong learners who will responsibly contribute in the global community.

School Structure & Curriculum

The Robert E. Melican Middle School houses sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, all of whom are in a process of transition. In sixth grade that transition is from elementary school, and in seventh and eighth, that transition is toward high school. It is a time of personal transition from pre-adolescence into young adulthood. It is a time to explore, to test, to reach toward new horizons, and to discover personal strengths and talents that will become the basis for higher learning and a productive existence.

The school is structured to support students during this important growth period. Students are grouped heterogeneously as "sections" and move as a group through ELA, science, and social studies. Mathematics classes are grouped by readiness level into grade-level and accelerated courses. The accelerated course in sixth grade covers the sixth grade curriculum and half of the seventh grade curriculum. The accelerated course in seventh grade covers the other half of the seventh grade curriculum and the eighth grade curriculum. Students who participate in the accelerated courses and do well are eligible to take ninth grade math in eighth grade, which is Algebra I. Students take either Spanish or French in seventh and eighth grades. For further information, please go to the school website at

<https://melican.nsboro.k12.ma.us/>. All curricula are guided by the Massachusetts State Frameworks.

General Information, A-Z

For your reference, we have linked Northborough policies to this handbook. Policies evolve over time, and by including live links, this handbook will remain current. For the complete Northborough Policy Manual, please click [here](#).

A

Absence (Including Extended Absences)

When a student is absent for the day, caregivers/guardians should call the absence line (508-351-7008) or email melicanattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us before 8:00 a.m. to give notification. If the school is not notified, a call will be made to verify the absence. A student must be in school by 11:00 a.m. (and remain in school until the end of the day) to be considered Tardy Present. If dismissed, the student must stay in school until 11:00 a.m. (and have been in school since the start of the day) to be considered Dismissed Present.

A student must be Present, Tardy Present, or Dismissed Present to participate in before or after school activities and events.

In cases of excessive absence, the administration may seek the aid of the School Resource Officer in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.

A documented absence or tardiness resulting from properly reported illness, medical appointment, court appearances, religious holidays, or urgent cause will ordinarily be excused. Caregivers/guardians will be contacted if we are not notified of the reason for the student's absence.

Making arrangements for missed assignments is the responsibility of the student. Caregivers/guardians and students are also encouraged to check teacher Canvas pages for assignments and updates.

In the case of long-term illness or hospitalization, a signed form from a doctor can verify the need for home tutoring. In such a case, please contact the school so arrangements can be made.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that all student work presented to teachers or others represents the individual academic work of that student. Students who present the work of others as their own, are involved in complicity with another to present work which is not their own, and/or use any form of artificial intelligence presented as their own work is considered an act of academic dishonesty. Additionally, students who present original work which received a grade in a previous class, but are using it in another class for a grade without prior teacher approval is considered an act of academic dishonesty.

In instances when collaborative work is assigned, we expect for the assignment to list all team members who participated. The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools is prohibited at all stages of the work process, including preliminary ones. Please note that different classes at MMS may implement different AI expectations, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

- Cheating - is any activity in which a student deliberately misrepresents his or her actual academic achievement.
- Plagiarism - is a form of academic dishonesty where a student intentionally takes and/or uses as his or her own work another person's published or unpublished thoughts, ideas or writings. This can include the use of artificial intelligence to generate work in which a student presents as their own. Verbatim repetition or paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, of another person's writing work, or research is also plagiarism.
- Misrepresentation - includes any fabrication or false presentation of data, quotations, sources or other information.
- Aiding or Abetting - includes helping another student to cheat, plagiarize, misrepresent or otherwise engage in academic dishonesty.
- Engaging in any form of coercing another student to engage in any of the behaviors listed above is also an act of dishonesty.

In any case of academic dishonesty, the following disciplinary actions may occur, depending on prior and current offenses:

- A "0" for the assignment in question or partial credit;
- Notification of the student's parent/guardian;
- Detention or suspension;
- Notification of the student's current teachers;

After School Activities

After school activities include a variety of intramural sports, performing musical groups, Yearbook, Student Council, *Melican Insider*, special interest clubs, and interscholastic field hockey, soccer, basketball, baseball, softball, cross country, and track and field. Other activities are offered during the year such as rocket club and the school musical. Each fall, a detailed list of after school offerings is sent home to caregivers/guardians and published on the school website. Most activities are completed by 3:10 p.m. on Tuesday through Thursday when the late bus is provided. Activities extending beyond 3:10 p.m. require other transportation arrangements.

A student must be Present, Tardy Present, or Dismissed Present to participate in before or after school activities and events.

Arrival and Dismissal

School is open for student arrival at 7:20 a.m. Buses are scheduled to arrive at The Robert E. Melican Middle School on or before 7:35 a.m. When students arrive, sixth graders will report to the gym, seventh and eighth graders to the cafeteria. At 7:38, students are dismissed to first period, which begins at 7:43.

Students are dismissed from school at 2:10 and bus riders exit from the front lobby directly onto their buses. Students who walk home or who are being picked up by caregivers/guardians wait in the cafeteria or gym until the buses have left school property.

Students who remain after school on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday may take one of the late buses or get picked up by a caregiver/guardian. Late bus routes are different from regular runs. (Refer to [Late Bus](#))

After school, caregiver/guardian pickup follows a different plan than regular dismissal. Cars move into the inner parking lot, closest to the school. Cars line up curbside, pulling as far down by the tennis courts as possible. Students exit from the school into their waiting cars. Students should not walk across the parking lot without a caregiver/guardian escort because of safety concerns.

For the safety and welfare of our students, caregivers/guardians are reminded 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.

Assault Policy Overview

An assault on school personnel is considered an extremely serious breach of conduct. Suspension from school is a probable consequence of such actions.

Athletics

There are numerous opportunities for students to participate in athletics. Some of them are intramural and club sports; others are interscholastic and involve contests against other schools. Some of the interscholastic teams require students to try out, while others are open to everyone. Safety is the top priority of our athletic program. For more information, contact the District Athletic Director, Mike Mocerino at mmocerino@nsboro.k12.ma.us.

Athletics - Medical Requirements and Safety Responsibilities - Interscholastic Sports

Medical Exams/Permission Forms

All students who plan to participate in athletics must have written proof of a current physical examination (within 13 months of athletic involvement) signed by a physician. The nurse will have the responsibility of making sure this documentation is on file in the Health Office.

Athletes will not be allowed to participate without the completion of the Medical Exam, Medical Information and Permission Form, and Team Contract.

Athletic Injuries

Injuries to athletes will occur in interscholastic athletics at all levels regardless of precautions taken. The coach will have the responsibility of addressing all athletic injuries and making the proper recommendations. The coach(es) must be prepared to recognize and properly administer first aid or refer injuries to the appropriate medical personnel.

