

Northborough Public Schools



Parent/Guardian Student Handbook Kindergarten-Grade 5

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Northborough, Southborough and Northborough and Southborough Regional School Districts prohibit discrimination in its operations. The school districts provide equal employment and educational opportunities to all persons regardless of their 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. This applies to all persons affiliated with the Northborough, Southborough and Northborough and Southborough Regional School Districts including students, prospective and existing personnel, contractors and suppliers of goods and services. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools or directly to the United States Department of Education Region I Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02110.

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VISITORS AND SCHOOL SECURITY

Parents and community members are invited to visit and volunteer at our school. For the safety and security of everyone in our building, there is a security system, doors are locked at all times, and visitors are asked to ring the bell for access, enter the office, sign in, wear a visitor's badge, and sign out when leaving.

School Hours:

Zeh & Proctor Schools 8:30-3:00

Lincoln Street and Peaslee Schools 8:55-3:25

PARKING AND DRIVING AT SCHOOL

Anyone driving on school grounds must reduce speed and watch closely for children. For safety reasons, please do not use cell phones while driving on school grounds, and follow the indicated traffic pattern.

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

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school every day that school is in session. If a student will be absent, parents should call or email the school office early in the morning to report their child's absence. Please do not leave absence messages on a teacher's voicemail.

Students who are absent or dismissed from school because of illness, may not participate in after-school or evening activities. A student who becomes ill during the day, or otherwise needs to be dismissed, should report to the nurse's office. School staff will contact the parent if the student will be sent home. A student who leaves school during the day for a medical or dental appointment, or any other reason, should bring a note from the parent to their classroom teacher. A documented absence or tardiness resulting from a properly reported illness, medical appointment, court appearance, religious holiday, or urgent cause will ordinarily be excused. Parents will be contacted if the school has not received parental notification of the reason for a student's absence within 3 days of the absence.

Making arrangements for missed assignments is the responsibility of the student. Parents and students are encouraged to check teacher websites for assignments and updates.

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

PUPIL ABSENCE NOTIFICATION PROGRAM

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

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

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

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DISMISSAL OF INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

Late Arrival

- Parents/guardians can check their students in at the main office where they will be signed in for the day.

Early Dismissal

- The school follows the guidelines below to safely release students to parents/guardians:
- Parents/guardians must email or call ahead to the main office to have students dismissed early.
- Parents/guardians must park and ring the bell at the main door upon arrival, identify themselves, the student being dismissed, as well as their relationship to the student.
- Parents/guardians should be prepared to show a photo identification.
- An office staff member will call the classroom to have the student dismissed.
- The student will report to the office, where they will sign out.
- An office staff member will walk the student to the front lobby vestibule, where they will meet the parent/guardian at the door, check ID, and release the student. The early release will then be recorded in Powerschool attendance.

PARENT DROP-OFF OF ITEMS

We highly encourage students to come to school prepared but recognize that there are some situations when parents/guardians need to drop off items.

If medication is being dropped off, the school nurse will meet the parents/guardians at the front door to receive it directly.

BUSES

The bus schedule is listed on the district website (www.nsboro.k12.ma.us). A student may ride only on their assigned bus. Leaving or boarding the bus at a location other than the student's assigned home stop or assigned school is not permitted.

Waiting For The Bus

Students must be on time for the bus. Bus drivers are not required to wait for students who are not outside waiting at the stop. Students must observe all safety precautions while waiting for the bus:

- Do not play on the road.
- Avoid crossing streets, if possible.
- Do not engage in horseplay.
- Do not trespass on private property.
- As the bus approaches, line up well off the roadway and do not approach the bus until it has stopped and the driver has opened the door.

Loading The Bus

When the bus arrives, students must:

- Get on the bus quickly and be seated.
- Remain seated; keep aisles and exits clear.
- Listen carefully and obey any directions from the driver.

