

NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MISSION

The mission of the North Reading Public Schools is to educate all students by providing a safe learning environment which challenges and encourages them to be thinking, creative and responsible individuals who are confident and committed to excellence, service, and life-long learning.

Statement of Philosophy

INCLUSION

The North Reading School District is an inclusive school district. As such, we are a collaborative culture that welcomes all members into our learning community. With the recognition that students share more similarities than differences, our learning community respects each individual's unique contributions. In our schools, we expect all adults to share the responsibility to provide every student with access to and participation in high quality general education.

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ARRIVAL

MORNING ARRIVAL

Students should arrive at school no more than ten (10) minutes before school begins. Before this time, there is no supervision available. Children should not be in the building early unless there is a prior agreement between the parents and the principal or teacher.

BEFORE / AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before-school care is available to families of students and begins at 7:30 a.m. on the first day of school. A minimum number of five students must be enrolled for the program to operate. Transportation is not provided. The monthly tuition for the program, based upon the number of days enrolled each week is due in advance by the first of each month (September through May). No tuition is charged for June. Children in the program are dropped off at the main entrance of the school and go directly into the school where they are met by a member of the school staff. Students proceed to their classrooms at the start of the school day. On days when there is a 90-minute school delay, before-school care is canceled. Please call the school department's Business Office at 664-7810 if you are interested in the before-school program. Students who arrive earlier than ten (10) minutes prior to the start of school and who do not have a prior appointment will be sent to the Before School Care Program and a payment will be requested.

After-school care is available at each of the elementary schools through the YMCA. Information about cost, times, transportation and location of the after-school program may be obtained by calling the school's office.

ATTENDANCE

REGULAR ATTENDANCE

The education of children is a responsibility shared by the school and parents. Teachers and parents work to develop characteristics important in the educational growth of their children. Proper work habits are essential to their development. Punctuality is one of the basic work habits. Regular attendance is another.

Regular classroom instruction is the most effective learning situation. Research shows there is a direct relationship between regular school attendance and higher achieving students. Circumstances that take a child out of the classroom may have an adverse effect upon a child's educational progress. Circumstances that take a child out of the classroom for non-medical or non-emergency reasons are counter to productive learning experiences, the realization of curricular objectives, and self-discipline.

ABSENCE

Absences for reasons other than religious, medical or family emergencies are unexcused absences. Whenever a child is absent, parents or guardians are to notify the school secretary. If a call is not received, the home will be contacted.

Absences may be reported during non-school hours by calling the school's absentee call-in line. At all other times, absences may be reported by calling the main office of the school. When notifying the school of your child's absence, please include the following information:

- Name and address of the person making the call.
- Child's full name.
- Grade and teacher's name.
- Reason for absence.

Upon a student's return to school, an explanatory note, signed by a parent or guardian, must be presented to the homeroom teacher. The note must state the reason for the absence and indicate any restrictions on the child's participation in normal school activities due to illness or injury.

ATTENDANCE REPORTS

Research shows there is a direct relationship between regular school attendance and higher achieving students. Circumstances that take a child out of the classroom reasons beyond health or emergency reasons are counter to a productive learning experience, the realization of curricular objectives and self-discipline and work habits.

The school system is required to report attendance information to the state. In order to ensure that we are aware of students' cumulative attendance and in compliance with state law, parents of students who have accumulated excessive absences will receive a letter bringing the number of days absent, tardy and dismissed to their attention. We realize that some students may have extended periods of illness causing the number of days absent to be elevated. In some instances the nurse is aware of these circumstances, and in some instances she is not. Please understand that being issued a letter is simply a reminder. Absences can certainly add up quickly.

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 policy on attendance, 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 use their personal time, or take time away from classroom teaching and planning to prepare lessons and materials for students going on vacation. They should not be expected to privately tutor children who have missed lessons nor should they be expected to arrive early, stay late, or use their lunch time to administer missed tests and assessments.

Families who make a decision to take their children out of school for extended vacations during the school year are responsible for sustaining their children's educational program. The best teachable moments cannot always be planned and it is difficult to recapture this time.

TARDINESS

Students who arrive at school late will be marked tardy and should report to the main office before going to their homeroom. When students will be more than twenty minutes late, parents should notify the school. Calls should include the name and address of the parent or guardian calling and the student's name, grade, and homeroom. If no such call is received, the school will contact the home.

DISMISSAL

DISMISSAL DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Every effort should be made to schedule appointments for children outside of school hours as dismissals during the day are disruptive to learning and should be avoided whenever possible. For students who need to be dismissed early, an explanatory note must be given to the homeroom teacher on the day of dismissal. Notes should include the following:

- The Date
- Child's Name
- Homeroom Number
- Reason for Dismissal
- Time of Desired Dismissal
- Parent or Guardian's signature

Students dismissed early must be picked up by their parents or guardians in the main office. They may not walk home. If a child is returning to school the same day, he or she is expected to report to the main office.

END OF DAY DISMISSAL

Learning continues up until the close of the school day. Parents who pick up their children are requested to wait for them in each school's designated area. This is for two reasons:

1. Safety -- it is important that we know who is in the school; and
2. To lessen learning distractions and confusion in the hallways.

Drivers should pay particular attention to safety, obey the “No Parking” signs and follow the directions for traffic flow and pick-up/drop-off.

Students who regularly ride the bus home may not be picked up from the bus lines without prior approval from the principal or office staff. This precaution is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of every child. We appreciate your cooperation on this matter.

TRANSPORTATION

WALKERS

Children who walk to and from school should use sidewalks wherever they are available, go directly to school or home, not talk to any strangers, walk in groups whenever possible, and wait for the signal of the crossing guard before crossing the intersections. The school cannot be responsible for pick-up of children at non-designated sites.

STUDENT PICK UP

Parents who pick up children must follow the established procedures for parking, vehicle traffic and dismissal sites. These procedures are established to ensure safety and to allow supervision of children. The school cannot be responsible for pick-up of children at non-designated sites.

BUSES

Bus transportation is planned so that there is enough room on each bus to accommodate only those children assigned to the bus; therefore, children are not allowed to change buses.

Only in cases where the principal determines that health, safety or other substantive issues are at stake may a transfer be made, and only then with the expressed consent of the principal.

Bus passes are required for all students who ride the bus. Bus passes may be obtained through the Business Office in the Middle School. A Bus User Fee (\$250 per students with a \$450 family maximum) is charged for all students who live less than two miles from the school. Families who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch may have their fee waived if an application is submitted.

