

North Reading Middle School Student Handbook 2023-2024

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North Reading Middle School
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North Reading Middle School Mission Statement

The mission of the North Reading Middle School is to create a safe, supportive, and challenging academic environment for all students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for success in a rapidly changing world.

Middle School Core Values

Respect
Responsibility
Community

NRPS Mission Statement

The North Reading Public Schools provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where students develop both their social-emotional and academic skills and abilities through an exploration of a wide range of content areas, the arts, athletics, and extra-curricular opportunities. With a dedication to excellence, service, and life-long learning our students will engage collaboratively, think critically, embrace diversity, and value equity in order to become productive global citizens.

Student Experience Vision Statement

All students in North Reading will feel welcome, safe, and valued for who they are and supported to reach their potential as global citizens. Students will feel personally connected to their learning experiences and will feel represented inside and outside of the classroom ensuring a sense of belonging.

North Reading Middle School

2023-2024 Student/Parent Handbook

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WELCOME

Dear Students:

Welcome to North Reading Middle School. This handbook is designed to provide you with the information you need to be successful. We encourage you to be an active learner and productive member of the school community. The entire staff at NRMS is dedicated to assist you in any and every way that is necessary to ensure your experience here is prosperous and productive. It is our goal to provide you with the necessary knowledge and skills that you will need to successfully proceed into high school. It is our hope that you will invest in your education and development by being responsible school citizens, treating people with kindness and respect, and taking great pride in your school.

Dear Parents and Guardians:

A successful school experience is truly a collaborative effort. It is our responsibility to provide the best possible educational experience we can for the students of NRMS. As partners, we must work together to support and encourage our students. Strong, effective communication is an essential element to achieve this goal. Please feel free to contact us with your ideas, concerns, and support. I encourage your assistance in making NRMS a well-organized, safe, and comfortable learning environment where every student feels successful.

Kind regards,

Dr. Catherine O'Connell, Principal

ACADEMICS

Academic Integrity

North Reading Middle School is first and foremost about learning. Therefore the promotion of scholarship is one of our greatest concerns. True scholarship is founded upon integrity. At North Reading Middle School students are held responsible for the highest standards of honesty and integrity in their academic work and dealings with fellow students and teachers. Students should understand that all school work must be unquestionably their own. Any student who copies or cheats on any assignment, quiz, or test will receive appropriate consequences which may include receiving no academic credit for that particular assignment, quiz, or test. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) software or technology as a substitute for one's own work is prohibited. Parents will be notified in all cases involving a breach of our academic integrity code of conduct. Together, teachers and parents will work together to ensure that students understand the importance of what academic integrity means.

Agenda Book

All students will receive an agenda book at the beginning of the school year. Each student should record all assignments in this agenda, long-term as well as daily assignments. Parents are encouraged to check that assignments have been recorded and completed by their child. In addition, many of our teachers post their homework assignments electronically. Specific information will be provided by each teacher. Students are allowed to record their assignments electronically if they do not want to use the agenda.

Courses of Study

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Core Academic Subjects</u>
Grade 6	English Language Arts Mathematics Science Social Studies World Language / Computer Science (1 semester each)
Grade 7	English Language Arts Mathematics Science Social Studies World Language/Computer Science (1 semester each)
Grade 8	English Language Arts Mathematics Science Social Studies World Language

All Middle School students will have the opportunity to take a variety of general arts classes which include general music, art, robotics, digital learning, video production, health, and physical education. These courses run for one semester at a time. Chorus and Band are also offered during General Arts times and are full-year courses.

Academic Progress Reporting

All Middle School students and parents will have access to online academic progress reports. Students and parents will receive account and login information from the school.

Grading

It is expected that during the opening days of school students and parents will receive comprehensive information regarding assessment in their subject courses. This information should include how grades will be computed and outline the assessment practices being used. In general terms our grade reports are published using numerical grades with the specific breakdown as follows:

A = SUPERIOR ACHIEVEMENT

(97 - 100% = A+) (93 - 96% = A) (90 - 92% = A-)

B = ABOVE AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT

(87 - 89% = B+) (83 - 86% = B) (80 - 82% = B-)

C = AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT

(77 - 79% = C+) (73 - 76% = C) (70 - 72% = C-)

D = BELOW AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT

(67 - 69% = D+) (63 - 66% = D) (60 - 62% = D-)

F = FAILING

(less than 60%)

INC = INCOMPLETE: An incomplete must be made up during the first two weeks (ten days total) of the next quarter.

MED = MEDICAL: A "MED" can be issued if a significant medical situation has prevented you from completing a course. Proper medical documentation must be provided.

WDN = WITHDRAWN: A "withdrawn" indicates you left the course with no grade. There is no penalty for non-completion.

Guidance

There are three school psychologists and one full-time adjustment counselor available to all students and parents. Students are assigned to their school psychologist depending on their last name. School psychologists can assist you in your transition to a new grade, with your schedule, in dealing with difficult interpersonal situations, and in academic concerns that arise throughout the school year. You may see your school psychologist during lunch, before or after school, or other times when there is a serious concern. You must first check in with your classroom teacher and complete the Guidance Check-In Form (located in CLEVER). You will be called down when your school psychologist is available to meet with you. The school psychologists are here to help you succeed in middle school and to make your life at North Reading Middle School both satisfying and enjoyable.

Homework

The purpose of the homework assignment is to allow the student to review and practice the lessons taught during class that day, reinforce skills learned or to prepare for upcoming lessons or assessments.

Homework: Non-completion of Homework

We recognize that homework is a vital part of the learning process; therefore, it is expected that students will complete their homework to the best of their ability. A teacher *may* keep students after school who fail to attempt to complete homework. Teachers and teaching teams will set their own policies and practices with regard to homework. Written communication in this regard will be given to students and parents early in the school year. Any and all consequences imposed by a teacher due to a student failing to complete homework or otherwise prepare for class will be communicated to parents. It is essential that parents, teachers and students work together to ensure a positive learning experience including the daily obligations associated with homework completion.

Homework: Parental Involvement

Parents can assist greatly in this process by:

- providing a suitable place for study
- helping their child to develop *a daily* routine for home study
- ensuring that an absence does not interfere with any assigned work
- assisting and supporting but not doing the actual work; teachers want to accurately assess the actual student effort, organization of and completion of each homework assignment, including mistakes.
- notifying the teacher if they experience extreme difficulty with any assignments
- being aware of any long-term assignments; assisting their child to budget their time accordingly
- contacting the teacher(s) if they observe an unusual absence of assigned homework

Homework: Requests During an Absence

When you are absent and would like to request homework, you should:

- First call a classmate to request any missed assignments.
- Use the internet to get missed assignments (if your teachers post their notes/homework assignments electronically).
- If parents/guardians cannot access the internet to obtain homework, they may call the main office by 9:00am to request homework.

Homework: Time

In general terms, if a student is spending *more than* two hours or *less than* one half-hour on homework, it may be an issue for parental or teacher concern. We offer these numbers as a guideline so that parents can judge whether their child is being responsible, or if they are distracted, unorganized or being irresponsible as compared to their grade level peers.

Honor Roll

Students may be placed on one of the North Reading Middle School Honor Rolls if their average in all subjects meets certain standards:

High Honors: Requires a 90 – 100% in **all** subject areas

Honors: Requires an 80 – 89% (or higher) in **all** subject areas

Report Cards

Students' report cards will be uploaded to the portal at the end of each quarter. For each term the report card will include academic achievement in all subject areas.

Report cards will also contain effort and conduct grades in each major subject. Effort and conduct are typically graded in the following manner:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1.) Outstanding | (3.) Needs Improvement |
| (2.) Satisfactory | (4.) Unsatisfactory |

Absence, tardiness, and dismissals will also appear on your report card.

Teams

Our academic schedule and student assignments are based on the Team Concept which is one of the hallmarks of an effective middle school. We believe that small learning communities, Teams, enhance student contact and increase the opportunity for teachers to personalize learning. Instructional Teams share responsibility for student learning and facilitate a sense of belonging. Teams are the platform for creating greater coordination, collaboration, and integration of learning opportunities. Teams will work to coordinate class work, tests, student management, parental contacts and special team activities. Further, teams will work to integrate and connect curriculum concepts, essential questions and instructional “best practices.”

ACTIVITIES

After School Activities

A complete list of clubs and activities will be published shortly after the start of the school year. Registration for these activities will be done through Family ID. Information regarding the registration process will be provided.

Rules for Participating in Extra-Curricular Activities

All students who participate in extra-curricular activities will be in attendance at school on the day of participation in any activity. For weekend or holiday activities, this requirement is waived. A student who is absent, dismissed or suspended (either internally or externally) on the day of an activity may not be allowed to participate in the activity. Students who are dismissed and return to school prior to the conclusion of the school day are not prevented from participating in an athletic practice, athletic contest, or other extra-curricular activity provided that they have attended at least 50 percent of the school day. (In exceptional cases, the Principal or his designee may waive these conditions). In the case of a multi-day suspension, a student will not be allowed to participate in any activity for the duration of the suspension, including weekends.

The student’s participation in any extra/co-curricular activity, including but not limited to intra-mural or interscholastic athletics of any nature, and/or student club or organization, is conditioned on compliance with all applicable laws, district policies (including but not limited to policies relative to student conduct and discipline, bullying, hazing, harassment, and discrimination), all MIAA policies, and district values and behavioral expectations. In the interest of student safety and compliance with these laws, policies, values, and expectations, coaches, advisors, and/or other school staff will routinely monitor activities in locker rooms and/or other meeting spaces. Such monitoring may include physical presence by coaches or other staff in locker rooms or dressing rooms. While monitoring students in locker rooms and/or dressing rooms, all coaches and staff will give appropriate consideration to student privacy. Students seeking increased privacy when changing clothes/uniforms may utilize individual stalls and/or privacy curtains or screens where available, and are encouraged to address any privacy related concerns with the coach or building principal.

School Sponsored Social Events

The Middle School may hold school sponsored social events during the school year. Only students who currently attend North Reading Middle School may attend our social events. No one else will be admitted unless they have prior approval by the school administration.

The standard rules of behavior, set forth in this handbook, apply at all school sponsored social events. Any changes in these standard rules will be made clear prior to the event.

ATTENDANCE

Student Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

With the passage of the federal [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), Congress has maintained the focus on advancing equity and excellence for all students, particularly disadvantaged and high need students. Guided by ESSA, in Massachusetts the current [accountability system](#) identifies how a district or school is doing through the following measures:

- Achievement
- Student progress or growth
- High school completion
- Progress towards English proficiency for English learners
- Chronic absenteeism
- Advanced coursework completion

A primary focus of the Massachusetts ESSA plan is to strengthen the quality and breadth of the instructional program all students experience in every school in the Commonwealth to ensure students graduate prepared for the rigors of post-secondary education, training and work. However, to benefit from this effort students must be present and engaged in learning.