Behavior While Riding On The Bus

While riding on the bus, students must engage in appropriate conduct, and obey the driver promptly and respectfully. Students are required to comply with all school rules at school bus stops and on school busses and may be subject to disciplinary consequences including long-term-suspension or expulsion for violations of applicable rules and policies in addition to suspension from school transportation.

FIELD TRIPS

Permission slips and all pertinent school information about the trip will be sent home with students. A signed permission slip must be on file in order for a student to attend.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Northborough Extended Day Program is an on-premises after-school program run by the Town of Northborough. Children participate in daily activities, which include outdoor free play, arts and crafts, and homework time. All required documentation must be completed before starting the program. For more information, please call 508-393-7020.

VOLUNTEERS

Parents and other community members are encouraged to play an active role in the life of the school. Volunteers may assist in many capacities throughout the year, which may vary from one-time special events to weekly classroom visits. Those interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities should speak with their child's teacher, the PTO, or the building principal. All volunteers must have a completed C.O.R.I. background check on file with the district within the past year. Volunteers should contact the main office to complete this.

SCHOOL CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

When a school closing is required, the District will use several different communication tools for notifying students and their families: the District website, ParentSquare, and local television and radio stations.

Please check one of the notification methods listed below, and do not call the school. When there is a delay or early dismissal, school staff is occupied with managing the transition in an orderly manner, and telephone calls interfere with completing the necessary schedule changes and other communications within the school.

- District Website: Cancellations and early dismissals will be posted on the front page of the district website, www.nsboro.k12.ma.us. This will be the earliest notification of school closings, posted at the very top of the front page.
- ParentSquare: Through ParentSquare, a message will be sent out to all households of school-attending students. These calls will be sent out at 5:30 a.m. School cancellation or closing phone call announcements will be made to all phone numbers on file for a student, including home, work, and cell phone numbers.
- Local Television and Radio Stations: The District will continue to post cancellation announcements through local media, as has traditionally been done in the past.

When school must close early due to emergency conditions, the announcement will be posted on the District website, sent to local media stations for announcements, and sent directly to families by phone through ParentSquare. A ParentSquare message will be sent to all home, work, and cell phone listings provided to the school as contact information.

When school closes early, students will be bused from their school to their regular afternoon after-school destination, unless parents/guardians have given the school office different instructions specifically for early closings.

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

Students order lunch at the beginning of the school day while attendance is taken. Hot lunches, with plain or skim milk included, are available to all students who want them at no cost. Students who bring their lunches from home may obtain milk separately for a fee. Menus are posted on the District's website under the Departments tab, Food & Nutrition. Students will be required to

provide their student ID number when getting hot lunch or milk. Teachers will practice this procedure during the first few weeks of school.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Teachers may recognize students' birthdays in the classroom with non-food celebrations. Birthday party invitations may not be passed out in the classroom.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are encouraged to avoid bringing cell phones and other electronic devices to school. If a student brings a cell phone or other electronic device to school, **it must be turned OFF and kept in a backpack during the school day (bell-to-bell).**

Students may not have or use electronic devices while in the building or on field trips unless permission is given by a supervising staff member. If permission is given to a student to possess or use an electronic device in school, the student and parent/ guardian must agree to the rules and protocols of the District. Students may not use electronic devices to access the school network or the Internet without permission from and under the supervision of, a supervising adult. Any such access is subject to all school policies, including the Acceptable Use Policy, and may only support instructional activities.

Students may not call, text, or message family members during the school day. If a student needs to reach a family member, phones are available in the main office. Parents/guardians who need to reach their children during the school day must also contact the main office.

Students may not photograph or video any staff members or students in school buildings or on school grounds without express permission from a supervising staff member.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor what devices their child brings to school. The school is not responsible for the safety of these items. In the event a cell phone or other electronic device is used in violation of this policy, the device may be confiscated, and parents/guardians will be notified to arrange for the return of the device. Repeated violations of this policy may lead to other actions.