BUS SAFETY

To help ensure the safety of the children while they are being transported, school personnel conduct bus evacuation drills and give classroom safety instruction during the school year. Students are expected to follow all bus rules and parents should review the following bus rules with their children

- Plan to be at the bus stop in time for the bus.
- Follow the directions of the driver immediately.
- Use sidewalks where available.
- Stay back from the road while waiting for the bus.
- Respect one another and the property of others.
- Stay completely clear of the bus while it is moving.
- Form an orderly line to board the bus.
- Use the handrail going up the stairs.
- Find a seat immediately.
- Share your seat with another student.
- Remain seated at all times.
- Talk quietly and respect everyone on the bus.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- No food/drink permitted on the bus.
- Keep arms, heads, and objects inside the bus.
- Ask permission from the bus driver before opening or closing windows.
- Wait for the bus to completely stop before leaving your seat to get off the bus.
- Use the handrail going down the stairs.
- Always cross in front of the bus.

- Never attempt to return to the bus once you leave unless instructed to do so by the bus driver.

Students being transported on a school bus are under the supervision, direction, and control of the school bus driver, and shall be subject to the discipline of the bus driver. Bus drivers adhere to the Department of Education regulations for school bus drivers. In order to promote safety, school buses may be equipped with audio-video monitors. Please speak with the principal if you have any questions about discipline on the bus.

Students who disregard bus safety rules may be assigned a specific seat and/or have their individual riding privileges suspended. The principal, as a result of an investigation or on the recommendation of the bus driver, may remove a student for a period not to exceed five (5) days. A longer suspension and/or termination of bus privileges may be recommended for continued offenses.

BUS SCHEDULE

Please note that starting times for each bus trip will vary during the school year. Traffic, weather, and mechanical difficulties may affect the arrival times at each bus stop. If you have concerns, please call the school. The safety of your children is important to us.

Bus routes and pick-up times are printed on the North Reading Public Schools web site and in the *North Reading Transcript* before school opens in the fall. If you are unsure of the location and/or time of your child's bus pick-up and drop-off, please call the school.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL

NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements canceling school may be heard over the following television and radio stations: WBZ - Channel 4, Radio AM 1030, WCVB - Channel 5, WRKO - Channel 7, Radio AM 680 and WFXT – Channel 25. Information about school cancellation will also be transmitted by telephone message via the ALERTNOW system for participating families. Parents and students should not telephone the Police Department, Fire Department, or any of the town or school offices for cancellation information. Information about school cancellation and other emergencies will also be made on the call-in number (978) 664-7810.

NINETY MINUTE DELAY

In the event of a 90-minute delay due to inclement weather conditions, students in full day kindergarten and grades 1-5 are picked up at their regular bus stops 90 minutes later than usual. Schools will not be ready to receive students earlier than the start time indicated. Dismissal is at the regular time. Morning preschool and kindergarten are canceled and afternoon preschool and kindergarten students are picked up on time. There is no before-school care.

UNEXPECTED EMERGENCY DISMISSAL

If bad weather or unforeseen emergencies force cancellation of classes after school has started, parents are urged to have contingency plans to provide for the safe transportation and supervision of their children. Information about emergency dismissals will be made on the call-in number (978) 664-7810 and via the ALERTNOW system for participating families.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Early release days are scheduled on six days throughout the year for parent conferences. Families should make appropriate arrangements for their children. Please refer to the school calendar for these early release days.

COMMUNICATION

PARENTS' ORGANIZATION

Every parent and guardian is encouraged to join the Parent Organization at their child's school. The Parents' Organizations are a vital part of the school community. One of the important functions of these groups is to raise funds to support enrichment programs for students. Monthly newsletters will keep you up-to-date on the latest activities of the parent organization. Meetings, held once a month, are posted on the monthly school calendar sent home with students. Everyone is welcome!

TELEPHONE / E-MAIL COMMUNICATION

The School Department utilizes a rapid communication system (ALERTNOW) to contact parents via telephone and e-mail. Use of this system is limited to emergency notification and/or the release of specific information from either the Superintendent of Schools and/or the building principals. An annual sign-up of contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses will be completed in September.

WEB SITE

The School Department and each school maintain a web site that can be accessed at www.north-reading.k12.ma.us.

PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

The elementary schools maintain an open communication policy. Open, honest dialogue, mutual respect, and the presentation of concerns based on reliable facts promote positive results in the best interest of children, build trust, and lead to a productive school community.

Student concerns, whether they pertain to grades, homework, management, student/teacher relationships, classroom relationships etc., should be discussed with the classroom teacher directly. Parents and teachers should discuss the concern and work together toward resolution. If the issue is not resolved after a reasonable amount of time, parents should contact the principal to arrange a meeting.

Elementary children are young and it is important that they feel safe and secure. Oftentimes, adult concerns shared with young children cause children to worry needlessly. When school concerns arise, be cautious with what you choose to share with your child and the manner in which it is shared as their sense of well-being is of primary importance.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Parents, guardians, visitors and volunteers should sign in at the main office upon entering the school and sign out when leaving. Under Massachusetts law volunteers in classrooms, school activities and field trips must sign a release form for a CORI (criminal background check)

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year in the fall and spring. This year, conferences are scheduled in December and March after each of the first two trimesters. Please refer to the school calendar for exact dates. Parents will receive notification of scheduled appointments.

Please note that on conference days there is an early dismissal from school.

In addition, parents and guardians may make appointments with their child's teacher at any time during the school year by calling the school or sending a note to the teacher.

Unless an appointment has been made, please do not expect teachers to be available during instructional time to discuss specific concerns and teachers will not be prepared to share confidential information about your child's progress.

NOTES TO TEACHERS

The morning rush to get children ready for school and to the bus on time is one with which we are all familiar. At school, the morning is also busy, especially in the main office.

Though it may sometimes be difficult to get a note written and sent off with your child in the morning, it is necessary that you do so. Students must bring a note to school, signed by their parents or guardians, in the following circumstances:

- Changes in regular dismissal routines.
- Student absence.
- Student tardiness.

It is suggested that you not call the office with changes in your child's daily dismissal routine. Messages taken by telephone regarding your child's plans after school will be placed in his or her teacher's mailbox. Please know that your child's teacher may not get this message until the school day is over. Similarly, changes in the daily dismissal routine should not be sent via e-mail. Only in the case of an emergency will the secretary interrupt a teacher during class time.

STUDENT PHONE CALLS

Students may not use the school phone to call home to ask permission to change their after school plans. These plans should be made in advance and appropriate notes sent to school with students.

Students may not use the school phone to request forgotten items such as permission slips, homework, water bottles, musical instruments, etc. be brought to school by their parents. Only in instances where a faculty member deems it necessary that a child call home may students use the school phone.