Accident/Injury Report Procedures

The coach will complete an Injury Report form immediately for all athletic injuries or accidents that involve any student under his/her/their control during practice, contest, or while traveling to or from a contest. The coach is responsible for contacting the principal or assistant principal regarding the injury as soon as possible. The injury form should be turned in to the Health Office the following morning with the coach retaining a copy.

Return to Participation

Athletes that are injured (concussions, broken bones, ligament sprains, muscle strains, dislocations) can only return to play when authorized by the student's PCP, orthopedic surgeon, or specialty physician. Written authorization must be presented to the Health Office prior to return.

Concussion Protocol

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not be allowed to return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

If an athlete is removed from the contest, evaluated and allowed to return to play, no follow-up procedure is required. If, however, an athlete is removed from a contest, evaluated and not allowed to return to play, the following procedure must take place before the individual can return to play:

- The athlete's caregivers will be notified
- The athlete must see his/her/their primary care physician
- The athlete must have a signed note from his/her/their primary care physician stating his/her/their condition and recommendations for return to participation. Final clearance for participation must come from a physician and be on file in the Health Office prior to the athlete returning to play.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [J-340 Concussion Policy](#).

B

Backpacks

Students have the option to carry their backpacks and other bags from class to class. If students choose not to, they may store their items in their assigned lockers.

Band/Band Sectionals

Concert band introduces students to standard band literature and focuses on improving techniques for performance.

All band musicians perform in grade-level concert bands, which meet twice a week, and perform in both winter and spring concerts. Concert bands for students in grades seven and eight also perform in the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (M.I.C.C.A.) Festival each spring.

Other instrumental ensembles include the wind ensembles, chamber ensembles, stage band, and jazz band. There are auditions at the start of the year to form these groups.

Band students also have weekly instrumental lessons called sectionals. In order to attend sectionals, students miss classes throughout the year. The sectional schedule is implemented on a six-week rotation so students do not miss the same class each week. Students should be able to attend sectionals if he/she/they ask the teacher and do not have a test or quiz that period. Students are responsible for working with their teachers to replicate the missed learning experiences.

Bathroom Procedure

Students should use the bathrooms during break times. If there is an emergency during a class, however, students must get permission from a teacher and use the school's pass system.

Bicycles

Bicycle racks are located in the front of the building. Owners should provide locks to secure their bicycles in the rack. Bicycles are to be ridden only on hard topped surfaces.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

It is the policy of the Northborough Public School District to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. 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 parental 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 promptly investigate 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, caregivers 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, caregivers, 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 caregivers 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, caregiver, 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, Caregivers or Guardians, and Others

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough expect students, caregivers, 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 caregivers 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 caregivers of a target or aggressor prior to completion of the principal's investigation.

In notifying the caregivers 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 caregivers to whom the notice is provided. The principal shall ensure that any notice to the caregivers complies with applicable state regulations including, but not limited to, 603 CMR 49.00, and shall not report specific information to the target's caregiver(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 caregivers 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 caregivers 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 Southborough Public Schools within ten (10) school days of the caregivers/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)². 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 caregivers 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.

Allegations of bullying based on a protected classification under state or federal law, may 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 <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/human-resources/human-resources>.

Bus Procedures

For safety reasons, students must:

- Follow the driver's instructions
- Remain seated when the buses are moving
- Ride only on assigned buses (except in cases where prior permission has been given)

Students must not:

- Distract the driver
- Throw objects or destroy property
- Roughhouse or use abusive language
- Put arms/items out the window

Bus routes are printed in the newspapers and posted on our website prior to the opening of school. Additionally, our Assistant Superintendent of Operations, emails all families their bus routes before the start of school. Be sure to

consult the schedules at the beginning of the school year.

Bus service is provided as a special privilege and should be treated as such. Drivers are instructed to report misconduct to the administration on a Bus Disciplinary Form, which the school then sends to the caregiver/guardian. Reasons for disciplinary action are stated, and the driver's decision about the need for a warning or a suspension is indicated. In case of suspension, dates are given, and the suspension begins the morning following the offense to give the caregivers/guardians an opportunity to arrange alternate transportation.

Students are required to comply with all school rules at school bus stops and on school buses and may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

In cases when a student must take a different bus, a note from a caregiver/guardian stating which bus and why must be turned in to the office in the morning. The note, with office approval, is to be picked up by the student at dismissal. Students will not be allowed on a different bus without the approved note. At times, buses are full and students are not allowed to transfer to them. There may be other circumstances, i.e. a global pandemic, when students are not allowed to ride another bus.

C

Cancellation of School (Refer to [School Closings and Delayed Openings](#))

Canvas Information

Canvas is a course management system that supports online learning and teaching. It allows assignments, notifications, and grades to be posted online. This system can be accessed by students, caregivers/guardians, and staff. Caregivers/guardians and students are given log-in information at the beginning of each year. Caregivers/guardians who have children at Algonquin use the same login information to access all children in middle and high school. Caregivers/guardians are encouraged to check Canvas for student progress and reach out to teachers with questions at any point in the school year.

For more information, please click [Student and Caregiver Canvas Guides](#).

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not to be used during the school day. Staff may take possession of phones being used during the day. A caregiver/guardian may be asked to come and pick up the phone at the end of the school day. As a reminder, student dismissal during the school day must occur through the main office or our health office. Students should not be texting caregivers/guardians to request early pick up during the school day. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken cell phones.

Chorus

Choruses are performance based. They focus on music reading skills, continued development of the singing voice, and part-singing. Chorus is a graded course and available to all students; no audition is necessary. Each grade has

its own chorus that meets twice a week within the regular schedule.

There is also a Select Chorus, a Cambiata Chorus, and other singing groups that require auditions. These groups meet before and after school.

Chorus students explore vocal styles of music and perform a variety of repertoires. Performance opportunities include concerts, special school-wide assemblies, and other events.

Chromebooks

Each student is issued a chromebook at the beginning of sixth grade. Chromebooks should last for the three years students are at Melican. Students are responsible for bringing charged chromebooks to school each day. Students are also responsible for any damage to their chromebooks.

If a student device is not working due to a device issue, we will replace the device. If it is damaged or not working due to accidental student mishandling (liquid spill, dropped, cracked screen, etc), they will be granted ONE single no-cost replacement in a four year cycle. After that, there will be a charge for each replacement device. This includes damages caused because of another student. The same practice applies to a lost or stolen device.

Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy

The Public Schools of Northborough is committed to maintaining school environments free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sex sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, pregnancy related conditions, pregnancy status, age homelessness, genetic information, ethnic background, ancestry, disability or any category protected under state or federal law.