STUDENT APPEARANCE AND DRESS

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 disruption or disorder within the school. The school district and individual schools are responsible for seeing that student attire does not interfere with the health or safety of any student or others, and that student attire does not contribute to a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student or others.

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

LOST AND FOUND

Name tags and labels on personal articles help in returning lost items to their rightful owners. Backpacks, clothing, and other large items found around the school are kept in the lost and found. Glasses, watches, wallets, jewelry, books, and other valuables are located in the office.

RECESS

Recess will occur each day and will be 30 minutes long.

HEALTH SERVICES

[Northborough Wellness Policy J-320](#)

A registered school nurse is available on campus during regular school hours:

Zeh & Proctor Schools 8:30-3:00

Lincoln Street and Peaslee Schools 8:55-3:25

School nurses provide care for all students, including first aid, emergency care and assessment, the management of chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, seizures, food allergies, etc), support for mental health concerns, preventive services, and communication with the school team, families and community providers.

HEALTH INFORMATION

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

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

IMMUNIZATION AND PHYSICAL EXAM

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

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

Immunization records and physical documentation can be provided to the school nurse as a secure document via email, fax, or a hard copy can be brought to the school's Health Office.

Lincoln Street School Email: mfioire@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Fax: (508)501-7897

Peaslee School Email: lperkins@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Fax: (508)351-7035

Proctor School Email: dgage@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Fax: (508)351-7007

Zeh School Email: sberger@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Fax: (508)393-5125

ILLNESS AND INJURY

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

MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

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

- Prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications, and inhalers to be administered under the above conditions must be brought to the nurse by the parent or guardian in the original properly labeled container.
- School policy prohibits students from carrying medications on their person or having them in their possession without the prior approval of the school nurse.
- No medication will be administered in school without a written order from a licensed prescriber and parent or guardian permission if under 18. This written order must be signed and dated for a closed period of time and include instructions for dispensing.
- A Medication Administration Plan (MAP) signed by a parent or guardian, or student if over 18 years old, must be submitted to the nurse concerning the dispensing of medication.

- For short-term prescription medication requiring administration for ten (10) school days or less, the pharmacy-labeled container may be used in lieu of a licensed prescriber's order. If the nurse has a question, she may request a written order from a licensed prescriber.
- Each school calendar year requires a new written order from the licensed prescriber and a new Medication Administration Plan (MAP) for the dispensing of the medication.

HEALTH SCREENINGS

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

- Vision - Grades K-5
- Hearing - Grades K-3
- Postural screenings: Grade 5
- BMI (Body Mass Index): Grades 1 and 4

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

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

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

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

Fever (>100.0° Fahrenheit or higher):

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hand, foot, and mouth (Coxsackie virus) - usually begins with mild fever, poor appetite, malaise, and sore throat. One or two days after the fever starts, sores develop in the mouth, usually on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks. A skin rash, usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, with flat or raised red spots and sometimes blisters, develops over 1–2 days. Individuals may attend school with the rash; there is no need to exclude anyone feeling well enough to attend school.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ALLERGIC REACTION AND EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTOR USE

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

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

STUDENT PLACEMENT

The student placement process is complex and time-consuming. Classroom teachers meet by grade level, in conjunction with the specialist staff, to develop heterogeneous class lists that are balanced. The following goals guide the school staff when making class assignments:

1. To form a class of children that is balanced with respect to intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs
2. To support the needs of each learner
3. To achieve an equitable teacher/student ratio

If parents/guardians have a sensitive or specific concern, they should contact the school principal.

HOMEWORK POLICY

The Northborough school community supports homework that provides meaningful follow-up to what has been taught, helps prepare students for what will be taught, enriches students' grasp of the curriculum, and allows parents/guardians to play an active role in their child's education. As students progress through each grade, homework builds in complexity, expectations, and time. Homework goals and expectations are established by classroom teachers and communicated with parents/guardians and students at the beginning of the school year. Individual student capabilities are always respected. Any concerns regarding the amount of homework your child is receiving should be addressed to their teacher.