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Personal wireless communication devices (cell phones, pagers, etc.) must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours. Students and parents should not utilize electronic communication devices to communicate during school hours. Personal devices with video or other imaging capabilities are prohibited within the school.

First Offense: Parent/Guardian will be notified. Item is confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian of the student at the end of the day.

Repeated Offense(s): Parent/Guardian will be notified. Item is confiscated and returned to parent/guardian. Consequence may include detention or suspension. The severity of the infraction will be considered when determining the consequences.

DELIVERY OF ARTICLES

If it is necessary to deliver any articles to your child during the school day, please leave them with the school secretary in the main office. She will be sure they arrive in your child's

classroom. Please be sure your child brings what he/she needs each day.

SCHOOL NOTICES

North Reading Public Schools is making every effort to be environmentally friendly. Please consider participating in our electronic newsletters and calendar options for school communication (posted on website as well www.north-reading.k12.ma.us). Each school will provide families the option of participating in our green initiative, but we want to be certain all families have access to school information, so notices in the backpack is still a functional option. Please look for these notices or e-notices, as they will keep you updated on school happenings.

Throughout the year, notices about field trips, performances, special events, conferences, open houses, etc. are sent home with students. On a daily basis, it is important that you ask your child for any notices that he or she may have received during the day.

Class newsletters are sent home on a monthly basis. Each homeroom's newsletter is unique and is a window into the classroom. They provide a perfect opening for discussions about school and ideas for enrichment activities to support learning at home.

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act established the presence of School Councils in every public elementary school. The School Council supports school initiatives and is responsible for assessing the needs of the school and serves in an advisory role to the principal. In the spring of each year, it prepares and presents a "School Improvement Plan" to the School Committee. After approval, this plan is filed with the Department of Education. Meetings of the Council

are held regularly during the school year. Members include the principal, faculty members, parents, and a community resident. Faculty and parent members are elected to the Council by their peers. All meetings of the School Council are open to the public.

SNACKS AND LUNCHESES

SNACKS

Each day, students in all grades are given time to eat a small snack in the classroom. Snacks should not require refrigeration and should not be shared with other students. As snack time is not more than ten minutes long, snacks should be kept small. We encourage healthy snacks that contain little or no processed sugar. Parents should also be aware of the increase in food allergies, particularly with peanut products, in planning their child's snack. In the event that a child with a life threatening allergy is enrolled in your child's classrooms, you will be notified of specific protocols for snacks and lunches.

LUNCHESES

Lunches are served daily to students in grades 1–5 and the full day kindergarten program. As of this writing, the cost of lunch is \$2.50 and milk alone costs 60 cents. Students may purchase weekly lunch tickets or pay for lunches on a daily basis. These prices are subject to change prior to the start of school and will be published in the *North Reading Transcript*.

Monthly menus are given to students to bring home and are displayed in each classroom. In addition, weekly menus are printed in the *North Reading Transcript*.

Each day, students may choose from among a special entree listed on the menu and three or four standard fares listed on each monthly menu. Low fat chocolate milk, regular white milk, and low fat milk are available every day. Drinks brought from home should not contain caffeine. Lunches should be well balanced and healthy.

If a child forgets his or her lunch money, a lunch will be provided. Please send in the money for the “missed” lunch the next school day.

FREE OR REDUCED PRICE LUNCHES

Each family will receive an application for free or reduced price lunches. The information contained in the application is strictly confidential. Parents or guardians wishing to apply should respond to all questions.

Parents or guardians may also request an application any time during the school year if financial circumstances develop making the family eligible. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to notify the school when circumstances no longer dictate a need for continuation of free or reduced price meals.

LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

Classes are divided with tables assigned to specific classrooms. Paraprofessionals supervise lunch and are available to assist the children. Lunch is 30 minutes long.

Students are asked to talk quietly during lunch and use appropriate table manners. All students are responsible for cleaning up their table areas after eating and disposing of any trash they may have.

RECESS

All classes are scheduled for a 15 minute recess each day. Paraprofessionals supervise recess. Baseball bats, hard balls, roller skates, and roller blades are not permitted on the playground. Pile-on games, tackle, or overly rough play is not permitted. Children are expected to remember to demonstrate courtesy, kindness, and consideration when playing. At the discretion of the principal, any student who behaves in an unsafe manner will be suspended. Students should be dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. Flip-flops, platform shoes and sneakers with wheels are not considered safe for wear at school and shall not be worn.

SCHOOL FORMS

During the course of the year, a number of forms require a parent signature and prompt return:

- Emergency Information Forms
- Health Forms
- ALERTNOW Communication System Participation Approval Form
- Free or Reduced Price Lunch Forms, if appropriate
- Special Education Forms, when applicable
- Emergency Dismissal Forms
- Confirmation of Parent-Teacher Conference Meetings
- Permission for Field Trips or Extra Curricular Activities
- Student Pictures
- Video Permission Forms
- Student Insurance
- Acceptable Use Policy / Regulations
- CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) Form for chaperones and volunteers

Money sent to school should be sealed in an envelope with the child's name, room number, and amount and purpose written clearly on the front.

SCHOOL PROGRAM

The academic program in the Elementary Schools follows the guidelines of Massachusetts State Frameworks (see www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/). Students are introduced to and work toward gaining proficiency in the learning standards outlined in Frameworks for the elementary level.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The English Language Arts Framework consists of four strands of learning: Language, Literature, Composition, and Media.

In language, children learn to follow rules for class discussion and self-run small group discussions. They learn to contribute knowledge for class projects, give oral presentations using eye contact, proper pace, volume and clear enunciation. Antonyms, synonyms, compound words, homophones, homographs, and words related through prefixes and suffixes are studied. Dictionary skills are taught. They are taught the basic parts of speech, punctuation, capitalization, paragraph indentation, usage, sentence structure, and standard spelling.

In literature, children learn to identify variations in the dialogue of literary characters, words from other languages that have been adopted into English, basic facts and ideas they have read, heard, or viewed, and themes in fictional and non-fictional work. They use their knowledge of phonics, syllabication, suffixes, the meaning of prefixes, the dictionary, and context clues to decode and understand new words. Children are taught to distinguish among common forms of literature such as poetry and prose, fiction and non-

fiction. They learn to identify the elements of plot, character, and setting and use these in their own stories. Common expository organizational structures such as compare and contrast, chronological or logical order, and cause and effect are explored. They compare tales from different cultures, interpret the meaning of different selections of literary works and non-fiction materials, and plan and perform readings of selected texts using clear diction and voice quality appropriate to the selection.

