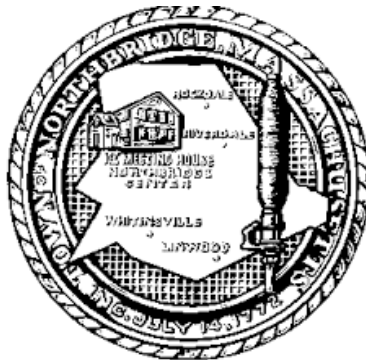


Northbridge Public Schools

Student and Family Handbook

2022- 2023



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Northbridge Public Schools



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The Northbridge Public Schools prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic, status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory, disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristic.



The Northbridge Public Schools Town of Northbridge

87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588 (508) 234-8156 FAX (508) 234-8469 www.nps.org

Amy McKinstry, Superintendent
Gregory Rosenthal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Jill Healy, Director of Curriculum
Melissa J. Walker, Director of Finance

FOREWORD:

The Northbridge District Student and Family Handbook provides information about instructional programs, support services, and expectations regarding student behavior. It also includes an abbreviated overview of certain laws, policies, rules, regulations, and practices that affect students. This handbook is available on our website at www.nps.org.

This handbook is not intended to replace the actual policies, regulations, rules, and practices established by the Northbridge School Committee. If errors in this publication occur, the Northbridge School Committee Policy manual will represent the actual guiding document. The policy manual is available online at <https://www.nps.org/district/school-committee/pages/policy-manual>.

The School Committee, Superintendent, and school administrators reserve the right to develop, revise, define, and eliminate policies, rules, and regulations as they deem appropriate. Students and families may be notified about these changes as appropriate and relevant.

Each school will provide a supplement that presents school-specific information and procedures. It is the student and parent/guardian's responsibility to become familiar with the handbook.

You must complete the Handbook Acknowledgment, Media Release, Acceptable Use forms, and any other acknowledgment forms requested by the school administrators. These forms must be returned to the school's main office by Friday, September 9, 2022.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CONTACT INFORMATION

The following list provides details on key areas within the District and how to contact the director or administrator responsible for each area.

Superintendent

Amy McKinstry (amckinstry@nps.org)

The superintendent is the District's instructional leader and chief executive officer. The superintendent is responsible for the quality of the District's curriculum and instruction, the efficacy of all of the District's educational programming and support systems, the management of the schools and the administration of all District policies and procedures.

It is the superintendent's responsibility to recommend policies to the School Committee and, when adopted by the School Committee, implement, interpret and execute them. It is also the superintendent's responsibility to recommend an annual district budget that supports the District Strategic Plan.

The superintendent is also responsible for the direct supervision of the following personnel:

- Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- Director of Business and Finance
- Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Director of Technology
- Director of Facilities
- Building Principals
- Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

To reach the superintendent's office, please contact:

Executive Assistant to Superintendent: Adrienne Pontbriand (apontbriand@nps.org)

Tel: (508) 234-8156

FAX: (508) 234-8469

Curriculum & Instruction

Jill Healy, Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment (jhealy@nps.org)

Contact the office of Curriculum and Instruction to obtain information regarding district-wide curriculum; instructional practices and programs; school-specific, district-wide and state assessments; professional development programming; home-schooling; and, educator evaluation processes and procedures (TeachPoint).

Business and Finance

Melissa Walker, Director of Business and Finance (mwalker@nps.org)

The Business Office is responsible for managing the District's financial operations. These activities include: annual development of district budget, accounting and financial reporting, payroll, employee benefits, school lunch programs, workers' compensation, accounts payable and receivable, pre-school billing, transportation/bussing coordination, property and liability claims, and tuition/tax credit billing.

The Director of Business and Finance is also responsible for the direct supervision of the following personnel:

- Supervisor of Administrative Services and Human Resources: Kristi Boucher (klboucher@nps.org)
- Accounts Payable: Leann O'Meara (lomeara@nps.org)
- Payroll and Facilities Use: Sue Richard (srichard@nps.org)
- Transportation Coordinator: Patricia Paine (ppaine@nps.org)

Pupil Personnel Services

Greg Rosenthal, Director of PPS (grosenthal@nps.org)

The office of Pupil Personnel Services serves as a liaison to the school district for special education services. The department is also responsible for 504 compliance, IEP/student records management, homeless student programming (McKinney-Vento), school counseling programs, health services programs, out-of-district placements, special education transportation, English Language Learners programming, translation services, and tutoring.

The Director of Pupil Personnel Services is also responsible for the direct supervision of the following personnel:

- Executive Asst. to Dir. of PPS: Nicki Gangai (ngangai@nps.org)
- Administrative Asst. for PPS: Jennifer Porcelli (jporcelli@nps.org)
- Occupational Therapists/Physical Therapists

The PPS Director also assists in the supervision of the following personnel:

- Special Education Team Chairs
- School Nurses
- Adjustment Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Speech Pathologists

Technology

Tiago Vital, Director of Technology (tvital@nps.org)

The technology department handles all technology issues and support throughout the district, hardware/software purchasing and maintenance, all network systems and network administration, technology policies, district data reporting, data management systems, telephones and security system maintenance, Google suite issues and administration, and Infinite Campus maintenance and reporting.

The Director of Technology is directly responsible for the following individuals:

- Systems Information Manager: Julie Fields (jfields@nps.org)
- Instructional Technology Specialists:
 - Anthony Amitrano, Grades K-12 (aamitrano@nps.org)
- Technology Support Specialists:
 - Clistenes Cabral (ccabral@nps.org)
 - Daniel Locke (dlocke@nps.org)

Facilities and Maintenance

George Simmons, Director of Facilities (gsimmons@nps.org)

The facilities and maintenance department is responsible for facility safety and maintenance, building security, building use requests, construction/renovation of district facilities, grounds maintenance, shipping and receiving, building custodial services, snow removal and walkway treatment, fields maintenance.

The Director of Facilities is directly responsible for the building and district-wide custodial and maintenance staff.

District Website and Social Media:

www.nps.org – Northbridge Public Schools website

[@NorthbridgePS](#) – Twitter

[Northbridge Public Schools](#) - Facebook

Administration

District Office
87 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8156

Northbridge School Committee

Mrs. Erin Donohue, Chairperson, edonohue@nps.org
Mrs. Katherine Atchue, Vice-Chair, katchue@nps.org
Mr. Allan Richards, aerichardssc@nps.org
Mrs. Jill Leonard, jleonard@nps.org
Mrs. Healthier Alden, halden@nps.org

Central Office Staff

Superintendent: Amy McKinstry
Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment: Jill Healy
Director of Pupil Personnel Services: Greg Rosenthal
Director of Finance: Melissa Walker
Director of Facilities: George Simmons
Director of Technology: Tiago Vital
Transportation Coordinator: Mrs. Patricia Paine
Food Service: Mary Farese-Brown, PH: (508) 234-8163

Vendetti Bus Company - Ms. Wanda White
410 N Main St, Uxbridge, MA 01569
(508) 234-8981

Northbridge Elementary School (Gr. PK - 5)

Mrs. Lorinda Allen, Principal of Academics Mr. Nicholas Hoffman, Principal of Student & Staff Support
Mrs. Lauren Dolan, Assistant Principal Mr. David Ferraro, Dean of Student Support
Mrs. Jill Redding, Early Childhood Coordinator

21 Crescent St.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8161

Northbridge Middle School (Gr. 5 - 8)

Mr. John Diorio, Principal
Mrs. Susan Palmer-Howes, Assistant Principal
Mr. Jason Stien, Dean of Students

171 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8718

Northbridge High School (Gr. 9-12 and Post Grad)

Mrs. Dawn Stockwell, Principal
Mr. Eric Tracey, Assistant Principal
Mr. John Susienka, Dean of Students

427 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-6221

Important Telephone Numbers

Police: 508-234-6211
Fire: 508-234-8448
Ambulance: 508-234-2111
Poison Control: 800-682-9211

Town of Northbridge

Selectman/Town Manager 508-234-2095
Town Clerk 508-234-2001
Treasurer/Collector 508-234-5432
Board of Registrar 508-234-2001
United States Post Office 800-275-8777
Whitinsville Library 508-234-2151
Whitin Community Center 508-234-8184

Anonymous Alert (Bullying)

<http://www.nps.org/node/2272>

Social Service

Arbour Counseling-Franklin 508-528-6037
Beginning Bridges Community Partnership 508-234-1291
Catholic Charities 508-234-3800
Crisis Center 508-791-6562
Dept. of Social Services 508-234-1000
Dept. of Transitional Assistance 508-767-3100
Family Continuity Program (FCP) 508-234-4181
First Call Referral 508-755-1233
Food Pantry 508-234-4599
Integrated Psychotherapy 508-473-1200

Maria Diran-LMHC Whitinsville 774-847-7227
Milford-Franklin Counseling Services, Inc 508 437-7400
Parental Stress Line 800-632-8188
Riverside Emergency Service 508-634-3420
Riverside Outpatient Counseling 508-529-7000
Social Security 800-772-1213
Wayside Community Counseling/Valley Rape Crisis Program 508-478-7400 / 800-511-5070
Wayside Trauma Intervention 508-478-6888
WIC-On Wheels 508-641-4829
You, Inc 508-849-0469

Health Services:

Whitinsville Urgent Care 508-234-6311

Northbridge Public Schools Nursing,
Northbridge High School
427 Linwood Ave.
508-234-9356

School Closings

School closing, delayed starting time or early dismissal will be announced by the **Connect-Ed** system, the district website, social media, and on the following channels:

WBZ-TV Channel 4
WCVB Channel 5
TV 7 News
Fox 25
NECN

**Connect-Ed is an automatic calling system. In order for parents to receive Connect-Ed calls, it is important that you keep the school updated with your current phone number(s)*

Sharing Your Concerns In the Northbridge Public Schools

NPS strongly believes that two-way communication with members of the NPS school community is a vital component to achieving the goals set forth in our District Strategic Plan. We are committed to ensuring that families and community members are able to voice their thoughts and opinions and are responded to thoughtfully by the appropriate building and district personnel in a timely manner.

The lists below are a guide to help you identify the most appropriate and efficient way to ensure that your concerns/questions are addressed. Please use this list to identify the individual or informational source that will help clarify your concern and/or answer your question.

Begin with identifying the individual who is most closely involved in your issue. Issues should be addressed in a progressive manner, with the individual most knowledgeable and involved being contacted first, usually at the teacher, building or program level, and progressing as needed. A typical progression may look like the following:

Teacher/coach/counselor . . . asst. principal or principal/athletic director . . . director of PPS/curriculum/technology . . . superintendent . . . school committee.

Type of Concern/Question and Suggested Contact:

- *Classroom learning or behavior situation* - (teacher or guidance counselor (HS), then principal/asst. principal)
- *Building-based rules and regulations* - (district handbook/school-specific appendix – on NPS website; building principal/asst. principal)
- *What is my child learning? How can I help my child with their learning?* - (classroom teacher; building principal; Curriculum Director)
- *I think my child might have a learning disability.* - (teacher or guidance counselor/adjustment counselor; SpEd team chair; Director of PPS)
- *I want to volunteer in one of the schools.* (building principal; Superintendent's executive assistant)
- *I'm having an issue with the bus/transportation.* (building principal; transportation coordinator at Central Office)
- *I'm having an issue with my child's teacher(s) or other staff member(s).* (building principal/asst. principal)

- *Civil Rights/Non-Discrimination/Sexual Harassment:* Inquiries relating to any of these issues should be directed to the district's Title IX/Non-Discrimination Officers listed below:
 - **Jill Healy** (jhealy@nps.org)
 - **Greg Rosenthal** (grosenthal@nps.org)

Please keep the following steps in mind when you have a concern or issue:

1. Contact the person **most involved** or knowledgeable about your issue/concern.
2. State your concern in detail, and if you contact the individual by phone, be sure and follow up with an email confirming your conversation.
3. It is helpful to brainstorm possible suggestions or solutions prior to reaching out to your contact person.
4. If you do not feel your concern has been addressed, or no resolution has been achieved, and you need to move on to the next level, be sure to document your conversations and record the dates and times, as well as the content.
5. Please remember that if the issue involves a specific individual, it is likely that that person will have to be involved at some point in order to resolve the issue.
6. Also, please remember that in some cases, confidentiality may be required to protect an individual's rights, so the person trying to resolve your issue may not be able to discuss certain things with you if that confidentiality may be violated.
7. Finally, please note that all emails sent through the Northbridge Public Schools email system are public record, so it is important to be concise and appropriate and only state facts in your emails.

Please know that the District will do everything we can to address your concerns and resolve your issues as quickly as possible. We also understand that sometimes certain issues are more serious than others or are time-sensitive, and therefore, progressive contact is not the most efficient. However, we do ask that unless it is truly time-sensitive or extremely serious in nature, you utilize the progressive contact lists and steps we have outlined above.



2022-2023 School Calendar

July '22						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August '22						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September '22						
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October '22						
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30	31					

November '22						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

December '22						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Calendar Key						
						No School
						Prof. Dev. - No School
						Early Release Day

July	
July	Summer School-All Offices Open
August	
Aug. 10 & 11	District Leadership Team Retreat
Aug. 15 & 16	New Teacher Orientation
Aug. 19 & 22	Leadership Institute for DCs & Team Leaders
Aug. 29	Staff Opening Day Activities @ NHS
Aug. 30	Building Based PD Activities-Staff Only
Aug. 31	Building Based PD Activities-Staff Only
September	
Sept. 1	First Day of School Grades 1-12
Sept. 2	First Day for Kindergarten
Sept. 5	Labor Day-No School
Sept. 6	First Day for Preschool
Sept. 28	Early Release Day-Prof. Development

October	
Oct. 10	Columbus Day-No School
November	
Nov. 8	Early Release Day-Prof. Development
Nov. 11	Veterans Day-No School
Nov. 23	Early Release Day-Thanksgiving Recess
Nov. 24-25	Thanksgiving Recess
December	
Dec. 7	Early Release-Parent Conferences
Dec 26-Jan 2	Winter Recess

January	
Jan. 1	New Year's Day
Jan. 2	New Year's Day Observed-No School
Jan. 3	School Resumes
Jan. 13	Prof. Dev-Staff Only-full day
Jan. 16	Martin Luther King Jr Day-No School
February	
Feb. 20	President's Day-No School
Feb. 17-21	February Recess-No School

March	
March 15	Early Release-Parent Conferences
March 29	Early Release-Professional Development
April	
April 7	Good Friday-No School
April 17-21	Patriots Day/Spring Recess-No School
May	
May 24	Early Release-Professional Development
May 29	Memorial Day-No School
June	
June 2	HS Graduation
June 14	180th Day of School- Early Release Day
June 15-22	*Weather Related Make-up Days
June 19	Juneteenth-No School (if yr. extended)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays	
NHS-427 Linwood Ave	
Media Center - 7:00PM	
Televised on Channel 1	

January '23						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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29	30	31				

February '23						
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March '23						
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April '23						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May '23						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June '23						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

NORTHBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS CALENDAR DATES 2022-2023

Faculty Meetings:

September 6, 20
October 4, 18
November 8, 22
December 6, 20
January 10, 24
February 14, 28
March 14, 28
April 11, 25
May 9, 23
June 6

Open House/Curriculum Nights

- PK - Open House – Sept 1- 9:00-10:00 a.m. & 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Kdg - Open House – Aug 31-6:00-7:30 p.m. & Sept. 1 -10:00-11:00 a.m.
- Grades 1 & 2 - Open House - Sept 7th - 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- Grades 3 - 5 Open House - Sept 8th - 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- NMS--Curr. Night - Sept 28th - 6:00-7:30 p.m.
- Freshman Orientation - Aug. 23, 2022
- NHS- Open House/ Curr. Night - Sept. 14, 2022

Parent Conferences

December 7, 2022
March 15, 2023

Report Card Schedule HS & MS		Report Card Schedule Elementary	
Mid-semester	September 30	Term Ends	November 3
Term Ends	November 3	Sent home	November 10
Sent home	November 10	Parent conf	December 7
Parent Conf	December 7		
Mid-semester	December 8	Term Ends	January 19
Term Ends	January 19	Sent home	January 26
Sent home	January 26		
Mid-semester	March 1	Parent Conf	March 15
Parent Conf	March 15	Term Ends	April 4
Term Ends	April 4	Sent home	April 11
Sent home	April 11		
Mid-Semester	May 12	Term-Ends	June 14
Term-Ends	June 14	Sent home	June 14
Sent home	June 14		

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District Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Our District Strategic Plan is comprised of the vision, mission, core values, and the strategic goals and initiatives for the Northbridge Public Schools. Our Strategic Plan is a dynamic, active document that guides all of our decision-making at the school and district levels.

Annually, we review the Strategic Plan to develop a budget that supports the goals and initiatives that were developed in order to provide our students with the most robust resources and programming possible.

Input into the District Strategic Plan includes analysis of student, school and district data around performance and attendance, as well as an analysis of current district strengths and weaknesses, a review of progress on last year's Strategic Plan, requirements of state and federal legislation and recommendations from district and school staff, focus groups, parents, students and other stakeholders, as well as input from our School Committee members.

This District Strategic Plan was designed around three areas (shared leadership, inclusive culture, and teaching and learning) that we feel, if focused on for improvement, will help us accomplish our mission.

Our intent is that everyone in the school community understands our vision and mission, the goals of the Strategic Plan, and the role that each individual stakeholder plays in helping us accomplish our mission and goals.

(The full plan can be found on our website at: <https://www.nps.org/district/about-district/links/strategic-plan-2021-2024>)

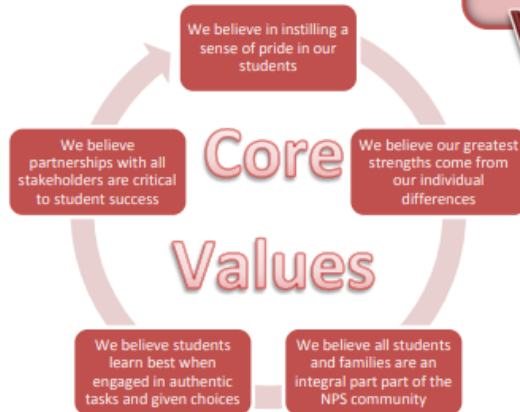
Northbridge Public Schools District Strategic Plan 2021-2024

The Northbridge Public Schools is a proud community focused on the education and well-being of ALL students. We recognize each student as an individual, and we provide creative and innovative learning opportunities that encourage them to use their unique voices and personal strengths to achieve academic and personal success.

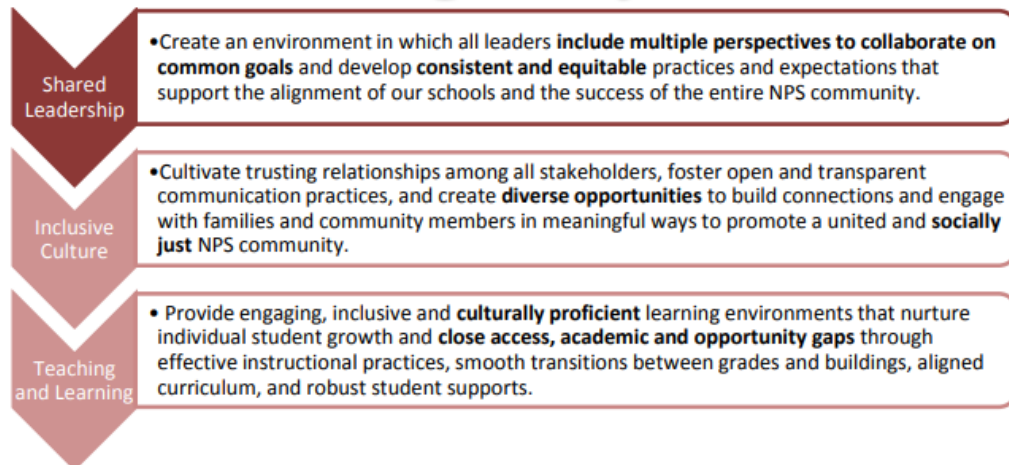
MISSION

NPS students are confident, empathetic and responsible individuals. Inspired by their passions, and prepared by their education, they achieve personal success and contribute to both society and their community in a positive way.