Regular completion of homework by students is essential to the progress of both the student and the class as a whole. If, because of illness, emergency, or other serious issue, a student cannot complete a particular piece of homework, the parent/guardian should contact the teacher.

ABSENCE DUE TO VACATION

The school respectfully requests that family vacations be scheduled when school is not in session.

If, however, a child will be out of school for three days or more for a vacation outside of the regularly scheduled school days off, the principal must be consulted to discuss a plan for missed school work. Teachers are not required to provide work in advance of family vacations. Time off for family vacations when school is in session is considered unexcused.

MAKE-UP WORK

Students are responsible for making up all work missed due to unexcused or vacation absences. Teachers allow a reasonable amount of time for students to turn in work that is late due to an

absence. Upon return from an absence, the teacher should be consulted regarding any other assignments to be made up.

TESTING

A variety of informal testing occurs on a regular basis throughout the year, and students also participate in the state testing program at certain grade levels. Third through fifth grade students take the state-required tests in the spring of each year. Information regarding the dates and curriculum areas of testing are found on the Massachusetts Department of Education website, the school website, and communication sent home prior to the testing dates. If you have any questions regarding testing please contact the office.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AND REPORT CARDS

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring of each year (see the school calendar for specific dates).. On these days, students will attend only one-half day of school. Additional conferences are encouraged whenever parents or teachers feel they are necessary. Communication between home and school is important for each student's progress and development. The school encourages such contact through notes, phone calls, and/or email. School personnel all have email accounts and do their best to check messages once a day. To contact a teacher during the school day, parents/guardians should call the school office. If the teacher is unavailable, they will return the call as soon as possible. Report cards will be sent via ParentSquare twice a year, at the end of the first semester, and at the end of the year.

E-MAIL GUIDELINES

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

- E-mail sent through the school's email system is not considered private, therefore caution is recommended regarding issues of a personal or sensitive nature disclosed in e-mail messages.
- E-mail communications should be brief and concise.
- Time-sensitive information should not be sent in e-mail messages as teachers may not be able to respond within the expected timeframe.
- E-mail communication should be used appropriately and as needed. It should not be used as a daily messaging tool.

At times, teachers and teaching teams may establish e-mail protocols with families that are mutually agreeable to support students.

SOCIAL COMPETENCY PROGRAM

The Northborough Schools social competency program is called Second Step. This program recognizes the critical role that relationships play in the social development and academic success of children. By developing the social competencies necessary to make and maintain new and diverse relationships with classmates, children create new avenues for their own and others' growth. The explicit instruction and practice in various social competency skills provided in this curriculum help students and teachers to build more positive relationships and raise their expectations of themselves and others. The goal is to create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment, one that appreciates the diversity of all types and encourages and supports the academic achievements of all.

STUDENT INFORMATION FORMS

Student information forms are kept on file for use in case of an emergency. It is important that the school be notified immediately of any changes to the information on these forms throughout the year.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

Students who are English Learners will continue to receive English Language Development instruction, as well as Sheltered Content Instruction ("SCI") as a part of the Sheltered English Immersion ("SEI") program.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

When a student experiences a consistent pattern of difficulty in an appropriate level of work or navigating social interactions, various supports are available through and beyond the general education classroom. Communication between home and the school will take place to explore the issue and possible resolutions.

The issue may then be referred to the Child Study Team ("CST"), a group that consists of the classroom teacher, the principal, a special education teacher, speech and language teacher, the psychologist, and the reading teacher. This group discusses the student's current performance and explores strategies to resolve the issue in the general education classroom setting.

If the student's difficulties are not resolved through the pre-referral process, the student may be referred for formal assessments and consideration of whether an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan is required to meet the student's educational needs.