With the addition of Chronic Absenteeism as an accountability measure it is helpful to understand what it is and why it is important. Massachusetts defines Chronically Absent as missing at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 18 days absent if enrolled for 180) regardless of whether the absences are considered excused, unexcused and/or for disciplinary reasons. Being chronically absent can have a significant impact on a student's ability to read at grade level, perform academically, and graduate on time.

Absence

In case of illness or family emergency, a parent/guardian must call NRMS at (978) 664-7806 before 8:30 a.m. and leave a message on the attendance extension (MA Gen. Laws Chap 76 1A). **In addition**, on the first day upon returning to school, **you must bring** to the main office **a note signed by a parent or guardian** stating the reason why you were absent and the date(s) of your absence. **If we do not have a note stating the reason why you were absent by the third day of your return, your absence will be considered an unexcused absence.**

- Any illness related absence from school of more than (4) consecutive school days *may* require a physician's certificate indicating your reason for being absent and your readiness for a safe (i.e. non-contagious) return to school.
- A student who arrives after 11:30 a.m. to school will be marked absent for that day of school.
- A student who is absent from school, or arrives after 11:30 a.m. may not participate in, or attend, any co-curricular activity or event that day or evening.

It is your responsibility as a student to find out your makeup assignments from each of your teachers immediately after you return to school from an absence. You must complete each makeup assignment to your teacher's satisfaction. If the absence was excused, you will have one more day than the number of consecutive days you have been absent to complete these assignments. For example: if you have been absent for two days, you will have three days to make up your work when you return to school. Work that is not made up will be recorded as a "0" unless arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Arrival

Students may begin to report to homeroom at 8:20 a.m. If a student arrives before 8:20 a.m., they should wait out in front of the school until 8:10 a.m.. At 8:10 a.m. students may enter the building and wait in a designated area until 8:20 a.m. when they may walk directly to their locker and then report to homeroom where they will begin

their day. All electronic devices, except for the school issued ChromeBook, need to be turned off and stored away in the student's locker. Students need to be in homeroom by **8:30 a.m. or they will be marked tardy.**

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected of all students. Except in cases of illness and special circumstances, you are expected to be present whenever school is in session. To address absences from school Chapters 76 and 77 of the General Laws of Massachusetts allow the following reasons to excuse an absence:

1. Illness of the student
2. Court appearance
3. Death or serious illness in the family
4. Family emergency
5. Religious observance
6. School sponsored event
7. Suspension

Dismissal Procedures

You may be dismissed from school during the school day if you have a note signed by a parent or guardian stating the time of and the reason for the dismissal. Any student who is dismissed before 11:30 am and does not return to school will be counted as absent, and will not be eligible for that day's extra curricular activities (i.e. clubs, dances).

The reasons for excused dismissals will follow the same guidelines that are set forth for absences (see above). Any student who is going to be dismissed must turn in a note to the office the morning of the dismissal. The note must be signed by a parent/guardian, and must state the time and the specific reason for the dismissal. Any dismissals that do not meet the guidelines that are set forth by the state regulations *may* result in an unexcused absence, pending administrative review.

All dismissals due to illness must go through the school nurse. If dismissal is necessary, the nurse or the office will make arrangements. No student may use a cell phone to call a parent/ guardian to be dismissed. A student may be assigned appropriate consequences for violating the cell phone use policy. All dismissals from school must go through the main office or the nurse's office.

Family Vacations

School vacations are planned well in advance so there is ample time for families to arrange vacations when school is not in session. In its attendance policy, the North Reading School Committee rejects the notion that vacations and travel undertaken during the school year are equal in value to regular school attendance. **Vacation absenteeism is not condoned. Teachers should not be expected to take time away from classroom teaching and planning to prepare lessons and materials for students going on vacation.** Families who make a decision to take vacations outside of the school year are responsible for sustaining their children's educational program.

Tardiness to School

School begins at 8:30 a.m. **If you arrive at school after 8:30 a.m. you must report directly to the office with your tardy excuse note. Any unexcused tardy or habitual incidents of tardiness may result in administrative/disciplinary action including office detention.**

DISCIPLINE

A. Behavior standards and discipline

Behavior expectations at North Reading Middle School are based on the NRMS Core Values of Respect, Responsibility and Community.

A-1 Bus Conduct

North Reading provides bus transportation for those who qualify under the guidelines established by the state. To ensure proper conduct and safety of all riders, all school behavior rules apply while students are on any school bus

- I will ride only my assigned bus.
- I will carry my valid bus pass.
- I will remain seated while riding the bus.
- I will obey the instructions of the school bus driver.
- I will report unsafe behavior to an adult.

Corrective Action: When rules of school bus behavior are violated, the student(s) will be spoken to by administration and may be deprived of bus riding privileges.

A-2 Cafeteria

To ensure that the dining spaces continue to be a clean, attractive, and safe place, we depend on cooperation from students. The following guidelines apply:

- I will be courteous to our cafeteria and custodial staff.
- I will remain seated while eating lunch.
- I will refrain from throwing any food.
- I will talk quietly with classmates and will go immediately silent when an adult signals for quiet.
- I will help clean my table and surrounding areas before being dismissed.
- I will ask an adult for permission to leave the cafeteria.
- I will wait to be dismissed from the cafeteria at the end of lunch by an adult.

Corrective Action: The student will be spoken to by on-duty faculty; if behavior is repeated the student will receive a consequence.

A-3 Hallway Protocols

- I will walk on the right side of the hallway in order to keep traffic flowing smoothly.
- I understand that running, pushing, and shoving are unsafe.

Corrective Action: The student will be spoken to by faculty/administration; if behavior is repeated the student may receive a consequence.

A-4 On field trips

All school rules apply to students while on a field trip. Students must be present in school on the day of the field trip in order to attend.

The administration reserves the right to allow or deny a student's participation on a school sponsored field trip at any time leading up to or while on the field trip.

Corrective Action: Students who violate school rules while on a field trip will be assigned an appropriate consequence at the discretion of the administration. A consequence may include the immediate removal of the student's participation on said field trip and at the sole expense of the parent/guardian.

A-5 At school sponsored social events

- Only students currently attending NRMS may attend school social events. No one else will be admitted without prior approval of school administration.
- Students must be present in school on the day of the event in order to attend.
- High school students are not permitted to attend NRMS events unless approved by Middle School Administration.
- Bottles, cans and cups may NOT be brought into a social event.
- No one will be permitted to enter after an established time without permission from the adviser or school administration.
- Students must remain at the social event until the event is over; if a student wants to leave early, they must be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Students who have faced disciplinary action may be excluded from attending a school sponsored social event.

Corrective Action: Students who misbehave at school sponsored social events will be assigned appropriate consequences by school administration.

B. Bullying and Hazing

Bullying defies the core values held by NRMS—respect, responsibility, community—and can adversely affect student education. Bullying of any type will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action. Students should be aware that online behavior—or cyber-bullying—whether in school or out of school, can also be subject to corrective action. For more information, refer to our [district website](#), [this brochure](#), and the School Committee Policy on bullying located in the policies and procedures section of this handbook.

Hazing is defined as the imposition of strenuous, often humiliating, tasks as part of a program of rigorous physical training and initiation. For more information, please refer to the [Anti-Hazing Law](#) as well as the School Committee Policy on hazing located in the policies and procedures section of this handbook.

All students and guardians are required to sign off that they have read the NRMS Student Handbook, including the information pertaining to Bullying and Hazing. This sign-off form will remain on file while the student is enrolled at NRMS.

C. General Rules

C-1 Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

The intent of this policy is to allow students to use electronic devices while they are coming to school and/or after school, but the use of any electronic devices during school hours is prohibited. Cell phones (TURNED OFF) must be kept stored away in student lockers. Earbuds/headphones should only be used with teacher permission and never when traveling in the hallways.

- I will turn off my phone when I enter the building.
- I will only use my phone with the permission of an adult.
- I will secure my phone in my locked locker throughout the day.
- I will only wear my earbuds/headphones when I have the permission of an adult.

Corrective action:

First Offense: Item is confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. Student is given a warning by staff.

Second Offense: Item is confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the day. Student will speak to an administrator. A parent/guardian may be notified.

Subsequent Offenses: Item will be confiscated, a parent/guardian will be notified. Student may be required to turn in the device to the office during school hours for a period of time. Student may also receive additional consequences including detention.

C-2 Gum-chewing

Gum-chewing is not allowed at NRMS without permission from staff.

Corrective Action: If found to be chewing gum, the student will be spoken to by a staff member and asked to dispose of the gum ; if behavior is repeated the student may receive additional consequences.

C-3 Smoking/Tobacco/Nicotine Delivery Devices

Smoking is prohibited by State law everywhere on school grounds. Possession of tobacco products on school grounds is a violation of school rules. Smoking and/or the use of tobacco products including chewing tobacco and/or the use of vapor/electronic cigarette devices, and nicotine delivery devices at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity is strictly prohibited; students found to be in violation are subject to disciplinary action.

Corrective Action: To be determined by the administration and may include suspension from school.

C-4 Lockers and Backpacks

- Student lockers should be kept closed and locked. Lockers are school property and are subject to inspection or search at any time by the administration.
- Locks and lockers may not be tampered with in any way.
- Students are only allowed to use the locker to which they are assigned. Homeroom teacher permission is necessary to change to another locker.
- For safety and health reasons, no backpacks are permitted in any classroom, unless the student(s) have prior approval from an adult. Students bringing backpacks to school must store them in their lockers. Backpacks should be clean and organized. As with student attire, backpacks depicting any tobacco, drug or alcohol advertisement or other inappropriate language will not be permitted.

Corrective action: Student may lose locker privileges.

C-5 PDA (Public Display of Affection)

Public displays of affection are not allowed at school.

Corrective Action: Students will be spoken to by faculty and/or administration. If the behavior is repeated, parents will be notified.

C-6 Dress Code

Students are expected to come to school dressed for their health, safety and learning. To ensure safety during physical education class, students must wear rubber soled sneakers. Student attire cannot harass, threaten, intimidate or demean an individual or group of individuals because of sex, color, race, religion, age, disability,

gender identity, national origin or sexual orientation. Staff is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

The following items are not acceptable for school:

- Sunglasses
- Hats and hoods when they cover a student's eyes, ears or face and/or that block other students' vision.
- Any article of clothing or accessory that advertises and/or demonstrates drug/alcohol/nicotine/substance use
- Any article of clothing or accessory that is deemed by administration to be unsafe, obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, violent or disruptive to the learning environment

Corrective Action: Students in violation of the dress code will be asked to change clothing and/or remove an accessory. Parents/guardians may be asked to bring alternative attire from home.

C-7 Substance Abuse (Suspected)

If a staff member believes that a student's behavior suggests possible substance abuse, the student will be referred to the administration and/or the school nurse.

Corrective Action: The parent/guardian will be contacted and may be asked to follow up with the student's pediatrician.

C-8 Out of Bounds- Leaving School Without Permission

Once students have arrived at school in the morning, they are not allowed to leave the building or school grounds without the permission of the administration.