VISION



Strategic Objectives



If we give our students the tools and support to pursue their passions, skills and interests responsibly and practically . . . Then our students will achieve personal success and contribute to the community in a positive way.

GENERAL INFORMATION

After School Activities, Clubs and Sports

All students are welcome to participate in the after school clubs, activities, and sports offered at their school. Please check each school's Appendix for specific information regarding types of activities, participation guidelines, expectations, and eligibility (MIAA).

Asbestos - The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Annual Notification Letter

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) 40 CFR 763 requires all schools from Pre-K to Grade 12 to conduct inspections to determine if they contain asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM). If they do contain these materials, the ACBM must be categorized according to the type of material, its location, current damage, and its potential for future damage. Also, a detailed Asbestos Management Plan must be developed. The Management Plan details the inspection findings, and outlines the response actions the School Board intends to implement.

To accomplish these goals, the School District now has on file at the school and at the Department of Health the approved Asbestos Management Plan for the school facility. The provisions of the plan are being implemented in a timely and ongoing fashion. It is our Board's desire to provide a safe and healthy facility for all students, employees and visitors.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirements of AHERA for written notice of the availability of the Management Plan for review should you desire to do so. Please contact the Northbridge Public Schools Central Office for further details.

Before and After School Care

The Northbridge Public Schools offers extended care options for students in Gr. K-8. These programs are managed by AlphaBEST. For information regarding enrollment and participation, you may go to the district website or go to the AlphaBEST website at <https://www.alphabest.org/?s=Northbridge&x=12&y=8>, or you can contact the main office at your child's school.

Dismissal Procedures

Restrictive Dismissal:

Whenever there is a restriction as to whom a student may be discharged, we must have one of the following:

1. In case of a divorce or separation, we must have a **court order** indicating the person who is restricted from picking up the child.
2. Children will only be dismissed to people verified on the Emergency Card.

Identification will be required before the child is discharged in either situation. If there is a change in either 1 or 2, the school must be notified in writing of this change. Appropriate personnel will be informed.

Early Dismissal:

Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds before their regular dismissal time without prior written approval from their parent/guardian. If you would like to dismiss your child from school, please send a note to the office with your child prior to the start of school. Students will not be dismissed directly

from their classroom. Students will only be released to the authorized adults that have been registered on the student's emergency card and proper identification may be required. Authorized person(s) must come to the main office to dismiss the student.

Early Dismissal Due to Weather:

In case of an early dismissal due to weather, it is imperative that arrangements be made for the care of your child in the event that a parent/guardian is not home. Be sure that your child is thoroughly familiar with these arrangements and knows where they should go if they are dismissed from school early because of an emergency. Early planning is the best preventive measure.

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools to activate the Connect-Ed system to alert parents of unplanned early dismissals.

Dress Code - Student

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, adheres to the schools' dress code, and does not cause disorder or disruption. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

Clothing advertising drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or which bears inappropriate symbols or language, or which could be construed as offensive by anyone, is not permitted. (*See more specific dress code requirements in middle and high school appendices.*)

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

Entrance Requirements

A child must be five (5) years of age by September 1st of the school year during which they wish to enroll in order to be eligible to enter kindergarten (Policy JEB). Any student enrolling in Northbridge Public Schools for the first time must present a copy of his/her birth certificate and complete immunization records. Failure to produce complete immunization records will result in the student not being permitted to enroll. All children will be screened in the spring prior to entering kindergarten. The kindergarten staff and speech and language pathologists will conduct the screening.

First Week – Forms/Updates

Families will be provided a link to online forms to be completed during the first week of school. This packet will contain the following information:

- School emergency card
- Pick-up authorization form
- Computer/Internet Empowered Use Policy form
- Photo permission form
- School menu
- Free and reduced lunch form
- PTA membership form (if appropriate)
- Student schedule (if appropriate)
- Bus tag (if appropriate)

Please help us by completing the required forms by September 9, 2022.

**** Parents who need a paper packet may request same from their child's school office.**

Home Schooling

Parents who live in Northbridge but choose not to enroll their students in the Northbridge Public Schools in order to home school their students must complete a **Home School Application Form** and agree to the terms outlined therein. This form must be submitted to **Jill Healy, Director of Curriculum** at Central Office prior to the start of the school year for which home-schooling is scheduled to begin. Home school forms can be found on the district website at the following link <https://www.nps.org/district/about-district>. Applications and information can also be requested via email through our Home-School Coordinator/Curriculum Director, Jill Healy at jhealy@nps.org.

Idling of Motor Vehicles

Operators of motor vehicles are prohibited from allowing any motor vehicle to idle unnecessarily on school grounds (see M.G.L. c. 90, section 16B).

The following exceptions apply: traffic conditions; queueing for pick-up or drop-off; diesel engine cool down and warm up; maintenance of temperature of school busses.

Violators may be subject to a civil fine of up to \$100 for a first offense and \$500 for second and subsequent offenses.

Lost and Found

All clothing, lunch boxes, and backpacks found at school are placed in the lost and found located in each building. Money, jewelry, and any other articles of value are turned into the principal.

Personal Property

Personal property, other than items needed to complete homework and assignments, should not be brought to school without specific permission from the teacher or principal. This includes, but is not limited to, computers, iPads, toys, games, lasers, baseball bats, cameras, skateboards, trading cards, electronic games of any kind, movies, and excessive amounts of money. Students violating this policy will have the item taken away and returned at the end of the day. In the case of money or valuables, parents will be notified to pick up the items.

The school will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. All personal items should be clearly labeled with the student's name. This includes coats, hats, gloves, mittens, lunch boxes, backpacks, personal books, and electronic devices approved by the school principal or related to a student's approved educational program.

Registration/Withdrawal

Registration:

Students must register in the office at each school building for his/her grade level.

The following documents must be provided for all students enrolling at any of the Northbridge Public Schools:

- District Student Registration Form
- Birth Certificate

- Proof of Residency: *i.e. mortgage documents, water/sewer bill, rental agreement, Purchase & Sales agreement, recent utility bill, etc. showing name and address of custodial parent(s)*
- Most recent Physical and Immunization Record
- Most recent report card and any academic support documents *i.e. IEP or 504*
- Legal Proof of Guardianship or Custodial Paperwork ****This documentation must be provided if you fall into one of the categories below:**
 - If you are not listed as the mother/father on the student's birth certificate
 - If you are not the mother/father, but have physical custody of the student
 - If either the mother or father have joint legal custody with physical custody going to either mother or father
 - If either the mother or father have sole custody

Withdrawal:

Students must be withdrawn if you are leaving the district for any reason, including home schooling. Please notify the school as soon as you know the date of your child's withdrawal, so that the records can be processed and sent to the receiving school and your student's status can be changed in Infinite Campus for accurate reporting to the state. The custodial parent or guardian must come into the school to fill out a records release form. All books and other materials/equipment borrowed or issued from the school should be returned. If borrowed/issued items are not returned, payment to replace the items is required.

School Closings or Delays

School closings, delayed starting time or early dismissal will be announced via the Connect-Ed system and on the following channels: WBZ-TV Channel 4, WCVB Channel 5, TV 7 News, Fox 25 and NECN.

No announcement will be made from the individual schools. **Please do not call the schools for this information**, as these decisions are not made on an individual school basis. If school is closed for the day or dismissed early, all school-related activities are also canceled.

Student Records Requests

The District's policy of students' and parents'/guardians' privacy rights to academic records is in compliance with Student Record Regulations under the authority of Chapters 71, 71B, and Chapter 76 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Access to Student Records

Parents/guardians may have access to the student record. Access shall be provided as soon as practicable and **within ten days** after the initial request, except in the case of non-custodial parents. Upon request for access, the entire student record shall be made available.

A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record, unless the school district has been provided with documentation indicating that:

- The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
- The parent has been denied visitation, or

- The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
- There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.
- The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted.
- In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.
- Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access.
- The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.
- Upon receipt of a court order that prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS and OTHER RELATED POLICIES

Internet Use in Educational Setting

The internet is a vast computer network full of wonderful educational experiences. However, there are some parts of the Internet that are not appropriate for education and, therefore, the Northbridge Public Schools will teach students to use the Internet safely by following the guidelines listed below. Teachers and staff who use the Internet will follow the same guidelines to model appropriate use while protecting themselves and school property.

At preschool – grade 1 levels, students may only use the Internet alongside an adult. Students in grades 2 -12 may be assigned accounts to access the Internet directly. Anyone accessing the Internet through the District's computers and networks must first return a signed ***Empowered Use Agreement***. This shall be done when a student enrolls, or reaches grade 2, or when an employee is hired, and must be reviewed and signed off on yearly while student/staff is a member of the Northbridge Public Schools.

Internet access will be provided with filtering software designed to identify and prohibit access to sites that educators believe contain inappropriate material for students. It is important to remember, however, that no system is perfect and that the possibility always exists for some inappropriate materials to get through.

Ultimately, everyone must take responsibility for their own actions and take the necessary steps to protect themselves. Therefore, anyone found repeatedly or intentionally visiting objectionable, problematic, or inappropriate sites will have his or her Internet privileges revoked and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Empowered Use Policy

I. Introduction

The Northbridge Public Schools offer network access to its students, staff, and others such as citizens, volunteers, and elected officials ("the Users"). As digital technologies emerge it is essential that all users of the Northbridge Public Schools Computer Network ("The Network") have an understanding of the available technology and its appropriate use. The intent of this policy is to establish a set of guidelines that all users of the network will understand and practice while accessing the network.

II. Purpose

This policy outlines the ideal characteristics of users in a digital world through the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior with regard to technology use called *Digital Citizenship*. There are three guiding principles within the framework of digital citizenship:

- **Safe** - Protecting others and yourself from danger, risk, or injury.
- **Savvy** - Maturing into educated digital citizens by developing wisdom, practical knowledge, and the understanding to make good judgments.
- **Social** - Respecting yourself as a digital citizen through creating cooperative and interdependent relationships and understanding of others.

When accessing the network, users must take full responsibility for their own actions. While the network's possibilities are tremendous, it also has potential for abuse. The Northbridge Public Schools shall not be liable for the actions of anyone accessing the network. Users assume full responsibility for any costs, liabilities, or damages arising from the way the user chooses to access the network. Use of the network constitutes their agreement to abide by this policy as set forth below, or as modified in the future.

III. The Nine Elements of Digital Citizenship

Within the framework of the 3 guiding principles of Safe, Savvy, and Social, the specific nine elements guide all technology use by users of the network. Integrated within the curriculum throughout all grade levels, students will learn and develop skills in each of these elements.

Element 1 - Digital Access

Many students and families are fortunate to have near constant access to technology. The district, as a result of infrastructure development and technology purchases, is fortunate to have a substantial amount of technology available to staff and students throughout the school day. However, there remains a digital divide to technology access due to a variety of factors (socio-economic status, disabilities, etc.) Students and staff will make use of digital technology when and where appropriate and take necessary steps to ensure that regardless of technology availability, all students and families will have access to curriculum and information, whether online or offline.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Access	Examples of Appropriate Digital Access
Schools ignore or overlook the digital needs of disenfranchised groups (e.g., not viewed as important)	District administrators work toward providing technology opportunities for all students within their schools
Teachers fail to accommodate students who do not have access to technology	Technology leaders provide technology to students for use in school and out, such as a one-to-one laptop program

Element 2 - Digital Commerce

With near ubiquitous access to technology, students are regularly exposed to the commercial nature of apps and the internet. At an early age, children encounter online games that offer upgrades or special powers as well as videos and ads for products that are easily purchased online. In coordination with families, students will be aware of the financial and security implications of making online purchases in addition to the possibility of identity theft and credit issues.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Commerce	Examples of Appropriate Digital Commerce
Students purchase goods online without knowing how to protect their identity (leaving them open to identity theft).	Students become informed consumers so they can safely purchase items online.
Students fail to realize that poor online purchasing practices lead to poor credit ratings.	Students spend the time to research what they want to purchase, then take the time to identify safe, secure, and reputable sites with the best prices. (Ribble 55)

Element 3 - Digital Communication

“Cell phones, social networking, and texting have changed the way people communicate. These forms of communication have created a new social structure governing how, when, and with whom people interact”. (Ribble 58) With the ease of digital communication, students will understand positive best practices in appropriate email use, texting issues, cell phone etiquette, and choosing technology communication models.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Communication	Examples of Appropriate Digital Communication
Students text or use social media during class time.	Students and teachers use digital communication devices when they will not interrupt what is going on in the school or classroom.
Students use text messaging and email shorthand for class assignments when asked to give complete answers.	Digital communication technologies such as social media sites are used to support student activities in the classroom, such as sharing ideas or writings with others
Students use text messaging to cheat on tests.	Teachers use blogs and social media to inform parents of classroom activities. (Ribble 61)
Sharing of graphically inappropriate pictures with others.	Students use school-appropriate images to enhance presentations, reports, and other assignments.

Using anonymous or other social media sites to bully or berate others.	Students uplift each other with positive conversations online and in person.
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Element 4 - Digital Literacy

Students of the 21st Century are often referred to as “digital natives”. Having been born into a society where technology is virtually everywhere, it is easy to make this assumption. However, just because a student has had access to technology their whole lives, does not mean they know how to use it effectively. Learning the digital basics (web browsing, searching the web, email, office tools), evaluating online resources (discerning the accuracy and trustworthiness of content on websites), and exploring and developing online learning modes (Ribble 65) are all essential components of developing digital literacy.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Literacy	Examples of Appropriate Digital Access
Students choose alternative educational opportunities because their school or district does not offer online classes or a distance education program.	Students take online courses (or mixed delivery-- part face-to-face, part online) that are designed to keep them interested in the material.
Teachers do not provide resources and materials that students can get from digital sources (e.g., blogs, websites, podcasts).	Teachers use digital technologies in new and innovative ways, such as creating content for the web that can be accessed by students away from the classroom. (Ribble 65)

Element 5 - Digital Etiquette

With the ubiquitous access to technology, all users of technology are looked to as role models of appropriate use. If students see others using technology in one way (positive or negative), they will engage in that same behavior. Students will use technology in ways that have a positive effect on others, when it is contextually appropriate, and maintain respect for others.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Etiquette	Examples of Appropriate Digital Etiquette
Students use cell phones to text in situations where they should be listening/focusing on others.	Students work with their teachers to understand what information can be shared from their devices, and when it is appropriate to do so.
Students communicate on a social networking site without knowing the rules (who can see posts or personal information) or responsibilities (letting others know when threats or negative comments have been made about them).	When communicating with a messaging app, users learn the rules of the group before becoming involved in the conversation. (Ribble 70)

Element 6 - Digital Law

On the internet, copyrighted, inappropriate, and sometimes illegal material and information can be found. It is essential that all users understand the legal implications of accessing file-sharing websites, using

pirated software, hacking or bypassing systems and networks, and assuming or stealing someone's identity.

Examples of Illegal Technology Use	Examples of Legal Technology Use
Students using copyrighted material such as photographs, artwork, music or movies without permission.	Students understand what can be downloaded without charge and what is considered copyrighted material and should be paid for. They are aware of free alternatives such as Creative Commons licensed work.
Students scripting (using computer code), using VPNs, extensions, or other means to bypass firewalls or other network protection.	Students understand that the restrictions put in place by the school district and their parents are for their safety.
Students sharing inappropriate material with others.	Students inform an adult when they learn of someone sharing graphically inappropriate material. (Ribble 75)

Element 7 - Digital Rights and Responsibilities

All users need to understand the difference between what they are capable of doing with access to the network and what should be done for the overall good of the group of teachers and learners. Following accepted norms, using online material ethically (including citing sources and asking for permission), and identifying cyberbullies, threats, and other inappropriate behavior are expectations of all users.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Rights and Responsibilities	Examples of Appropriate Digital Access
Users use material from the internet without properly citing the source.	Users cite websites or other digital media sources when using information for class projects or presenting material.
Users violate their school's Acceptable Use Policy because they view it as unfair.	Users are informed of their rights when using digital technologies, while also being aware of their responsibilities. (Ribble 79)

Element 8 - Digital Health and Wellness

In addition to social and emotional well-being regarding technology use, all users should be aware of how they can be physically affected by technology. This includes using proper ergonomics and avoiding repetitive motion injuries as well as developing addictive behaviors towards the internet and video games.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Health and Wellness	Examples of Appropriate Digital Health and Wellness

Administrators and teachers ignore the possible harmful physical effects of technology on students.	Technology leaders learn how to promote health and wellness with technology.
Teachers do not model proper ergonomics when using technology.	Teachers model digital safety in their classrooms and expect their students to do the same. (Ribble 85)

Element 9 - Digital Security

Protecting digital equipment (including desktop computers, tablets, chromebooks, personal devices, etc.) is a personal responsibility that has implications for all users on the network. The importance of creating and maintaining secure passwords, updating software to prevent viral threats, and understanding how to identify potential hacking, phishing, and spoofing threats are essential for all users. In addition to being educated about these, it is important to protect technology through use of spyware/adware blockers, data backup, understanding the role of the firewall, and using effective passwords and passcodes.

Examples of Inappropriate Digital Security	Examples of Appropriate Digital Security
District fails to maintain current software updates or patches that protect their computers from viruses and exploitation. Users fail to report notifications of possible virus detection or updates.	Users take the time to make sure their virus protection and firewalls are properly updated and configured to protect personal information.
Users fail to protect their identity when using email, social networking, or text messaging.	Teachers and parents talk to students about the dangers of providing information to anyone over the internet.
Students use weak or non-existent passwords. (Check yours here: https://howsecureismypassword.net)	All devices are secured with some kind of lock, passcode, combination, or fingerprint or facial recognition sensor. (Ribble 89)

IV. Responsibilities of the District

The primary purpose of the ("the Network") is to support the educational objectives of the Northbridge Public Schools and Northbridge's educational community in general. Network use provides valuable opportunities for research, curriculum support, and career development. The network is not a public forum (although its contents may be disclosed as a public record), and the Northbridge Public School system reserves the right to place reasonable limits on materials posted or accessed through this network. The Northbridge Public School System will take reasonable precautions to filter out inappropriate materials; however, it is impossible to monitor all content.

This policy seeks to educate staff about online content monitoring and to ensure student personal information is not disclosed; as required under the Children's Internet Protection Act (Federal Communications Commission) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (US Department of Education). Staff are expected to monitor student internet use in such a manner to prevent access by minors to inappropriate content on the internet, including attempts to access inappropriate materials and

circumvent system security; and provide instruction to students on interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, and responses to cyberbullying.

Use of the network must be consistent with its purpose as stated in Section IV. This policy outlines acceptable use of the network. However, it does not attempt to articulate all required or proscribed behaviors by users of the network. Users are expected to conform to the purpose, spirit, and examples set forth in this policy, as well as the standards of Digital Citizenship set forth by this document as well as the [International Society for Technology Education \(ISTE\)](#), and the [Massachusetts Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards](#), and to abide by the standards and rules of acceptable use.