In composition, students learn to write a well-organized composition with a beginning, middle, and end. They use a variety of forms or genres to address different audiences, revise their work to improve the level of detail and logical sequence, and use their knowledge of punctuation and grammar. Students generate their own relevant questions and formulate open-ended research questions to explore topics of interest.

Children use electronic media for research. They identify techniques used in television and use their knowledge to distinguish between facts and misleading information. They create age-appropriate media productions (radio script, television play, audio tape, etc.) for display or transmission.

MATHEMATICS

The Mathematics Framework consists of five strands of learning: Number Sense and Operations; Patterns, Relations and Algebra; Geometry; Measurement; and Statistics and Probability.

In number sense, students construct number meaning with manipulatives, learn the numeration system by relating, counting, grouping, and place value. Real-world situations are translated into numerical statements. Students model and discuss a variety of problem situations and relate math language and symbols to these situations. Students identify

problem structures represented by single operations and know when to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The concept of fractions, mixed numbers, and decimals are taught. Children learn to find equivalent fractions, explore operations of fractions and decimals, and apply fractions and decimals to problem situations. They model, explain, and develop proficiency with basic facts and algorithms. Strategies for estimation are explained and applied to quantities, measurement, and computations. Estimation is used to check solutions for sense. The use of calculators is limited.

In patterns, relations, and algebra, students learn to identify and describe a pattern and its relation to mathematics. They explore the use of variables and open sentences to express relationships and discover how to form and write number sentences for real problems. They investigate ways to find missing components in number sentences and they learn about the commutative properties of addition and multiplication.

In geometry and measurement, students model, draw, and classify shapes, develop spatial sense, and predict the results of combining, subdividing, or changing shapes. They learn to recognize, appreciate, and apply geometry to the world. Length, capacity, weight, area, volume, temperature, and angle are taught and applied.

In statistics, students collect, organize, and describe data and learn to construct, read, and interpret displays of data. In probability, the concept of chance is taught.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

The History and Social Studies Framework consists of four strands of learning: History, Geography, Economics, and Civics and Government.

In history, students explore the relationship and chronology of events. They learn about the effects of individual and group actions and the possible consequences of those actions. Students consider ideas different from their own and learn to differentiate among texts they read. The similarities and differences of background of American citizens are explored. American contributions and individual and shared responsibility are discussed. They learn the school is a community where everyone is equal and considerate of each other. Students are taught the "Golden Rule" and learn about the inventions and discoveries that make their lives different from people of long ago and the recent past.

In geography, cardinal directions, the north and south poles, the equator, hemispheres, continents, oceans, and major mountain ranges are studied. They learn about the principal features of New England and know and locate their community and major cities in Massachusetts. They learn and identify the states and major cities of the U.S.A. as well as countries of the world. Discussions take place about the human alteration of the environment and why people move.

In economics, students learn that natural limits require choice among conflicting goals. The differences between work and play are discussed as is the concept that work can be accomplished by working together, alone, or by taking initiative depending on the circumstance. They learn there is more than one way to accomplish a goal. The differences between possessing something and ownership and the gradations and variations in ownership are discussed. They study the concepts of incentives and money. Through examples in American and Massachusetts economic history, students learn about technological progress, population growth, and that the pursuit of economic opportunity can require people to move. In economics, children learn that goods can be made locally or elsewhere. The concept of obsolescence is taught and the reason traders and explorers of the past went great distances to overcome obstacles.

Understanding is developed about the cause and effect of divisions of labor by sex, class, and skill and the differences between the economic effects of individual choice and government policies.

In civics and government, students learn the classroom has rules and individuals have responsibilities. They learn who makes rules and the reasons for them. They compare home rules and school rules and learn why rules apply to everyone. Appropriate classroom conduct is discussed and children are taught to share, take turns, and treat people fairly and kindly. Discussions about the efforts of some for fair and equal treatment and the efforts of others to thwart justice are explored. The principles and practices of the American government are taught through the study of patriotic symbols, pledges, songs, portions of speeches and documents. They are taught and learn to explain the meanings of words, symbols, and ideas expressed in these songs, pledges, and texts. Children learn they are citizens of their school and the school's expectation of its citizens. They recognize and explain individual conduct that makes life better for everyone. They learn to work cooperatively, elect project and group leaders, and divide the labor in projects.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Science and Technology Framework consist of four strands of learning: Inquiry; the Domains of Science which include the Physical Sciences and Life Sciences; Technology and Engineering; Technology and Human Affairs.

With inquiry, children learn to observe and describe objects and events. They inquire, make predictions, and plan and conduct investigations. Simple patterns in data are recognized and communicated. Findings are interpreted by relating one factor to another.

In the domains of science, students learn about physical and life sciences. Observable properties of objects such as size, weight, shape, and color are identified. Physical and chemical changes are compared and the position and motion of objects investigated. Students learn about the sun, light, heat, and magnetism and the changes they effect. Life sciences include learning about the characteristics of living organisms, life cycles, animal and plant structures, growth, survival, and reproduction. Heredity and the similarities and variations among individuals of the same species are explored. The adaptation and diversity of organisms as well as the basic building blocks of life are studied. Children learn about the properties and changes of earth's materials, weather, rocks, water, fossils, and objects in the sky.

Technology leads the children to the design process. Technological problems are identified and solutions proposed and evaluated. Children discover the impact of technology on people and the environment. The technology of the past, present, and future is looked at through investigations of past inventions and current innovations. The tools and machines of technology are described, used, and given care. Children learn the effects of technology on communication, building, manufacturing, and transportation.

In science, technology, and human affairs, children learn that today's technologies were not part of the world of their parents and grandparents. They learn that technology has changed the way people work and live and has also created problems that we need to solve.

COMPUTER LAB AND INTERNET

Teachers use the Internet as a resource and as a part of the classroom program. Students and teachers make virtual visits around the world, and supplement the classroom program with activities and resources found on the Web.

Student technology competencies are part of the total school program, enriching and supporting units of study. Classroom teachers direct the learning in the lab, integrating skills and classroom goals. They are assisted by the computer paraprofessional who maintains the lab in preparation for classroom visits, not only to access the Internet but also to use software chosen to support the curriculum.

The computer lab, library, and most classrooms have Internet access. Students are not allowed to view anything on the Internet or contribute to the school's web site without signed parental permission. The use of the Internet is carefully directed and supervised by teachers and the computer lab paraprofessional. Children are never given the opportunity to "surf" on their own. Under no circumstances are addresses, phone numbers, last names, student pictures, or other vital personal information about students ever posted on the school's web site or given out over the Internet.

ART

The art program provides experiences for the development of creativity, critical thinking, and reflection. Students are exposed to a wide variety of different materials and processes and learn about color, shape, texture, placement, forms of presentation, patterns, and contrast. Art is also used to support classroom studies and presentations. Throughout the school, examples of children's work line the corridors.