Corrective action: To be determined by the administration and may include suspension from school.

D. Detention and Suspension Policies

Occasionally, behavior or work completion requires corrective action that makes an impact on a student's time and social activities. NRMS has a graduated system of detentions and suspensions.

D-1 Teacher-Assigned Detention

Teachers may assign detentions when student behavior or work completion is problematic. Detentions are held in the classroom and typically run thirty minutes, unless the teacher specifies otherwise. Detentions are typically held after school, but can on occasion be held during lunch or before school.

- Parents will be notified by the assigning teacher of a detention.
- If a student knows of a conflict that makes a detention extremely inconvenient, the student is encouraged to speak up; teachers are reasonable and will frequently allow students to make other arrangements.

Failure to attend a teacher assigned detention will result in further disciplinary action

D-2 Office Detention

Office detentions assigned by school administrators are held in the main office at assigned times. Morning, afternoon and lunch detentions are scheduled. Students are expected to be on time and tardiness may result in further consequences. During detention, students may participate in educational, reflective activities with a staff member. In addition, during detentions students may be required to provide some type of community service to the school during office detentions

- Afternoon detention: 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.
- Lunch detention: student's lunch period

- Parents/guardians will be notified.
- Students who become disruptive, uncooperative or disrespectful during an office detention face additional consequences.
- Students who fail to serve assigned office detention, may face additional consequences.

D-3 Social Activity Probation

School administration can place students on social activity probation for academic and/or behavioral reasons. While on social activity probation, students are restricted from attendance at certain special events (e.g. field trips, assemblies, school sponsored social events, etc.) and extracurricular activities may be limited or denied. Social activity probation is not meant to limit a student's academic involvement within the school.

D-4 Suspension

A student may be suspended from school classes, either externally or internally, for the following reasons:

1. Persistent truancy (which includes class truancy and/or leaving the school grounds)
2. Insubordination/refusal to follow the directive of someone in authority
3. Repetition of an offense after notice
4. Habitual and deliberate neglect of duty
5. Cheating and/or plagiarism
6. General bad conduct
7. Destruction or marring of school property, including graffiti
8. Possession and/or the use of tobacco products including chewing tobacco and/or the use and/or possession of vapor/electronic cigarette devices at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity
9. Fighting
10. Behavior that endangers persons or disrupts the school process
11. Use of profane or obscene language
12. Failure to serve detentions
13. Intimidation and/or threats, both verbal and physical
14. Any harassment based on gender, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or other protected group or affiliation
15. Vandalism
16. Stealing
17. Possession of items deemed to be drug-related paraphernalia at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; specific examples include, but are not limited to, pipes, vapes, and other applicators
18. Leaving the middle school building without authorization
19. Causing a school disturbance
20. Possession on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related event, of a dangerous weapon, such as a gun or knife, or any items that may be construed as dangerous weapons or a facsimile of a dangerous weapon; specific examples include, but are not limited to, knives, paintball guns, replica guns, or other items that have the potential to create a disturbance in the school setting (student is also subject to expulsion per M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H)
21. Attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances (student is also subject to expulsion per M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H if in possession of a controlled substance)
22. Possession and/or the use of alcohol at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity

23. Possession and/or the use of drugs at school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity (student is also subject to expulsion per M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H)
24. Hazing
25. Throwing snowballs
26. Use of social media/electronic communication in a way that disrupts the educational process or endangers him/herself or others
27. Bullying
28. Assault on school personnel (student is also subject to expulsion per M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H)
29. Other reasons as determined by the school administration

The parent or guardian of the suspended student shall be notified of any suspension. Please remember that the previous list covers only the major aspects of the school regulations and is not meant to define the entire breadth of the school committee and middle school policy. Every rule infraction which would result in a penalty, detention or suspension, is not given here. If further information on this is desired, please consult the principal.

In accordance with 603 CMR 53.00, in-school suspension will not be recorded as an absence while an external suspension will be recorded as an unexcused absence from school.

In accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, the principal, 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. This applies to all school rules violations, which is conduct that falls within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4. This does not apply to conduct that falls within the scope of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2.

Periods of suspension may be concurrent with school vacations. It is important to note that a suspension from school prohibits participation or attendance in any school-based activity during the suspension period. This may extend into school vacation periods as per the school year calendar. A student who has completed a period of suspension may be invited to participate in a re-entry meeting upon his or her return to school. Parents/guardians may be invited to this re-entry meeting. If school is canceled during a period of suspension, the days will advance accordingly.

D-5-(a) Internal Suspension

Students who are assigned an internal suspension (IS) will report to the office at the beginning of the school day (8:30 am). The student will be required to work on academic assignments in their possession or on assignments sent to the office by their teachers, or on assignments provided by the administration.

All assignments given to students in IS must be completed to the satisfaction of the assigning teacher.

Proper behavior is required during IS. During the course of the day, in addition to the assigned work, the student may also meet with an administrator or other staff member to discuss the reason for the suspension and the strategies needed to avoid reoccurrence.

D-5-(b) External Suspension

Students who have been assigned an external suspension (ES) may not be on the school campus at any time, day or night, unless specifically allowed by a member of the administration. Students may not participate in any school-related activity during the suspension.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Bicycles

Students who ride their bikes to school must operate their bike in a manner that will assure the safety of themselves and others at all times. **Arrival and departure from the middle school are the busiest traffic times; therefore, please walk your bike, skateboard or other student vehicle onto school grounds, and walk your bike until you are off school grounds.** Bring a lock to secure your bike to the bike stand provided by the school. **Students are also reminded that Massachusetts State Law requires the use of bike helmets by a person under the age of 17.**

Cafeteria/Lunch

Students are assigned to a lunch period with other students in the middle school. Student lunch period is twenty eight minutes long. Hot and cold meals may be purchased during the lunch period. A student who brings a lunch from home will stop by their locker to get their lunch and then proceed to the cafeteria.

Communication: Daily Messages

The middle school will email “daily messages” designed to keep parents informed about what is going on in school.

Communication: Messages to Students

Students are not allowed to carry their cell phones with them during school hours, so when parents need to get an important message to their child during the school day, the message should be left with the main office secretary (978-664-7806). **In order to minimize class interruptions messages should be limited to important, unexpected events, such as family illness, parent being absent from home after school.**

Communication: Messages to Teachers

Frequent communication with parents is encouraged. Email is the preferred method to reach teachers. [This document](#) can be used as a guide for communication with faculty and staff. If you would prefer to call, please contact the main office at 978-664-7806.

Emergency Operation Plan

The Middle School has in place an *Emergency Operation Plan* for all scenarios that may arise throughout the school year. Throughout the course of the year we will review and practice these important contingency plans with all of our students and staff. Parents and guardians will be notified about the specific nature of any conditions which require an emergency response and/or the need for relocation of students.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will be held periodically. Quiet and order are to be maintained by all students during fire drills. All students must remain with their teachers and stay as far as possible from the building as directed by teachers and staff.

In an effort to ensure that all students are safe and accounted for, attendance will be taken by teachers when the class has reassembled outside. When students arrive at the designated rally point, they should line up alphabetically. Students should familiarize themselves with the evacuation plans that are posted by the door of each room. Students must remain well clear of any and all fire apparatus and hydrants.

Illness/Accident

If a student becomes ill while at school, they should tell the nearest adult and obtain a pass to the school nurse. Students will be dismissed from school only with permission from a parent or an authorized guardian who will make arrangements for your transportation. If a student is injured at school, they should immediately notify the nearest adult.

Internet: Student/ Parent Permission Form for Internet Access

The district's Acceptable Use Policy form will be provided to each student at the beginning of the school year. Students must have this permission form, signed online by their parents.

Internet: Parent Permission Form for Internet Publishing

Before placing any examples of student work (i.e. artwork) on to the internet (i.e. school website) parents will receive appropriate notification along with a Parent Permission Form which will need to be completed online.

Library

Students are welcome to check out multiple library titles, however, they are responsible for everything checked out to them. Library books may be checked out for two weeks with the option to renew them for an additional two weeks if no reserves have been placed upon them. **If a student loses a library book/s**, they must pay the replacement cost of the book/s.

Lost and Found

Lost items that are found are turned into the office. Students should check the office for missing books, clothing and other items. We will periodically announce that lost and found items need to be picked up with any remaining items being donated to a local charity.

Nurse

A nurse is on duty or within easy reach whenever school is in session. The nurse's office is located near the main office. Some nursing responsibilities are providing first aid at times of injury or illness within the school setting, maintaining individual health records, and carrying out mandated school health programs such as vision, hearing and postural screening. **The nurse acts as the liaison between home and school regarding health concerns.**

Nurse: Immunizations

No student will be permitted to attend school without proof that all required immunizations are up to date, except in the case of a medical or religious reason for not being immunized. In those cases, proper documentation by professionals will be required.

Nurse: Medications

Students may not carry medications, either prescription or "over-the-counter", on their person or in their belongings, unless a specific medication administration plan has been developed with the school nurse. No student may give to or take from another student any medication, either prescription or "over-the-counter". When a student needs medicine to be given during the school day, please follow the policies listed in the back of this handbook. Any questions regarding medications in school should be referred to the school nurse.

Nurse: Physical Examinations

All students in grade 7 must have a physical examination sometime during the school year. It is preferred that these exams be given by the family physician. However, if necessary, the school nurse can help the family with a referral.

Parents' Association

The North Reading Middle School is actively supported by a strong Parents' Association and all parents are encouraged to join and attend their monthly meetings. Among other things the PA is responsible for sponsoring fundraising events that have provided many different enrichment activities and teaching materials (i.e. books for our library) and instructional technology. Monthly meetings of the PA are posted on our website. The Association will send home additional information including a request for e-mail addresses should parents wish to join.

Parent Conferences

We will hold a Back to School Night in September for parents. There will also be opportunities for invitation only conferences in late January and an Academic Open House in March. The dates for these events are located on the school calendar. Parents and guardians are encouraged to contact their student's team leader at any time throughout the school year to request a meeting if there is a student concern.

Physical Education: Clothing

On PE days, students should come to school dressed for PE class. Shorts, T-shirts and other comfortable clothing are appropriate for PE class. Sneakers or other suitable athletic footwear is mandatory. Sweatshirts and sweatpants may be needed during cool weather. Any additional information and instruction concerning gym clothing and procedures will be provided by the physical education teachers at the beginning of the year.

Physical Education/ Health: Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education

Parents and guardians of middle school students have the right to be notified of curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality education or human sexuality issues and permits them to exempt their children from any portion of that curriculum without penalty. On an annual basis the School Department is to make instructional materials for said curriculum reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, and others for inspection and review.

Pictures

Oftentimes during the school year, we like to take pictures of the students. We may, for instance, take pictures during a class play or other school events. Some teachers may take or ask for pictures of students as part of class activities. Sometimes to highlight a special occasion or event, The North Reading Transcript is invited to the school and pictures are taken and published in the newspaper. Also, we expect to create a school yearbook in the spring with everyone's picture in it. Parents/guardians can indicate whether or not they want student work or pictures published on the district's Acceptable Use Policy form that is required to be completed online for each school year.