Privacy

Users should not have an expectation of privacy or confidentiality in the content of electronic communications or other computer files sent or received and/or stored on the school computer network. Users should be aware that the data they create, receive, or send on the network is the property of the Northbridge Public School system, and that the data may be recovered and reviewed, even after it has been deleted. The Northbridge Public School system captures and archives all Email, including attachments, sent and received through the district's mail servers and also reserves the right to monitor use of the network and to examine all data stored on district servers or other systems maintained by third parties under contract with the district.

Any Emails or other communication or data may be a public record and thus possibly subject to public disclosure. All communications, including text and images, regardless of content or purpose, are public, not private and may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or the receiver. Network administrators or their designees may review communications to maintain integrity system-wide and to ensure users are accessing the system in a responsible manner. All network activities are logged. These logs may be disclosed to law enforcement or other third parties.

Violations

The district reserves the right to deny, revoke or suspend, without prior notification, specific user privileges and/or to take other disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal, for violation of this policy. The system will advise appropriate law enforcement agencies of illegal activities conducted through the network. The Northbridge Public School system also will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to any illegal activities conducted through the network. Any known breach of this policy should be immediately reported to the Director of Technology.

Departure

Upon departure of the district, users will no longer have access to the Northbridge Public Schools network nor communication (Email) platform. User accounts are suspended and archived as a matter of public record. Access to former accounts or material contained in accounts is prohibited without written consent of the Superintendent of Schools.

Acceptance

All users of the network should acknowledge the understanding of and compliance with this policy on an annual basis.

Network Usage Guidelines

This list of guidelines is intended to serve as an outline of the general parameters and expectations of network use. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all potential infractions and situations.

- It is the policy of Northbridge Public Schools to maintain a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. Users shall observe this policy in the use of the network and employ digital etiquette by using appropriate, non-abusive language, refrain from making defamatory remarks or slurs of any kind, bullying, and from the use of obscene or profane language.
- Network IDs and passwords are provided for each user's personal use only. Passwords should be secured and not shared with anyone. Users must not use another person's password. If you suspect that someone has discovered your password, please communicate with a technology department staff member or a building administrator to have it changed immediately.
- Any use for, or in support of, illegal purposes or activities is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, gaining unauthorized access to other systems, arranging for the sale or purchase of drugs or alcohol, information about dangerous materials or devices such as weapons, threatening others, transferring obscene material, or attempting to do any of the above.
- Any use for commercial purposes is prohibited. Users may not create web pages to advertise or sell products or services and may not offer, provide, or purchase products or services through the network.
- Any use for fundraising for any non-school sponsored purpose, whether for charity or otherwise, is prohibited.
- Any use for political purposes is prohibited except for using the network to communicate with elected officials. (For example, lobbying for a political cause using the network would be inappropriate while inviting a political figure to class as a guest speaker would be appropriate.)
- Downloading, using, or copying software in violation of a license agreement or copyright, or otherwise infringing on intellectual property rights is prohibited.
- Users should assume that most materials available on the Internet are protected by copyright. Unauthorized use of copyrighted materials is prohibited. Additionally, any material obtained from the Internet and included in one's own work must be properly cited regardless of copyright status.
- Users shall not access, upload, download, transmit, or distribute material that is pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit, threatening, discriminatory, intimidating, abusive, harassing, or would otherwise be deemed offensive by a reasonable person.
- Users shall neither download nor install any commercial software, shareware or freeware onto network drives or disks without prior permission of the Director of Technology. Appropriate educational apps and browser extensions and add-ons may be downloaded to your iPad or Chromebook without prior permission.
- Staff must obtain the permission of their supervisor or supervisor's designee prior to creating, publishing, or using any district web pages, social media pages or any other digital content which is school-related, or which could be reasonably understood to be school-related. This includes any content which identifies the school or affiliated club, team, or organization by name in the account name or which uses the school's name or image. When creating accounts, staff must use an official Northbridge Schools Email address and confirm the proper use of privacy settings with the approving supervisor or supervisor's designee. No social media account covered by this policy shall permit comments by the public unless otherwise approved by a supervisor or supervisor's designee.
- Staff may be required to provide their supervisor or supervisor's designee with the username and password to district social media accounts, if such accounts are authorized. However, staff may not provide the username and password to district accounts to any unauthorized individual, including students and volunteers.
- Any student-related content, including pictures, is subject to the same restrictions governing the Web Page Protocol and a parent's decision to opt their student out of certain publications. Each school office maintains a list of students whose parents have opted-out of publication. It is the staff member's responsibility to check that list before posting such information.
- Social media accounts should be used exclusively for district and classroom-related work and communication, with prior authorization from building or district administration, and should be set up with an nps.org email account. Staff members may not use district accounts for personal use.

- Staff shall not access social media networking sites on school-owned devices unless such access is for an educational activity which has been pre-approved by a supervisor or supervisor's designee. This prohibition extends to using chat rooms, message boards, messaging in social media applications, and includes posting on social networking sites.
- Users shall be aware of their use of social media; as others may conduct their own search of you. Such searches may result in discovery of personal postings and/or your comments made about work, fellow staff/users, and/or students. Given such possible searches and your status as a school district employee, staff are held to a higher standard of conduct that reflects on your reputation and/or that of the school district. Staff shall refrain from "friending" or creating other electronic relationships with students.
- Staff shall refrain from sharing personally-identifiable information such as home addresses and telephone numbers.
- Staff shall not connect any device not owned and managed by the school district to the network, apart from use of public wi-fi network, unless prior authorization is given by building or district administration.
- Users shall not access, receive, upload, download, transmit, or distribute information promoting the use of dangerous instruments such as bombs or other explosive devices, firearms, or other weaponry.
- Users must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to any file servers or data in the Northbridge Public Schools system, outside file servers or data, or go beyond the user's authorized access. This includes logging in through another person's account and/or accessing another person's files. Users shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.
- Not all material accessible through the Internet is of educational value. Users are expected to refrain from seeking, accessing, uploading, downloading, transmitting, or distributing material that is not relevant to their work. Users are to access the district network only for purposes related to the schools and the performance of their jobs. Incidental personal use of school information technology is permitted as long as such use is not excessive, wasteful, and/or otherwise does not interfere with the employee's job duties and performance and is in accordance with the policies set forth in this policy. Incidental personal use is defined as use by an individual employee for occasional personal communications. Personal means of communication should not be used to conduct district-related business.
- Use appropriate judgment and caution in communications concerning students and ensure that personally identifiable information remains confidential. In order to limit the possibility of the disclosure of student records, student information shall be stored only on systems and devices approved by the district. Student information should not be stored in an unsecured manner such as CDs, DVDs, USB drives, other portable media, or on personal devices. Teachers shall take reasonable steps to ensure privacy and security of student information. Examples include locking their computer when they leave their classroom, ensuring that private student information is not visible when sharing their screen via video conferencing or classroom projector, and selecting a secure password.

Use of Cell Phones and Personal Devices

Students will not be permitted to use cell phones, headphones or any other personal electronic devices in the classroom. At the beginning of each class, students will place their cell phones (and/or electronic devices) in a designated area. If a student does not place the electronic device in the designated area at the start of class, then it is assumed they do not have one. If a student is found with a phone or other personal electronic device in their possession during class or anywhere else in the building during class time, they are subject to disciplinary action. See below.

Students will have access to their cell phones/personal electronic devices in the cafeteria during lunch time.

Enforcement and Penalties

All staff including teachers, administrators, and support staff are directed to monitor student violations of this policy. Refusal to hand over the phone or electronic device when requested to do so will be considered insubordination, and student will be subject to disciplinary action under the disciplinary code.

Consequences for students found to be in violation of the policy will be as follows:

- **First offense:** Student's electronic device will be confiscated, turned over to the building Administrator, and returned to the student at the end of the school day. A warning will be issued, and the parent will be contacted by the teacher or other individual confiscating the device.
- **Second offense:** Student's electronic device will be confiscated and turned over to the building Administrator. The student will be issued an office detention, the device will be returned at the end of the school day, and the parent will be contacted by the teacher or other individual confiscating the device.
- **Third offense:** Student's electronic device will be confiscated and turned over to the building Administrator. The parent will be contacted by administration. The student will also be issued two office detentions, and the device will be returned only to the student's parent or guardian. The student will also be prohibited from bringing an electronic device to school for two weeks, or alternatively, may be required to leave their phones in the Main Office upon entering the building each day during those two weeks.
- Additional offenses beyond the third offense will result in progressive discipline, up to and including: additional (extended) office detentions; Saturday School; exclusion from extracurricular activities (including clubs, athletics, councils, dances, etc.) or, suspension.

Students who violate this policy more than three times will also not be allowed to bring their device into the building for the remainder of the school year, or they may be asked to turn in their device to administration each morning for the remainder of the school year.

The use of school and personally owned technology on school property or at school events is a privilege, not a right. This privilege comes with personal responsibilities, and if students violate the responsible use of any technology in the school building, your privilege may be revoked and/or suspended.

Additional Information

- Recording of any kind, taking pictures on school property and/or posting of these on the internet is forbidden without prior consent and is subject to additional discipline.
- The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices and WILL NOT assist with setting up reparations for stolen items.
- The school administration reserves the right to seize and search a student's cell phone or other electronic device if there is reasonable suspicion that the device has been used to commit a crime or break school rules. This includes the reasonable suspicion of illegal drug activity and/or the sending of bullying or harassing text messages.

Field Trip Policies

The Northbridge Public Schools recognize that first-hand learning experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the school to encourage field trips as part of, and directly related to, the total school program and curriculum.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. The school will establish regulations to ensure that:

- All students have written parental permission for trips.
- All trips are properly supervised.
- All safety precautions are observed.
- All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37N, if field trips involve late night or overnight travel, the following must be met:

A. Trip Approval Process

1. Advance approval by the School Committee will be required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel (in concurrence with IJOA, Policy Relating to Field Trips).
2. The approval process will be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
3. Overnight trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips must be appropriate for the grade level and must meet *Time on Learning Requirements* of the Massachusetts Department of Education.
4. Teachers and other school staff will be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process applies only to school-sanctioned trips; trips will not be approved that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.
5. Policies and procedures for trip approval will take into account all logistical details involving security arrangements, emergency management and communications protocols, transportation, accommodations, itinerary, fundraising required of students, the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs, and recommendation of the principal.

B. Transportation

1. The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should generally be avoided. Should the use of vans be necessary for overnight travel, prior written authorization from the Superintendent and subsequent approval by the School Committee must be obtained. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches. No student drivers will be allowed at any time.
2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel will involve pre-trip checks for companies, drivers, and vehicles. Companies must have liability insurance on drivers.
3. School officials will ensure that the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) licenses the selected carrier for passenger transportation. The District should not contract with any carrier that has an FMCSA safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory".
4. The contract with the carrier must prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the District to allow for verification of the subcontractor's qualifications.

C. Trip Scheduling

1. Overnight accommodations will be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Hiring independent security is recommended when appropriate.

2. Field trips during school time must meet the Massachusetts Department of Education *Time on Learning* requirements.
3. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour of service requirements and common sense. Student vehicular (bus and auto) travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM will not be allowed unless relief drivers are provided.
4. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a field trip, the school will provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

D. Fundraising

1. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.
2. Group fundraising activities are preferred.

E. Student Supervision

1. After taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics, students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones.
2. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI/criminal record check. Faculty and staff of the school, along with parents of students, will serve as chaperones. A chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.
3. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such forms shall include eligibility requirements and appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.
4. When away from school, all school rules will apply to the trip. Infringement of rules may result in a student's immediate expulsion from the trip. In such cases, parents will be financially responsible for transportation home.

Forgery, Plagiarism, and Cheating

Forgery, cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable behaviors and will not be tolerated in any manner or form. This includes, but is not limited to, the forging of parent/guardian's signature, the use of "crib" notes, falsifying one's identity, submitting another person's work as one's own, allowing another student to use your work or cutting and pasting of copyrighted materials from computer sources. A grade of zero will be given in all cases. (*See more specific guidelines for HS students in HS appendix.*)

Promotion and Retention of Students

The School Committee is dedicated to the best total and continuous development of each student enrolled. The professional staff is expected to place students at the grade level best suited to them academically, socially, and emotionally.

In evaluating student achievement, each teacher will make use of all available information, including results of teacher-made tests and other measures of skill and content mastery, standardized test results, and teacher observation of student performance. The Principal will direct and aid teachers in their evaluations and review grade assignments in order to ensure uniformity of evaluation standards.

Students will normally progress annually from grade to grade. Exceptions may be made when, in the judgment of the professional staff, such exceptions are in the best educational interest of the students involved. Exceptions will only be made after prior notification and explanation to each student's parents, but the final decision will rest with the building Principal.

At Northbridge High School, a student transitions to the next grade level after he/she has earned cumulative credits and has the potential to earn total credits required for graduation in his/her identified class. Students will be placed on grade level probation, and identified as repeating a grade, if they are unable to attain the required number of cumulative credits for graduation in the current class.

Sex Education

Parent/Guardian Notification

In accordance with General Laws Chapter 71, Section 32A, the Northbridge School Committee has adopted this policy on the rights of parent/guardian of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

The Northbridge School Committee supports the right of parents or guardians to exempt their children from any portion of the curriculum which involves reference to human sexual education or human sexuality issues. Northbridge schools will notify parents regarding the presentation of curricula that involves these issues.

Parents or guardians shall have the flexibility to exempt their children from any portion of the said curriculum through written notification to the school principal. No child so exempted shall be penalized by reason of such exemption. In the event of such an exemption, a substitute assignment may be provided.

To the extent practical, the Northbridge Public Schools shall make program instruction materials for said curricula reasonably accessible to parents, guardians and others for inspection and review.

A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Principal concerning notice, access to instructional materials, or exemption for the student under this policy may send a written request to the Superintendent for review of the issue. The Superintendent or designee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision. A parent/guardian who is dissatisfied with the Superintendent's decision may send a written request to the School Committee for review of the issue. The School Committee will review the issue and give the parent/guardian a timely written decision. A parent/guardian who is still dissatisfied after this process may send a written request to the Commissioner of Education for review of the issue in dispute.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The School Committee recognizes that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their child attend school regularly in accordance with state law.

An absence will be defined as occurring any time a student is not present at the start of the school day, and does not check in (as late, tardy to school) with the school's' office when they finally arrive. A student **MUST BE** in attendance for at least half of the school day, in order for it to count towards a day in attendance.

When a child is going to be absent, the school district requires the parent/guardian to call the school to inform them of their child's absence. To call your child out absent, please contact the school's Main Office. When calling your child out absent, you may contact the school at any time. The phone system utilizes an absentee message system. **Please note: a parent phone call does not excuse your child's absence.**

If a student is absent and the school is not notified, the school will call the student's parent/guardian. Therefore, it is important that parents/guardians provide their current contact information to ensure proper

notification can be made. If your child is going to have an extended absence due to medical reasons, please notify the school nurse and principal.

An **excused absence** occurs when a student is absent for a legitimate, acceptable reason and is able to provide **adequate written documentation** (a note from a parent/guardian or physician explaining the reason for the absence) within five (5) days of the absence. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible. In instances of chronic or irregular absences reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Excused absences include the following:

- Death in the immediate family/funeral
- Observance of a major religious holiday
- Professional appointments that could not be scheduled outside the regular school day
- Illness covered by a physician's note or other medical professional
- Serious illness or injury or chronic illness
- Personal/family emergencies approved by the school principal
- Mandated legal/court appearances
- School sponsored field trips
- Approved school-related activities including college visits and job interviews
- Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child

Unexcused absences include the following:

- Family vacations/non-emergency travel
- Lack of transportation
- Illness – unless proper and conclusive documentation is produced
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Attendance at or participation in sporting events/competitions that are not school sanctioned

In order to ensure the health and safety of our students, administration, counselors and/or the School Resource Officer may conduct a home visit of students who are considered unexcused absent and whose parent/guardian has not submitted a note or called the school to report their child absent.

Regardless of the reason for the student's absence or tardiness, and regardless of whether parents/guardians have submitted a written note or called the school to explain the absence or tardiness of their child, students will be officially recorded as absent or tardy on days when they are not in attendance at school or are late coming to school.

***** *Students who are absent more than half the school day will not be allowed to participate in any after-school or evening activities that day. Students with excessive attendance issues may be determined to be ineligible to participate in class and/or school sponsored events.* *****

In accordance with the law (c. 76, sections 1A and 1B), the NPS administration shall inform a parent/guardian of a student's absence if the school has not received notification of the absence from the parent/guardian within three (3) days of the absence.

Unexcused Absences – Notification

The following is a step-by-step notification and follow-up procedure that will be used in situations of **unexcused absences**:

Step One: When a student has a total of five (5) unexcused days of non-attendance, the student's teacher(s)/school secretary will contact the parent/guardian to notify them of the unexcused absences. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76 Section 1B, "each school committee shall have a policy of notifying the parent or guardian of a student who has missed five (5) or more school days unexcused in a school year".

Step Two: If student continues to be absent, on the seventh (7) unexcused day of non-attendance, the building administrator or designee will send a letter notifying the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the absences and consequences of additional absences. Student will also be referred to the building Student Support Team for assessment of attendance issues.

Step Three: If a student continues to be absent without an appropriate excuse, and the total of non-attendance days is ten (10), a phone call will be made to the parent(s) or guardian(s) to schedule a diversion meeting with the School Adjustment Counselor, Dean of Students and/or Administration. The meeting will focus on the concerns associated with the student's attendance and recommendations and information provided by the SST to develop an action plan to support improved attendance. The action steps shall be developed and agreed upon by the relevant administrator, the student and the student's parent/guardian, with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies.

Step Four: If a student continues to be absent from school without an appropriate excuse, or the parent did not participate in an attendance diversion meeting, then the following actions may be taken:

- An additional meeting may be held with administration, at the school's discretion
- The school's administrator (or designee) may be obliged to file a Failure to Cause School Attendance with the Milford District Court
- The school's administrator or designee may be obliged to file a 51-A for educational neglect with the Department of Children and Families.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 76:1, 1A, and 1B; 76:16; 76:20

Excessive Absences/Tuancy

The Northbridge School Department will fully comply with and enforce Massachusetts' laws requiring court notification and action on behalf of any child between the ages of 6 and 16 with more than (7) seven unexcused absences in any (6) six-month period. All parents of students in this category will be notified in writing that a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) truancy or criminal (failure to cause attendance) complaint has been made. The Principal, acting as the representative of the School Committee, shall have sole jurisdiction in determining whether an absence shall be excused. For "excused" status, the Principal will consider issues of serious medical impairment, bereavement, religious holidays, or emergencies. (*See excused absences referenced above.*)

Sometimes excessive absenteeism can be an indication that abuse or neglect exists in the home. Where necessary, a referral will be made to the Department of Children and Families.

Tardiness

Promptness to school is vital for a student to develop proper work habits and to get a full day of instruction. Students should be inside their classroom ready to learn at their building's scheduled start time.

1. All students at the must be in class when school begins or they will be considered tardy.

2. Students arriving more than (5) five minutes after the start of school day MUST report to the office for a late slip
3. Early dismissal requests require prior written notification from a parent.

If a student in grades K-4 is late, a parent must accompany the student to the main office. Being on time to school and class is mandatory.