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.

Conferences (Refer to Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences)

Contact Information

On the first day of school, caregivers/guardians receive a contact form to complete via PowerSchool. Please complete it within the first week of school. If changes occur throughout the year, please inform the main office immediately.

Curriculum Content

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Northborough Public Schools, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

D

Delayed School Opening (Refer to [School Closings and Delayed Openings](#))

Detention ([Refer to Guide to Mutual Respect](#))

Discipline ([Refer to Guide to Mutual Respect](#))

Dismissal ([Refer to Arrival and Dismissal](#))

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.

The District supports students' freedom of expression and does not seek to abridge that expression, provided that such expression does not cause any substantial disruption 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 or others, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student or others.

Student dress is a matter of personal pride as well as an indication of respect for the learning environment. While clothing styles will change over time, and specific articles of dress or accessories may emerge which require further review, we provide the following general guidelines for students:

- Garments with messages or labeling that advocate or promote drugs, alcohol, violence, vulgarities, ethnic slurs, or contain harassment or discriminatory content may not be worn.

This plan is in effect for all school events. If there are any questions regarding a student's attire, a school administrator may have a discussion with a student or make a phone call home.

Dropping Off Items Procedure

Items brought in during the day for students should be left in the main office. Items should be clearly labeled with first and last name and grade. Students are called to the office to pick up items at the end of morning homeroom, during the mid-morning break, and before dismissal. We do our best to get items to students outside of these call down times. There may be circumstances, i.e. a global pandemic, when visitors are not permitted to enter the building. During these times, items will be left outside on a table under the awning.

Drugs and Alcohol

Illegal drug and alcohol use is a fact of life in today's society. To use or not to use such substances is a decision that all young people must address for themselves at an early age. Governments, schools, and social programs have attempted to prevent such abusive behavior by young people through school and the community. The Robert

E. Melican Middle School strives to harbor an environment that is safe and conducive to our students' learning. Drugs and alcohol take away from both of these aspects. In order to maintain a safe and optimal educational environment, the school forbids drug and alcohol possession and use. Possession, use and/or sale of unlawful drugs and/or alcohol are crimes and will result in disciplinary action including but not limited to: confiscation of materials; caregiver/guardian notification; suspension from school; referral to law enforcement authorities.

E

Early Dismissal

For early dismissal, caregivers/guardians should email melicanattendance@nsboro.k12.ma.us.

In order to pick up a student, caregivers/guardians **must** either come into the office, identify themselves, and sign the student out, or call the office to identify themselves. The student will then be called to the office. Please allow ample time for this procedure. For safety reasons, caregivers/guardians may be asked to show identification. Caregivers/guardians do not need to sign students back into school.

There may be times (i.e. a global pandemic) when visitors are not permitted in the building. During those times, caregivers/guardians should call the office and arrangements will be made to dismiss your child.

Early School Closing (Refer to [School Closings and Delayed Openings](#))

Electronic Devices

The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. Families should decide whether or not their student is responsible enough to take electronic devices to school. Devices must remain locked in lockers or in student bags throughout the school day.

Elevator Use

A student who has a medical condition that necessitates the use of the elevator, may have his/her/their caregivers/guardians request an elevator pass from the nurse. Students pick up elevator passes from the nurse in the morning and then return them at the end of the school day.

Emergency Contact

caregivers are asked to complete a data sheet via PowerSchool to secure information and update school records.

Emergency Response Plan

The Robert E. Melican Middle School, in collaboration with other town departments, has created an emergency response plan that is made available to and reviewed with all staff members on an annual basis. Due to public safety guidelines, copies are not available to the public.

F

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to support school activities. Please contact the principal for more information.

Financial Obligations

Students who have been permitted the use of school property (textbooks, chromebooks, library books, locks, etc.) are responsible for the return or payment of these items before transfer to another school or the close of school in June. Refunds will be given for any monies paid should the items be returned or found later.

Each student is issued a chromebook at the beginning of sixth grade. Chromebooks should last for the three years students are at Melican. Students are responsible for bringing charged chromebooks to school each day. Students are also responsible for any damage to their chromebooks.

If a student device is not working due to a device issue, we will replace the device. If it is damaged or not working due to accidental student mishandling (liquid spill, dropped, cracked screen, etc), they will be granted ONE single no-cost replacement in a year cycle. After that, there will be a charge for each replacement device. This includes damages caused because of another student. The same practice applies to a lost or stolen device.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [J-200 - Student Financial Obligations for School Loaned Materials](#).

Field Trips

Curriculum enhancing field trips occur throughout the year. Notification and permission forms are shared with families. Permission forms **must** be completed by a caregiver/guardian and returned in order for students to participate.

Fire/Evacuation Drills

A fire/evacuation drill procedure sign is located in every room. Students and teachers will evacuate the building quickly and quietly according to these directions. Safety is dependent upon the orderly evacuation of all.

The fire/evacuation drill procedures are reviewed and rehearsed during the first week of school and periodically throughout the year.

FLEX Blocks

Many students have Flex Blocks throughout the week. During these periods, students engage in silent reading, work on assignments and projects, receive extra help from classroom teachers, or participate in special enrichment activities. Students are responsible for bringing necessary materials and assignments to these sessions.

The number of Flex Blocks in each student's schedule depends upon involvement in band, chorus, and other learning considerations.

G

Guidance Counselors

Guidance support is available to all students. Appointments can be made in the guidance office before or after school. Caregivers/guardians may also make appointments with a guidance counselor by calling the school. Each student is assigned a guidance counselor in grade six, and this counselor works with him/her/them for all three middle school years.

Guide to Mutual Respect (Refer to the [Guide to Mutual Respect](#))

H

Half Days/Early Release Days

Half days for students occur throughout the year. They are listed on the Northborough Public School Calendar; they typically include caregiver-teacher conference days (two in the fall and one in the winter), Open House, the days before Thanksgiving and December break, the last day of school, and Wellness Days.

Harassment

Harassment in any form is not tolerated. Situations are managed expediently, in accordance with the [Guide to Mutual Respect](#) and state and federal laws.

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, criminal prosecution may follow.

For more information, please click [M.G.L. c. 269, §§ 17–19](#).

Health Services

[Northborough Wellness Policy J-320](#)

A registered school nurse is available on campus during regular school hours, from 7:35 a.m. - 2:10 p.m. 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 caregiver or guardian and emergency contact information, including phone numbers and electronic mail addresses, be kept up-to-date. **caregiver(s) or guardian(s) should update this information at the beginning of each school year by completing the PowerSchool returning student online form.** The Power School 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 caregiver 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 Northborough-Southborough Public School district per the [Northborough School Immunization Policy](#).