Safety Equipment

Our school is equipped with several *Onsite Electronic Defibrillators*. Fire extinguishers, alarm boxes, fire blankets and safety showers (science classrooms) are also located throughout the building. All of our safety equipment is to be used only in an emergency. Students are not to be in any laboratory area without a teacher present. Vandalism of any safety equipment is a serious out-of-school suspension offense.

School Cancellations

Occasionally it is necessary to delay the start of school or to cancel school for the day. You may view announcements of cancellations or delayed openings on the following: CHANNEL 4 WBZ-TV, CHANNEL 25 WFXT-TV, CHANNEL 5 WCVB-TV, CHANNEL 10 NBC-BOSTON, CHANNEL 7 WHDH-TV, NECN (New England Cable News)

RECORDED MESSAGE TELEPHONE LINE: 978-664-7810

DISTRICT WEBSITE: www.north-reading.k12.ma.us

Blackboard Connect (Telephone, Email, and Text Message)

It is also possible that bad weather or unforeseen emergencies could force the cancellation of classes after the school day has started. It is suggested, therefore, that parents have contingency plans to provide for the safe transportation and supervision of their children. Students should be familiar with the plans made on their behalf. Early release days are scheduled periodically throughout the school year in order that teachers may participate in workshops. You and your parents will be notified in advance of these dates and times. No lunches are served on these days.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-up:

Parents/Guardians should familiarize themselves with the drop-off and pick-up procedure that is published on the [school website](#).

Visitors

In order to continue to promote a safe learning environment for the entire middle school community, the following safety procedures have been implemented:

- All visitors/parents will report to the main office, sign in, and obtain a visitor pass.
- Visitors must sign out in the main office before leaving.
- Parents wishing to meet with a teacher or administrator should call to set-up an appointment.

We cannot allow direct access to faculty and staff during school hours unless an appointment has been prearranged.

POLICIES

The policies listed below are “selected” North Reading School Committee policies. The complete policy manual of the North Reading School Committee may be found at:

<https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/school-committee/pages/school-committee-policy-manual>

Any errors, omissions, or edits to the policies that are found on the following pages are unintended and are superseded by the current North Reading School Committee Policy Manual and any applicable laws and regulations.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

DUE PROCESS

A student has the right to be heard prior to any imposition of suspension. Prior to the imposition of discipline, a student will be given an opportunity to receive notice of, and respond to, the allegations or charges against them (except in cases of extreme emergency). Before suspending a student from school, depending on the alleged conduct, the administrator will apply the appropriate level of disciplinary due process consistent with Massachusetts and federal law as described below.

Definitions

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H1/2.

In-School Suspension: the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) 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.

Short-Term Suspension: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) 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: the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense in subsections (a) or (b) of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (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, except in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½.

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

Principal: the primary administrator of the school or the principal's designee for disciplinary purposes.

Due Process for M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4 Offenses: Any Offense other than Dangerous Weapons, Narcotics, Assaults on Staff or Felony Matters

All school principals and principal's designees and the Superintendent and Superintendent's designees when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing or appeal to consider student discipline for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff and felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal or designee shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed, and their use and results documented, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless 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. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4(b).

Emergency Removal, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4

A principal may remove a student from school temporarily 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 temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- (a) make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (b) provide written notice to the student and parent as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (c) provide the student an opportunity to have a hearing with the principal that complies with the requirements for a short-term suspension or long-term suspension, as applicable, and as set out below, and the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, 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; and
- (d) 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 below, whichever is applicable.

A principal may 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.

In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4

Due Process, In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4

Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent.

Principal's Decision, In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

On or before the day of suspension, the principal shall send written notice to the student and parent about the In-School Suspension, including the reason and the length of the In-School Suspension, and inviting the parent to a meeting with the principal for the purpose set forth in 603 CMR 53.10(4), if such meeting has not already occurred. The principal shall deliver such notice on the day of the suspension by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or by other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. Students have the right to appeal an In-School Suspension that will result in their in school or out of school suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year.

Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

Due Process, Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

Except as provided in cases of In-School Suspension or Emergency Removal, a principal may not impose a suspension as a consequence for a disciplinary offense without first providing the student and the parent oral and written notice, and providing the student an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing.

The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language: the disciplinary offense; the basis for the charge; the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; 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 to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; the right of the student and the student's parent to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate; and, if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal: the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b), and the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

Principal's Hearing, Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

At the principal's hearing, the student and parents (if participating) may dispute the charge(s) against the student and present information, including mitigating facts, for the principal's consideration in determining consequences for the student.

Principal's Decision, Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

The principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice. If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the short-term suspension takes effect. Students shall have no right to appeal a short-term suspension.

Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄

Due Process, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄

The student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension.

Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the principal will also notify the student and parent of the following rights: (1) in advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; (2) the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense; (3) the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; (4) the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and (5) the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.

Principal's Hearing, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄

The student will have the rights identified in the written notice and the principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

Principal's Decision, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄

Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a Long-Term Suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: (1) identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal; (3) identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; (4) include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21; (5) inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension.

Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language: (a) the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that (b) the Long-Term Suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

Superintendent Appeal, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄

A student who is placed on Long-Term Suspension under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ³/₄ following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The student or parent shall

file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

Superintendent's Appeal Hearing, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the superintendent shall grant the extension. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension as identified above.

Superintendent's Decision, Long-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which: (1) identifies the disciplinary offense and the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) sets out the key facts and conclusions reached by the superintendent; (3) identifies the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; and (4) includes notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, with regard to the suspension.

Due Process for M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H 1/2 Offenses: Dangerous Weapons, Drugs, Assaults on Staff and Felony Matters

Short-Term Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½

For disciplinary offenses involving a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student will be given oral notice of the violation with which the student is charged and an opportunity to respond thereto, prior to the Principal's imposition of a short-term suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of a short term or interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive days or less pending further disciplinary proceedings, the student and parents will be provided with written notice of the suspension and the date and time of the formal disciplinary hearing.

Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion, M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½

For offenses that fall within M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½, a principal may long-term suspend a student for more than ninety (90) days or permanently expel a student if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H½.

The procedures below apply to M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H ½ suspensions that exceed ten (10) consecutive days.

Dangerous Weapons, Drugs or Assaults on Staff

(1) 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 long-term suspension and/or expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.

a. Building principals or designees are required to report to the police department the presence of any weapon on school premises.

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

Principal's Hearing, Long-Term Exclusion, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraphs 1 or 2 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, the principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraphs (1) or (2) above.

Appeal to the Superintendent, Long-Term Exclusion, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H

Any student who has been expelled pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) calendar 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.

Felony Complaints/Convictions

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 may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

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 may expel said student if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Notice of Principal's Hearing, Long-Term Exclusion, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½

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/expulsion; provided, however, that such suspension/expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

Appeal to the Superintendent, Long-Term Exclusion, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent or guardian within three (3) 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 be represented by counsel at student's own expense. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision with regard to the suspension.

OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Any student who is serving a short-term suspension, long-term suspension or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan. M.G.L. c. 76, § 21.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In addition to the due process protections and rights afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or whom the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services.

- a. A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive school days, or a series of short term suspensions that exceeds ten (10) school days and constitute a pattern of removal, are considered to constitute a potential disciplinary change in placement.
- b. Prior to a suspension that would result in a disciplinary change in placement of a student with a disability, the building administrators, the parents and relevant members of the student's IEP/504 Team will convene to determine whether the violation for which the student is subject to a disciplinary change in placement was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- c. If the Team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to all students except that students eligible for special education services shall be entitled to a free appropriate public education as of the eleventh (11th) day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year.
- d. If the team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment or review any existing behavior intervention plan and takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan and the student will not be suspended for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability.
- e. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the District may place the student in an interim alternative setting (as determined by the Team) up to forty-five (45) school days if:

- 1) The student was in possession of a dangerous weapon on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;
- 2) The student was in possession of or using of illegal drugs on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;
- 3) The student engaged in solicitation of a controlled substance on school grounds or at school-sponsored events; or
- 4) The student inflicted serious bodily injury to another at school or at school-sponsored events.

The interim alternative setting must enable the student to participate in the general curriculum, progress toward the goals in the IEP, and receive the special education and related services contained in the student's IEP. The interim alternative setting must also provide services and modifications designed to address the behavior giving rise to the removal and to prevent the behavior from reoccurring. At the conclusion of the forty-five (45) school day period, *the student shall be returned to his/her previous placement* unless the parent (or student if 18+ years of age) consents to an extension of the interim alternative setting or an Order is obtained from the Bureau of Special Education Appeal authorizing the student's continued removal.

If the conduct does not involve a dangerous weapon, controlled substance, or serious bodily injury, the school may remove the student to an interim alternative setting for forty-five (45) days only: 1) with parental consent *or* 2) by obtaining authorization from a court or BSEA Hearing Officer. In order to obtain an order from the a court or BSEA Hearing Officer, the school must prove that maintaining the student's placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

f. The parent shall have the right to appeal the Team's manifestation determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on the appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.

REPORTING

The District shall collect and annually report to the DESE regarding in-school suspensions, short and long-term suspensions, expulsions, emergency removals, access to education services, and such other information as may be required by the DESE.

The principal of each school shall periodically review discipline data by selected student populations, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English language learner status, and student with a disability status in accordance with law and regulation.

Adopted September 13, 1971
Reviewed March 20, 1973
Revised, First Reading August 18, 1983
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Revised June, 2009
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Approved May 21, 2012
Reviewed April 8, 2013
Revised, First Reading May 9, 2016
Approved May 23, 2016
Revised, First Reading July 24, 2017

Transferring or Withdrawing From School

Any request for transfer from North Reading Middle School to a new middle school must be accompanied by a letter from the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The student will then be issued the necessary form to be signed by all his/her current teachers, the school librarian, and a school administrator. The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to sign all other requisite forms.

If the student is withdrawing without the intention of immediately enrolling in another school (only as allowed under the law), he/she and his/her parents(s)/guardian(s) will be required to meet with the student's guidance counselor. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss options after withdrawal and to complete the necessary withdrawal paperwork.

Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records

The State Board of Education has adopted Regulations Pertaining to Student Records. The development of these regulations, which have the force of law, was mandated by state laws enacted in 1972 and 1974. The regulations apply to all public elementary and secondary schools. (They also apply to all private schools which have state approval to provide special education services under Chapter 766, the Special Education Act.) They are designed to ensure parents' and students' 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 he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into two sections: the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. The information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the school system.

The temporary record contains the majority of the information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results; class rank; school sponsored extra-curricular activities; and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; as well as other similar information. The temporary record is destroyed within five years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of the major parental and student rights regarding the Student Records, as provided by the Regulations Pertaining to Student Records:

Inspection of Record: A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old, has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay.