*** See specific guidelines for MS and HS students in appropriate appendices.*

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

DISTRICT ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying is defined as the repeated use of a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students, driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus or paraprofessional, directed at another student or staff member that has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other student or staff member or damage to his or her property;
- placing the other student or staff member in reasonable fear of harm to him or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- creating a hostile environment at school for the bullied student or staff member;
- infringing on the rights of the other student or staff member at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic means, and includes the distribution of electronic communications or the posting of electronic material that may be accessed by one or more persons.

In accordance with Massachusetts Law Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools, bullying is prohibited in any form:

- At school and at all school facilities;
- At school-sponsored or school-related functions, whether on or off school grounds;
- On school buses and at school bus stops;
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, licensed or used by a school; and
- At non-school-related locations and through non-school technology or electronic devices, if the bullying affects the school environment.

To create more positive school climates and prevent as much bullying as possible, age-appropriate instruction for students in each grade on bullying prevention must be incorporated into a school's curriculum. In addition, Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) are required to include measures to ensure that children who are particularly vulnerable to bullying obtain the skills to avoid and respond to bullying, an especially challenging task for special needs children.

Professional development for teachers and other staff to help them prevent and stop bullying is required on an annual basis. In addition, schools must offer education to parents about bullying prevention. To stop bullying as soon as it occurs, all school staff are required to promptly report bullying when they witness or become aware of it. A school principal or his designee must immediately investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action. The attached policy provides more specific information to guide students,

staff, administrators, and parents on reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints of bullying and harassment.

Each school district, commonwealth charter school, collaborative, approved private day or residential school and non-public school is required to develop a **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**. The principal is responsible for implementing the plan.

Each plan must contain several provisions, including:

- Procedures for responding to and investigating reports of bullying
- Strategies for protecting those who report bullying
- Notice to the parents or guardians of students involved in bullying, including perpetrators and victims
- Appropriate services for students who have been bullied or who are bullies.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

**** This policy was updated on May 25, 2021.**

All complaints of bullying will be thoroughly investigated in a timely manner in accordance with the district's **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan**.

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e9736Un2E8hgriDqKBcdVVqikFpi-ULE/view?usp=sharing>)

Age-appropriate Evidence-Based Instruction

NPS provides age-appropriate instruction regarding bullying and cyber-bullying to students primarily through school-based, age appropriate curriculum. Each school implements an evidence-based program, as well as small group lessons and advisory classes as appropriate.

In addition, Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) are required to include measures to ensure that children who are particularly vulnerable to bullying obtain the skills to avoid and respond to bullying, an especially challenging task for special needs children.

Vulnerable Students

The Northbridge Public Schools recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to become targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The district will strive to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

Bullying Prevention

Students can help prevent bullying from happening if they follow this code of behavior.

- Be kind to each other.
- Do not use words that would cause a classmate to feel sad, upset, or ashamed.
- Keep your hands to yourself. Do not hit, kick, punch, pinch, or touch another student. Never touch another student in a way that might hurt them.
- Consider other people's feelings at all times before you speak. Try your best not to hurt others' feelings.
- Do not say or do anything to threaten another student.

- Do not do or say anything that would make another student scared.
- Do not tease, taunt, mock, embarrass, or humiliate your classmates.
- **If you are being bullied, tell an adult right away.**
- **If you know another student is being bullied, tell your teacher, principal, parents, or another adult right away.**
- Review and follow our anti-bullying policy.
- If you bully another student, you will be disciplined, up to and including a long-term suspension from school.

Cyberbullying Prevention

Students can help prevent cyberbullying from happening if they follow this code of behavior.

- Do not write anything in an email, text, tweet, Facebook post, or in any other electronic forum that you would not say out loud for everyone to hear. Remember, these written messages are out of your control once you send or post them, and they may continue to exist long after you have deleted your copy.
- Follow the rules above under “bullying” and apply them to electronic communications.
- Remember that only one text, tweet, email, Facebook post, etc. may be cyber-bullying. We encourage parents and students to read our anti-bullying policy together to ensure that they both understand that various definitions of cyberbullying.
- **If you are being cyber-bullied, tell an adult right away.**
- **If you know another student is being cyber-bullied, tell your teacher, principal, parents, or another adult right away.**
- Review and follow our anti-bullying policy (it includes cyber-bullying).
- If you engage in cyberbullying, you will be disciplined, up to and including long-term suspension from school.

Professional development for teachers and other staff to help them prevent and stop bullying is required on an annual basis. In addition, schools must offer education to parents about bullying prevention.

To stop bullying as soon as it occurs, all school staff are required to promptly report bullying when they witness or become aware of it. A school principal or his designee must immediately investigate and take appropriate disciplinary action. The attached policy provides more specific information to guide students, staff, administrators, and parents on reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints of bullying and harassment.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is a witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited.

Complaints regarding a school or district not responding appropriately to bullying allegations may be investigated through the DESE’s Program Quality Assurance (PQA) Services: [Problem Resolution System](#).

COMMUNICATION

Change of Address/Email/Telephone

Please notify the school immediately of any change in address, telephone numbers (i.e. home, work, or emergency), or email addresses. In case of an emergency, it is very important that we are able to reach parents/guardians or authorized adult. Also, please be sure to update contact person information when any changes occur.

Channel 194 on Northbridge Cable and District YouTube Channel

The Northbridge Public Schools airs Northbridge School Committee meetings and student performances on Channel 194 (Spectrum Cable in Northbridge). Additionally, School Committee meetings are streamed live to the Internet and posted to the NPS YouTube channel. Parents and older students are also encouraged to follow the school department on social media for current updates and pictures.

Connect-Ed (all call system)

Through an automated system, you may receive a message from the Superintendent of Schools, your child's building principal, or other school or district representative, on your home phone number, Cell phone number or email address notifying you of various events/information. If you wish to have this message sent to a different phone number or email, please notify the school's office with the change in information.

District Website

The Northbridge Public Schools has a website at www.nps.org. The website has general school and district information and policies.

Infinite Campus

Campus Parent Portal

Campus Parent Portal provides parents/guardians with information to stay connected and engaged with their student's learning. Its primary purpose is to provide biographical, academic and attendance data on their students enrolled in the district.

What can I see in the Campus Parent Portal?

- Attendance Data (all grades)
- Biographical Data (all grades)
- In Progress Grades (Gr 6-8)
- Report Cards (all grades)
- Course Assignments (Gr 6-12)
- Student Schedules (Gr 6-12)
- Course Recommendations (Gr 9-12)

How do I register for the Campus Parent Portal?

The Campus Parent Portal is available to all legal guardians of registered students with an active email. Once a student is registered, the guardian will receive an email within a few days that includes an account activation link along with instructions on how to set up their new account.

Links to the Infinite Campus Parent Portal are available on our website in the tools section of each page.

Troubleshooting

If you have any questions or have not received your activation email, please contact your child's school:

- NES for students in Grades PK-5: 508-234-8161 ext 31001 or ext 31002
- NMS for students in Grades 6-8: 508-234-8178 ext 2231
- NHS for students in Grades 9-12: 508-234-6221 ext 1502

Terms and Conditions:

The district accepts no responsibility in the event the username and password is shared, given, stolen or in any other way, becomes the possession of a person other than the parent/guardian. In the event of a username and/or password being compromised, the parent/guardian should change their password. Users of this system shall not use a username and password that is registered to another individual. Individual student information should be kept confidential. Should misuse of the above conditions occur, access will be terminated. *By creation and use of a parent portal account, the user agrees to be bound by these Terms and Conditions.*

Notes from Home to School

A note to your child's teacher/school is required when:

- Your child will be late for school.
- Your child will be dismissed early.
- Your child returns to school after an illness.
- Your family changes addresses and/or phone number.
- Your child's transportation plans change.

Contacting Staff Members

The Northbridge Public Schools has a phone system that allows parents to contact teacher voicemail directly. Any phone calls made to a teacher's extension during school hours will go straight to their voicemail. Teachers will check messages on a daily basis.

Every staff member also has an NPS email address, and staff members are encouraged to check email at least once throughout day.

Keep in mind, most are busy working directly with students during school hours, so please allow **at least** 24 hours for a phone or email response. If the matter is urgent, please call the school office and leave a message.

DISCIPLINE, BEHAVIOR and CODE OF CONDUCT

Pupils are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will contribute to the best interest of the Northbridge Public Schools. We believe that no student has the right to keep a teacher from providing instruction or a student from learning. We believe each student has a right to be respected and learn in a safe environment. The Northbridge Public School's discipline plan focuses on a positive learning environment based on fairness and consistency.

The Northbridge Public Schools shall help students learn behavior patterns that will enable them to be responsible, contributing members of society. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their level of maturity and act with due regard for their fellow students and supervisory authority. Students shall have a right to reasonable treatment from the school and its employees and, in turn, the school and its employees shall have a right to expect reasonable behavior from students. The principal will be responsible for administering behavior and discipline procedures at the school in accordance with District policy and school procedures. Corrective actions for shall be commensurate with the severity of the misbehavior. Consideration shall be given to the following:

1. Age of the student
2. Mitigating circumstances
3. Previous behavior of the student
4. Attitude of the student

Students are expected to be respectful and courteous to everyone in the school community (as well as guests), at all times, while in school, on school grounds, on the bus, and during school-related activities (on or off campus.) Students are expected to obey any reasonable request made by a staff member. Students are expected to use proper language in school at all times, and students are expected to dress in a manner that does not disrupt the teaching/learning process or cause undue attention to an individual student.

When students choose to act in a manner that is in conflict with our core beliefs and values, appropriate disciplinary measures will be taken. When a disciplinary event arises that involves a consequence of suspension or expulsion, all students will receive due process (the level of process due varies depending on the level of discipline contemplated – see Disciplinary Procedure section below) in accordance with the law and with the procedures outlined in this Handbook.

The primary responsibility of teachers is to teach, and the primary responsibility of students is to come to school prepared to learn. When students act in a manner that is disruptive to the learning environment of others, disciplinary action will be taken. Our discipline policy is designed to address inappropriate behaviors and to encourage students to make better choices.

We are committed to acting promptly, to treating each student fairly and respectfully, and to applying discipline consistently. Students are reminded to think carefully about their other commitments before acting in a manner that conflicts with NPS Policy.

Disciplinary Actions/Consequences:

Disciplinary action for students may include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- written warning
- teacher detention
- office detention
- classroom transfer
- suspension (short- or long-term; in-school or out-of-school)
- exclusion from school-sponsored functions or events
- exclusion from after-school programs and/or extra-curricular activities (inc. athletics)
- limitation/denial of access to parts or areas of a school building or grounds
- long-term suspension or expulsion from school (in limited circumstances authorized by statute and with access to education services consistent with the school-wide education service plan)
- requiring adult supervision on school premises
- being placed on a Behavior Plan
- awareness training
- counseling
- or, any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or the school disciplinary code.

The District complies with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the discipline of all students, including those with disabilities.

*(** See MS and HS appendices for more specific guidelines for middle and high school students.)*

PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention Supports

PBIS is a multi-tiered approach to improve social, emotional and academic outcomes for all students. It is a positive and proactive way to manage both classroom and building-level behaviors.

Staff at our elementary school and middle school are trained in PBIS, and high school staff is currently being trained, to help students engage in positive behaviors using school-wide expectations created by the staff and students. Each school has their own incentive program to encourage students to “do the right thing” even when no one is watching.

Effective PBIS programming is the first step to address behavior problems in all of our schools. (See *individual school appendices for more information on their PBIS programs.*)

Disciplinary Procedures

This section of the Handbook provides a summary of rights and procedures which govern how and when a student may be disciplined. Included in this Handbook are the text of M.G.L. c. 71, sections 37H, 37H1/2, and 37H3/4, as well as the relevant text of 603 CMR 53.00 (DESE regulations regarding student discipline). This text should be consulted for specific details about a student’s rights and the various applicable procedures.

Detention

Detention, or keeping a student after school, is sometimes a necessary consequence for inappropriate actions. There are two kinds of detention: teacher and school/office.

(1) A **teacher detention** is given for unacceptable behavior within the classroom. The individual teacher will determine the procedure to follow for this kind of detention.

(2) An **office detention** is given for disruptive behavior in the corridor, on the playground, in the cafeteria, at assemblies, or other school areas outside of the regular classroom before, during or after school. Office detention can also be assigned to students who have repeatedly created disturbances in classrooms or violated school policies.

Students will be given 24 hours’ notice for both teacher and office detentions. In some cases, detentions will be assigned during a student’s lunch period, and these detentions do not require 24 hours’ advance notice. Teachers and administrators can assign one detention or multiple detentions for a single violation. A student’s due process rights are not triggered by the imposition of detentions. Failure to serve detention is a serious offense and will result in additional detention(s) and/or suspension.

Behaviors that may result in office detention:

The following are only examples of behaviors that may result in a student being assigned an office detention (this list is not intended to include all behaviors that may result in office detention, nor is it intended to suggest that detention is a maximum penalty for the infractions listed):

- habitual tardiness
- repeatedly cutting class
- habitual classroom misbehavior
- throwing items (including ice or snow)
- use of skateboards on school grounds
- failure to report after school for a teacher detention
- use of profanity and/or obscene language or gestures
- disruptive behavior in and around the school

- possession of items which disrupt the educational process
- unauthorized use of a cell phone in the school building
- dress code violations

Appeal of Teacher/Office Detention:

If the office detention was imposed by the Dean/Assistant Principal, the student may appeal the detention in writing to the Principal. The appeal must be made within one (1) school day of the student's receipt of notice of the detention. If the detention was imposed by a teacher, the student may appeal the detention in writing to the Assistant Principal. The appeal must be made within one (1) school day of the student's receipt of notice of the detention. An appeal of a detention does not stay the discipline, but may result only in the expunging of it from the student's record in the event the discipline is overturned. Students have no appeal rights with respect to detentions other than those described in this section.

Suspensions

In-School Suspension

In-School Suspension is a temporary exclusion from the activities of the regular classroom when deemed appropriate by the administrator. School work is obtained for the student and the student completes the assignments in a designated/supervised location in the building. All completed assignments are handed back to the respective teachers for grading.

A student who receives an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense is entitled to the following due process:

- 1. Notice of the charge:** The principal or designee shall provide written notice to the parent/guardian, offering an opportunity to meet and to discuss the violation as charged, *prior* to the suspension taking place.
- 2. Meeting with the Principal or designee:** The student shall meet with the principal or designee regarding the alleged offense. The principal or designee shall make a good faith effort to include the student's parent/guardian in this meeting. The parent/guardian, if present, shall have an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and to offer additional information or mitigating facts.
- 3. Explanation of the evidence:** At the meeting, the student shall be told the basis of the accusation, the nature of the disciplinary offense, and any other pertinent information. The student, and his/her parent/guardian, if present, shall have the opportunity to present additional information and to offer mitigating facts. However, the student will not have the opportunity to secure counsel, to confront and cross-examine witnesses or to call his/her own witness to verify his/her version of the incident. The Principal or designee, in his/her sole discretion, may permit the student to question the accuser or present witnesses.
- 4. Written determination:** The principal or designee will issue a written determination of the suspension to both the student and the parent/guardian, including the key facts and conclusions reached, and length and effective date of the suspension, and a date of return to school/classes, and the opportunity to make up assignments and other needed school work.

Out-of-School Suspension

Out-of-School Suspension is a temporary exclusion from the activities of the regular classroom, accompanied by a temporary exclusion from school when deemed appropriate by the administrator. Under *Goss vs. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975), students facing an out-of-school suspension of ten days or less have interests in their education that qualify them for procedural protections against the unjust deprivation of those interests under the Due Process Clause of the United States Constitution. Students

facing a suspension of greater than 10 days have enhanced procedural rights. Massachusetts law authorizes the suspension/removal from school for a maximum of 90 days, with the exception of conduct covered by M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2.

** The due process for out-of-school suspensions is the same as that of in-school suspensions.

Behaviors that may result in out-of-school suspension:

The following are only examples of behaviors that may result in a student being suspended (this list is not intended to include all behaviors that can result in detention). These behaviors may result in in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, long-term suspension, short-term suspension or, where noted, indefinite suspension:

- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol.
- Defacing of lockers, walls, or other objects on school property, both inside and outside the building or grounds, by writing names, messages, or drawing on them or use of graffiti.
- Unauthorized leaving of school grounds.
- Repeatedly and intentionally violating school or district dress code
- Assault (i.e. threatening assault, hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing) against fellow students or other members of the school community.
- Damaging, destroying, or stealing personal or school property or attempting to do so.
- Using or possessing tobacco products.
- Possessing combustible materials such as matches or lighters.
- Committing sexual, racial, or any form of harassment or intimidation or retaliation.
- Using abusive, vulgar or profane language.
- Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise.
- Setting off false alarms.
- Defiant behavior towards any school personnel or policy.
- Discharging or attempting to discharge fire safety equipment.
- Fighting.
- Serious misbehavior on a field trip.
- Behavior that endangers others or substantially disrupts the educational process.
- Behavior that encourages another student to substantially disrupt the educational process.
- Possession of or use of firecrackers, fireworks or stink bombs.
- Persistent or excessive truancy and/or tardiness to class and class cutting.
- Habitual misbehavior that has not been resolved after the assignment of school detentions.
- Bullying, bullying participant, including bystander and/or retaliator.
- Cyber-bullying, cyber-bullying participant, including bystander and/or retaliator (remember, a single electronic communication (email, text, post, etc.) may constitute cyber-bullying if it is sent to or may be viewed by more than one person).
- Harassment, harassment participant, including bystander and/or retaliator.
- Hazing, violence, extortion or the threat of hazing, violence or extortion directed towards another student or school personnel, including bystander and/or retaliator.
- Failure to report acts of bullying, cyber-bullying, or hazing, to adult at school.
- Assaulting educational personnel (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H1/2 in Appendix)(Note: this behavior may result in an indefinite suspension or one longer than 90 days).
- Being charged with a felony (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H1/2 in Appendix)(Note: this behavior may result in an indefinite suspension or one longer than 90 days).
- Possessing a dangerous weapon including but not limited to a knife or a gun (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H in Appendix) (Note: this behavior may result in an indefinite suspension or one longer than 90 days).

- Possessing a controlled substance as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C including but not limited to illegal drugs and prescription medication (see M.G.L. c. 71, §37H in Appendix)(Note: this behavior may result in an indefinite suspension or one longer than 90 days).

In addition to any of these infractions, any breaches of Federal Law, Massachusetts State Law, or bylaws of the Town of Northbridge, may be handled in cooperation with the local police department and may result in suspension or expulsion where authorized by law (see M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 in Appendix A).

Appeal of Short-Term Suspensions (10 days or less)

If the suspension was imposed by the Assistant Principal, the student may appeal the suspension in writing to the Principal. The appeal must be made within one (1) school day of the student's receipt of the notice of the suspension. An appeal of a suspension does not stay the discipline, but may result only in the expunging of a student's record. There is no right of appeal beyond the Principal. Additionally, there is no right of appeal if the Principal, rather than the Assistant Principal, imposes the suspension.

Applicability to Students with Disabilities:

This provision shall apply to students with disabilities who are suspended for ten (10) or fewer cumulative days in one academic year. Suspensions of students with disabilities exceeding ten (10) cumulative days in one academic year shall be governed by applicable state and federal law.

Long Term Suspension (more than 10 days):

Students facing a suspension of more than ten days (cumulatively within a school year or consecutively) and up to ninety days have the right to a more formal process. These rights include the following in addition to those described for short-term suspensions:

- to review the student's own record and any documents on which the principal may rely, in making his/her decision regarding suspension;
- to be represented by counsel (at the student's expense);
- to present the student's own explanation of the alleged incident;
- to produce witnesses on his/her own behalf;
- to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school or district;
- to request a recording of the meeting;
- notice of the student's opportunities to make academic progress during suspension, with information about the school's education service plan; and
- notice of the right to appeal the suspension, with instructions about the process for doing so.