One Tdap and one MenACWY vaccine are required prior to entry into 7th grade(unless either a medical or religious exemption is provided).

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 7th grade.

A copy of a recent physical exam within the past 13 months is required to try out or participate in interscholastic sports at the middle school and high school.

Immunization records and physical documentation can be provided to the school nurse as a secure document via email kgallagher@nsboro.k12.ma.us, via fax (508-501-7811), or a hard copy can be brought to the 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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:

- Vision - Grade 7
- Hearing - Grade 7
- Postural screenings: Grades 6-8
- Body Mass Index (BMI): Grade 7
- Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT): Grade 8

The caregiver 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 caregiver 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

- caregivers 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 caregiver or guardian will be notified of the transport.

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

Homework

The Public Schools of Northborough believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn and grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Time to think, to sleep, to read, and to play should be considered as important to student development as is time to complete homework.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-190 Homework Policy](#).

I - L

Immunizations (Refer to [Health Information](#))

Internet Use

All students sign the Responsible Use Policy form at the beginning of the school year. This outlines appropriate use of the Internet and devices at school and on the district network.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-200 Student Responsible Use Policy](#).

Late Bus

There are late buses, which run on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons at approximately 3:30 p.m. Late bus routes, which are different from typical daily bus routes, are posted on the school's website. These buses are available for students who stay after school for any reason.

Locks and Lockers

Each student will be assigned a locker and may be assigned one lock at the beginning of the school year. He/she/they may store their backpacks and other supplies in the locker if they choose to do so. (See [Backpacks](#)).

Only school issued locks may be used on school lockers and lockers must remain locked at all times. Students must keep the combinations to themselves, and they are responsible for returning the locks in June. If a lock is lost, a charge of \$5.00 must be paid before another is issued.

Students have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their student lockers. Weapons, illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages, stolen property, and other contraband may not be stored in school lockers. Lockers are to remain locked at all times. Lockers are school property, and the school reserves the right to periodically inspect lockers to assure compliance with school rules.

Lost and Found

Lost items should be given to the office. A lost and found table is located in the school’s lobby across from the elevator. Students should check there for lost items.

Lunch and Brain Break

The school provides two or more lunch options every day. To assist in the selection process, a menu is posted on our website. It is important that students indicate their lunch choices during first period so the cafeteria staff can prepare the appropriate number of servings.

Lunch is free to all students. Second lunches and a la carte snacks and drinks may be purchased. Information about pre-paying is emailed to families before the start of the school year. Students then utilize the bar codes on these ID badges to access their MySchoolBucks account.

For more information about MySchoolBucks, please click the link: [MySchoolBucks](#)

Soda and glass containers are not allowed at lunch.

Only water may be consumed outside the cafeteria during the school day. Other beverages can attract ants and, when spilled, may damage surfaces and devices.

M - O

Make-Up Work (Refer to [Absences](#))

MCAS Testing

MCAS testing occurs in the spring for grades 6, 7, and 8. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website details the testing date windows and the subject tests for each grade.

Medication (Refer to [Medication at School](#) under [Health Information](#))

No School (Refer to [School Closings and Delayed Openings](#))

Office Hours

The Robert E. Melican Middle School office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Two administrative assistants work

to respond to the needs of caregivers/guardians, students, and staff.

Open House

In September, caregivers/guardians have the opportunity to meet the principal, assistant principal, counselors, teachers, and specialists during the annual Open House. During the evening, caregivers/guardians meet with teachers to learn about curriculum, procedures, and special events.

P - R

Parent/Caregiver Concerns

Caregivers/guardians are encouraged to call the school to talk with teachers about concerns at any time. Guidance counselors are also available to consult with caregivers/guardians. If problems arise that are not resolved in communications with the teacher or staff member involved, caregivers/guardians should contact the principal or assistant principal.

Please check the school’s website at <https://melican.nsboro.k12.ma.us/> for a current listing of staff email addresses.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

The Robert E. Melican Middle School has an active and supportive PTO. This organization supports field trips, teacher grants, projects, and special events.

The PTO plays an additional positive role in the following ways: holds fund raising events, helps finance innovative teaching practices, and promotes teacher appreciation activities. PTO meetings are held regularly and are open to all caregivers/guardians.

Parent/Caregiver-Teacher Conferences

Parent/Caregiver-teacher conferences occur twice each year, once in the fall (two days) and once in the spring. Fall conferences are held on two days in October. Spring conferences are held on one day in March. MMS uses Sign-Up Genius to schedule conferences. Information is sent to families and families are able to schedule conferences during times that work best for them.

During other times of the year, caregivers/guardians are encouraged to contact the school at any time if a concern arises.

Parking Lot Protocol (Refer to [Arrival and Dismissal](#))

The safety of our students and staff is a key priority. We work collaboratively with the bus company to establish arrival and dismissal procedures. If you choose to drive your child to and from school, please adhere to our parking lot protocols. If arriving before 7:40 a.m. for student drop-off and/or before 2:15 for student pick-up, drivers should enter the parking lot and take the first left. This lane is used as the morning drop-off (single lane) and afternoon pick-up (two lanes). If arriving after 7:40 and/or after 2:25 (once buses have departed the parking lot), drivers can use the lane closest to the overhang. There may be staff on duty assisting you with this procedure. Please proceed with caution

when driving in the parking lot.

PowerSchool Information

Our district uses PowerSchool as our student information system. Information such as student biographical data, caregiver/guardian contact information, and student attendance are housed here. Additionally, student schedules and report cards are generated through PowerSchool. caregivers/guardians and students will receive login information at the beginning of each school year.

Preparation for Class

While expectations among teachers may vary, each student is required to come to class with his/her/their materials (Chromebook, charger, textbook, pen or pencil, and homework). Success in class is contingent upon being prepared.

Professional Development Days

Days are scheduled during the school year for teacher professional development. Students are not in attendance on these days.

Pupil Absence Notification Program

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

The Principal or designee will notify a student's caregivers/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 caregivers/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 caregivers/guardians in accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts law. M.G.L. c. 76, § 18.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times each year. In each subject, students receive a letter grade, marks for effort and conduct, and comments. These are emailed to families and/or viewed through PowerSchool.

Responsible Use Policy

All students sign the Responsible Use Policy form at the beginning of the school year. This outlines appropriate use of the Internet and devices at school and on the district network.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-200 Student Responsible Use Policy](#).

S

Schedules

A rotating schedule of seven or eight academic periods each day is used at the Robert E. Melican Middle School. Each grade has a designated lunch period; sixth graders eat first, followed by seventh and eighth graders.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

When school closings must be announced, the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough will make use of several different communication tools for notifying students and their families: the district website, local television and radio stations, and a computerized phone messaging system.