The parent and student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials.

Finally, the parent and 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.

Confidentiality of Record: With a few exceptions, no individual or organization but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

Amendment of Record: The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to high authorities in the school system.

Destruction of Records: The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. 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 student must be notified and provided with an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before destruction. This notification is given by way of the “Destruction of Student Records” notice, which is provided to each graduating, transferring, or withdrawing student by his/her Guidance Counselor.

Standardized Testing and Research Studies: Students will be given advance notice of any standardized testing or research studies to be conducted during the school year. This will provide opportunities for parents or students to raise questions in advance.

Release of Directory Information: a school may release the following directory information: a student’s name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, dates of attendance, weight and height of members of athletic teams, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors and awards, and post-high school plans without the consent of the eligible student or parent, provided that the school gives public notice of the types of information it may release under 603 CMR 23.07 and allows eligible students and parents a reasonable time after such notice to request that this information not be released without the prior consent of the eligible student or parent. This provision of the “North Reading Middle School Handbook for Students and Parents” as noted here is intended to serve as public notice to students and parents. Students and parents requesting not to have directory information shared with third parties are required to submit written notice to the middle school principal.

The above is only a summary of some of the more important provisions of the regulations pertaining to Student Records that relate to student and parent rights. If more detailed information is desired, a copy of the regulations may be received from the school principal.

Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education

In accordance with Mass. General Law 71, Section 32A (Parental Notification Law), parents and guardians of students have the right to be notified of curricula that primarily involves human sexuality education or human sexuality issues and permits parents to exempt their children from any portion of the curriculum without penalty. On an annual basis the School Department is to make instructional materials for said curriculum reasonably accessible to parents, guardians, and others for inspection and review. The attached regulations outline the procedures for notification, exemption, and accessibility to curricula material.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians of students will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum that primarily involve human sexuality education or human sexuality issues. Parents/guardians of students who enroll after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If the planned curriculum changes during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

Each such notice to parents/guardians will include a brief description of the curriculum covered by this policy, and will inform parents/guardians that they may:

1. Exempt their child from any portion of the curriculum that primarily involves human sexuality education or human sexuality issues, without penalty to the student, by sending a letter to the school principal requesting an exemption. Any student who is exempted by request of the parent/guardian under this policy may be given an alternative assignment.
2. Inspect and review program and instruction materials for these curricula, which will be made reasonably accessible to parents/guardians and others to the extent practicable. Parents/guardians may arrange with the principal to review the materials at the school, and may also review them at other locations that may be determined by the Superintendent of Schools including with the Director of Curriculum and Educational Technology.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the decision of the principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption of the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the

parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within two weeks of the request. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision, preferably within four weeks of the request. A parent or guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

Each year in September, the Superintendent of Schools will arrange with each principal to distribute appropriate notification to parents/guardians.

Student Guidelines for Acceptable Use of the Internet

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Access is a privilege, not a right. Use of the network is contingent upon responsibility. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on district servers remain private.

The intent of the acceptable use guidelines is to make clear certain cases that are consistent or inconsistent with the purposes of North Reading Public Schools Internet Server, not to completely enumerate all such possible uses. Students will be issued an Acceptable Use Policy at the beginning of each school year. This policy must be signed by the student and his/her parent/guardian prior to student use of school-based computers.

The Internet consists of a worldwide network of interlinked computers. The Internet is intended to provide an information source for everyone. Internet access provided by North Reading Public Schools Internet Server is a tremendous asset to the school community.

A North Reading Public Schools Internet Server account is a receptacle of stored information for the account holder and a means of access to the Internet. Each account holder will be provided with a space for email and file storage. Account holders will have access to a wide variety of network providers. As much as possible, access to information resources will be designed to direct students to resources that have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. Students may move beyond resources evaluated by staff if they have been granted parental permission and have submitted all required forms. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared.

North Reading Public Schools Internet Server users will have the following resources available to them: news groups, bulletin boards and World Wide Web home pages. They will also be able to use such information acquisition tools as FTP and Gopher. Account holders will respect the privacy and integrity of accounts held by users of the entire computer network community.

Wireless Communication Devices

The North Reading School Committee recognizes that wireless communication devices are a common means by which students stay in close communication with their parents. For the purpose of this policy, a "wireless communication device" is any communication device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays text, numerical or photographic messages or otherwise delivers communication to the possessor.

Wireless communication devices in the possession of students must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours. Use during school hours may be disruptive and may be conducive to cheating, invasion of privacy, or illegal activity; thus, such use is prohibited. Use of wireless communication devices with video or other imaging capabilities in school locker rooms and rest rooms is also prohibited at all times (during and outside of school hours). During school hours, parents can and should contact the administrative office of their child's school if they need to reach their child. Students and parents should not phone one another directly during school hours using a personal communication device. Students who are found to be using (as defined by a school administrator) a "wireless communication device" during school hours are subject to having the device

confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian (see the section that follows entitled “Digital Citizenship” for additional information with respect to the use of wireless communication devices).

North Reading Public Schools Internet Server Acceptable Use Guidelines

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Access is a privilege, not a right. Use of the network is contingent upon responsibility. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on district servers remain private.

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School Committee Policy on Accommodations for Religious Observances

Our American tradition requires respect for religious diversity and upholds freedom of religions and equality before the law. The North Reading Public School District serves children from many different religious backgrounds; therefore, it shall be the policy to uphold this tradition in its schools.

State and federal laws require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of religious holy days. As part of these accommodations, students may miss school in order to participate in celebrations of their families’ major religious holidays. Students are entitled to have individual accommodations made to allow them to participate in their family religious observances without detriment to their education or grades, including extensions of due dates on assigned work (at minimum: number of days absent plus one), opportunities to make up material missed in class, including examinations and reasonable accommodations as may be appropriate.

Any pupil absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any school-sponsored award, or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence. Students whose observance of a religious holiday conflicts with participating in a school-scheduled event such as try-outs, athletic contests, theatricals, or concerts, will not be required to participate nor be penalized for their non-participation.

Teachers shall refrain from scheduling one-time school sponsored events (field trips, athletic events, music performances, theater plays and productions, auditions, and back to school functions), on major non-national religious holidays. Long-term assignments will not be due the day after a major non-national religious holiday. This policy should not prevent coaches and advisors from holding practices for these events during major non-national religious holidays.

The North Reading School District reserves the right to adjust the school calendar to provide a school year of at least 180 school days, while taking into account possible days of low attendance due to student and/or staff observance of religious holidays.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The North Reading Public School District is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The North Reading Public School District does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status,

ancestry, national or ethnic origin, or homelessness in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other school-administered programs and activities.

NON-DISCRIMINATION: DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROHIBITED

The North Reading Public School District is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The North Reading Public School District does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, or homelessness in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other school-administered programs and activities.

Discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment by administrators, staff, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. Retaliation against any individual who has filed a discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment complaint or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is also prohibited. The North Reading Public Schools has established a grievance procedure to provide prompt and equitable investigation of and resolution to complaints of discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment, including complaints under: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5; M.G.L. c. 151B; M.G.L. c. 151C; 603 CMR 26.00; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the Age Act.

This policy applies to all students as well as members of the general public.

Any questions about the District's grievance procedure or the statutes prohibiting discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment, may be directed to the District's Civil Rights Coordinator:

Dr. Patrick C. Daly, Superintendent of Schools
North Reading Public Schools
189 Park Street
North Reading, MA 01864
(978) 664-9557

First Reading June 23, 2009

Approved July 21, 2009

Updated August 20, 2010

Reviewed April 8, 2013

Updated August 26, 2015

Revised, First Reading July 24, 2017

Approved July 27, 2017

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

The North Reading Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The North Reading Public Schools is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The North Reading Public Schools' 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, admission to a public school of North Reading Public Schools or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures*, available at:

<https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/pages/title-ix>. Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be initially addressed through the *District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure* and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the *District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures*, available at: <https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/pages/title-ix>.

Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school district does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The District's Title IX Coordinator(s) are:

Sean Killeen, Assistant Superintendent
North Reading Public Schools
189 Park Street
North Reading, MA 01864
skilleen@nrpsk12.org
978-664-7810

Cynthia Conant, Director of Student Services
North Reading Public Schools
189 Park Street
North Reading, MA 01864
cconant@nrpsk12.org
(978) 664-7810

Prohibition of Hazing

The North Reading School Committee prohibits any act of hazing. The North Reading Public School's policy reflects the content of M.G.L. Chapter 269, Sections 17-19.

Chapter 269 of the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL)

An Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Chapter 269: Section 17. Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Physical Restraint of Students

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the North Reading School District. Students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Physical restraint shall be used with extreme caution and only in emergency situations after other, less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603CMR 46.00 shall administer physical restraint on students. Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

In the event that physical restraint has been used, the parents of the student will be notified by the principal. In the event that a student and/or parent believes that physical restraint has been used inappropriately, a complaint shall be filed in writing to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services will complete an investigation and file a written report with the Superintendent of Schools and the Department of Education.

School Safety

Specific emergency responses may include "shelter in place," "lock down," and "evacuation/relocation." Fire drills and other emergency response drills will be conducted periodically. Parents and guardians will be notified about the specific nature of any conditions which require an emergency response and/or the need for

relocation of students. The “Connect 5” email and telephone call system will be used to notify parents/guardians of emergencies.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

This Act authorizes Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to implement safe and drug free school programs through the Safe and Drug Free Schools Act. The Safe and Drug Free Schools Act requires districts to have a plan to keep schools safe and drug free, including appropriate and effective discipline policies, security procedures, prevention activities, a stringent code of conduct, and a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds.

North Reading Middle School, through a Memorandum of Agreement with the North Reading Police Department, participates in the School Threat Assessment and Response System (STARS) and the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC).

In order to continue to promote a safe learning environment for the entire North Reading Middle School community, the following safety procedures have been implemented.

1. All exterior doors are locked on a daily basis at 8:35 a.m.
2. A faculty member is assigned to the main lobby to greet visitors.
3. Students are responsible for possessing their student identification cards on a daily basis. Failure to do so may result in administrative action.

Use of Security Cameras on School Property

The School Committee recognizes its responsibility to promote school safety and foster a safe and effective learning environment for students and staff, as well as that of the general public who have occasion to use school facilities. In an effort to promote safe and secure school facilities, the School Committee supports the use of security cameras in its schools or on school grounds as part of an overall security plan. Security cameras will only be utilized in public areas within the schools and on school property where there is no “reasonable expectation of privacy.” Use of video-only security cameras will be restricted to major exterior entrances and exits, large gathering spaces including corridors, cafeteria, lobbies and libraries and school parking lots. No video cameras will be placed in classrooms, locker rooms, restrooms, staff dining areas or private offices. Audio recording shall not be utilized by the School District.