The District is committed to providing quality education to all students regardless of their strengths or weaknesses. Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to enable them to make effective progress in school. Parents/guardians or teachers may refer students for an evaluation of the student's eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and/or M.G.L. c. 71B. Within

five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Upon receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted, and a Team meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

Additionally, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") requires a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to any qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . ."

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

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

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Massachusetts law requires that every public school have a school council to assist in site-based decision-making. This council is composed of the principal, parents, teachers and other community members "broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and community."

The school council provides teachers, parents, and community members the opportunity to collaborate in determining short and long-term goals for the school and their execution. At monthly meetings, Council members work together to develop the annual School Improvement Plan and to track the progress being made in implementing recommendations made by the Council the previous year.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

PTO is a group of highly dedicated parents working with the staff and children to enhance the learning experience of the children. This is done through various fundraisers whose proceeds fund

buses for field trips, cultural arts programs, and other family-school activities. Each school has its own organization.

NORTHBOROUGH/SOUTHBOROUGH SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (“NSPAC”)

NSPAC is a parent volunteer-run, positive, and solution-oriented organization welcoming parents and guardians of children ages 3-22 with special needs and learning differences in the Northborough and Southborough School Districts.

The mission of NSPAC is to facilitate networking opportunities, provide a forum to share ideas and resources, and provide support to all families navigating the special education process. Membership is free and members meet for regular meetings, workshops, and presentations held throughout the year.

NSPAC collaborates with District administration and School Committee members on matters related to the support, safety, and educational programs of students with special needs.

Additional information and a calendar of events can be found on their [website](#). Board officers can be emailed at nspac1@gmail.com.

CIVIL RIGHTS NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Public Schools of Northborough are 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 other class protected by state or federal law.

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

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

CODE OF CONDUCT

Basic School Rights for All Community Members

All members of the school community, including students, teachers, custodians, cafeteria staff, administrators, secretaries, aides, tutors, bus drivers, substitute teachers, parents, and guests, have the right:

1. To be treated with dignity and respect.
2. To be in a positive school environment without disrespectful or disruptive behavior.
3. To be free of physical or emotional harm or harassment.

The Northborough School District encourages learning, thoughtfulness, consideration for others, respect for authority, and acceptance of individual differences. Most school rules are a matter of courtesy and safety and are emphasized as such. Students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior in the classroom and non-classroom settings, including in the cafeteria, on field trips, and on the playground. The administration and staff will communicate expectations and routines on an ongoing basis. Teachers develop their own set of classroom guidelines and expectations with their individual classes. .

Classroom Conduct

The teacher is primarily responsible for ensuring that everyone's rights are protected in the classroom environment. Repeated difficulties or problems of a more serious nature may be referred to the administration for action.

Conduct Other than in the Classroom

All adult staff members are responsible for the behavior of the students outside of the classroom setting.

Student Behavior Expectations

Students are expected to show a high level of respect for the rights of others and for authority, and the proper regard for private and public property. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a safe and orderly learning environment within the school. Students are expected to engage in safe and appropriate behavior at all times.

Students will:

1. Show respect for their teachers, all other adults, all other students, and their property.
2. Always follow requests and directions from teachers and other adult staff members..
3. Not fight or engage in any other conduct or action that could harm another person in any way. Put-downs, mean comments, teasing, and bullying will not be tolerated.
4. Use acceptable language in school. Profanity and obscene gestures will not be tolerated.
5. Take care of school property, including taking care of books, magazines, workbooks, and other materials, as well as not defacing or otherwise damaging school property or facilities.

6. Not have in their possession any dangerous or disruptive objects.
7. Not have or use electronic devices such as cell phones, MP3 players, iPods, iPads, and the like, while in the building or on field trips, except in accordance with the policies set forth in this handbook.
8. Not sell, offer to sell, purchase, offer to purchase, or trade any item in school without specific permission from the principal.
9. Follow all other rules established by the school.