When schools must close early or open late due to emergency conditions, the announcement will be posted on the district website, sent to local media stations for announcement, and sent directly to you by phone. This 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 bused from their school to his/her/their regular afternoon after school destination, unless the caregiver/guardian has given the school office different instructions specifically for early closings.

School Council

In keeping with the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, the Robert E. Melican Middle School has a School Council composed of the principal, caregivers/guardians, a community representative, and teachers. The council meets monthly to review school needs and to create a School Improvement Plan that is aligned with the District Strategic Plan.

Caregivers/guardians are encouraged to consider joining this important group. Openings are posted at the beginning of the school year. Contact the principal if you are interested.

School Transfers

If your child is moving to another community and changing schools, a caregiver/guardian should notify as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition. A release form must be signed by a caregiver/guardian to permit the transfer of records. The student must return all materials and financial obligations must be met.

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](#) 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, who serves as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Heather Richards, Title IX Coordinator
The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough
53 Parkerville Road
Southborough, MA 01772
508-486-5115
hrichards@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Inquiries 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
8th 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](#).

Student Council

Each fall, a Student Council is formed. The Council's various responsibilities include: discussing school climate, representing student concerns, providing a "voice" for the student body, and planning school events.

Student Recognition

The Robert E. Melican Middle School acknowledges student performance in various ways including naming team students of the month. Students are also honored in curriculum specific areas such as technology education, physical education, art and music. Roadrunner Raffle Tickets are issued all year long, and a raffle is held once per month. Students who receive an A- or better in each of their core academic classes for all three trimesters receive a Presidential Award and are invited to an end-of-year breakfast acknowledgement.

Student Support Services, Special Education

The Robert E. Melican Middle School provides many support services for special needs students: grade level learning centers, English Language Learners (ELL), speech therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, and counseling.

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. caregivers/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 caregiver(s)/guardian(s). Upon receipt of the caregiver(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, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02118. In regard to concerns related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, caregivers/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.

Referrals for students to be considered for special needs services may be initiated by the caregivers/guardians or by teachers and will be reviewed by the Middle School Student Support Team (SST).

Student Support Team (SST)

The Student Support Team meets weekly to discuss and develop plans for struggling learners. The Student Support Team includes the following members: principal, school nurse, guidance counselors, school psychologist, behavior specialist, special education teachers, school adjustment counselors, assistant principal, general education teachers, and any other staff involved with the student(s) being discussed.

T - Z

Tardiness for Class

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Consequences for excessive tardiness vary by teacher.

Tardiness for School

Students who arrive tardy to school are required to check in with the office and get a “pass” for their class. Caregivers/guardians are encouraged to help students arrive at school on time. Students should be in school by 7:40 a.m. Excessive tardiness to school may result in communication to families by a school administrator.

Teacher/Staff Communication

Teachers can be reached by any of the following ways:

- 1. by email at first initial followed by last name@nsboro.k12.ma.us
- 2. by calling the office at 508-351-7020

Team Structure

We have five teams: Red Team (8th grade), Green Team (7th and 8th grade), Blue Team (7th grade), Orange Team (6th and 7th grade), Purple Team (6th grade).

Five heterogeneous sections, or classes of students, comprise each team. The team structure allows teachers who teach the same students to work together to create learning experiences that are beneficial to the specific needs of each student. Students remain with their sections for English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies.

Telephone (Landline) Usage and Messages

The office staff will relay an emergency message to a student as needed.

Office phones are available for student use at all times.

Textbooks

Textbooks and other school resources may be distributed throughout the school year in some classes. Students are expected to keep these resources in good condition and return them at the end of the school year. Costs will be assessed for lost or damaged materials.

If a book is lost during the school year, the student must pay for the cost of that book (typically ranging from \$35-\$95).

Vacations

School vacations are published in the school calendar. Caregivers/guardians are asked to support the need to have students present in school and to schedule their vacations when school is not in session. If students miss school due to vacation plans, the absence is considered unexcused and students are responsible for making up all missed work. Teachers are not required to provide work in advance of vacations.

Visitors

Doors are locked during the school day. Visitors are buzzed into the school via a security system. Visitors may be asked to show identification upon arrival, and they will be issued a visitor badge. There may be times (i.e. a global pandemic) when visitors are not permitted in the building.

Other students are not permitted to visit the Middle School during school hours unless arrangements have been made in advance through the main office. Students wishing to visit former teachers may do so after 2:15 p.m. after checking in at the office.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to help in many areas such as tutoring, clerical and library aide work, the sharing of hobbies or special interests, or participation in career awareness programs. Other volunteer opportunities are announced throughout the year (e.g. chaperoning field trips, planning the Eighth Grade Farewell Dance). All volunteers must have valid CORI and SORI on file. These forms can be obtained through the office.

Guide to Mutual Respect

Introduction

The Robert E. Melican Middle School community desires to maintain a positive and safe learning environment for every student. To achieve that goal, each group within the larger community is expected to adhere to four basic behavioral guidelines:

1. Respect yourself.
2. Respect others.
3. Respect the physical environment of the school.
4. Respect the learning environment of the school.

Teachers exemplify these expectations by:

- Modeling and communicating the behavior expected of students,
- Providing enriching and engaging educational experiences,
- Knowing and enforcing the Guide to the Mutual Respect in a manner geared to prevent disciplinary issues.

caregivers/Caregivers exemplify these expectations by:

- Participating with the school and its staff in developing and supporting suitable behavioral expectations,
- Collaborating with the school to resolve problematic disciplinary issues.

Students exemplify these expectations by:

- Interacting respectfully with all school personnel,
- Supporting their classmates,
- Cooperating with teacher directives,
- Contributing to the learning environment through their positive actions.

The successful implementation of these guidelines requires the presumption that all parties involved have worth and dignity and that they are contributing members of this educational community. We must interact with each other, always remembering these precepts.

To assure that we reach these positive goals, it is necessary that we delineate those behaviors, which are unacceptable in our learning environment and make clear the consequences of such actions.

Offenses fall into three categories:

1. Category A - those that are monitored by the individual teacher and relate to classroom management or minor level building-wide offenses.
2. Category B - more serious offenses that are referred to the building-wide disciplinary system.
3. Category C - infractions that are of such a serious nature that immediate action by the Administration may be warranted.

The Process

caregivers/guardians will be notified of continued offenses in Category A by the appropriate educator. Offenses in Categories B and C will result in a call to the home. Caregivers/guardians will be made aware of impending disciplinary action and have an opportunity to discuss ways of resolving the behavioral problems. Students and caregivers/guardians also have the right to speak to a teacher who has initiated the disciplinary action and to the administration if a further explanation or a hearing is necessary.