Controlled Substances, Dangerous Weapons and Assaults on School Personnel (MGL Chapter 71, Sec. 37H)

The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district’s policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Said policies shall prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel. Copies of these policies shall be provided to any person upon request and without cost by the principal of every school within the district.

Each school district’s policies pertaining to the conduct of students shall include the following: disciplinary proceedings, including procedures assuring due process; standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; procedures to assure school building security and safety for students and school personnel; and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of other students’ civil rights. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for informational purposes only.

In each school building containing the grades nine to twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a student handbook setting forth the rules

pertaining to the conduct of students. The school council shall review the student handbook each spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time. The annual review shall cover all areas of student conduct, including, but not limited to, those outlined in this section.

Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, all student handbooks shall contain the following provisions:

- 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, at his/her discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b). (Chapter 51 of the Acts of 1994, approved July 1, 1994, effective September 29, 1994.)
- 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 expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his/her 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 the provisions of this section.
- e. When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion. (This section was amended by Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993 on January 4, 1994.)

Felony Complaints and Felony Convictions (M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 37H ½)

Notwithstanding the provisions of section eighty-four and sections sixteen and seventeen of chapter seventy-six:

(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 taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his/her 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 counsel. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal or

headmaster, including recommending an alternate education 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 superintendent.

(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 notify the superintendent in writing of his/her 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 appeal. At the hearing, the student 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 education 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 expulsion.

Upon expulsion of such student, no school or school district shall be required to provide educational services to such student. (This section was added on January 4, 1994 pursuant to Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993)

The department of education and the department of youth services shall, pursuant to a study and recommendation conducted by the Massachusetts Jobs Council, assure that an education opportunity is provided for a student whose admission to a school or right to educational services is regulated by the provisions of this act.

Said study shall contain a statistical analysis of the number of students who have been expelled and the services that are now provided, and recommendation for the provision of education to expelled students in the future. Said study shall be completed within five months and shall be submitted to the house and senate clerk and the house and senate chairmen of the joint committee on education, arts and humanities.

(M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 37H ¾)

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(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.

Weapons Reports and Student Records (M.G.L., 71, Section 37L)

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

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

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

School Bullying Prevented; Bullying Prevention Plans
M.G.L., 71 Section 37O

(a) As used in this section the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meaning:- “Approved private day or residential school”, a school that accepts, through agreement with a school committee, a child requiring special education pursuant to section 10 of chapter 71B.

“Bullying”, the repeated use by one or more students 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 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 section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

“Charter school”, commonwealth charter schools and Horace Mann charter schools established pursuant to section 89 of chapter 71.

“Cyber-bullying”, 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. Cyber-bullying 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. Cyber-bullying 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 (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

“Collaborative school”; a school operated by an educational collaborative established pursuant to section 4E of chapter 40.

“Department”; the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

“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 student’s education.

“Plan”; a bullying prevention and intervention plan established pursuant to subsection (d).

“Perpetrator”; a student who engages in bullying or retaliation.

“School district”; the school department of a city or town, a regional school district or a county agricultural school.

“School grounds”; property on which a school building or facility is located or property that is owned, leased or used by a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school, or collaborative school for a school-sponsored activity, function, program, instruction or training.

“Victim”; a student against whom bullying or retaliation has been perpetrated.

(b) Bullying shall be prohibited: (i) 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 (ii) 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. Nothing contained herein shall require schools to staff 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 shall be prohibited.

(c) Each school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide age-appropriate instruction on bullying prevention in each grade that is incorporated into the curriculum of the school district or school. The curriculum shall be evidence-based.

(d) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall develop, adhere to and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period; provided, however, that a non-public school shall only be required to give notice to and provide a comment period for families that have a child attending the school. The plan shall be updated at least biennially. Each plan shall include, but not be limited to: (i) descriptions of and statements prohibiting bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation; (ii) clear procedures for students, staff, parents, guardians and others to report bullying or retaliation; (iii) a provision that reports of bullying or retaliation may be made anonymously; provided, however, that no disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report; (iv) clear procedures for promptly responding to and investigating reports of bullying or retaliation; (v) the range of disciplinary actions that may be taken against a perpetrator for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior; (vi) clear procedures for restoring a sense of safety for a victim and assessing that victim's needs for protection; (vii) strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about an act of bullying; (viii) procedures consistent with state and federal law for promptly notifying the parents or guardians of a victim and a perpetrator; provided, further, that the parents or guardians of a victim shall also be notified of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation; and provided, further, that the procedures shall provide for immediate notification pursuant to regulations promulgated under this subsection by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator; (ix) a provision that a student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action; and (x) a strategy for providing counseling or referral to appropriate services for perpetrators and victims and for appropriate family members of said students. The plan shall afford all students the same protection regardless of their status under the law.

A school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school may establish separate discrimination or harassment policies that include categories of students. Nothing in this section shall prevent a school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school from remediating any discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state or federal law. The plan for a school district, charter school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall include a provision for ongoing professional development to build the skills of all staff members, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities and paraprofessionals, to prevent, identify and respond to bullying. The content of such professional development shall include, but not be limited to: (i) developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents; (ii) developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents; (iii) information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among a perpetrator, victim and witnesses to the bullying; (iv) research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment; (v) information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and (vi) internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying. The department shall identify and offer information on alternative methods for fulfilling the professional development requirements of this section, at least 1 of which shall be available at no cost to school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools and collaborative schools.

The plan shall include provisions for informing parents and guardians about the bullying prevention curriculum of the school district or school and shall include, but not be limited to: (i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curriculum at home and support the school district or school plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying;

and (iii) online safety and cyber-bullying. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations on the requirements related to a principal's duties under clause (viii) of the second paragraph of this subsection; provided, that school districts, charter schools, approved private day or residential schools and collaborative schools shall be subject to the regulations. A non-public school shall develop procedures for immediate notification by the principal or person who holds a comparable role to the local law enforcement agency when criminal charges may be pursued against the perpetrator.

(e)(1) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms and in the languages which are most prevalent among the students, parents or guardians, annual written notice of the relevant student-related sections of the plan. (2) Each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school shall provide to all school staff annual written notice of the plan. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the plan applicable to the school. Relevant sections of the plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in a school district or school employee handbook. (3) The plan shall be posted on the website of each school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school and collaborative school.

(f) Each school principal or the person who holds a comparable position shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan at his school.

(g) 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, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the principal or to the school official identified in the plan as responsible for receiving such reports or both. Upon receipt of such a report, the school principal or a designee shall promptly conduct an investigation. If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the school principal or designee shall (i) notify the local law enforcement agency if the school principal or designee believes that criminal charges may be pursued against a perpetrator; (ii) take appropriate disciplinary action; (iii) notify the parents or guardians of a perpetrator; and (iv) notify the parents or guardians of the victim, and to the extent consistent with state and federal law, notify them of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation.

(h) If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the school district or school informed of the bullying or retaliation shall contact law enforcement consistent with the provisions of clause (viii) of the second paragraph of subsection (d).

(i) Nothing in this section shall supersede or replace existing rights or remedies under any other general or special law, nor shall this section create a private right of action.

(j) The department, after consultation with the department of public health, the department of mental health, the attorney general, the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association and experts on bullying shall: (i) publish a model plan for school districts and schools to consider when creating their plans; and (ii) compile a list of bullying prevention and intervention resources, evidence-based curricula, best practices and academic-based research that shall be made available to schools. The model plan shall be consistent with the behavioral health and public schools framework developed by the department in accordance with section 19 of chapter 321 of the acts of 2008. The resources may include, but shall not be limited to, print, audio, video or digital media; subscription based online services; and on-site or technology-enabled professional development and training sessions. The department shall biennially update the model plan and the list of the resources, curricula, best practices and research and shall post them on its website.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan for the North Reading Public Schools is posted on the website for the school district.

Federal Gun-Free Schools Act

The Federal Gun-Free Schools Act is Section 14601 of the Improving America's School Act which was enacted in October of 1994. This act requires school districts and other educational agencies to **expel** from school for a **minimum period of one year** any student who is determined to have brought a firearm to school. An exception is made to permit the chief administering officer (i.e., superintendent of schools) to modify the expulsion requirement on a case by case basis. The law does not preclude an expelled student from receiving educational services in an alternative setting.

School Committee Policy/Searches and Interrogation of Student Behavior

No society can endure without reasonable rules and regulations governing the conduct of the members of the society. Respect for the rights of others mandates that there will be adherence to reasonable rules and regulations and that for the violation of such rules and regulations, consequences and penalties may be imposed.

In all instances, students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity. Positive behavior is based on the respect for one's self and for the worth and human dignity of others. Development of such positive behavior in students is the dual function of the home and school. All employees will be expected to share the responsibility for supervising the behavior of students.

The North Reading School Committee directs the Superintendent to develop a Student Behavior Code and a Violations of Behavior Code and to publish such codes in student handbooks.

Guidelines for Use of Canines in Schools

1. When using canines to locate controlled substances in a school, the canines may be directed by their handlers to sniff inanimate objects such as desks, lockers, book bags that are not in the immediate possession of students, bathrooms that are not being used by students, classrooms that are not being used by students, and cars parked on school grounds. These types of examinations by canines are not "searches" under the state and federal constitutions.
2. Canines should not be used to sniff students' persons and belongings in the immediate possession of students, nor should they be used in a manner that causes fright or significant apprehension in students. These types of examinations by canines constitute "searches" and are prohibited under the state and federal constitutions unless probable cause exists to believe that the student being sniffed possesses a controlled substance.
3. If school officials want to search particular classrooms or other areas being used by students, the students must be escorted away from the area by school officials before canines are brought in to the area to look for drugs.
4. School canine searches should be planned and conducted in a manner that leaves open an option for school and police officials to decide to seek criminal complaints against students found in possession of drugs, and maximize the likelihood that drugs found during searches will not be suppressed in court. Whenever possible, school and police officials should attempt to establish probable cause, not just a reasonable suspicion, before conducting a search for drugs based on a canine's alert.
5. Although an alert by one canine to the presence of controlled substances may constitute probable cause, if a canine alerts to the presence of a controlled substance in a student's locker, desk, book bag, car or other belongings, a search should not be conducted until a second canine is brought in to examine the same area. We recommend a system of using canines to corroborate each other. Courts are more likely to conclude that probable cause exists if two canines are independently alerted to the presence of a controlled substance in the same area.
6. If two canines independently alert to the same locker, desk, book bag, car, or other area, it is recommended that a search warrant for that area be obtained. Obtaining a search warrant best preserves

the option of deciding to seek a criminal complaint if drugs are found. Courts are less likely to suppress drugs that are found during a search conducted pursuant to a warrant. But, if school and police officials decide not to seek a search warrant, the area still may be searched without a warrant. The search would be conducted by school officials, in accordance with school policy. Police officers may be present to assist in the search and take custody of controlled substances found during the search.