Appeal of Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 days)

If a student receiving a long-term suspension (more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than ten 10 school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year) wishes to appeal that decision to the Superintendent, he/she must do so in writing no later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The student or parent/guardian may request an extension of up to 7 calendar days to submit this request for an appeal. The Superintendent or designee shall hold a hearing within 3 school days of receiving the student's request for an appeal. The student or parent/guardian may request an extension of up to 7 calendar days for this hearing to be held. The Superintendent or designee must include the parent/guardian in this hearing, or else must show a good faith effort to include him/her. At the hearing, the student has the same rights afforded him/her at the principal's meeting prior to issuing the long-term suspension. The Superintendent or designee will arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which will be provided to the student or parent/guardian upon request. The Superintendent will issue a written decision within 5 calendar days of

the hearing, either upholding or lessening the suspension. This will be the school district's final decision on the matter.

Emergency Removal

Emergency removal of a student is within the Principal's authority when, in his/her judgment, the student's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, and there is no adequate alternative to alleviate that danger. However, the Principal or designee shall do the following:

- Make adequate provisions for the student's safety and transportation before removing him/her from school/classroom on an emergency basis.
- Make immediate reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and parent/guardian of the emergency removal and the reason for it.
- Provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian.
- Provide an opportunity for a hearing before the principal, with the parent/guardian in attendance, within two school days of the emergency removal (unless the parties agree to an extension of time).
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and a written notice of the hearing no later than the following school day.

Suspended Students and School-Sponsored Activities

Students who are suspended from school (other than an in-school suspension) are not allowed to be in school or on school property at any time during the period of suspension and are not allowed to attend any school-sponsored activities. When the period of suspension includes a weekend or vacation period, the student is ineligible to participate in or attend any activities throughout the entire period. Students who do not fulfill outstanding disciplinary obligations by the last day of school must make arrangements with the Principal or Assistant Principal to serve detentions and work details during the summer. A student serving a suspension will be required to complete these obligations at the beginning of the next school year. If a school-sponsored activity begins prior to the start of the school year, that time will be included as part of the suspension.

Expulsion/Indefinite Suspension

Expulsion is a permanent removal from school. Indefinite suspension is a removal from school for an indefinite period. These consequences may be imposed for a narrow range of conduct, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, sections 37 H, 37 H ½ and 37H 3/4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applicability of Expulsion Policy to Students with Disabilities

To the extent that the application of the foregoing policy to students with disabilities conflicts with state or federal laws, such law(s) shall prevail.

Academic Progress of Suspended/Expelled Students

Any student who is serving a suspension or expulsion shall have the opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress during the period of removal. Northbridge Public Schools will establish and publish an education service plan specifying alternative educational services which will be made available to students who are expelled or suspended for more than 10 days.

Suspended or Expelled Students

Students who have been suspended or expelled from school shall not be eligible to participate in any school functions for the duration of such disciplinary action. Students who are suspended or expelled and return to school grounds or school sponsored events may be suspended an additional day and may be referred to the police or other proper authorities for trespassing. The period of suspension ends as of the beginning of the school day on which the student returns to school.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities (IDEA)

All students are expected to meet the requirements for behavior as set forth in this handbook. In addition to those due process protections afforded to all students, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and related regulations require that additional provisions be made for students who have been found eligible for special education services or who the school district knows or has reason to know might be eligible for such services. Students who have been found to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, are, generally, also entitled to increased procedural protections prior to imposing discipline that will result in the student's removal for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or where there is a pattern of short term removals exceeding ten (10) school days in a given year.

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

1. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for every student eligible for special education or related services shall indicate whether the student can be expected to meet the regular discipline code of the school or whether the code should be modified to address the student's individual needs.
2. Students with disabilities may be excluded from their programs for up to (10) ten school days to the extent that such sanctions would be applied to all students. Before a student with a disability can be excluded from his/her program for more than (10) ten consecutive school days in a given school year or subjected to a pattern of removal constituting a "change of placement", building administrators, the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504

Team will meet to determine the relationship between the student's disability and behavior (Manifestation Determination). During days of disciplinary exclusions exceeding (10) ten school days in a single school year, special education students have the right to receive services necessary to provide him/her with a free appropriate public education.

3. If building administrators, the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the student's conduct was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student in accordance with the procedures and penalties applicable to all students but will continue to provide a free appropriate public education to those students with an IEP. The student's IEP Team will identify the services necessary to provide a free appropriate public education during the period of exclusion, review any existing behavior intervention plan or, where appropriate, conduct a functional behavioral assessment.
4. If building administrators, the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and relevant members of the student's IEP or 504 Team determine that the conduct giving rise to disciplinary action was a manifestation of the student's disability, the student will not be subjected to further disciplinary removal or exclusion from the student's current educational program based on that conduct (except for conduct involving weapons, drugs, or resulting in serious bodily injury to others) until the IEP or 504 Team develops, and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent to, a new placement or unless the District obtains an order from a court or from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) authorizing a change in the student's placement. The student's Team shall also review, and modify as appropriate, any existing behavior intervention plan or arrange for a functional behavioral assessment.
5. If a special education student possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits a controlled substance, possesses a weapon, or causes serious bodily injury to another on school grounds or at a school function, the District may place the student in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for up to (45) forty-five school days. A court or BSEA Hearing Officer may also order the placement of a student who presents a substantial likelihood of injury to self or others in an appropriate interim setting for up to (45) forty-five school days.

Miscellaneous Discipline Policies/Procedures

Liability for Damages

The Northbridge Public Schools shall seek compensation for District property willfully damaged by a minor or student aged 18 years or older. Civil action may be brought against the minor or the minor's parent/guardian, or against the individual if the student is 18 years of age or older. All incidents shall be investigated, liabilities fixed, and all costs assessed in a non-discriminatory and non-arbitrary manner. Schools shall be monitored to ensure that findings of liability are in accordance with District procedures in affording due process guarantees.

Search and Seizure

Searches and seizures of student property will be conducted, for reasonable suspicion, to preserve order in the school, and/or to protect the safety of any member of the school community. Northbridge Public Schools authorities may exercise their rights to conduct an inspection of student lockers and/or desks. A student shall not misuse lockers and desks assigned by school authorities. Lockers and desks remain, at all times, the property of the District.

Searches by school officials of students' automobiles or the student will be conducted in a way that protects the students' rights consistent with the responsibility of the school system to provide an atmosphere conducive to the educational process.

A warrantless search (non-emergency) of a student's school locker or articles carried upon the student's person may be conducted if there is a reasonable suspicion that the search is necessary to protect the health and/or safety of students and staff, or to detect a violation of school rules. Such a search may be

conducted if school authorities suspect that a student possesses such items as, but not limited to, weapons, dangerous instruments, stolen goods, narcotics, hallucinogenics, amphetamines, barbiturates, marijuana, unregistered drugs, controlled substances, alcoholic beverages, or evidence of cheating or other academic misconduct. An administrator only, with a witness, will carry out search and seizure procedures. When violations of the law are suspected, police officials will be advised and may be asked by the administrators to assist.

Hazing

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 536 of the Acts of 1985, the School Committee hereby deems that no student, employee or school organization under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing a student while on or off school property, or at a school sponsored event regardless of the location. No organization that uses the facilities or grounds under the control of the School Committee shall engage in the activity of hazing any person while on school property.

Any student who observes what appears to them to be the activity of hazing another student or person should report such information to the Principal including the time, date, location, names of identifiable participants and the types of behavior exhibited. Students and employees of the District are obligated by law to report incidents of hazing to the police department.

Any student who is present at a hazing has the obligation to report such an incident. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action by the school against that student and could involve suspension from school for up to three days.

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be suspended from school for up to ten (10) school days.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant.

In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

Tobacco and Vape Use/Possession

Tobacco use and/or possession by all students, staff, parents and visitors is prohibited in all school buildings, school vehicles, and on school property owned by, leased by, or under the control of the school district, including off-campus school-sponsored activities. The following are understood with respect to this policy:

- The use of tobacco includes possession of a lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, or other lighted smoking equipment, including electronic cigarettes (e.g. e-cigarettes) and/or vaping devices and chewing tobacco.
- Tobacco possession/use includes all tobacco/nicotine containing products, including smokeless and chewing tobacco, and vaping related liquids, oils and/or waxes. It also includes lighters, matches and other materials used to ignite tobacco.

Confiscation and Proof: Tobacco products, nicotine products and/or smoking/vaping equipment discovered in the possession of a student will be confiscated and given to the building principal.

Reasonable Suspicion by witness of a student using or possessing tobacco products or smoking/vaping equipment, which may include lighters, matches, electronic cigarettes, nicotine products or vaping devices, will justify disciplinary action under this policy. Direct observation of smoking/vaping is not always required.

Vaping Policy

The health and safety of our NPS students is a top priority, so we feel it is necessary to inform you of a major concern in schools across the country. The presence and use of e-cigarette/vaping devices has drastically increased among teens and adolescents. We take this issue seriously and are concerned with the effects these devices have on our students.

1. **What is vaping?** - Vaping is the act of inhaling a vapor that is produced by an electronic vaporizer or e-cigarette. The vapor comes from heating flavored liquids that may contain nicotine, marijuana/THC, cocaine, or other drugs. These flavored liquids release a very strong sweet smell into the air when vaporized.
2. **What do vaping devices look like?** -Vaporizers come in various shapes and sizes that you can view in the links below. The most common form we've seen is a "Juul" which looks like an electronic flash drive that plugs into a USB port for charging. These devices can be quite small and can easily be concealed with normal backpack/school-related items.
3. **What are the dangers of vaping?** -Varying information has created misconceptions about vaping, however, VAPING IS NOT A SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO SMOKING. The medical community has conducted many studies and released many warnings. The biggest risks involve nicotine dependency, stunted brain development, vape juices that contain multiple known carcinogens (cancer causing elements), and many respiratory diseases.
4. **Where are kids getting vaping devices?** -Although it is illegal for stores to sell vaping items to anyone under 18, our students are getting their hands on them. Online purchasing without age verification, getting a device from a family member or friend, or buying them from random people all seem to be sources of distribution.

The Northbridge Public Schools support the use of vape detectors throughout the middle and high school buildings for the purpose of discouraging the use of electronic devices. State law and district policy prohibits smoking/vaping in school buildings and on school grounds at all times by all persons; this includes vaping with electronic cigarettes and vapor pens.

If a student is in the vicinity of a vape detector that notifies administration of an occurrence of possible vaping, administrators may search the student. Parents will be notified in such cases. Students who act as lookouts for smokers/vapers, are knowingly present, or in possession of a device will be subject to discipline. Any student in violation of the laws concerning tobacco products and/or smoking, including but not limited to e-cigarettes and vapor pens will be subject to discipline as determined by administration. Students struggling with nicotine related substance abuse and looking for help will be supported in their efforts to live substance free.

DISCRIMINATION and HARASSMENT POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Non-Discrimination and Harassment

The Northbridge Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, homelessness, religion, age or immigration status. The Northbridge Public Schools are also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status, age or disability. In addition, the District provides equal access to all designated youth groups. Consistent with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, the District also does not discriminate against students on the basis of homelessness.

The Northbridge Public Schools' policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of the District or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, homelessness, disability or immigration status.

Civil Rights Grievance Procedure

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

Persons who engage in harassment, discrimination or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to reprimand, suspension, termination/expulsion or other sanctions as determined by the school administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.

Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A. **"Discrimination"** means discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion by which an individual is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school.
- B. **"Harassment"** means unwelcome conduct on the basis of race, age, color, national origin, disability, or religion that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create or contribute to a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures or other conduct which rises to the level of a hostile environment. A hostile environment is one which unreasonably interfered with an individual's participation in, denied the individual the benefits of, or otherwise subjected the individual to discrimination under any program or activity of the District.

a. Non-Title IX Sexual Harassment

M.G.L. c. 151B, § 1 - the term "sexual harassment" is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or as a basis for employment decisions; (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive work environment. Discrimination on the basis of sex shall include, but not be limited to, sexual harassment.

M.G.L. c. 151C, § 1 - the term "sexual harassment" is defined as sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when: (a)) submission to or rejection of such advances, requests or conduct is made either

explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the provision of the benefits, privileges or placement services or as a basis for the evaluation of academic achievement; or (b) such advances, requests or conduct have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's education by creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or sexually offensive educational environment.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. A hostile environment on the basis of sex is created when the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of employment.

When determining whether an environment is hostile, the District shall consider the context, nature, frequency, and location of the incidents as well as the credibility of witnesses and the identity, number and relationships of the persons involved. The District must consider whether the alleged harassment was sufficient to have created such an environment for a reasonable person of the same age, gender, and experience as the Complainant, and under similar circumstances. Conduct does not constitute harassment where the incident occurs off-campus at a non-school sponsored activity and does not create a hostile environment at school for the victim.

- C. **Retaliation:** retaliatory acts against any individual who exercises his or her rights under the civil rights statutes covered by this procedure or the sexual harassment procedure are considered to be discrimination and are unlawful. Individuals are prohibited from coercing, intimidating, threatening, or interfering with an individual because the individual exercised any right granted or protected under this procedure and/or the Title IX Sexual Harassment Procedures.
- D. **Complainant:** An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this procedure. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file formal complaints on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any civil rights matter.
- E. **Party or Parties:** The complainant and/or respondent.
- F. **Principal:** The Principal or Principal's designee.
- G. **Respondent:** An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under this procedure.

How to Make a Complaint

Any student or employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to the Principal. Students may also report incidents of harassing conduct to a teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor. Any complaint received by a school personnel shall be promptly reported to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. Students or employees who are unsure

whether discrimination, harassment, or retaliation has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the Principal. There may be instances where another third-party, who has not experienced but is aware of the occurrence of prohibited conduct, may bring a complaint under this procedure. In such circumstances, that person is referred to as the “reporter.”

- A. Any District employee who observes or receives a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation shall promptly notify the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, identified below. Any District employee who observes discrimination, harassment or retaliation against a student should intervene to stop the conduct and report it to Principal. Upon receipt of a report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the Principal shall promptly inform the relevant Civil Rights Coordinator of the report, and the District will respond in a manner consistent with this Procedure. If the report involves an accusation against the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator, the employee shall report the incident to the Superintendent or designee.
- B. Informal Reports: Individuals may wish to file a formal complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or to report informally (i.e., without initiating a formal complaint). Such informal reports may be made to the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator. The District shall inform anyone making an informal report that he or she may initiate a formal complaint at any time, regardless of what steps are being or have been taken in response to an informal report.
- C. Anonymous Reports: Complainants and reporters should be aware that although the District will often be able to maintain confidentiality of reporting persons, the District may sometimes be required to take actions to protect the safety of the school community that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed (to the police, for example). When reporters or Complainants seek to remain anonymous or have their identities kept confidential, they will be informed that honoring such a request may limit the ability of the District to respond fully to any reported event, including limitations on the ability to take disciplinary action against an Respondent.
- D. Informal Process: If the District concludes that it is possible to resolve a matter, whether after formal complaint or an informal report, in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving, and with the consent of, the Complainant and Respondent, the District may seek to do so. The informal process is voluntary, and the Complainant and/or Respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time, without penalty.
- E. Formal Process: A formal complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or Complainant) the name(s) of the persons involved and witnesses to the conduct, describe the conduct, and identify, to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. The complaint shall be signed and dated by the reporter and/or Complainant. Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal. Investigations may be initiated whenever warranted, in the absence of a formal complaint, or after a formal complaint has been withdrawn.
- F. Initial Assessments: The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will make an initial assessment following a complaint. Based on that assessment, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may:
 - (a) if the conduct, even if substantiated, would not constitute harassment, discrimination or retaliation, dismiss the complaint;
 - (b) if the alleged conduct (or complaint) could not, even if true, constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, but is within the scope of another procedure,

the Civil Rights Coordinator shall refer the matter to the appropriate personnel; (c) if the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal concludes that it is possible to resolve the complaint in a prompt, fair and adequate manner through an informal process involving and with the consent of both parties, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may seek to do so in accordance with Section D, above; or (d) if the alleged conduct, if substantiated, would constitute discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal will initiate an investigation. The Civil Rights Coordinator or Principal may also identify and initiate any interim measures. (**See Section G.**)

- G. Interim Measures: The District will provide prompt and reasonable interim measures during the pendency of the investigation, if appropriate, to support and protect the safety of the parties, the educational environment, and the District and/or school community; to deter retaliation; and to preserve the integrity of the investigation and resolution process. Any interim measures will be monitored to ensure they are effective based on the evolving needs of the parties. Violations of the restrictions imposed by interim measures could be considered a violation of school rules and may be considered in determining whether discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred.
- H. Timeframes: The District will seek to complete any investigation within twenty (20) school days after receipt of a complaint and provide the written notice of the outcome of the investigation within twenty-five (25) school days. The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond the time period identified due to extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If a complaint or report of discrimination, harassment or retaliation is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant and Respondent of the extension. A report to the law enforcement will not automatically delay an investigation; however, a request from law enforcement to delay the investigation may require a temporary suspension of an investigation, and the District will promptly resume its investigation upon being advised that law enforcement's evidence gathering is completed.
- I. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the Principal, Civil Rights Coordinator or other individual designated by the Principal or Civil Rights Coordinator who has responsibility for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. A formal complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the formal resolution procedure:
 - 1. The Complainant shall be provided with an opportunity to be heard and have the opportunity to identify witnesses and other relevant evidence to the investigator.
 - 2. The Respondent will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.

3. The privacy rights of the parties shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
 4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
 5. The investigation will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the date of receipt of the complaint.
 6. The notification of the outcome of the investigation, including, if appropriate, a description of the remedies taken, will be provided to the parties within twenty-five (25) school days of the receipt of the complaint, unless extended for good cause.
 7. Nothing in this Procedure will preclude the investigator, in his or her discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the time period described above.
- J. Standard of Proof: The investigation shall made factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- K. If the investigator determines that discrimination, harassment or retaliation has occurred, the District shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which shall include but not be limited to:
1. Identifying what steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment or retaliation, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate; and
 2. Informing the Complainant and Respondent of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) in accordance with the above timelines.

The school administration may also refer the offender for disciplinary procedures to be conducted in accordance with federal and state law. Nothing in the Procedure shall be interpreted as limiting or prohibiting the District's ability to take appropriate disciplinary action against the offender in accordance with the applicable code(s) of conduct or employment contracts or policies, where appropriate, prior to completion of the investigation, in accordance with the due process rights of employees and students, as applicable.

- L. Appeal: If the Complainant or the Respondent is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within seven (7) calendar days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation, except for circumstances in which the Respondent is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. In such an instance, the appeal rights of the Respondent will be provided in a manner consistent with the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾). Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent or designee, Northbridge Public Schools, 87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588. The Superintendent or designee will decide the appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal.
- M. Identification of Civil Rights Coordinator for complaints of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation under this procedure is: **Greg Rosenthal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services:** grosenthal@nps.org. (508) 234-8156

Other Resources

Individuals also have the right to seek a remedy from Regional Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square Boston, MA 02110-1491 (617-289-0111), or with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, One Ashburton Place, Sixth Floor, Room 601, Boston, MA 02108 (617-994-6000), or with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (781-338-3300).