MUSIC

The primary purpose of the music curriculum is to begin the development of each student's ability to produce, listen to, and appreciate various styles of music. Children learn about rhythm, movement, melody, harmony, musical notation, styles of music, pitch, and music from other cultures. They sing, play instruments, and give performances.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH

The goal of the program is to develop in children knowledge and appreciation for physical activities, an awareness of their own physical well-being, and a healthy self and group image. The ability to follow directions, accept rules and decisions, cooperate and share with peers as well as learning how to win and lose gracefully are concepts that are stressed.

In the early grades, students are exposed to all types of movement and games that teach cooperation, sharing, and sportsmanship. The importance of a healthy body is also introduced. As they grow and develop, a transition from basic skills to specific sport skills and an understanding of game rules begins. Upper grade students spend more time on specific sport skills and on understanding the importance of staying physically fit.

Health education is incorporated into our physical education program. In addition, our fifth gradestudents participate in a growth and development unit in the spring.

Parents/Guardians are provided the opportunity to view the video, prior to students viewing, and will provide parents/guardians the option of having their child participate. Please look for more information in the spring of their fifth grade school year.

LIBRARY

The library is the heart of the school and is a busy place. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade visit the library once a week to take out books, develop skills, and to listen to stories. In addition, students use the library for research related to classroom projects and to explore topics of personal interest. The School libraries have a rich collection of books, tapes, and research materials. Students are encouraged to read as much as they can.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Under I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) of 1997, the North Reading Public Schools provide services for children evaluated and identified as being in need of assistance due to one or more of the following impairments: developmental delays, intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, communicative, physical, specific learning, and health. I.D.E.A. provides services for children with severe special needs from their third to twenty-second birthday.

When a child experiences difficulties, his or her parents or guardians, and the school's learning specialists are informed. A Support Team meeting to discuss a child's difficulties is then arranged, and a Curriculum Accommodation Plan (CAP) implemented to increase regular education's capacity to meet the child's needs. A period of time is then allowed to implement and assess the effectiveness of the CAP in helping the child progress effectively in regular education.

Should the child continue to experience difficulties, an initial evaluation to determine Special Education eligibility and the need to conduct an individual evaluation will be conducted by the school's Support Team. Support Team members include the principal, reading specialist, learning specialists, speech and hearing specialist, school psychologist, and the child's classroom teacher. Throughout this phase of the process parents or guardians are consulted as well, and are informed of their rights as parents under the special education provision. Parents should be fully involved as active participants and possible problem solvers.

Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to participate in the SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council).

COUNSELING

Counseling is available to all students. The school has a professional psychologist who works with individual students, small groups, and whole classes. In all cases concerned about a child's social/emotional well being, a referral will be made to the school psychologist by the principal, classroom teacher, or parent of a student. When issues arise with a particular child, the psychologist is consulted, the parents or guardians informed, and options to help a child discussed. Conferences are arranged when appropriate.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Both half and full day kindergarten programs are provided. The AM and PM sessions of half day kindergarten switch at mid-year. The full day program offers additional opportunities for children to learn. The flexible schedule affords teachers and students more time together to explore, experience and internalize the kindergarten curriculum. Tuition is charged for participation in the full day program. An orientation session is held for all parents of incoming kindergarten students and parents are notified about the dates of kindergarten registration.

HOMEWORK

Homework is designed to stimulate children's thinking, provide practice, and reinforce concepts. It is an integral part of the school curriculum and helps children to develop independent study habits and to gain proficiency in the application of knowledge.

Parents and guardians are asked to provide their children with a quiet study place and check to see if there are assignments. Problems with homework should be brought directly to the teacher, who is best able to clear up any

confusion or difficulty a child may have. Homework assignments that require the cooperative efforts of the parent or guardian include learning spelling words and math facts. This particularly applies to students in the first, second, and third grades. In addition to regular homework assignments, children are to read alone or with their families each night.

MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (MCAS) TESTS SCHEDULE

The MCAS tests are administered to third, fourth, and fifth grade students.

Grade 3

English Language Arts (ELA) Reading Comprehension*
Math **

Grade 4

ELA Composition *
ELA Reading Comprehension *
Math **

Grade 5

ELA Reading Comprehension *
Math **
Science, Technology, Engineering **

* March 22 – April 4, 2011

** May 10 – 24, 2011

Results from the MCAS Tests are mailed home to parents at the start of the following school year.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

BEHAVIORAL OBLIGATIONS

All students are expected to demonstrate respect and responsibility. Courtesy, kindness, cooperation, and the consideration for the feelings, ideas and work of others are qualities that promote friendships and build trust. These, along with a pleasant attitude and the ability to listen and make helpful contributions, create an environment where everyone finds joy in learning.

LEARNING OBLIGATIONS

All students are expected to come to school on time, rested, and ready to learn. It is expected they will follow directions, classroom rules, and give the teacher and their schoolwork full attention. Classroom and homework assignments are to be completed thoroughly and handed in on time. Students are urged to ask questions and seek the help of their teachers when they are unsure of how to proceed or do not understand a concept taught.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Every student is expected to take care of his or her school and the materials he or she uses. Children are expected to clean up after themselves, pick up any trash they may drop, bus their trays at lunch time, and throw away any waste from their snacks or lunch in the trash bins provided.

STUDENT DRESS

Children are expected to come to school dressed for their health, safety, and learning. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. In winter, jackets, boots, hats, and mittens are suitable for outdoor play. Your child may also find it more comfortable to keep a sweater at school. Footwear such

as flip-flops, platform shoes and sneakers with wheels are not considered safe for use at school and shall not be worn.

To ensure safety during gym classes, children should wear rubber-soled shoes or sneakers. Clothing that carries offensive messages, including those that promote alcohol, drugs, sex or violence, is not allowed. Scanty attire such as halter tops, or clothing that exposes the midriff shall not be worn. Students who are not appropriately dressed will be asked to have their parents bring acceptable clothing to school.

LANGUAGE

Students are expected to be respectful and use courteous language at all times while at school, during related school events, and on the buses. Impolite remarks, rudeness, and jokes at another's expense are harmful and hurtful. A good rule to keep in mind is to always speak to others as you would like them to speak to you. Students are also expected to speak kindly about others when they are not present and not to encourage fighting through words.

DISCIPLINE

All children are expected to be cooperative and considerate of each other and the staff. Classroom rules and responsibilities are fully discussed with each class on the first day of school. Students are expected to understand the rules contained in this manual as well as the rules of their class.