Failure to meet any of these behavioral expectations will, at the discretion of the teacher or administrator, result in a warning, detention(s), or other appropriate consequences. The teacher or administrator will contact the parent/guardian and student, and the consequence will be assigned on the day of or shortly after the incident. A violation of any of the above rules, which is sufficiently serious, may result in suspension.

BUS BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to engage in respectful and appropriate behavior on the bus at all times and to adhere to the following Bus Rules.

Bus Rules

1. While riding the bus, students must follow all instructions given by the bus driver.
2. Students must enter and leave the bus in an orderly manner.
3. Students must remain seated while riding on the bus.
4. Nothing may be thrown in, on, into, or out of the school bus.
5. Putting heads, arms, or objects out of bus windows is forbidden.
6. Hazardous materials, objects, and animals are prohibited on the bus.
7. Profane language is prohibited on the bus.
8. Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus.
9. Students must comply with all other school rules and policies while on the bus.

Violation of the Bus Rules may result in bus privileges being suspended and/or other school disciplinary action. Any concerns regarding bus behavior should be immediately reported to school administration.

DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS

All disciplinary procedures are subject to, and students must comply with, all policies adopted by the Northborough School Committee from time to time. No student shall be disciplined without being afforded appropriate due process. M.G.L. c.71, §37H; M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2; M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4;

Discipline of students with disabilities is subject to the provisions of M.G.L. c.71B and the provisions of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as amended to date.

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

It is important that you read the following information about bullying. After reading, if you believe that your child has been the target of bullying, you may file a written report. Written reports are considered serious allegations that will be addressed through school administration. We encourage open communication between parents and school staff. Anonymous reports will be investigated, but follow-up may be difficult. [District Bully Prevention and Intervention Plan](#)

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

It is the policy of the Northborough and Southborough Public School District to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Allegations of bullying based on a protected classification under state or federal law, shall also be investigated and responded to in accordance with the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure and/or Title IX Sex Discrimination Grievance Procedure which may be accessed on the District's website at the following links: <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/human-resources/human-resources>

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

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

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

As a school district we are committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate harmful and disruptive behaviors that can impede the educational process in our schools. While any student could be subject to bullying and harassment, the District recognizes that certain students, may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough have taken specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to avoid and respond to bullying. These steps include, but are not limited to: 1) regular surveys of students on school climate and school safety issues; 2) collecting and analyzing building-specific data on the prevalence and characteristics of

bullying; incorporating specific information and instruction in the District's anti-bullying curriculum and professional development trainings regarding vulnerable student populations and facilitating the prevention of bullying, harassment, and teasing of these potential student targets. At least once every four years beginning with the 2015/16 school year, the District will also administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the District will annually report bullying incident data to the DESE.

The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, in school-related activities, or that occurs outside of school and creates a hostile school environment for the targeted student. We will 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, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. Reports made by students, parents, guardians, or other individuals who are not school or school district staff members, may also be made anonymously, although no student shall be subject to discipline solely on the basis of an anonymous complaint. The Public Schools of Northborough & Southborough will have a variety of reporting options available to the school community including, but not limited to, a written Incident Reporting Form, an online Incident Reporting Form, and email communication. Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report.

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

1. Reporting by Staff

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

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

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

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

1. Preliminary Determinations

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

If the Principal determines that such facts, if true, would constitute bullying, as defined above, the principal will promptly commence an investigation of the complaint. Upon

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

2. Notice to Law Enforcement

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

3. Notice to Another School or District

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

C. Investigation Procedures

1. Investigation

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

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

2. Determinations

Within fifteen (15) school days of the principal’s receipt of the complaint of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal will make a determination based upon all of the

facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal will determine what remedial action may be required, if any, and determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal's findings and determinations shall be documented in writing on the Incident Reporting Form.