TITLE IX - SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Northbridge Public Schools ("District") are committed to maintaining school environments free of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment in any form or for any reason is prohibited. This includes sexual harassment by administrators, personnel, students, vendors, and other individuals in school or at school related events.

The Northbridge Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities and is required by Title IX not to discriminate on the basis of sex. Such non-discrimination also extends to admissions and the employment application process. Retaliation against any individual who has brought sexual harassment to the attention of school officials, or against an individual who has participated, or refused to participate, in the investigation thereof is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the Northbridge Public Schools.

Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures apply only to allegations of sexual harassment under Title IX, which includes harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, and is defined in the Definitions section below.

The Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures apply to conduct that occurs within the United States in an education program or activity of the District, regardless of whether such District program or activity is conducted on or off school grounds. A District education program or activity includes locations, events, or circumstances over which the District exercised substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the sexual harassment occurred.

Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX will be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures. Allegations of conduct that meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, and simultaneously meet the definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will also be addressed through the Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures.

Allegations of conduct that do not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX, but could, if proven, meet the definition(s) of sexual harassment under Title VII (employees), M.G.L. c. 151B (employees), and/or M.G.L. c. 151C (students), will be addressed through the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures. (See exception under Section II, Part 4, Step 4 below). The definitions of sexual harassment under Title VII, M.G.L. c. 151B, and M.G.L. c. 151C are set out in the Civil Rights Grievance Procedures. **(See previous section.)**

Confidentiality

The District will keep the identity of complainants, respondents, and witnesses confidential, except as permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as otherwise required by law, and/or as necessary to carry out this Procedure.

DEFINITIONS

Complainant: An individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment under Title IX. Parents and/or legal guardians of a complainant are not considered a complainant but may file a Formal Complaint on behalf of a minor child and act on behalf of the minor child in any Title IX matter. For the purpose of this procedure the terms “complainant” and “alleged victim” shall have the same meaning.

Formal Complaint: A document or electronic submission filed by a complainant, that contains the complainant’s physical or digital signature or otherwise indicates that the complainant is the person filing the Formal Complaint, or a document signed by the Title IX coordinator, that:

- (1) alleges sexual harassment against a respondent; and
- (2) requests that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

At the time of filing a Formal Complaint, the complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the District’s education program or activity with which the Formal Complaint is being filed.

Sexual Harassment: Under Title IX, the term “sexual harassment” includes three (3) types of misconduct based on sex:

- (1) any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school employee;
- (2) unwelcome conduct on the basis of sex, including unwelcome conduct based on sex stereotyping or on the basis of traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, that is sufficiently severe and pervasive and objectively offensive conduct, effectively denying a person equal educational access; or
- (3) any instance of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined below.

Sexual Assault: An offense that meets the definition of rape, fondling, incest, or statutory rape as used in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting system and set out below:

- Rape: The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.
- Fondling: The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her age or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental incapacity. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 13B, a child under the age of 14 is incapable of giving consent to indecent touching.
- Incest: Sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.
- Statutory Rape: Sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent. In Massachusetts, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 265, § 23, the statutory age of consent is 16 years of age.

For the purposes of the definition of sexual assault, the term “consent” shall be defined in a manner consistent with Massachusetts laws.

Dating Violence: Violence committed by a person who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim. The existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on the reporting party's statement and with consideration of the length of the relationship, the type of relationship, and the frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship. For the purposes of this definition, dating violence includes, but is not limited to, sexual or physical abuse or the threat of such abuse. Dating violence does not include acts covered under the definition of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence: A felony or misdemeanor crime of violence committed by a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim; by a person with whom the victim shares a child in common; by a person who is cohabitating with, or has cohabitated with, the victim as a spouse or intimate partner; by a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred; by any other person against an adult or youth victim who is protected from that person's acts under the domestic or family violence laws of the jurisdiction in which the crime of violence occurred.

Stalking: Engaging in a "course of conduct" directed at a specific person that would cause a "reasonable person" to fear for the person's safety or the safety of others or suffer "substantial emotional distress."

For the purposes of this definition:

"Course of conduct" means two or more acts, including, but not limited to, acts in which the stalker directly, indirectly, or through third parties, by any action, method, device, or means, follows, monitors, observes, surveils, threatens, or communicates to or about a person, or interferes with a person's property.

"Reasonable person" means a reasonable person under similar circumstances and with similar identities to the victim.

"Substantial emotional distress" means significant mental suffering or anguish that may, but does not necessarily, require medical or other professional treatment or counseling.

Party or Parties: The complainant and/or respondent.

Principal: The Principal or Principal's designee.

Respondent: An individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

Superintendent: The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.

Supportive Measures: Individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the Complainant or Respondent, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual harassment. Supportive Measures may be offered before or after the filing of a Formal Complaint or where no Formal Complaint has been filed. Supportive measures are individualized services reasonably available that are non-punitive, non-disciplinary, and not unreasonably burdensome to the other party, while designed to ensure equal educational access, protect safety, and/or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures available to complainants and respondents include, but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments; modifications of work or class schedules; campus escort services; mutual restrictions on contact between the parties; changes in work locations; leaves of absence; increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the building and/or campus; and other similar measures.

Violations of the restrictions imposed by supportive measures may be considered a violation of school rules and may also be considered in determining whether sexual harassment has occurred.

Title IX Coordinator: Employee(s) designated by the District to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX.

I. REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- A. Who May Report Sexual Harassment: Anyone may report an allegation of sexual harassment.
- B. How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator or the Principal, but any District employee who receives a report of sexual harassment will respond to the report as outlined below.
- C. Internal Reporting: Any District employee who receives a report of sexual harassment shall respond by promptly informing the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the report. Any District employee who observes sexual harassment of a student should intervene to stop the conduct and shall promptly inform the Principal or Title IX Coordinator of the incident. If a report involves an allegation against the Principal or Title IX Coordinator, the District employee shall instead report the allegation to the Superintendent.

Any Principal who receives a report of sexual harassment shall promptly inform the relevant Title IX Coordinator of the report.

- D. District's Response to Report: The District will respond to all reports of sexual harassment promptly and equitably, and in a manner consistent with this Procedure and any other relevant District procedures and policies. Upon receipt of a report, the Title IX Coordinator shall:
 - (1) Promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures;
 - (2) Inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint;
 - (3) Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
 - (4) If the District does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and
- (5) Explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint. Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined in Section II.

II. FILING A TITLE IX FORMAL COMPLAINT

Only the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint will trigger the Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process, outlined below.

- A. Who may file a Title IX Formal Complaint: Although anyone may report sexual harassment, only a complainant or a Title IX Coordinator may file a Title IX Formal Complaint. If a complainant chooses not to file a Formal Complaint, the complainant's choice to not initiate an investigation will generally be respected, unless the Title IX Coordinator determines that signing a Formal Complaint to initiate an investigation over the wishes of the complainant is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. The Title IX Coordinator will take into account concerns articulated by the parties, the best interests of the community, fairness to all concerned, and the District's legal obligations under applicable state and

federal laws. Where the Title IX Coordinator signs the Formal Complaint, the Title IX Coordinator is not a complainant or a party during the grievance process and must comply with the requirement to be free from conflicts or bias.

- B. Processing of a Title IX Formal Complaint: Title IX Formal Complaints will be investigated promptly and equitably by the Title IX Coordinator or designee, as follows:

Step 1: Title IX Formal Complaint is filed:

- (1) A Formal Complaint shall state (if known to the reporter or alleged victim) the name(s) of the persons involved, witnesses to the conduct, if any, a description of the conduct, and to the extent possible, the dates and locations of the conduct. A Formal Complaint will not be dismissed solely because it was not completely filled out or it was filled out incorrectly.
- (2) A Formal Complaint may be filed at any time, including during non-business hours. Formal Complaints submitted outside of normal business hours will be deemed received on the following school working day.
- (3) At the time of the filing of the Formal Complaint, the alleged victim must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of the school with which the Formal Complaint is filed.
- (4) A Formal Complaint may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator in person, by mail, or by electronic mail, by using the contact information for the Title IX Coordinator listed in this procedure, and by any additional method designated by the school.
- (5) Consolidation of Formal Complaints: the District may consolidate Formal Complaints where the allegations arise out of the same facts.
- (6) Consideration of the use of the Informal Resolution Process with the consent of the parties. See Section II(D).
- (7) Throughout this process, there shall be a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

Step 2: Consider Supportive Measures for both the complainant and the respondent: Once a Formal Complaint is filed, the Title IX Coordinator will ensure that supportive measures are considered for both parties. See Section I(D).

Step 3: Written Notice of Allegations: Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the District shall send written notice of the allegations, including the identity of the parties, to both the complainant and the respondent, if their identities are known. The written notice must include: (1) a statement prohibiting knowingly submitting false information; (2) sufficient details known at the time to allow the respondent the opportunity to respond to the allegations; (3) a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct; (4) that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process; (5) that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney; and (6) that the parties/advisors may inspect and review evidence in accordance with this procedure. If, in the course of the investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations of sexual harassment that are not included in the initial written notice of allegations, the District shall provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

Step 4: Consider Whether Dismissal of Formal Complaint Warranted: Some Formal Complaints will be subject to mandatory or discretionary dismissal under Title IX.

- (1) Mandatory Dismissal of Formal Complaint: The Title IX Coordinator shall dismiss a Formal Complaint under Title IX when the conduct alleged:

- a. even if proved, would not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX;
 - b. did not occur in an education program or activity of the District; or
 - c. did not occur against a person in the United States.
- (2) Discretionary Dismissal of Formal Complaint: The Title IX Coordinator may dismiss a Formal Complaint or allegations therein for purposes of Title IX at any time if:
 - a. the complainant informs the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant desires to withdraw the Formal Complaint or allegations;
 - b. the respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District; or
 - c. specific circumstances prevent the District from gathering sufficient evidence to make a determination.
- (3) The Title IX Coordinator must provide the parties with written notice of any dismissal of a Formal Complaint and the reasons for the dismissal.
- (4) Dismissal of a Formal Complaint for purposes of Title IX shall not preclude the District from addressing the allegations under any other relevant District policies or procedure(s), including but not limited to, the Civil Rights Grievance Procedures, the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Student Code of Conduct, and/or a collective bargaining contract, nor will it preclude the District from addressing the allegations pursuant to the grievance process set out in Section II of this Procedure. The Title IX Coordinator shall have the discretion to make any such referrals and proceed as appropriate in regard to the allegations.

Step 5: Initial Investigation: All Formal Complaints will be investigated by the Title IX Coordinator or other individual designated to serve as the investigator by the Title IX Coordinator. The investigator shall be responsible for seeking and gathering evidence relative to the investigation. Any Formal Complaint against an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. During the Formal Complaint resolution process:

- (1) Standard of Proof: The investigator shall make factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
- (2) The burden for gathering evidence and the burden of proof remains on the District, not on the parties.
- (3) The District shall provide equal opportunity for the parties to present fact and expert witnesses and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- (4) The District shall not restrict the ability of the parties to discuss the allegations or gather evidence (e.g., no "gag" orders).
- (5) Each party may have one (1) advisor of their own selection and at their own expense participate in this grievance process. In the case of a student under the age of 18, this advisor may be in addition to the student's parents/guardians. Any restrictions on the participation of an advisor will be applied equally to each party. The advisor may, but is not required to, be an attorney. Any evidence received by an advisor in this process is subject to confidentiality and may be used only for the purpose of the grievance process. Advisors are prohibited from disseminating or disclosing such evidence outside of the grievance process.
- (6) The District shall send prior written notice to the parties of any investigative interviews, meetings, or hearings in which their participation is invited or expected.
- (7) Privacy of Medical Treatment and Mental Health Treatment Records: The District may not access or use either the complainant's or the respondent's medical, psychological, or similar treatment records unless the District obtains the party's written consent to do so.
- (8) The investigator may impose reasonable timeframes on all parties as required to facilitate the timely completion of the investigation. The investigator may extend any of the timeframes beyond the time periods identified in this procedure for good cause. If a complaint or report of sexual harassment is received within three (3) weeks of the end of the academic school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by

the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the unavailability of witnesses while school is not in session. If the investigator extends the investigation, the investigator will notify the parties of the extension and the reasons therefore in writing.

Step 6: Opportunity for Parties to Respond to Evidence: The District must send the parties, and their advisor(s) (if they have one) evidence directly related to the allegation, in electronic format or hard copy. Parties shall be afforded ten (10) calendar days to inspect, review and respond to the evidence. The District shall not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use evidence that constitutes information protected from disclosure by a legally recognized privilege, unless it has been waived by the holder of the privilege.

- (1) Prior to providing evidence to the parties, the investigator may redact confidential information that is not directly related to the allegations or that is otherwise barred from use under Title IX or by privilege (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and/or 603 CMR 23.00. Information that is directly related to the investigation, and that is not expressly barred from disclosure under Title IX (e.g., treatment records), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00, must be made available for review by both parties.
- (2) The parties and their advisors shall be prohibited from dissemination of any of the evidence for any purpose not directly related to this grievance procedure.

Step 7: Completion of the Investigative Report: The District must send the parties, and their advisor, an Investigative Report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence but does not reach any conclusions regarding responsibility, in electronic format or hard copy, within twenty-five (25) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint, unless otherwise extended for good cause. A copy of the Investigative Report will also be sent to the decision-maker.

Step 8: Parties' Opportunity to Respond to Investigative Report: The District shall provide each party ten (10) calendar days for the parties to respond to the investigative report. The Investigative Report will notify the parties of the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker directed questions of the other party and/or any witness within that same ten (10) calendar days. (See Step 9).

Step 9: Directed Written Questions from the Parties: After the Investigative Report has been sent to the parties, but prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, the decision-maker shall afford both the complainant and the respondent the opportunity to submit to the decision-maker written, relevant questions of the other party or any witness, provide the party with the other party's and/or witness's written responses to said written questions, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party in writing. Questions that seek disclosure of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and/or 603 CMR 23.00 shall not be permitted, unless the person holding the privilege has waived the privilege.

- (1) The complainant shall be protected from answering questions about the complainant's prior sexual behavior unless offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged misconduct or offered to prove the complainant's consent to the conduct under investigation.
- (2) Upon receipt of the Investigative Report, each party shall have ten (10) calendar days to submit directed relevant questions to the decision-maker in writing.

- a. All questions must be posed in a respectful manner (e.g., without profanity and without attacking a person's character or motivations).
 - b. Questions that are not relevant will be excluded, and the decision-maker shall explain to the party posing the question the reason(s) for excluding any question.
- (3) Upon receipt of the directed questions from the District, each party and witness shall have five (5) calendar days to respond to those questions in writing.¹
- (4) After receipt of the answers by the parties, any follow-up questions by the parties shall be submitted to the decision-maker in writing within three (3) calendar days, and those follow-up questions shall be responded to in writing within three (3) calendar days of receipt.
- (5) Each party will be provided a copy of the other party's or witness's written answers.

Step 10: Determination of Responsibility/Findings of Fact by the Decision-Maker:

- (1) The decision-maker shall issue a written determination regarding responsibility with a description of the procedural steps taken, findings of fact, conclusions about whether the alleged conduct occurred, rationale for the result as to each allegation, the range of disciplinary sanctions to which the respondent may be subject, whether remedies will be provided to the complainant, and procedures and bases for appeal. The decision-maker's written determination shall not be completed by the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator.
 - (2) Standard of Proof: The decision-maker shall make factual findings based on a preponderance of the evidence standard.
 - (3) The decision-maker's findings shall be based on an objective review of all relevant evidence, inculpatory and exculpatory, and avoid credibility determinations based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
 - (4) The decision-maker shall not draw inferences about the determination of responsibility based solely on a party's failure or refusal to answer questions.
 - (5) The written determination must be sent simultaneously to both parties.
 - (6) This determination shall be sent within twenty (20) school days of the issuance of the investigative report unless an extension is agreed upon by the parties or if the process is otherwise reasonably delayed. Except where the parties have agreed to an extension of the timeline or where the process is otherwise reasonably delayed, the written determination shall be issued within sixty (60) school days of receipt of the Formal Complaint.
- B. Remedies: If the decision-maker determines that sexual harassment has occurred, the District administration shall take steps to eliminate the harassing environment, which may include but not be limited to providing remedies to a complainant that are designed to restore or preserve the complainant's equal access to the District's education programs and/or activities. These remedies may be the same individualized services as the supportive measures outlined in Section I(D) above and/or may consist of alternative interventions and/or punitive or disciplinary sanctions that burden the respondent.
- C. Discipline: Persons who engage in sexual harassment or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, expulsion (if applicable under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H ½), or other sanctions as determined by the District administration, subject to applicable procedural requirements.
 - (1) Although the respondent may, in accordance with Title IX, be subject to emergency removal at any time, the respondent may not be subject to disciplinary sanctions for the

¹ The parent or guardian may act on behalf of the party in drafting questions and submitting written answers. In the case of young children, reasonable accommodation based on disability, and/or other good cause, either party and/or any witness may request and have their oral responses reduced to writing by the investigator or Title IX Coordinator.

misconduct defined under this procedure until after this grievance process has been completed.

- D. Informal Process: Only after a Formal Complaint is filed may the District opt to offer and facilitate informal resolution options, such as mediation or restorative justice. Both parties must give voluntary, informed, written consent to attempt any offered informal resolution. Any informal resolution under this procedure will be facilitated by trained personnel.
- (1) The informal resolution process is not available to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.
 - (2) The informal process is voluntary, and the alleged victim and/or respondent may terminate or decline any informal process at any time and resume the Formal Complaint grievance process.
 - (3) The informal process shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days.

Participation in the informal process will stay the timelines of the Formal Complaint process.

- E. Emergency Removal under Title IX: The District may remove a respondent on an emergency basis at any time provided that the District: (1) undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis; (2) determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal and that there is no alternative to the respondent's emergency removal to mitigate the threat presented; and (3) provides the respondent with notice and the opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.
- F. Anonymous Reports: The District may be on notice of an allegation of sexual harassment through receipt of an anonymous report. In cases of anonymous reports, the District's obligation is to respond in a manner that is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances. If the anonymous reporter is the complainant and they request confidentiality, the District can and should offer supportive measures to the extent consistent with maintaining the request for confidentiality. If an anonymous report is received without a disclosure of the complainant's identity, the District will be unable to provide the complainant supportive measures in response to that report. The District may in conformance with applicable state laws and regulations be required to report sexual harassment identified in an anonymous complaint to state and/or local authorities such as the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families in conformance with state statutes and regulations and/or take actions to protect the safety of the school community (contacting the police, for example) that may result in the identity of the reporting person being disclosed. Although the District shall respond to anonymous reports of sexual harassment in accordance with this Procedure, a Formal Complaint cannot be filed anonymously.
- G. Appeals: The complainant or respondent may appeal from a determination regarding responsibility and/or from the District's dismissal of a Formal Complaint or any allegations therein, only on the following bases:
- (1) procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
 - (2) newly discovered evidence that could affect the outcome of the matter; and/or
 - (3) Title IX personnel had a conflict of interest or bias that affected the outcome of the matter.

An appeal may be made to the Superintendent or designee within five (5) calendar days after receiving the determination of responsibility or dismissal. The Superintendent will decide the appeal no later than thirty (30) calendar days of the date of receipt of the written appeal. In cases in which it has been determined that a respondent student is subject to long-term suspension as a result of a finding of sexual harassment in accordance with this procedure, the respondent may elect to exercise their appeal under the disciplinary due process requirements applicable to the circumstances (e.g., M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H, 37H ½ or 37H ¾) in place of this appellate procedure.