The teacher, who may discipline the child, typically solves behavioral problems in the classroom. Discipline is always fair and proportional to the offense. Large groups of students will not be disciplined for the actions of one or a few. The principal is always available to discuss any behavioral

problems with a teacher and provide assistance when necessary.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

For discipline to be consistent and effective, the following guidelines are adhered to by all teachers:

1. Routine behavioral problems are handled in the classroom by the teacher.
2. Students are given an in-class reprimand for inappropriate behavior and when necessary a later private discussion is held with the teacher.
3. In-class discipline may include missing recess, writing an apology, or staying after school. Parents are informed whenever their child is kept after school and must make arrangements for transportation home.
4. Parents will be called by their child's teacher to arrange for a conference when there is an ongoing behavioral problem with their child. The principal and school psychologist will also be informed.
5. Students involved in disobedience, fighting, threatening or the destruction of property are sent to the principal's office. The principal may contact the parent/guardian and, if appropriate, arrange for a conference. Conferences may include a faculty member and the school psychologist.

BULLYING, THREATS, FIGHTING

Every student is guaranteed the right to a safe, secure school environment free from bullying, threats or violence. This right extends from the classrooms, to the corridors and lavatories, to the playground and cafeteria, and to the school buses. Students are urged to bring serious concerns about bullying or other threats to their teacher or the principal. A student should never attempt to manage a difficult situation

alone. Parents are also asked to bring concerns to the attention of their child's teacher immediately so that appropriate steps may be taken to remedy any problems.

Bullying may occur in words or actions. It is not okay for anyone to threaten or hurt another individual. Treating people differently or threatening to hurt someone because they are different is a form of harassment and is unlawful. Sometimes joking around and teasing can cross the line to bullying and harassment. If you witness suspected bullying or if you feel you have been bullied, you should report it to your teacher and/or the principal. We want all children to feel welcome and safe so they can do their best work.

Fighting with, threatening the well-being of another individual and bullying are against school policy and will not be tolerated. In cases of fighting, threats, and suspected bullying, parents or guardians will be informed immediately. If appropriate, a meeting will be held with the parents/guardians, student, and principal. Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the principal and may include loss of privileges to attend field trips and school sponsored activities, loss of recess, extra work, after school detention, and/or suspension.

BULLYING POLICY

The North Reading School Committee prohibits any acts of harassment or bullying. The Committee believes that a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment or 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.

As a form of harassment, bullying is defined as any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act, including electronically transmitted acts that a reasonable person should know would have the potential to harm a person or damage an individual's property, or place an individual in reasonable fear of such physical, social or psychological harm; or acts that have the effect of harassing, controlling, isolating, intimidating, or demeaning another individual. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off school property, at any school-sponsored function, or in a school vehicle or bus. Bullying motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expressions; or a mental, physical or sensory disability or impairments; or by any other distinguishing characteristics may be considered a hate crime and subject to possible criminal investigation.

The School Committee expects students to conduct themselves in a manner in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students, school staff, volunteers and contractors. The Committee believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents and guardians, staff, and community members of the school district, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline and mutual respect.

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.

DISOBEDIENCE

Students may not refuse any reasonable request made by a faculty or staff member. In all cases of disobedience, the principal or child's classroom teacher will speak with the offending child. In cases of gross or repeated disobedience, parents or guardians will be informed immediately. If appropriate, a meeting will be held with the parents/guardians, student and principal. Any disciplinary action taken will be at the discretion of the principal and may include a written apology, loss of privileges, after-school detention, and/or suspension.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

Purposeful destruction of school property or the property of another individual is not allowed. The willful destruction of property will result in the principal immediately informing the parents or guardians of the offending student. If appropriate, a meeting will be held with the parents/guardians, student and principal. Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the principal and may include restitution for damages, loss of recess, after school detention, and/or suspension. Textbooks or library books that are lost or damaged will be charged to the student's parent or guardian.

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL LAW (MGL Chapter 71, Section 37 H)

- 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 the 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.
- d. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b). (Chapter 51 or the Acts of 1994, approved July 1, 1994, effective September 29, 1994.)
- e. 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 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.
- f. 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.)

PROCEDURES FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Federal and state laws govern the disciplining of students with disabilities eligible for special education and 504 Accommodation Plans. These laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA 2004), 20 U.S.C. 1400, et. Seq., 34 C.F.R. 300.519-529 et. Seq., and Massachusetts General Laws c. 71 B.

Students with disabilities eligible for special education who violate the school code of conduct are subject to suspension from their current placement up to ten (10) school days, without a prior determination as to whether the misconduct is related to the student's disability. If the school wishes to impose a suspension which will result in more than 10 consecutive school days; or there is a pattern of suspensions that are shorter than ten (10) consecutive days but constitute a pattern, the school special education team, parent(s) and other relevant members of the Team must meet within ten (10) days to review the student's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information from the parents, to determine whether the student's misconduct is related to their disability or is the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP (called a "Manifestation Determination" meeting).

If the Manifestation Determination Team determines that the behavior is NOT related to the disability, then the suspension or expulsion of the student may go forward consistent with policies applied to any student without disabilities, except the district must still offer:

1. services to enable the student, in another setting, to continue to participate in the general education curriculum and to progress toward their IEP goals;
2. as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications, to address the behavior so that it does not reoccur.

Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place a student with a disability in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days if a student:

1. carries a weapon to school or to a school function;
2. knowingly possesses, uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or school functions;
3. inflicts serious bodily injury on another person while at school or a school function.

Additionally, a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Hearing Officer, under certain circumstances, may order a change in the placement of a student with disabilities eligible for Special Education to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days. Under the circumstances described in this paragraph, or if the removal of a student will constitute a change in the student's placement, as defined by Federal Special Education law, a student's IEP team may convene to review the student's educational program, conduct a manifestation determination, change an existing IEP, conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment and/or develop and implement a Behavior Modification Plan.

If District personnel, the parent and other relevant members of the Team determine that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the Team completes a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and behavioral intervention plan (BIP) if it has not already done so. If a behavioral intervention plan is already in place, the Team reviews it and modifies it, as necessary, to address the behavior. Except when he or she has been placed in an interim alternative educational setting, the student returns to the original placement unless the parent(s) and District agree otherwise or a Hearing Officer orders a new placement.

Not later than the date of the decision to take disciplinary action, North Reading Public Schools will notify the parent(s) of that decision and will provide them with written notice of procedural safeguards. If the parent(s) choose(s) to appeal or the school district requests a hearing because it believes that maintaining the student's current placement is likely to result in injury to the student or others, the student remains in the disciplinary placement, if any, until the decision of a hearing officer or the end of the time period for the disciplinary action, whichever comes first, unless the parent and North Reading Public Schools agree otherwise.