7. If a first canine alerts to the presence of a controlled substance in a particular locker, desk, book bag, car or other area, but the second canine does not alert to the same area, we do not recommend seeking a search warrant. In such case, school officials should be asked to decide whether to conduct a search in accordance with school policy. If school officials conduct a search, police officers may be present to assist in the search and to take custody of controlled substances found during the search. School and police officials still may decide to seek a criminal complaint even if drugs are found during a warrantless search based solely on an alert by one dog.

Hoax Devices (MGL Ch. 266)

Pursuant to M.G.L Chapter 266 Sec. 102A ½ establishes that it is a felony for any person to possess, transport, use, or place, or cause another to possess, transport, use, or place, a fake bomb or “hoax device” with intent to cause anxiety, unrest, fear, or personal discomfort to any person or group of persons. This statute defines a “hoax device” as any device that would cause a person reason to believe that it places in danger life or property by fire or explosion. A person convicted under this statute may be fined up to \$5000 and/or sentenced up to two and one-half years in a house of correction or five years in state prison.

Asbestos Notification

As part of the regulations pertaining to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) we are required to notify all staff and parents that documents pertaining to asbestos are on file at your school. These documents are available for your review in the Principal’s Office.

School Admission/Residency

Only students who actually reside in the Town of North Reading may attend the North Reading Public Schools. “Residence” is a place where a person actually lives. Unless expressly permitted under the approved guidelines, temporary residence in the Town of North Reading solely for the purpose of attending the North Reading Public Schools is not considered “residence” for admissions to the North Reading Public Schools.

In determining residency, the North Reading School Committee retains the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides. Students found to be in violation of the residency policy may be dismissed immediately from the North Reading Public Schools and the parent(s), guardian(s) or responsible adult may be jointly and severally liable to the North Reading Public Schools for the student’s tuition for the full academic year(s). The North Reading Public School District may also impose other penalties on the family such as legal fees incurred by legal action and the withholding of certain scholarships and prizes. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency, may appeal the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

Legal References:

MGL Chapter 76, § 5

McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act

First Reading January 22, 2007

Approved February 12, 2007
Reviewed April 8, 2013
Reviewed February 9, 2018
Reviewed June 4, 2018

The North Reading School Committee adopts the following policy regarding the residency and admissions of students. The staff is directed to ensure that all forms and regulations are fully executed and conform to this policy.

I. Residency

In order to attend the Public Schools of North Reading, a student must actually reside in the Town of North Reading, unless one of the exceptions (set forth in Part V below) applies. The residence of a minor child is ordinarily presumed to be the legal residence of the child's parent or legal guardian having physical custody of the child. A student's actual residence is considered to be the place where he or she lives permanently. In determining residency, the Public Schools of North Reading retain the right to require the production of a variety of records and documentation and to investigate where a student actually resides.

A determination that a student does not actually reside in the Town of North Reading renders the student ineligible to enroll in the Public Schools of North Reading or, if the student is already enrolled in the Public Schools of North Reading, shall result in the termination of such enrollment. A parent, legal guardian, or student who has reached the age of majority (18), who is aggrieved by a determination of residency may appeal the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final.

II. Verification of Residency

Before any student is enrolled in the Public Schools of North Reading, his or her parent or legal guardian must provide:

1. A signed Residency Statement; and (if necessary) a Responsible Adult Affidavit
2. Proof of residency in the Town of North Reading (3 documents)

All applicants for enrollment must submit at least one document each from Column A, B, and C and any other documents that may be requested, including but not limited to those from Column A, B, or C (noted below). A parent, guardian, or student who is unable to produce the required documents should contact the Superintendent of Schools.

Column A Evidence of Residency (Photo ID)

Record of recent mortgage payment and/or property tax bill

Copy of Lease *and* record of recent rental payment

Landlord Affidavit *and* recent rental payment

Column B Evidence of Occupancy

Recent bill dated within the past 60 days showing North Reading address

Gas Bill

Oil Bill

Electric Bill

Column C Evidence of Identification

Valid Driver's License

Valid MA Photo ID Card

Passport

The Principal, or his/her designee, shall verify the home address and home telephone number of each student at least once during the school year. Any irregularities shall be reported promptly to the Superintendent of Schools. Parents are required to notify the school of any changes of their address or the address of the student within five days of the change.

III. Enforcement

Should a question arise concerning any student's residency in the Town of North Reading while attending the Public Schools of North Reading, the student's residency will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that if returned to the Public Schools of North Reading because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds.

The Superintendent may request additional documentation, and/or may obtain the services of police or investigative agency personnel to conduct investigations into student residence. The Attendance Officer and/or residency investigator(s) will report his or her findings to the Superintendent of Schools, who shall make final determination of residency.

Upon an initial determination by the Superintendent of Schools that a student is actually residing in a city or town other than the Town of North Reading, the student's enrollment in the Public Schools of North Reading shall be terminated immediately.

IV. Penalties

In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law, the Public Schools of North Reading reserve the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services provided during the period of non-residency.

V. Exceptions

1. The Residency Requirements Shall Not Apply to the Following:

- a. Students enrolled in the Middle School under special programs approved by the School Committee, such as educational exchange programs;
- b. Tuition paying students, as permitted by law;
- c. Children of non-resident employees of the Town of North Reading, who meet the conditions established from time to time by the School Committee in the policy pertaining to such students;
- d. Students who are entitled to attend the Public Schools of North Reading under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

2. Extraordinary Circumstances:

- a. Tuition Basis

Students already enrolled in the Public Schools of North Reading who move out on or after February 1st of a given school year, or in the case of 8th graders and North Reading High School seniors who move out on or after October 1st of a given school year, may complete the current school year.

- b. Tuition Waivers

At the discretion of the Superintendent or his designee, tuition may be waived in the following cases:

1. Students in their senior class at North Reading High School who move from North Reading on or after October 1 of their senior year, and who have resided in North Reading during the entire previous school year.

2. Students who move because of the severe or chronic illness of the student or immediate family member; the death of an immediate family member; disaster to the residence; or other circumstances having a significant impact upon the student.
3. Students whose parents divorce or separate, provided one custodial parent remains a resident of North Reading.
3. Dwellings that are Intersected by the Town Line:
 - a. Dwellings that are Intersected by the Town Line prior to the Adoption of the Policy:
 1. In the case of a single family dwelling, as distinguished from a plot of land, that is intersected by whatever degree by the Town Boundary Line prior to the adoption of this policy, and upon which some property tax is assessed by the Town of North Reading, persons residing therein may attend the Public Schools of North Reading.
 2. In the case of a multiple-dwelling structure in which any apartment, suite, or family unit located therein is intersected by the Town Boundary Line prior to the adoption of this policy, and upon which some property tax is assessed by the Town of North Reading, persons residing therein may attend the Public Schools of North Reading.
 - b. Dwellings that are Built or Altered After the Adoption of this Policy:
 1. In the case of a single family dwelling that is intersected by whatever degree by the Town Boundary Line because of construction or alterations occurring after the adoption of this policy, if more than fifty percent of such dwelling is located within the town boundary, persons residing therein may attend the Public Schools of North Reading.
 2. In the case of a multiple-dwelling structure in which any apartment, suite, or family unit located therein is intersected by the Town Boundary Line because of construction or alterations occurring after the adoption of this policy, if more than fifty percent if such apartment, suite or family unit, is located within the Town boundary, persons residing therein may attend the Public Schools of North Reading.

VI. Potential Waiver when Residency is in Transition

For students whose residency is in transition, the following exceptions to the general policy may apply, with prior written approval from the Superintendent of Schools:

1. Pending Purchase of Dwelling

The children of families who have a signed and accepted a Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase and reside in a dwelling in the Town of North Reading may be enrolled up to 30 calendar days in advance of the time actual physical residence occurs. If actual residence occurs later than 30 days after enrollment, students may be asked to leave the schools until actual residence occurs.

2. Construction of New Dwelling

Children of families which are building a primary residence in North Reading may enroll in the Schools at the beginning of the school year if they have obtained certificate of occupancy from the Town.

3. Residence in Rental Properties

Children of families who plan to rent a primary residence in North Reading may enroll in the North Reading Public Schools 30 days prior to taking possession of the rental property, as evidenced by a signed lease and evidence of financial commitment.

4. Brief Residence Outside the Town

North Reading Schools' students whose families must briefly live outside the Town because they are (a) moving from one North Reading residence to another, or (b) renovating a current North Reading residence, may continue to attend the North Reading Public Schools. Evidence of the intention and ability to resume residency in North Reading within 90 days may be required.

VII. Notification

The Public Schools of North Reading residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences of falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be published in the North Reading School Committee Policy Manual, and published in each school handbook.

Legal Reference: M.G.L. Chapter 76, Section 5

Revised, First Reading April 29, 2013

Approved May 6, 2013

Reviewed June 4, 2018

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student educational records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches age 18 or attends a school beyond high school, whichever comes first. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's educational records maintained by the school and parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct such records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- Schools officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

The School Committee will direct the Superintendent to ensure that appropriate notification on FERPA, including military recruitment, will be provided to students and parents annually.

Legal Reference: Statute 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Regulations: 34 CFR Part 99.

Bullying

The North Reading School Committee prohibits any act of bullying or retaliation for reporting bullying behaviors. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying are expected of administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers to provide positive examples for student behavior.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent and/or his/her Designee to develop administrative guidelines and procedures for the implementation of this policy. The guidelines and/or procedures will address prevention and education efforts, expectations of student and staff conduct, school responses, including disciplinary action to bullying incidents, and procedures for reporting and addressing complaints of bullying.

A. Definitions

A **hostile environment** is 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 student's education.

Bullying is defined as 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 target that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- (ii) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking an action against his/her will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Perpetrator is now defined as: a student or 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.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but 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. Cyber-bullying 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 above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying 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 above in clauses (i) to (v) , inclusive, of the definition bullying. Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures, audio recordings, or images of others.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

B. Where Bullying Is Prohibited

Bullying, included cyber-bullying, is prohibited (i) on school grounds, property immediately next 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 the school district, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district and (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the target, infringes on the rights of the target at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the health or well-being of the target during school hours, or the orderly operation of the school.

C. Bullying and Retaliation Are Prohibited and Will Lead to Discipline

The North Reading Public Schools absolutely prohibits bullying and retaliation as defined in Section A. Students or members 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 who engage in bullying or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action; however, disciplinary action taken must balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior conducive to a non-hostile environment in the school district. The range of disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, detentions, short-term or long-term suspensions, or expulsions from school as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the school administration and/or school committee from taking disciplinary action against a student or 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 for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying, as defined above, but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school environment.

D. Reporting Obligations

Staff, faculty, and students are obligated to report bullying to the school principal or his or her designee. Specifically:

- (i) 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, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation he or she has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or his or her designee.
- (ii) The district expects students and parents/guardians who witness or become aware of any instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the school principal or his or her designee. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation; however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.
- (iii) In the event that bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the school principal or his or her designee will notify the local law enforcement agency if he or she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public day school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Superintendent of the North Reading Public Schools or his or her designee will notify law enforcement if she or he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.