Appeals must be made in writing (email is sufficient) to the Superintendent or designee, Northbridge Public Schools, 87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588.

The Title IX Formal Complaint grievance process is deemed complete when either the time period for appeal has lapsed or upon the issuance of the Superintendent's decision on a timely filed appeal.

- H. Recordkeeping: Records related to this Procedure will be maintained for a period of seven (7) years.
- I. Employment Agencies: The contact information for state and federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies is as follows: 1) Federal - United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC); John F. Kennedy Federal Building; 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475; Boston, MA 02203-0506; 1-800-669-4000; EEOC Boston Area Office Website: <https://www.eeoc.gov/field-office/boston/location>; 2) State: Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD); Boston Headquarters; One Ashburton Place; Sixth Floor, Room 601; Boston, MA 02108; (617)-994-6000; MCAD Website <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-commission-against-discrimination>.

Title VI and Title IX (race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, and sexual orientation) Coordinators are:

Mrs. Jill Healy, Director of CIA
Northbridge Public Schools
87 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8516
jhealy@nps.org

Dr. Greg Rosenthal, Director of PPS
Northbridge Public Schools
87 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8156
grosenthal@nps.org

FOOD POLICIES/PROGRAMS

The Northbridge Public Schools has developed a protocol for food celebrations in the classroom to address three issues:

- There has been an increase in life-threatening food allergies in our schools
- New legislation has been passed which supports Northbridge Public Schools' efforts to help prevent obesity in children

Celebrations In The Classroom

We encourage non-food celebrations; however we realize that at times food is an important and appropriate part of a celebration.

1. There will no longer be an allowable foods list. Ingredients change on an almost daily basis, and there is no safe way to guarantee that a food that seemed safe this week will be safe next week.
2. No food will be brought in to share with the entire class.
3. When a teacher chooses to plan a celebration, parents will be asked to send in a special snack for their student to enjoy during the celebration. Teachers have the option to have students decorate a bag to bring home for the snack, or to provide one for the snack. They may also ask the parents to provide a bag.

4. Sharing of snacks among students is not allowed.

Curriculum Related Food Lessons

When a teacher decides to include food as part of the curriculum, he/she will send permission forms home 7 calendar days before the lesson.

At the beginning of the school year, a general food permission form will be included in the forms sent home on the first day of school for every student. On this form, parents/guardians will be able to indicate if their child may participate in any curriculum related food lesson during the school year, or if the student has a special circumstance and the parent/guardian must be informed of the food to be provided. During the school year, teachers will only need to send permission forms home with students who require permission for each food lesson or to students who do not have a permission form on file at school. The nurse will keep track of the food permission forms and will provide teachers with the list of students who require permission forms for each food related lesson. If a student cannot have a food, the teacher and parent/guardian will work out an acceptable alternative food.

During some teaching units students are asked to bring in homemade food that enhances a unit or lesson plan. If a teacher is including homemade food during a lesson such as this, a letter will be sent home to parents of students describing the event and the foods that will be available (e.g. homemade food representing cultures studied in our lesson) at least 7 calendar days before the event. If a student cannot sample the homemade foods, the teacher and parent will work out an alternative that will still allow the student to participate in some way. An example would be having that parent/student make a cultural food item that that student can eat. Teachers and parents are responsible to remind the student that he/she cannot sample the foods.

Rewards and Incentives

Food **will not be used as a reward or incentive** for any student unless indicated in an IEP or 504 plan. As always, children are not allowed to share snacks or food with each other, either in school, on the bus, or at school sponsored events such as Field Trips.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

The Northbridge Public Schools provides a School Breakfast and School Lunch Program.

All students are eligible to receive a complete breakfast and lunch each day at no cost for the entire 2022-2023 school year. These free meals are per the menu provided on the District website by the Food Services Department. This does not include individual a la carte items, additional meals or meal items or additional snacks/drinks.

Because breakfast and lunch are included in the school day, Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications are not required this year to qualify for free meals. As completing an application may provide for a discount for other fee based services, Free and Reduced Applications are available for [download](#) on the school website and hard copies are available throughout the year in each school's office. Please contact your child's school for the necessary forms if you feel your family becomes eligible at any time throughout the school year.

The Northbridge Public Schools Food Service Department utilizes a computerized cash register system, which comes with a convenient, easy, and secure online service called myschoolbucks.com. This web service allows parents to view their child's current meal account balance, as well as receive low balance alerts and make secure online prepayments to that account. Parents may also view a history report that

will show the dates and times their child has purchased a meal within the past thirty days. Please visit the myschoolbucks.com website to setup an account or the [MySchoolBucks Information Page](#) on the District website to learn more.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. While cash is accepted at the register, prepayment of meals is encouraged. Parents can deposit funds into their child's meal account to minimize the possibility that their child may be without meal money on any given day. At the end of the year, any remaining funds on account for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year. Please see the [District's Food Charging Policy](#) on the District website for more information.

To make payments by check: Please make checks payable to Northbridge Food Services and include your child's first and last name along with your child's five digit student ID on the check.

To make payments online:

1. [>> www.nps.org >> online payment center >> school lunch](http://www.nps.org)
2. www.myschoolbucks.com

HEALTH INFORMATION

The following are health requirements for students attending Northbridge Public Schools:

1. No student may enter school unless **immunizations**, according to Massachusetts State Law, are up-to-date. To ensure continued attendance in school, immunizations must be kept up-to-date.
2. A **lead test** is now required for school entry.
3. **Physical Exams** are required for entrance into school.
4. **Emergency cards** sent home at the beginning of each school year should be filled out completely and returned immediately. Phone numbers and addresses should be kept up-to-date. Be sure to list **two (2) people in town** who **have agreed** to be contacted if you are not available. Please keep your child's teacher and the nurse informed of any medical problems.

Health Services

Students who become ill or injured will be directed to the school nurses for assessment, evaluation, treatment and/or referral. If the nurse is not available, students are to report to the office. Students are not to leave the building without authorization. Parents will be notified when a child must be sent home. If the parent cannot be contacted, the person indicated on the Emergency Card will be called. It is imperative that the Emergency Card be completed annually and updated as necessary.

Concussion Protocols (see HS Appendix)

Physical Examinations

Massachusetts requires that a physical examination by a health care provider be on file with the nurse for kindergarten entry, and at the beginning of the school year for grades 1, 4, 7, and 10. Students entering the District without records or recent physical must have a physical examination within the first year. A physical exam is also required within 13 months prior to tryouts for competitive athletics or cheerleading.

Mandated Screening Programs

Students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 are weighed and measured. Students in grades K, 1, 5, and 10 are tested for vision and students in grades K, 1, 7, and 10 are tested for hearing. Students in grades 5 - 9 receive an annual postural screening for scoliosis. The school nurse does the screening with assistance from the Physical Education Staff. Parents will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems.

Contagious Conditions

Parents are requested to report any incidence of contagious disease or condition to the school nurse and do not send your child to school while contagious. This includes incidence of head lice, scabies and COVID-19. When these conditions are identified while your child is at school, the student will be sent home. Return to school is permitted following treatment and verification by the school nurse that the student is free of disease/contagion.

Immunizations

All students must be compliant with immunizations required by Massachusetts regulations (102 CMR 7.09 and 105 CMR 220.00) and established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The only exemptions are for documented religious or medical reasons.

Medication Administration

Medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be by written order of the provider with written permission from the parent/guardian before the nurse may administer medication. Medication must be brought to the school by the parent/guardian or other designated responsible adult in the original container with the label intact.

Students are not to transport medication to and from school. However, in the case of self-medicating students, students may transport and self-administer upon completion of a written agreement between the parent and the nurse. File: ADF-R

Latex

No latex products, e.g. balloons, will be allowed in any school in the district due to latex allergies.

HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Booster Clubs – Middle and High Schools

Parents and community members regularly meet to provide support to the sporting teams and promote student health and wellness through the strong athletic history in Northbridge. Both the Middle School and High School Booster Clubs are looking for new members. Each group has a Facebook page which provides up-to-date meeting information and activities taking place in the community.

NPTA

The Northbridge Parent Teacher Association is a group of parents, teachers, and administrators dedicated to the enrichment of the educational experience of the children at Northbridge Elementary School. Each year, the NPTA sponsors programming designed to both fundraise and promote family involvement. For the safety of all our students, no door-to-door sales are allowed. The key to success is parent participation. All students and their families benefit from the Northbridge PTA. The association provides enrichment programs that support the extension of the curriculum.

The NTPA meets the first Wednesday of the month at Northbridge Elementary School. To find out more about the visit their website at <http://northbridgepta.my-pta.org/>

Parent Volunteers

Parents and visitors are welcomed and encouraged to visit our schools. All visitors must report to the school office, sign in upon entering the building, and pick up a visitor's badge. The visitor's pass must be visible throughout the duration of the visit. Parents must sign out and return the pass at the end of the visit.

A **CORI** (Criminal Offender Record Information) form must be in place and processed before any adult volunteer is allowed to volunteer with children, including, but not limited to volunteering in the classroom and chaperoning a field trip. **CORI** forms are available in the office and could take about four weeks to process. Please be advised that the **CORI** process may now include fingerprinting. It is strongly suggested that all prospective volunteers complete the form in September. If you have completed a form in a prior year, please verify that the form remains current with the Main Office in September of each year. **CORI** information will be updated at least every three years.

Questions or concerns regarding this matter may be directed to:

Superintendent's Office
Northbridge Public School District
87 Linwood Avenue
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8156

School Councils

The School Council was created to meet the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 53 (also known as the Education Reform Act of 1993). School Council membership consists of the principal, parent/guardians, teachers, students and community representatives. Application for membership may be obtained by contacting the principal's office. School Council members are elected at the start of school during the year in which they will serve.

The primary responsibilities of the School Council are to assist and advise the principal in the following areas:

- Adopting educational goals for the school which address the educational needs of students attending the school
- Reviewing the school's handbook
- Reviewing the school's annual budget
- Formulating a school improvement plan

All School Council meetings are subject to the Open Meeting Laws and all interested parties may attend.

Special Education Parent/Guardian Advisory Council (PAC)

The PAC is a State mandated Parent/Guardian Advisory Council whose goal is to give parents/guardians the opportunity to participate in educational programming in a more informed way. The PAC acts as a support group for parents/guardians who wishes to discuss special needs issues. The PAC will assist in providing information about the availability of special education services, procedures to obtain these services and the right and responsibilities of parent/guardian under State and Federal special education laws. Membership is open to parent/guardian of children with or without special needs, educators, human service agency representatives, school committee members, and any caring member of the community.

Regular monthly meetings are held which are announced on Cable TV and can be found advertised in the local newspaper. For more information about the SpEd PAC, please contact the Pupil Personnel Services Office.

English Learning Parent/Guardian Advisory Council

The district is developing an ELPAC for the 2022-2023 school year to help support the parents and legal guardians of our English Learners. Membership will be voluntary and open to all parents and legal guardians of students who are or have been identified as English learners. This group will meet regularly with school or district leaders to participate in the planning and development of programs to improve educational opportunities for English learners; advising the district or school on any new proposed language acquisition programs; review district and school improvement plans as they relate to English learners; and, meeting at least annually with the school committee or school council.

More information on meeting dates and opportunities for participation will be announced in late September. If you'd like to participate or you have any questions, please contact Dr. Greg Rosenthal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, at (508) 234-8156 or at grosenthal@nps.org.

SAFE SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Safety of students is of critical importance to the school. All staff members are familiar with the school's Critical Incident/Safety Operations Plan. In addition, each school site has security procedures, which are implemented as needed.

Visitor's Passes

All visitors must report to the main office. If you wish to go to an area of the school beyond the office, you must obtain a visitor's pass and enter your name in the sign-in log. This is to ensure the safety of all children. In addition, any adult wishing to volunteer or interact with a child must have an approved criminal history check (CORI) on file with the Northbridge Public Schools.

Fire Drills

For the safety of everyone, the school practices fire drills frequently during the school year. At the beginning of the school year you will receive special directions. You will also find instructions posted in each classroom. When the fire alarm sounds, teachers will guide students to exit the building quickly and orderly. Attendance will be taken. If a student is not present during the attendance procedures, and is not absent from school, disciplinary action may follow.

Enhanced Lockdown Procedures (ALICE)

In the unfortunate circumstance that an intruder or active shooter is threatening one of our school buildings, staff and students are trained yearly and practice the following *Enhanced Lockdown Procedures*

Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate

1. ALERT
 - PA Announcement
 - Gunfire, screaming, loud noises
 - Phone call
 - Text or emergency notification
 - May SEE aggressor

2. LOCKDOWN

- Traditional lockdown procedures, plus:
- Barricade the door
- Spread out within the room
- Don't huddle
- Look for alternate escape route
- DO NOT open the door for anyone

3. INFORM

- Call 911 or text appropriate parties when safe to do so
- Who? What? Where? When? How?
- Pass on real-time information

4. COUNTER

- Interrupt process of shooting accurately
- Create chaos (shout, yell, scream, throw things)
- Move, move, move
- Create barriers (use what's available)
- Divert attention
- Take back control – last resort – personal choice

5. EVACUATE

- Occupants have authority to leave building when they deem appropriate
- Look for a window, door not commonly used, connector door
- Run and zig-zag down hallway as fast as possible with palms raised
- Run to pre-determined rally point

What can we do to ensure a Safe School?

- See something, say something
- Do not prop open doors that open to the outside
- Do not open doors for others to get inside
- Report safety concerns immediately to the closest adult

School Resource Officer

Northbridge Public Schools has a full-time school resource officer from the Northbridge Police Department, ***Officer Tom DeJordy***. He is present in the buildings and available each day of the school year to assist staff and administration throughout the district, as needed. He can be contacted at tdejordy@nps.org.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting (51A)

Under General Laws Chapter 119, Section 51A for purposes of reporting child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families. Under MGL119, Sec. 51A, a school staff member who has reasonable cause to believe that a student under the age of 18 is suffering physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect by a parent, guardian, school staff member or other caretaker must immediately report

the abuse or neglect either directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or to the person designated by the school to accept those reports, who then promptly reports it to DCF.

The Principal and/or Superintendent will report to local police certain forms of harassment and conduct that may constitute a crime. The Principal and/or Superintendent may report physical injury, destruction of public property, potential hate crimes and other acts of a serious criminal nature to local police for investigation.

If a staff member is found to be the cause of abuse or neglect, the staff member will not be allowed to work while DCF goes through the investigation. If the staff member is found at fault, he/she will be terminated immediately.

Child Find

The Northbridge Public School District is required to identify all children, ages three years to twenty-one years, who reside within the District, have not yet graduated from high school, and who are in need of special education and related services. Any child suspected of having a disability and believed to be in need of special education and related services may be referred to Greg Rosenthal, Director of Pupil Services, Northbridge Public School District, 87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, MA 01588 (508-234-8156 X204)

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, Ch 71, Section 38 Q½ (DCAP)

A school district shall adopt and implement a Curriculum Accommodation Plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular program including, but limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement.

School Councils and District Accommodation Plan, Ch 71 Section 59C

The school council, including the school principal, shall meet regularly and shall assist in the identification of the educational needs of all students attending the school, shall make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the Curriculum Accommodation Plan required pursuant to Section 38Q1/2.

Purpose

School districts are required to implement a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) to help ensure efforts have been made to meet the needs of students in general education and avoid unnecessary referrals to special education. The DCAP provides an accounting of resources and accommodations available to all students and classroom teachers and encompasses the following:

- Analysis and accommodations of diverse learning styles in the general education classroom;
- Provision of appropriate services and supports within the general education classroom;
- Support services that address the needs of students with disruptive behavior;
- Encouragement of parental involvement in their children's education;
- Encouragement of teacher collaboration and effective planning;
- Assistance to general education staff through research-based professional development and an effective mentoring program.

Northbridge Public School District is committed to the high expectations and active engagement of all learners. The DCAP documents the ways educators in Northbridge Public Schools work to meet the

needs of our students. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to: modified materials, targeted assessments, instructional strategies, and support services. These accommodations shape the way instruction is delivered to the student but does not change or modify the content of the concepts taught to students.

The following accommodations are available for all students in the Northbridge Public Schools to provide equal access to the general education curriculum program:

I. Student Resources

Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment:

- Posted standards-based objectives that clearly state what students need to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson (student-friendly terms)
- Small group instruction
- Strategic grouping strategies
- Pre-teach or re-teach concepts with different approach
- Provide background knowledge
- Provide options to increase engagement (differentiate by content, process, product and learning environment)
- Provide preferential seating
- Daily access to technology to enhance instruction
- Utilize graphic organizers
- Provide manipulatives/concrete models
- Break down tasks/assignments into manageable steps
- Provide students with study guides
- Provide project organizers/checklists to break down larger/longer projects
- Provide students with models and exemplars
- Authentic tasks based on real-world problems/situations
- Integrate multiple senses into learning opportunities
- Create learning opportunities based on student interests and abilities
- Frequent checks for understanding
- Multiple opportunities for students to discuss their learning/thinking
- Appropriate use of “wait time”
- Multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning
- Extended time on assessments
- Rubrics and clear learning expectations
- Individual student conferencing
- W.I.N. (What I Need) blocks
- Utilizing UDL rubric as a resource for lesson planning
- Gr K-8 Title I services

Organizational Strategies:

- Clearly established and consistent routines and expectations
- Use of timers/time keeping
- Frequent check-ins
- Various graphic organizers and templates
- Posted agendas in a specific location
- Agendas/student planner support
- Study guides/structured notes
- Utilizing google classroom for assignments

Social/Emotional and Behavioral Strategies:

- Clear rules and logical consequences (posted)
- Strategic seating plans/accommodated seating
- Ongoing communication with parents (in their preferred method/language) to support in-class strategies
- Movement breaks
- Diverse classroom management strategies
- Careful and thoughtful student placement processes
- Adjustment/guidance counselor support
- Well managed transitions between classes
- PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports)
- Support through counseling staff, psychologists, nurses and other support staff
- Social emotional learning programs in general education (Advisory, Game Change, Second Step, etc.)
- Anti-bullying training and processes
- Embedded SEL strategies in all lesson/content areas

II. Teacher Resources

- PK-8 Instructional coach
- Department Chairs & Team Leaders
- District Mentoring Program
- Professional Learning Communities
- Common Planning Time
- Early Intervention Team
- Student Support Team
- Ongoing professional development activities (in and out of district)
- Opportunities to take graduate courses reimbursed by district
- Collaboration/consultation with support staff (Instruction Coach, Department Chairs/Team Leaders, Sheltered English Instructors, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Behavior Specialists, School Adjustment Counselors, Psychologists, Special Education Teachers, Nurse, Administrators)
- Lesson Study participation opportunities
- Continued curriculum support (updated and revised pacing guides and other supports)
- Updated standards-based curriculum materials
- Effective supervision and evaluation processes
- Instructional Assistants/Paraprofessionals
- PK-12 Instructional Technologist
- School Resource Officer
- Dean of Students
- Strong partnerships with parents/families/community

Foster Care***Best Interest Determination***

Best interest determinations are conducted to make decisions about the school a student will attend following a foster care placement or change in placement (to a new city/town). These decisions should be made collaboratively by the parties who are best situated to understand the student's unique needs. These parties often include DCF (Dept. of Children and Families); some combination of the student, the

student's family, and any EDM (Educational Decision Maker); the district and school of origin; and the local school district (as appropriate). All appropriate parties should have the opportunity to participate meaningfully in the decision making process. Every effort should be made to reach consensus regarding the appropriate school placement of a student in foster care. However, if there is disagreement regarding school placement for a student in foster care, DCF is considered the final decision maker in making the best interest determination. Under ESSA, to promote educational stability, students should continue to attend their schools of origin while best interest determinations are being made.