If, prior to a disciplinary action, the North Reading Public Schools had knowledge that the student MAY be a student with a disability, then the District shall provide all the protections available to the student until the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible through evaluation. North Reading Public Schools may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

1. The parent previously expressed concern in writing; or
2. The parent requested an evaluation; or
3. School staff expressed directly to the principal, other district Administrator or Director of Pupil Personnel

Services concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student.

The North Reading Public Schools may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services, or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility for special education services. If the North Reading Public Schools has no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the North Reading Public Schools must conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services. In the event that the student is evaluated and found eligible, then he/she shall receive all procedural protections as previously described subsequent to the finding of eligibility.

For additional information, you may contact the school principal or the Director of Pupil Personnel Services at 978-664-7823.

GRADES

GRADING SYSTEM

North Reading students receive a standards-based report card. Children learn at different rates, in different ways, and in different sequences. Students are evaluated based on their own individual mastery in relation to standards rather than in comparison with peers. Report cards are sent home on a trimester basis (December, March and June). Two grades are reported: “Performance Levels” and “Performance Skills.” Performance Levels are summative grades based on achievement in each of the academic standards of a discipline and express the degree to which a student’s performance is progressing toward mastery and

independence. Performance Level grades include **T** (“on target”), **D** (“Developing Skills”), **N** (“Skill Not Yet Exhibited / Needs Improvement”) and **NA** (“Not Assessed at this Time”) in Kindergarten; **4, 3, 2,** or **1** for students in grades 1-5. In addition to “Performance Level” grades, students are evaluated on a range of “Performance Skills.” Performance Skills provide information about student achievement relative to trimester expectations in each subject area. Parent conferences follow the first and second trimester report cards.

STUDENT RECORDS / FERPA

Student records are available to parents or guardians upon request. Non-custodial parents who wish to access their children's records should speak with the principal who will provide that parent with a copy of the regulations regarding the access of records for non-custodial parents.

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. 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:

- School 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. Please contact the school principal for more information about FERPA.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips have a connection to a class' learning theme, unit, or program. Children must have written permission from their parents or guardians to participate in a field trip. Appropriate permission slips are sent home ahead of time stating the destination and cost to the student. School buses are used to transport students to and from their destination unless the destination is within easy walking distance. Parents often accompany students on field trips and should let teachers know if they are available to chaperone. Parents who serve as chaperones must complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) Release Form prior to serving as a chaperone.

LOST AND FOUND

On occasion students misplace, lose, or forget personal items during the school year. Jackets, personal books, mittens, hats, boots, lunch boxes, and bags should be clearly labeled in permanent ink. Should your child lose an item, please check the lost and found boxes in the school.

CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

FALL PARENTS' ORIENTATION NIGHT

The Parent Orientation Night is an opportunity for parents and guardians to visit their children's homeroom classes to learn about grade-level and classroom expectations, and to find out what their children will be learning during the year. Questions are encouraged but should be general in nature. If you wish to discuss your child, please arrange with the teacher for a private appointment at another time.

PARTY INVITATIONS

Birthday party and other party invitations should not be passed out in school. For those children who may not be invited to a classmate's party, seeing invitations passed out in school can be a painful experience.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The celebration of birthdays is an important time in the life of each child and each family recognizes this special day in a different way. Birthdays are recognized throughout the school year and each child is made to feel special on his/her birthday. Parents and guardians may purchase Birthday Books to commemorate their children's birthdays. Books for purchase are on display in the library and on a book list that

is available from the library paraprofessional. Once purchased, a book plate with the child's name is placed on the inside cover of the book. The books are catalogued and become a part of the permanent library collection. On the day of a child's birthday, he or she may go to the library and be the first to check-out his or her birthday book. The library paraprofessional will provide homeroom teachers with a list of students for whom books have been purchased.

Given the concern over allergies and the varied nutritional needs of children, classroom birthday celebrations that include food (cupcakes, candy, etc.) are not allowed.

FIELD DAY

In the spring, field day programs are coordinated for students at each school. This is a fun day for all. The participation of parents and guardians is encouraged.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Individual and class pictures are taken at each school. As picture time draws near, specific information is sent home with the students.

HEALTH SERVICES

The services of the school nurse are available throughout each school day. Please note that children learn best when they are healthy, well-rested and have had a nutritious breakfast.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM

It is mandatory that an up-to-date Emergency Information Form is on file for each student. To help the school nurse reach parents and guardians in an emergency, it is important that the Emergency Information Form be carefully completed at the start of school. Any change in the information on the form should be brought to the school's attention immediately.

ILLNESS OR INJURY IN SCHOOL

In the case of minor illness or injury, the school nurse will evaluate the child and refer any concerns to the parent or guardian. If a child requires dismissal from school, the school nurse will contact the parent or guardian who will be responsible for transporting their child home during the school day. Parents and guardians should have a contingency plan in place in the event that they are unable to transport their child.

If the nature of an illness or injury is such that emergency transportation to a medical facility is necessary, the school will call the Fire Department to arrange for transportation.

Children with mild illnesses such as coughs, colds and sore throats without fever may attend school as long as they feel well enough to participate. Children should be kept home if they do not feel well enough or have symptoms that may suggest more serious illness including:

- Fever (oral temperature over 100°F without the aid of Tylenol or Motrin), especially with sore throat or rash
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Red eyes with yellow/green discharge

When in doubt, please call your child's doctor for advice. Please do not ask the nurse to make a medical diagnosis for an illness or injury. When your child returns to school, please send a note describing the nature of the illness.

A doctor's note is required when a child returns to school after being absent for five or more days.

A parent/guardian's note may excuse a student from physical education because of injury for one class. The parent/guardian must inform the school nurse so that it may be determined if the student can participate in recess or other school activities.

If a child is to miss more than one physical education class, a note is required from the student's medical provider. The note should specify the nature of the injury, physical limitations and specify when the student is allowed to resume active play without restriction.

A note from the medical provider is required for any student who will be using crutches in school. The note must include the student's diagnosis, activity restrictions, weight bearing status and the length of time the student will be on crutches. The school nurse must be provided with updated information regarding activity restrictions, etc. after each follow-up appointment with the medical provider.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND EXCLUSION POLICY

To protect all children in school, the following contagious conditions are reasons for excluding a child. Quarantine guidelines from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health are included below. Please notify the school nurse immediately if your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease.

Chicken pox

Student may return to school on the sixth day after the rash first appears (or when all blisters are crusted over and dry).

Conjunctivitis

Student may return the day after treatment begins.

Hepatitis

Student may return one week after the onset of the illness and the jaundice has disappeared.