- (iv) If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, and the North Reading Public Schools is the first to be notified of the bullying and retaliation, then the Superintendent of North Reading Public Schools or his or her designee must, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action.
- (v) Members of the North Reading community are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying, as defined in Section A, to the Superintendent as appropriate.

E. Investigation

The Principal or his/her designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged perpetrator of bullying. The actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying shall be discussed.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying/Cyber-bullying Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged aggressor, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

F. Determination

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided by each school to the Director of Academic Services.

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligation under law.

G. Target Assistance

The North Reading Public Schools shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and aggressors, affected by bullying, as necessary.

H. Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up

School staff will promptly provide written notice to the parents or guardians of a target and an aggressor about whether or not the complaint was substantiated and, if substantiated, what action is being taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or retaliation. Specific information about disciplinary action taken generally will not be released to the target's parents or guardians—unless it involves a “stay away” or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

If appropriate, within a reasonable time period following closure of the complaint, the administrative staff or a designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been any recurrence of the prohibited conduct.

I. Training and Assessment

Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.

Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.

J. Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.

Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the North Reading Public Schools website.

REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFS.: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
603 CMR 26.00
MGL 71:37O
MGL 265:43, 43A
MGL 268:13B
MGL 269:14A

CROSS REFS.:

Non-discrimination	ABBA, GAAB-R
Sexual Harassment	GAAB, GAAB-R, JCAD, JCAD-R
Prohibition of Hazing	JHCD, JHCD-R
Student Discipline	JD
Non-Discrimination:Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited	JCAD

First Reading June 23, 2009

Approved July 21, 2009

Revised and First Reading October 25, 2010

Approved November 8, 2010

Reviewed November 13, 2012

Revised October 7, 2013

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities, including schools that receive federal funds. Section 504 provides that: “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.”

Section 504 protects all persons with a disability who:

1. have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working);
2. have a record of such an impairment; or
3. are regarded as having such an impairment.

The North Reading Public School district recognizes a responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the student is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services which allow the student to participate in the general education program.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has the right to file an internal grievance with the Building 504 Coordinator, the Principal, or the District 504 Coordinator, the Pupil Personnel Services Director. A copy of the grievance/complaint form is in the Student/Parent Handbook. You may request the grievance procedures from the Pupil Personnel Services Office.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the identification, evaluation or placement decision, he/she may request an impartial hearing before a hearing officer at the Bureau of Special Education Appeals, whether or not the party has pursued or is pursuing an internal grievance. Parents may examine the records relevant to the District’s identification, evaluation, and placement actions.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) specifies rights related to educational records. This act gives the parent/guardian the right to:

1. Inspect and review his/her child’s educational records;

2. Make copies of these records;
3. Receive a list of all individuals having access to those records;
4. Ask for an explanation of any item in the records;
5. Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, violates the child's rights; and
6. A hearing, before the Superintendent, on the issue if the school refuses to make the amendment.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Cynthia Conant, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services and District 504 Coordinator, at 978-664-7823.

Approved June 23, 2009

Updated August 19, 2011

Reviewed November 13, 2012

Grievance/Complaint Procedure (Non-Discrimination Compliance)

The Superintendent of Schools annually appoints a Coordinator for Non-Discrimination Compliance who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all complaints and grievances of discrimination and sexual harassment. All matters involving discrimination and sexual harassment complaints and grievances will remain confidential to the extent consistent with the North Reading Public Schools' obligations relating to investigations and due process rights of individuals affected.

Any member of the school community who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination or sexual harassment is urged to report any incident of discrimination or harassment to the building principal or supervisor and the Coordinator for Non-Discrimination Compliance within thirty business days of the alleged incident. Every effort should be made to provide the name(s) of anyone involved; the date, time, place, location of any alleged misconduct; a description of the alleged misconduct; and an account of any circumstances which may be relevant to the particular situation. The complainant may wish to have a supportive faculty member (and/or parent or guardian, if he/she is a student) present at all discussions involving the case. In addition, the complainant is urged to keep written notes on all things relevant to the complaint, and make at least two copies of these notes for reference purposes. Staff members who receive complaints are expected to call them to the attention of the building principal or supervisor and the Coordinator of Non-Discrimination Compliance immediately or as soon as possible thereafter and follow the guidelines established above. The Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator will take appropriate steps to investigate and/or resolve the complaint within ten business days of the initial report made by the charging party. Such steps may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. The Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator (NDCC) will confer with the charging party (the complainant) in order to obtain a clear understanding of that party's statement of the facts. Depending on the circumstances, the NDCC may request the complainant write a letter to the charged party (respondent) summarizing the nature of the behavior and requesting that it stop;
- b. The NDCC will then attempt to meet with the respondent in order to obtain his or her response to the complaint and may request the respondent write a letter to the complainant. The NDCC will explain to the respondent that retaliation against someone who has filed a complaint is prohibited.
- c. The NDCC will hold as many meetings with the parties as is necessary to gather facts;
- d. The NDCC will also interview any and all persons named by either party in the course of the investigation, to

determine the validity and/or scope of the claim;

- e. The NDCC will submit a written report of the findings to all parties;
- f. On the basis of the NDCC's perception of the situation he or she may:

Grievance/Complaint Procedure

1. Attempt to resolve the matter informally through conciliation,
2. Report the incident and transfer the record to the Superintendent or his/her designee and so notify the parties by certified mail,
3. Report the matter to the local police if criminal activity is potentially involved.

After reviewing the record made by the Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator, the Superintendent or designee has ten business days to gather the evidence necessary to decide the case, and thereafter impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including a recommendation for a letter of reprimand or warning or a suspension of one to ten days. Termination or expulsion is subject to the requirements of due process. Notwithstanding, it is understood that in the event a resolution involves disciplinary action against an employer or a student, the complainant will not be informed of the disciplinary action unless it directly involves the complainant (i.e. a directive to "stay away" from the complainant, as might occur in a harassment complaint).

A written report of the findings will be submitted to all parties.

All parties have ten business days to appeal the decision of the findings to the School Committee. A written statement in response to the findings may be submitted on appeal, but one is not required.

The School Committee will hear the Appeal on the date of the next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting. The Appeal process is limited to a review of the existing record, unless the Committee determines that there are exigent circumstances calling for consideration of additional information. Within fifteen (15) school days of the meeting, the School Committee will provide a final disposition of the Appeal to the parties.

All the timelines, above, will be implemented, unless the nature of the investigation or other exigent circumstances prevent such implementation. In which case, the parties will be notified, and the investigation completed as quickly as possible.

Questions may be referred to:

Dr. Patrick C. Daly, Superintendent
Tel: (978) 664-7810

Dr. Patrick C. Daly, Coordinator for Non-Discrimination Compliance
Tel: (978) 664-7810

Ms. Cynthia Conant, Director of Student Services
Tel: (978) 664-7810

Approved June 23, 2009
Updated August 20, 2010
Reviewed March 28, 2011
Reviewed November 13, 2012

North Reading Public Schools
Resolution of Non-Discrimination Compliance Grievance Report Form

DIRECTIONS: This form should be completed by both the compliant(s) and the Non-Discrimination Compliance Coordinator in the event of a grievance related to non-discrimination compliance.

NAME OF COMPLAINANT _____

EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT _____ BUILDING _____

DAY, DATE, TIME OF REPORT SUBMISSION

NAME OF COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR RECEIVING THIS REPORT

DAY, DATE, TIME REPORT RECEIVED

DAY, DATE, TIME OF ALLEGED INCIDENT

SPECIFY TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION ALLEGED

_____ TITLE I

_____ TITLE IX

_____ TITLE II

_____ SECTION 504

_____ TITLE VI

_____ M.G.L. Ch. 76, SECTION 5

NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) PRESENT DURING ALLEGED INCIDENT

NATURE OF COMPLAINT (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NEEDED)

SPECIFIC RELIEF DESIRED (WHAT DO YOU WANT DONE OR CORRECTED)

FOLLOW-UP (CHECK ONE)

_____ LETTER*

_____ ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

_____ FACE -TO-FACE MEETING*

_____ OTHER (EXPLAIN)

SIGNATURES:

COMPLAINT:

NON-DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR:

OTHERS PRESENT:

*Attach a copy of letter and response, if any, or summary of face-to-face meeting.

Accommodations for Religious Observances

Our American tradition requires respect for religious diversity and upholds freedom of religions and equality before the law. The North Reading Public School District serves children from many different religious backgrounds; therefore, it shall be the policy to uphold this tradition in its schools.

State and federal laws require schools to make reasonable accommodations to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of religious holy days. As part of these accommodations, students may miss school in order to participate in celebrations of their families' major religious holidays. Students are entitled to have individual accommodations made to allow them to participate in their family religious observances without detriment to their education or grades, including extensions of due dates on assigned work (at minimum: number of days absent plus one), opportunities to make up material missed in class, including examinations and reasonable accommodations as may be appropriate.

Any pupil absent from school because of a religious holiday may not be deprived of any school-sponsored award, or of eligibility or opportunity to compete for any award because of such absence. Students whose observance of a religious holiday conflicts with participating in a school-scheduled event such as try-outs, athletic contests, theatricals, or concerts, will not be required to participate nor be penalized for their non-participation.

Teachers shall refrain from scheduling one-time school sponsored events (field trips, athletic events, music performances, theater plays and productions, auditions, and back to school functions), on major non-national religious holidays. Long-term assignments will not be due the day after a major non-national religious holiday. This policy should not prevent coaches and advisors from holding practices for these events during major non-national religious holidays.

The North Reading School District reserves the right to adjust the school calendar to provide a school year of at least 180 school days, while taking into account possible days of low attendance due to student and/or staff observance of religious holidays.

Legal Ref

MGL 151B, section 4 (1)(A) and 151C, section 2B

First Reading November 24, 2008

Approved December 8, 2008

Pregnant Students

The North Reading School District wishes to preserve educational opportunities for those students who may become pregnant and/or take on parenting responsibilities. Student mothers, unless they receive adequate assistance, might drop out of school without acquiring the necessary education or without marketable skills.

Pregnant students will be permitted to continue in school in all instances when continued attendance has the sanction of the expectant mother's physician. The physician's approval of this continued attendance must be on file at the school. The student and her physician, in cooperation with the school staff, will develop an appropriate educational plan if it is agreed she should no longer attend school regularly. After giving birth, the student will be permitted to return to the same academic and extracurricular program as before the leave of absence.

Every effort will be made to see that the educational program of the student is disrupted as little as possible; that health counseling services, as well as instruction are offered; that return to school after delivery is encouraged; that a space is dedicated as a lactation room with break time built into the day, as needed; and that every opportunity to complete high school is provided.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:84
 Title IX: 20 U.S.C. §1681
 34 C.F.R. §106.40 (b)
 29 U.S.C. 207 (r) (1) (A.B)

First Reading March 10, 2014
Approved April 7, 2014