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

3. Notice of Investigative Findings

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

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

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

D. Requests for Reconsideration

If either the complaining party or the individual against whom the complaint was made is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, that person may request, in writing, a reopening of the investigation or reconsideration of the investigative findings. The written request shall state the reasons for request and shall be delivered to the Superintendent of the Northborough and Southborough Public Schools within ten (10) school days of the parents/guardians receipt of notice of the investigative findings. Within five (5) school days of receipt of any such request, the superintendent shall decide whether or not to reopen the investigation and shall provide written notification of that determination to the appealing party and to the other party involved.

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

E. Responses to Bullying

1. Education and Skill Building

In determining the appropriate response to an incident of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, the principal shall consider a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c.71, §370(d)(v)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 parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home.

2. Disciplinary Action

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

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

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others

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

4. Referral to Outside Services

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

5. Monitoring of Interventions

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

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICIES

NORTHBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS POLICY MANUAL

The Northborough Schools are governed by the policies and procedures set forth by the Northborough School Committee. For a complete set of School Committee policies, visit the Northborough/Southborough district website at www.nsboro.k12.ma.us.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy

Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Northborough-Southborough 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.

Wellness Policy

Sexual Harassment Policy

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough does not discriminate on the basis of sex and strictly prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. The District does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions in its educational programs and employment activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; M.G.L. c. 151B; M.G.L. c. 151C; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5. The District's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admissions, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

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

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

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

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

U.S. Department of Education
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](#).

MASSACHUSETTS STATUTES: STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary Due Process: Suspension and Expulsion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H $\frac{1}{2}$.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results

documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem-solving. The principal, headmaster, superintendent or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school- or district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however, that school- or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing,

including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

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

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

Basic Student Discipline Definitions

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (M.G.L. 603 CMR 53.00): means removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten consecutive school days, or no more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year,

shall not be considered a short-term suspension under these regulations. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten days, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, such suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Removal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The student shall have the right to **appeal** the expulsion to the superintendent. The student shall notify the superintendent, in writing, of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a

hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three calendar days of the expulsion. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or headmaster, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision of the city, town or regional school district with regard to the expulsion.

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

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

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(b) Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

(c) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

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

(d) Any student who has been expelled from a school district pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

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

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

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

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

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

Discipline Procedures and Students with Disabilities

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

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

(1) the student's parent/guardian expressed concern in writing to supervisory or

administrative personnel, or the student's teacher, that the student is in need of special education and related services; or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for ten (10) school days or less in the school year to the extent that such disciplinary sanctions would be applied to all students. Within ten (10) school days of any decision to exclude a student with a disability from his/her program for more than ten (10) consecutive days in a given school year or to impose a disciplinary sanction that would result in a disciplinary change in placement for a student with a disability, building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination).
- If building administrators, the parents/guardians, and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free

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

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

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

Student Records

Notification of Rights under FERPA

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

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

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

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

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

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

Family Policy Compliance Office

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

Summary of Massachusetts Laws and Regulations Pertaining to Student Records

A. Inspection of the Student Record

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

B. Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

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

C. Confidentiality of Student Records

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

D. Amendment of the Student Record

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

E. Destruction of Student Records

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

F. Directory Information

Federal and state regulations authorize school districts to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Northborough-Southborough Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications.

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

If you do not want directory information from your child's education records disclosed without your prior written consent, please notify the Principal in writing. The 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 ensure parent and student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records. The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that the student may be individually identified. The applicable regulations may be found at 603 CMR 23.00.

State Law on Student Records Access for Non-Custodial Parents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the

immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law;

3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –

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

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

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

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

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

Family Policy Compliance Office

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

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 parent 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. Parents 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, parents 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 parent 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 parent(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 parents/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 parents

or legal guardians relative to leave or deployment.

- An eligible student living with a noncustodial parent 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 parent/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 parents or guardians of District students. If parents'/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 parent or guardian with limited English skills, including parents 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*