Hepatitis B

Student may return once fever and jaundice are gone and he/she feels well enough to be in school.

Impetigo

Student may return after 24 hours of the antibiotic medication.

Mononucleosis

Student may return to school once he/she feels well enough. The student will require a note from the medical provider that describes activity restrictions and when the student can return to full activities.

Pediculosis (Head Lice, Nits)

Student may return to school once treated.

Ringworm

Student may return to school once treatment begins.

Scabies

Student may return the day after treatment begins.

Streptococcal Infections

Student may return to school after 24 hours of the antibiotic medication and the fever is gone.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

State law requires a physical examination within six months of entering school for the first time. A physical examination is required whenever a student transfers into the school system. An updated physical examination is required in 4th grade.

MEDICATION POLICY

Medications should be given at times outside of the school day whenever possible. If it is necessary for a student to take prescription or over-the-counter (OTC) medication during school hours, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Provide the school nurse with a written medication order from a physician or other licensed prescriber. (A medication order form can be obtained from the school nurse).
2. Complete a parent/guardian consent form and return to the school nurse. (A parent/guardian consent form can be obtained from the school nurse).
3. Prescription medication must be in the original container labeled by the pharmacy.
4. Over the counter medication must be in its original container.
5. An ADULT must deliver the medication to school.

* Nurses will not administer medications unless the above procedures are followed.

Please note: No student may carry medication on the school bus or in school during the school day except for emergency medications (e.g. inhaler, EpiPen), with a plan for doing so established by the medical provider and the school nurse. All other medications must be stored in the nurse's office.

ALLERGIES/ANAPHYLAXIS

Please bring to the attention of the school nurse all known allergies in your child. Any child with a known allergic reaction at risk for anaphylaxis should have their own EpiPen and/or *Benadryl* in school that is immediately accessible at all times. A written medication order by a licensed prescriber is required. In addition, written consent from a parent or guardian must be on file. The child's EpiPen and/or *Benadryl* must be delivered to the school nurse by an adult. Please contact the school nurse to complete a "Food Allergy Action Plan" which must be completed by the student's medical provider.

INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLAN

It is critical that the school nurse knows about any chronic medical problems (for example: asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders). Parents should work with the school nurse to develop a specific plan that addresses any health care needs while at school. In instances where close medical supervision by the school nurse is recommended by the child's physician, the parent should contact the school nurse to develop an Individual Health Plan.

SCHOOL SCREENING PROGRAMS

(Mandated by State Law)

Height and Weight:	Grades K-5
Vision:	Grades K-5
Hearing:	Grades K-3
Scoliosis:	Grade 5

SCHOOL INSURANCE

Parents receive student insurance application forms at the start of the school year. If you are interested in the coverage given, please return the form to the school as soon as possible.

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. Please consult the building principal and/or Superintendent on all questions of residency.

Legal References:

MGL c. 76, sec. 5

McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act

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.

Legal References:

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

SCHOOL SAFETY

Each school will develop an Emergency Operations Plan. 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 via the ALERTNOW communication system about the specific nature of any conditions which require an emergency response and/or the need for relocation of students.

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.

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 Main Office.

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. Further, 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 that child will be notified by the principal. In the event that a student and/or parent feel 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.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND 504 COMPLIANCE

It is the policy of North Reading Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation and/or disability in the admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs and activities. Additionally, all persons associated with North Reading Public Schools are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide an atmosphere free from sexual harassment. Mr. Patrick Daly, Director of Academic Services, is designated to handle inquiries and/or complaints regarding the non-discrimination policy (Title I, II, VI, IX) and/or complaints regarding sexual harassment. Mr. Daly can be reached at North Reading Middle School, 19 Sherman Road, North Reading, MA 01864, 978-664-9557.

Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. Mrs. Patricia Bullard, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, has been appointed as the district 504 Compliance Coordinator. Mrs. Bullard can be reached at North Reading Public Schools, 19 Sherman Road, North Reading, MA

01864, 978-664-7823. The building principals have been appointed as 504 Compliance Coordinators at their respective buildings and can answer all inquiries and/or complaints with regards to the Section 504 statute. You may direct additional inquiries about non-discrimination and 504 compliance to the Superintendent's Office, North Reading Public Schools, 19 Sherman Road, North Reading, MA 01864, 978-664-7810.

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS REGARDING SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973

Section 504 is an Act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a handicap in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a handicap as anyone who:

1. Has a mental or physical 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. Has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Is regarded as having such an impairment.

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

If the parent or 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. In addition, if the parent or guardian disagrees with the identification, evaluation or placement decision, he or 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) also specifies rights related to educational records. This act gives the parent or guardian the right to:

- a. Inspect and review his/her child's educational records;
- b. Make copies of these records;
- c. Receive a list of all individuals having access to those records;
- d. Ask for an explanation of any item in the records;
- e. Ask for an amendment to any report on the grounds that it is inaccurate, misleading, violates the child's rights; and
- f. 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 Patricia Bullard, Director of Pupil Personnel Services and District 504 Coordinator at 978-664-7823.

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:
 - 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:

Kathleen Willis, Superintendent
Tel: (978) 664-7810

Patrick Daly, Coordinator for Non-Discrimination Compliance
Tel: (978) 664-9557

Patricia Bullard, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Tel: (978) 664-7823

NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

RESOLUTION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE GRIEVANCE REPORT FORM

DIRECTIONS:

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

NAME OF COMPLAINANT	DAY, DATE, TIME OF REPORT SUBMISSION	
EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT	BUILDING	
NAME OF COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR RECEIVING THIS REPORT	DAY, DATE, TIME REPORT RECEIVED	
DAY, DATE, TIME OF ALLEGED INCIDENT	NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) PRESENT DURING ALLEGED INCIDENT	
SPECIFY TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION ALLEGED		
<input type="checkbox"/> TITLE I	<input type="checkbox"/> TITLE II	<input type="checkbox"/> TITLE VI
<input type="checkbox"/> TITLE XI	<input type="checkbox"/> SECT 504	<input type="checkbox"/> MGL Ch. 76, SECTION 5

NATURE OF COMPLAINT (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NEEDED)	
SPECIFIC RELIEF DESIRED (WHAT DO YOU WANT DONE OR CORRECTED?)	
FOLLOW-UP (CHECK ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/> LETTER*	
<input type="checkbox"/> FACE-TO-FACE MEETING*	
<input type="checkbox"/> ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION (EXPLAIN)	
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (EXPLAIN)	
SIGNATURES:	
COMPLAINANT	NON-DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE COORDINATOR
OTHERS PRESENT	OTHERS PRESENT

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