Students will be afforded due process before disciplinary consequences are imposed. The amount of process due will be determined based upon the potential consequences for the violation of which the student is accused. At a minimum, however, all students will be provided with the following prior to the imposition of disciplinary consequences:

- An explanation of the evidence supporting the charge(s);
- An opportunity for the student to present their perspective of the facts concerning the charge(s) and to explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident.

When a student is suspended, he/she/they will return to school accompanied by his/her/their caregiver/guardian. A caregiver/guardian conference will be conducted. (Depending upon the nature and circumstances of the offense, school administrators may decide to hold this conference either prior to or during the suspension.)

Category A – Classroom Management

Teachers will monitor all elements of classroom management. They will respond to inappropriate behaviors by personal interaction with the student, team discussions, consulting with counselors, the behavior specialist, and other support personnel, and communication with the home. Teachers will document these preventative efforts. However, when such actions are non-productive, this documentation will enter the discipline code under Category B. Once these actions have reached Category B level, continued inappropriate behaviors will go directly to Category B.

Examples of inappropriate classroom behaviors in Category A include but are not limited to the following: tardiness to class, disruption of the learning environment, overdue materials, unpreparedness for class (e.g., no book, pencil, chromebook), disrespect to staff or students.

Additional individual classroom expectations may be generated by the teacher in conjunction with the class.

Category A will also include minor misconduct throughout the building. When offenses in this category accumulate to indicate continuing inappropriate behavior by an individual, this documentation will also enter Category B - Serious, #11.

Examples of inappropriate school-wide behaviors in Category A include, but are not limited to the following: minor student abuse, tardiness to school, minor property abuse, running in the halls, minor misconduct anywhere in the school.

Category B – Serious

Offenses in this category represent serious infractions and may therefore result in a response from the administration. Consequences may include lunch detentions, after school detention, reflecting activities, and community service to the school.

Depending on the severity of the circumstances in which the infraction occurred, the administration could assign a suspension for an infraction in this category.

1. Profanity/disrespect to staff by either word or gesture.
2. Stealing.
3. Student abuse.
4. Individual/group harassment of an individual/s.
5. Behaviors that seriously disturb the learning environment.
6. School vandalism.
7. Fighting/Assault.
8. Forgery of and/or interference with school/home communication.
9. Truancy (absent for a whole or part of a day) without caregiver approval.
10. Inappropriate interaction with teachers or non-teaching staff members outside the classroom.
11. Accumulation of documented classroom misbehaviors documenting a lack of response to the

preventive efforts of the teacher, the home and the team, or accumulation of minor offenses from Category A.

12. Refusal to follow the directions of a teacher or administrator.
13. Possession and or use of stink bombs.
14. Possession of tobacco/nicotine substances or paraphernalia.
15. Other - with full explanation.

Category C - Major Infractions

Some infractions are of such a serious nature that immediate and severe action by the administration may be warranted. For the purposes of this document, suspension is defined as the temporary exclusion of a student from the regular school program for a specified number of days, generally not to exceed three (3). At the discretion of the administration, suspension can be served externally (student remains home) or internally (student remains at school under supervision). The number of suspension days assigned by the administration depends on the nature of the behavior.

1. Any aggressive behavior such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Inflicting bodily injury to another person.
 - b. Fighting.
 - c. Aggression toward an adult by word or gesture.
 - d. Other (as determined by the Principal).
2. Any illegal action such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Threatening individual or public safety,
 - b. Possessing materials/articles used as incendiary devices,
 - c. Setting fires,
 - d. Possessing explosives (as defined by state and/or criminal statutes),
 - e. Smoking/Vaping,
 - f. Possessing and/or drinking alcoholic beverages,
 - g. Seriously vandalizing school property or another's possessions,
 - h. Stealing that may result in police involvement,
 - i. Possessing and/or using a controlled substance or any other substance used to alter either mental or physical perception or sensation,
 - j. Possessing and/or using a dangerous weapon,,
 - k. Assault of a school staff member,
 - l. Discriminatory Harassment - including but not limited to verbal or physical taunting, threatening, ethnic or sexual harassment, flagging, singly or in a group,
 - m. Hazing,
 - n. Civil Rights Violation and/or Crimes of Hate,
 - o. Bullying
 - p. Other (as determined by the Principal).
3. Chronic or serious misbehavior that demonstrates complete disrespect for the learning environment and/or others.

Massachusetts Statutes: Student Behavior and Discipline

Students are expected to follow the school rules at all times while attending school or at a school function. Violations of this may result in a student receiving disciplinary action. Administrators and staff recognize that each student is unique and situations may vary from one incident to another. Melican works to make violations of school rules a learning experience for the student.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Under many circumstances, student conduct concerns can be solved through teacher intervention within the school day. There are times, however, when other consequences, including, but not limited to lunch detention, after school detention, restorative justice, behavioral contracts, suspension, and structured days, is warranted.

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 and/or in-school or out-of-school suspension.

Any specifics given in the policy are only guidelines; they are not absolute rules. The guidelines support 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 or an out-of-school suspension.

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

- M.G.L. c.71, §37H ½ which includes felony complaint or conviction
- M.G.L. c.71, §37H ¾ which includes school discipline not covered in 37 H ½.

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

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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 a 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 ³/₄ - Suspension on Grounds other than those set forth in Secs. 37H or 37H 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 caregiver 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 caregiver or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the caregiver or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the caregiver 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 caregivers 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 caregiver 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 caregiver or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a caregiver 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 caregiver or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the caregiver 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.

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 caregiver/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the caregiver/guardian.

DUE PROCESS UNDER M.G.L. 71 37H3/4

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the Principal determines that the student committed the

disciplinary offense, the Principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the caregiver/guardian orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the infraction, and the length of the in-school suspension. The Principal shall also invite the caregiver/guardian to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. Such a meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension, if possible, and if not, as soon thereafter as possible.

- If the Principal is unable to reach the caregiver/guardian after making and documenting at least two attempts to do so, such attempts shall constitute reasonable efforts for purposes of orally informing the caregiver/guardian of the in-school suspension. On the same day as the in-school suspension decision, the Principal shall also deliver written notice to the student and caregiver/guardian about the in-school suspension, including the reason and the length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the caregiver/guardian to a meeting with the principal, if such meeting has not already occurred. Said written notice shall be delivered to the caregiver/guardian on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the caregiver/guardian for school communications, or other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the caregiver/guardian.

OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION - NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

- Short-Term Suspension - In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and caregiver/guardian will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and of the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension.
 - Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the caregiver/guardian and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing.
- Long-Term Suspension - Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and caregiver/guardian of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses and evidence, the right to review the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, the right to translation services if required to participate in the hearing, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped. Out-of-school suspensions are not appealable unless the consequence results in more than ten (10) cumulative days of suspension during that school year.

PRINCIPAL'S HEARING

- Short-Term Suspension: At the Principal's hearing, the student and caregiver/guardian (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining disciplinary actions for the student.
- Long-Term Suspension: In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student will have the following rights:

- o the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/caregiver/guardian's expense;
 - o the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not;
 - o the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident (although the student may not be compelled to testify);
 - o the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
 - o the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.
- Principal's Decision: Based upon a preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or disciplinary actions to be imposed. In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed, a principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense; consider ways to re-engage the student in learning. The Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the disciplinary action for the offense, and shall avoid using long-term suspension from school as a disciplinary action until alternatives have been tried. If the Principal decides to suspend the student, written notice of the Principal's decision will be sent to the student and caregiver/guardian in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension, and the process for appeal, when an appeal right exists. The Principal will also notify the student and caregiver/guardian of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

LONG TERM SUSPENSION APPEAL

See M.G.L. 71 37H1/2 above. For long-term suspensions the Student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days upon request. (2) The student or caregiver shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) (d) 5.a. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion

There is no right to appeal an in-school or out-of-school suspension imposed under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4 which does not result in the student's suspension for more than 10 school days in the school year.

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 caregiver/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 caregiver/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 caregiver/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 caregiver/guardian, the Principal must provide the student and caregiver/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 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.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Any student who is disciplined pursuant to the three statutes above shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up 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 AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All students, including those receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), M.G.L. c. 71B, and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, are expected to adhere to all rules and regulations stated in this Student Handbook. The following procedures shall, however, apply when students with disabilities are subjected to suspension or expulsion in excess of (10) consecutive school days or when, as a result of a pattern of disciplinary removal exceeding ten (10) school days cumulatively in the school year, the student has been subjected to a disciplinary change in placement. Students entitled to the additional procedural protections set forth below include: (1) students who have been found eligible for special education services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and/or M.G.L. c. 71B; and (2) students who have been evaluated and determined to be

eligible students as defined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and (3) students who the District knows or should have known may be eligible for special education under the IDEA or Section 504.

- A. A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive school days or a series of short term suspensions that exceed ten (10) school days and constitute a pattern of removal are considered to constitute a disciplinary change in placement.
- B. Within ten (10) school days of any decision to impose a suspension or expulsion that would result in a disciplinary change in placement of a student with a disability, building administrators, the caregiver/guardian, the student (where appropriate), and relevant members of the student's IEP/504 Team ("Manifestation Team") will convene to determine whether the violation for which the student is subject to a disciplinary change in placement was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- C. If the Manifestation Team determines that the behavior was NOT a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to all students except that students eligible for special education services shall be entitled to a free appropriate public education as of the eleventh (11th) cumulative day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year. A functional behavior assessment will be conducted where appropriate.
- D. If the Team determines that the behavior WAS a manifestation of the Student's disability, the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment or review any existing behavior intervention plan and takes steps (with the consent of the caregiver/guardian) to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan and the student will not be suspended or expelled for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability.
- E. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (as determined by the Team) up to forty-five (45) school days:
 - i. If the behavior involves dangerous weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school or at a school function; or
 - ii. If the student causes substantial bodily injury to another at school or a school sponsored event.Additionally, if the district provides evidence that the student is "substantially likely" to injure him/herself or others and a hearing officer/court orders the alternative placement; or with the informed written consent of the student's caregiver or guardian.
- F. The caregiver/guardian shall have the right to appeal the manifestation Team's determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting to the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on any such appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.
- G. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the student will remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension from school.

M.G.L. c.71, §37L

Section 37L. The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section

51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fires under section 2A of chapter 148.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the superintendent of said school, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the board of education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

Student Records - Notification of Rights Under FERPA

1. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords caregivers and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:
2. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.
3. caregivers 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 caregiver or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
4. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the caregiver or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.
5. caregivers or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to the School Principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the caregiver or eligible student, the School will notify the caregiver 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 caregiver or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
6. 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.
7. 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

I. Inspection of the Student Record

A caregiver, 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 caregiver 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 caregiver or eligible student no later than ten (10) calendar days after the request, unless the caregiver or student consents to a delay. The caregiver 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.

II. Rights of Non-Custodial caregivers

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 34H and 603 CMR 23.07 specify detailed procedures that govern access to student records by caregivers who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please refer to [Student Record Access for Non-Custodial caregivers](#) below.

III. Confidentiality of Student Records

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the caregiver(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 caregiver 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.

IV. Amendment of the Student Record

Eligible students and/or caregivers have the right to add additional information, comments, data, and/or other relevant material to the student record. Eligible students and/or caregivers 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.

V. 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 caregiver/guardian and eligible student must be notified, and provided with the opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed.

VI. 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 caregiver'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 Northborough 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 insure caregiver 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.

Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords caregivers 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)-
 - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's caregiver;
 - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
 - Sex behavior or attitudes;
 - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;

- Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student caregivers; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
 - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 - Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and 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;
 - 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 –
 - Protected information surveys of students;
 - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
 - Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the caregivers to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law. The Northborough – Southborough Public Schools has developed and adopted policies in consultation with caregivers 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 The Northborough, Southborough, Public Schools will directly notify caregivers 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 caregiver 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 caregivers 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, caregivers 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. caregivers 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.

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

Student Privacy Policy Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Student Record Access for Non-Custodial caregivers

Chapter 71: Section 34H. Noncustodial caregivers; receipt of information for child enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools; notice to custodial caregiver.

- 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 caregivers of a child enrolled in the school if the caregivers 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 caregiver but not specified in the preceding sentence be provided to the requesting caregiver if that caregiver 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 caregiver shall be removed from 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 caregiver who does not have physical custody of a child shall be eligible for the receipt of information unless: (1) the caregiver'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 caregiver 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 caregiver requesting information under this section shall submit a written request to the school principal. 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 caregiver 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 caregiver and in English. The notification shall also inform the custodial caregiver that information requested under this section shall be provided to the requesting caregiver after 21 days unless the custodial caregiver 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 caregiver's custody from abuse by the requesting caregiver unless the protective order or any subsequent order which modifies the protective order, specifically allows access to the information described in this section.
- C. At any time the principal of a school is presented with an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to this section the school shall immediately cease to provide said information and shall notify the requesting caregiver that the distribution of information shall cease.
- D. The principal of each public elementary and secondary school shall designate a staff member whose duties

shall include the proper implementation of this section.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this section. Said regulations shall include provisions which assure that the information referred to in this section is properly marked to indicate that said information may not be used to support admission of the child to another school.

Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements if Used

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough recognize that on occasion physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members from serious, imminent physical harm. Physical restraint may be used only as an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited in public education programs except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed inappropriate under the circumstances. Physical restraint shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical restraint shall not be used: (a) as a means of discipline or punishment; (b) when the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting; (c) as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or (d) as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Nothing in the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough's policy, or the applicable regulations, prohibits: (a) the right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (b) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (c) the exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to MGL c. 119, § 51A.

The District complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in school, 603 CMR 46.00.

Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The definition includes children and youths who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described above.

The term "unaccompanied youth" includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a caregiver or guardian. If a student is homeless, or becomes homeless during the school year, they are encouraged to inform the school administration. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires that schools immediately enroll homeless students in school, even if they do not have the documents usually required for enrollment, such as school records, medical records or proof of residency, as long as the student has been properly immunized. Information on lead screenings as well as immunization records may be transferred over the phone. Caregivers or Guardians intending to register students who are homeless should be aware of the following:

To the extent feasible, homeless students will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, caregivers or guardians of homeless students may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to homeless families on the same terms as families residing in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The caregiver or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by the process set forth by state and federal regulation and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Homeless students are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a homeless student is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student or will divide the costs equally.

The district's liaison for homeless students and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of homeless students in schools, family shelters and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

To the extent practicable, and as required by law, the district will work with homeless students and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless students not currently attending school. Homeless students and unaccompanied youths will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education programs, gifted and talented programs and school nutrition programs. A child who is homeless or an unaccompanied youth and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for Title I services and the Free and Reduced Lunch program. For additional information regarding homeless students' rights and services, please contact the building principal or the District Homeless Liaison, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.

Educational Opportunities for Students in Foster Care

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that foster care students continue to attend their school of origin, unless after a collaborative decision-making process it is determined to be in the student's best interest to enroll in and attend school in the district in which a foster care provider or facility is located (if different than their prior school district). The law also requires that when it is not in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin, the student is immediately enrolled and attends in a new school district, even if records normally required for enrollment cannot be quickly produced. Additionally, the law requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF), The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the school district to designate points of contact; and also that the district collaborate with DCF and other school districts to ensure that students will receive transportation to the school of origin if needed.

Best Interest Determination

Decisions about whether a student in foster care should continue to attend their school of origin should be made collaboratively by DCF, the student (as appropriate), the student's family and/or foster family (and if different, the person authorized to make educational decisions on behalf of the student), the school and district of origin, and (when different) the local district where the student is placed. Best interest determinations should focus on the needs of each individual student and take into account a variety of factors. Every effort should be made to reach agreement regarding the appropriate school placement of a student in foster care. However, if there is disagreement regarding school placement for a student in foster care, DCF will finalize the best interest determination.

The district can seek review of DCF's decision by utilizing a Foster Care School Selection Dispute Resolution Process established by DESE and DCF. Decisions made through this process are not subject to review. Under the law, to promote educational stability, students should continue to attend their schools of origin while best interest determinations are being made.

Transportation

The district of origin must collaborate with DCF on how transportation will be provided and arranged to ensure that students in foster care who need transportation to remain in their school of origin will receive such transportation while they are in foster care. Transportation options may include using Title I funds, establishing regional collaborations among districts, coordinating with existing routes for transportation, seeking help from foster caregiver(s), etc. Absent other agreements between the district and DCF, the district of origin is responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.

Immediate Enrollment

If it is in the best interest of a student in foster care to leave the school of origin, the student must be enrolled in school in his/her local school district immediately. To minimize disruption of the student's education, the law requires the district to enroll the student in a new school right away, without waiting to receive the typical student enrollment documentation (other than emergency contact information). The enrolling school must immediately contact the child's school and district of origin to obtain the relevant records and documentation, and the school and district of origin should immediately transfer those records. To facilitate enrollment, DCF representatives will present a Notice to Local Educational Agency form that indicates that the student is in foster care, along with their state-agency identification badge, to the local school district when enrolling students.

Educational Opportunities for Children of Military Families

- In an effort to facilitate the placement, enrollment, graduation, data collection and provision of special services for students transferring into or out of the District because of their caregivers/guardians being on active duty in the U.S. Armed Services, the District supports and will implement its responsibilities as outlined in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children applies to children of military families who are school aged children enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade, in the household of an active-duty member of the uniformed service of the United States, including members of the National Guard and Reserve serving on active duty.
- The following applies under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children:
- Sending schools must send either official or unofficial records with the moving students and District receiving schools must use those records for immediate enrollment and educational placement.
- Simultaneously, the receiving school must request official records and the sending schools shall respond within 10 days with the records.
- Immunization requirements of the District may be met within 30 days from the date of enrollment (or be in progress).
- For Kindergarten and First grade students, a student can continue in the same grade in the receiving state regardless of entrance age requirements, if they have already started kindergarten or 1st grade in an accredited school in the sending state in which the family was stationed. A student may go to the next grade regardless of age requirements, if they have completed kindergarten or 1st grade in the sending state.
- Receiving schools must initially honor placement of students in all courses from the sending school. Receiving schools are not precluded from performing subsequent evaluation to ensure the appropriate placement and continued enrollment of the student in courses and programs.
- In compliance with federal law, special education students must be placed by the existing IEP with reasonable accommodations in the receiving school.
- The District may, as deemed appropriate, waive prerequisites or other preconditions for all courses and programs, while also maintaining its right to re-evaluate the student to ensure continued enrollment, as deemed

appropriate.

- Students shall have additional excused absences at the discretion of the District for visits with caregivers or legal guardians relative to leave or deployment.
- An eligible student living with a noncustodial caregiver or other person standing in loco parentis shall be permitted to attend the school in which he or she was enrolled while living without the custodial caregiver/guardian without any tuition fee imposed.
- The student will be provided with the opportunity for inclusion in extra-curricular activities regardless of deadlines as long as the child is otherwise qualified.

** This handbook has been translated into the major languages spoken by caregivers or guardians of District students. If caregivers'/guardians' or a student's primary language is not English, and the District has not already translated the student handbook(s) into their primary language, the school will translate a handbook and/or code of conduct into that language. The District will also make oral interpretation available for any caregiver or guardian with limited English skills, including caregivers or guardians who speak low-incidence languages. Title VI; EEOA 20 U.S.C. 1703(f); M. G. L. c. 76, section 5; 603 CMR 26.02(2); 603 CMR 26.03; 603 CMR 26.08*