Best interest determinations must involve deliberate consideration of the student's unique needs and account for the benefits of educational stability. Specific factors to consider when making best interest determinations include, but are not limited to:

- student's age and grade level;
- student's preference, when age appropriate;
- preferences of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or EDM(s);
- student's attachment to the school, including meaningful relationships with staff and peers;
- placement of the student's sibling(s);
- distance/length of time to travel to/from school;
- time of academic year, academic performance, and skills;
- current educational goals and services;
- individual skills, needs, and social connections;
- anticipated length of time in placement, and whether reunification is the family goal;
- number of placements to date;
- ability to maintain family relationships and engagement (including in extracurricular activities, where appropriate);
- clinical/behavioral issues;
- influence of the school climate on the student, including safety issues;
- availability and quality of the services in the school to meet the student's educational and social emotional needs;
- whether the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is receiving special education and related services, or the student is receiving special education or related aids and services under Section 504, and, if so, the availability of those required services in a school other than the school of origin; and if the school of origin is in the best interest but only for a limited duration of time (e.g., until the end of the school year, the end of a testing or grading period, or the end of a particular grade). Additionally, the parties involved in the decision may wish to determine a time to revisit the question of whether it is in the student's best interest to remain in the school of origin or enroll locally.

School of Origin

To promote educational stability, a student has the right to continue to attend the school of origin, unless it is determined not to be in the student's best interest. Students attending their school of origin should remain enrolled in their district of origin. If it is determined to be in a student's best interest to attend a school in the local school district, then in the event of a subsequent change in foster care placement, that school becomes the new school of origin.

If it is determined that a student's best interest is to continue to attend the school of origin, the student can remain in that school either for the duration of the student's time in foster care or until the student completes all the grades in that school, whichever takes place first. At any time that a student's EDM and other interested parties determine that remaining in the school of origin is not in a student's best interest, the student can enroll in the local school district. When a student exits foster care during a school year, Northbridge Public Schools will permit the student to continue in the school of origin through at least the end of the academic year, if in the student's best interest.

Local School District – Immediate Enrollment

If it is in the best interest of a student in foster care to leave the school of origin, the student must be enrolled in the local school district immediately. To minimize disruption of the student's education, ESSA requires the district to enroll the student without waiting to receive the typical exchange of student enrollment documentation including proof of residency; academic records; IEPs; discipline records; documents evidencing proof of custody (e.g., birth certificates, or custody or guardianship orders); identification documents; and medical, health, and immunization records. However, requiring emergency contact information for a student is not considered a barrier to immediate enrollment.

Enrollment will be provided by the DCF representatives who will present a Notice to LEA (Local Educational Agency) form that indicates that the student is in foster care, along with their state-agency identification badge, to the local school district when enrolling students.

The Northbridge School District will assign students to schools in the same manner and according to the same process used for all other students in the district (with the exception of immediate enrollment as described above). This includes a comparable placement for students whose IEPs call for out-of-district or other specialized placements. The local school district foster care point of contact must initiate a school-to-school transfer of records with the school of origin and ensure that the student is attending school while the records are being transferred.

For students with IEPs, immediate enrollment should not be delayed due to considerations regarding programmatic and/or fiscal responsibilities for providing special education services.

Transportation

Some students in foster care will need transportation to remain in their school of origin. Northbridge Public Schools will collaborate with DCF to implement policies and procedures governing how transportation will be provided and arranged to ensure that students in foster care who need transportation to remain in their school of origin will receive such transportation while they are in foster care.

Absent other agreements between districts and DCF, the district of origin is responsible for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.

Homeless Students/McKinney-Vento

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) ensures homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates a state coordinator in every state, a homeless education liaison in every school district, outlines the rights of homeless children and youth, defines homelessness, and requires collaboration and coordination across agencies and service providers.

The following terms are defined in the McKinney-Vento Act:

Homeless children and youths: individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. It includes:

1. Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due

to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.

2. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended) who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

School Placement

School placement determinations must be based on the best interest of the homeless student. In making decisions regarding best interests, school districts must:

- Presume keeping the student in the school of origin until the end of the year in which the student obtains permanent housing is in the student's best interest except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth;
- Consider student-centered factors related to the student's best interest including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless students, school placement of siblings, giving priority to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth

For homeless students who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, Northbridge Public Schools will remove barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, and on-line learning, .

Transportation

Northbridge Public Schools will ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin.

Furthermore, if the homeless student moves to an area served by another district, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, Northbridge Public Schools and the district in which the student resides must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin; and if the districts cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally.

In addition, the transportation agreement must meet Massachusetts state law and are comparable to those received by other students. Each school district's homeless education liaison must ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless student, and any unaccompanied homeless youth, is fully informed, in the language of the home, of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected.

Students who have been homeless during the school year and become permanently housed have the right to remain enrolled in their school of origin with transportation if needed through the end of the school year (June).

Enrollment

School districts must immediately enroll homeless students in school to provide educational stability and avoid separation from school for days or weeks while documents are located.

Therefore, homeless education liaisons must ensure that:

- Students who chose to enroll in school where they are temporarily residing must be enrolled immediately, even if they do not bring the records usually required for enrollment with them;
- If a homeless student arrives without records, the previously attended school district is contacted and the required records requested that homeless students are attending school while the records are being requested;
- Districts remove barriers to homeless students receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school;
- And, information about a homeless student's living situation shall be treated as a student education record and not be deemed to be directory information and therefore cannot be shared with the public including landlords.

ESE is aware that this requirement may constitute a departure with respect to school districts' enrollment policies. The immunization statute, G.L. c. 76§ 15, generally requires students to provide proof of immunization prior to enrollment. Since McKinney-Vento is a federal law, its requirements override the state immunization law. However, it should be noted that the immunization law allows, in the absence of a Department of Health declared epidemic or emergency, the enrollment of students who have not been immunized if they have religious objections to immunization. Moreover, the Department has consulted with the Department of Public Health (DPH) regarding this issue and DPH agrees that, in the absence of an emergency.

Home/Hospitalization Tutoring

Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in a public school or placed by the public school in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital.

Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Administrator for Special Education for eligible students. Such educational services shall not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

The intent of this regulation on home or hospital instruction is to provide a student receiving a publicly funded education with the opportunity to make educational progress even when a physician determines that the student is physically unable to attend school. While it is impossible to replicate the total school experience through the provision of home/hospital instruction, Northbridge Public Schools will provide, at a minimum, the instruction necessary to enable the student to keep up in his/her courses of study and minimize the educational loss that might occur during the period the student is confined at home or in a hospital.

Although the regulation on home/hospital instruction is included in the Special Education Regulations (603 CMR 28.00), home/hospital instruction is not considered "special education" unless the student has been found eligible for special education. In other words, home/hospital instruction typically is considered a regular education service, since it is in the interest of both the individual student and the school to make it possible for the student to keep up with schoolwork while s/he is unable to attend school for medical reasons.

The Special Education Regulations also include a provision relating specifically to students who are likely to be confined to home or hospital for medical reasons for more than 60 school days in any school year. Please see regulation 603 CMR 28.04(4).

Please note that the requirements and guidance discussed are separate and distinct from those relating to the approval of parent requests for "home education" or home schooling programs, which are governed by General Laws Chapter 76, § 1. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's *Home Education Advisory* provides guidance on the Massachusetts law governing homeschooling programs.

The Massachusetts regulation requiring educational services in the home or hospital is 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c).

Physical Restraint Policies/Procedures

The Northbridge Public Schools recognizes that on occasion physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members from serious, imminent physical harm. Physical restraint is defined as the use of bodily force to limit a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint shall only be used in emergency situations, in the judgment of the school staff member, when other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. The Northbridge Public Schools complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools, 630 CMR 46.00.

Administering Physical Restraints

Physical restraint may only be used in the following circumstances:

- When non-physical interventions are not effective and
- The student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:

- As a means of punishment; or as a response to property destruction, 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. However, in the judgment of the staff member, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive might escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.

Only school personnel who have received required training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraints on students with, wherever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation, subject to the safety requirements set forth in this policy. A staff member who has received in-depth training as specified in this policy may only administer floor prone restraints, and when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others. Physical restraint shall be discontinued as soon as possible, when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to self or others. (If, due to unusual circumstances, a restraint continue for more than twenty minutes, it shall be considered an "extended restraint" for purposes of the reporting requirements.)

Additional safety requirements:

- A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.
- If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
- Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:

- Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;
- Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and
- Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students and staff members who witnessed the incident.

Reporting

Staff shall report the use of physical restraint to the school principal after administration of a physical restraint that results in injury to a student or staff member; or lasts longer than five (5) minutes. The following reporting procedure will be followed:

- The staff member shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day.
- The written report shall be provided to the Principal or designee. The Principal shall prepare the report if the Principal administered the restraint.
- The Principal or designee shall maintain an ongoing record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department of Education, upon request.
- The Principal shall send a copy of the report to the Superintendent at the Central Office.
- The Principal or designee shall verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school days following the use of such restraint. If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language. The written report shall include:
- Names and job titles of the staff who administered the restraint and observers, if any; the date of the restraint; the time the restraint began and ended; and the name of the administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint.
- A description of the activity in which the restrained student and other students and staff in the same room or vicinity were engaged immediately preceding the use of physical restraint; the behavior that prompted the restraint; the efforts made to de-escalate the situation; alternatives to restraint that were attempted; and the justification for initiating physical restraint.
- A description of the administration of the restraint including the holds used and reasons such holds were necessary; the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint; how the restraint ended; and documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided.
- For extended restraints (a restraint lasting twenty (20) minutes or longer), the written report shall describe the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts and the justification for administering the extended restraint.
- Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student.

- Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student and/or any other related matter.
- When a restraint has resulted in a serious injury to a student or program staff member or when an extended restraint has been administered, the program shall provide a copy of the written report to the Department of Education within five (5) school days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also provide the Department with a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint.

Special Circumstances

Extended restraints and restraint that result in serious injury to a student or staff member must be reported as described above, regardless of any individual waiver. The following documentation regarding individual waiver of reporting requirements will be maintained on-site in the student's file and will be made available for inspection to the Department of Education upon request:

- Informed written consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) to the waiver, which shall specify those reporting requirements listed above that the parent(s)/guardian(s) agrees to waive; and
- Specific information regarding when and how the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed regarding the administration of all restraints to the individual student.
- Nothing herein shall be construed to allow a program or classroom to receive an exemption or waiver from any of the requirements of this policy on behalf of all of the students enrolled in a particular program or classroom.

Training

To ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint, all staff will receive information/training regarding the District's restraint policy annually. Employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within **one month** of starting their employment, which will include the following:

- The District's restraint policy;
- Interventions, which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors;
- Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an extended restraint is used;
- Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
- Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
- Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in depth training in the use of physical restraint. Those designated staff members will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

Receiving/Investigating Complaints

Any student, or parent(s)/guardian(s) on said student's behalf, who believes he or she has been inappropriately restrained by an employee of the Northbridge Public Schools should follow the procedure outlined in the ***Policy Relating to Complaints About District Personnel***.

This policy shall be reviewed annually, provided to school staff, and shall be included in student handbooks. (M.G.L. chapter 69, section 1B, and chapter 71, section 37G; Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 46.00 Physical Restraint)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Northbridge Public School District will identify, evaluate and provide an appropriate public education to students who are handicapped within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Further information may be obtained from your school's principal or Dr. Gregory Rosenthal, the District's Section 504 Coordinator (508) 234-8156.

Service and Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

Some students with disabilities require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to help them make effective progress in school. These services can include, but are not limited to, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized instruction, or placement in a special classroom. Parent(s)/guardian(s) or teachers may refer students they are concerned about to the Special Education Department.

Within five (5) school days of such a referral, a consent form authorizing an evaluation of the student will be forwarded to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Following receipt of the parent(s)/guardian(s)' consent, an evaluation will be conducted and a TEAM meeting will be held to determine if the student is eligible for special education services. If the student is found eligible for special education services, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services. In some cases, the evaluation Team determines that a student with a disability may require only individual accommodations as opposed to specialized instruction and/or related services. Such students are then referred for an evaluation of their eligibility for an individual accommodation plan in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students may also be referred for an evaluation of their eligibility under Section 504 even where they have not been referred for a special education evaluation.

For more information regarding the services available to students with disabilities please contact your school principal or team chairperson.

At the District level, the ADA and Section 504 (employment activities) coordinator is:

Dr. Greg Rosenthal, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Northbridge Public Schools
87 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588
(508) 234-8156
grosenthal@nps.org

Student Support Team (SST) Process

The Student Support Team (SST) is a positive, team-oriented approach to assisting students with a wide range of concerns related to their school performance and experience. The purpose of the SST is to identify and intervene early in order to design a support system for students having difficulty in the general education classroom, academically or behaviorally. Before referring students to an SST, staff members must attempt appropriate interventions and accommodations as outlined in the DCAP and the BCAP (building curriculum accommodation plan) and provide data regarding the effectiveness of those strategies.

The SST is different from a parent-teacher conference which focuses on improving communication and addressing specific class problems. The team usually consists of the SST Coordinator (administrator) teacher, and various support personnel from the school. Parents/students may also be included, depending on the concern and/or their age. Sometimes a special education teacher or other support service provider will also participate to give his or her perspective.

The SST meeting provides everyone with an opportunity to share concerns and develop a plan. The interventions agreed upon will vary depending on the child's needs. The SST team may also try to determine if the child may be struggling due to a specific learning disability or other special need. If the SST team determines that the child could have a special need, the Team Chair and/or special education service provider is invited to the final meeting for special education evaluation consideration.

Follow-up meetings are scheduled to ensure that the plan is working and to make adjustments to ensure student success. The Student Support Team is an efficient and effective way to bring together all resources in the best interest of helping students reach their potential.

Title I Program

The mission of the Title I Program is to help our students gain the reading, writing, and math skills they will need to use in their daily lives. We provide support to students, parents, and teachers to help students achieve their highest potential, feel confident in their abilities, and take responsibility for their success.

Title I is the largest federally funded education program. It provides resources to eligible school districts based on the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Title I staff assist schools in providing services that address identified student needs to help all students achieve state learning standards. In Northbridge, we use Title I funds to support students in reading, writing, and math in grades 1-8.

Notification to Parents of Teacher Qualifications

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 requires school districts that receive federal Title I funding to notify parents of their right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct their child.

As a recipient of these funds, the Northbridge Public Schools will provide you with this information in a timely manner if you request it. Specifically, you have the right to request the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

The Northbridge Public Schools is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. If you would like to receive any of the information listed above for your child's teacher, please contact the school principal.

For more information, please contact the District's Title I Coordinator.

Title 1 Coordinator is:

Mrs. Jill Healy, Director of Curriculum
Northbridge Public Schools
87 Linwood Ave.
Whitinsville, MA 01588

TRANSPORTATION/BUSSING POLICIES

Bus Routes and Stops

School bus stops will be at centralized locations. Students are not entitled to street-by-street or door-to-door pickup and/or delivery. All routes and stops will be determined using these guidelines:

- Bus capacity
- Length of bus routes and travel time
- Distance that an eligible student would be required to walk to a bus stop, which will not exceed the statutory limit of one mile
- Grade of student(s) to be transported
- Student's individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan

Buses will not travel into cul-de-sacs or travel on unapproved town roads.

A parent/guardian or responsible person designated by the parent/guardian must be at the bus stop for the drop-off of all kindergarten through grade 5 students. A parent/guardian may write a note granting permission for his/her child to be dropped off and left at the bus stop without an adult being present. If no note is received, and no responsible person is at the bus stop, kindergarten through grade 5 students will not be dropped off and will be transported back to the school.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure safe passage of his/her child over roadways to an established bus stop. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure the safety of his/her child at the established bus stop. The district's responsibility begins when the child boards the bus at the pickup location and ends when the child disembarks the bus at the assigned drop off location.

Students must be picked up and dropped off at the same bus stop location five days a week. Whichever bus stop a student is picked up at in the morning, must be the same bus stop the student is dropped off at in the afternoon. A note requesting the student take the bus to/from a different bus stop on any given day is not acceptable.

Exceptions to any of the above guidelines may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent.

Bus Conduct

Transportation by bus to and from school is a privilege for pupils who qualify by the Rules and Regulations of the Northbridge School Committee and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The school bus is an extension of the school itself, and the rules regarding behavior are the same as in school. It shall be understood that the right of the pupil to use transportation to and from school is a qualified right dependent on good behavior.

Bus rules advise students to:

- Walk on the side facing traffic to and from the bus stop on roads and highways where there are no sidewalks.
- Be on time at the pick-up point. We recommend that students be at the bus stop 5 minutes before pick-up time. Dogs must be restrained at home when buses are expected.
- In crossing the highway after leaving the bus, cross only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross.

- Pass in front of the bus, and look both ways before crossing the street.
- Keep all items out of the aisle. Keep the bus neat, and do not mark, cut, or break any part of the bus.
- Do not throw anything in the bus or out the windows. Do not put hands, arms, or other parts of your body out of the windows or rear exit door from the bus at any time.
- Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- Be respectful to the bus driver. He/she has a very important job to do and needs your help. The driver's ears and eyes need to be focused on the road in order to drive to and from school. Do not shout or make other noises that might distract the bus driver. Do not talk to the bus driver while the bus is moving, but report any emergencies to him/her at once.
- No student shall ride home on a bus to which he/she is not assigned. The school principal or assistant principal may deprive students from riding the bus for a length a time if the student violates these rules. In all cases the principal or the assistant principal must make a report to the parents and transportation supervisor.

For any alleged violation of the previously stated rules, the bus driver will notify the principal.

Consequences

Consequences for misbehavior on the school bus will be handled by the school administrators. Please reference the school's information regarding the appropriate consequence for each offense.

Changes in Transportation

If someone other than those who normally come for a student are to pick him/her up, parents should CALL, VISIT, OR WRITE THE SCHOOL and notify the staff of the change. **No student will be allowed to change his/her normal going home procedure unless the parent/guardian notifies the school in advance.** Your child's safety and security are of primary importance. Again, students must take the bus to and from the same bus stop each day. A note requesting a student take a different bus on any particular day is not acceptable.

Drop Off/Pick-Up Procedures

Each school has its own student drop off and student pick up procedure. Please check the school's Appendix for specific information.

Bicycles may be ridden to school beginning at the second grade. **All students must wear helmets.** They must be parked in designated area, and students are not permitted to ride bicycles inside the school buildings or during recess.

The school system is not responsible for damage occurring to bicycles on school grounds. Please be advised to bring locks for student's bikes.

Eligibility for Bussing

Eligibility for transportation services is determined by the location of the student's home in relation to the school to which the student is assigned, and does not entitle the student to door-to-door service. If a student is not eligible for transportation as provided for by this policy, the parent/guardian is responsible for assuring that the student gets to and from school safely.

Students with special needs who attend out of district placements (outside the Town of Northbridge) and ride special vehicles or vans are NOT subject to the mileage boundaries or the fee. Students with special needs who attend Northbridge Public Schools are subject to the mileage boundaries and the fee under the same provisions as other students unless they have

“special transportation” by a “special vehicle” indicated in their individualized plan (I.E.P). Students with special needs with these two provisions in their I.E.P. will be transported regardless of mileage and are NOT subject to the fee. Students who have a 504 plan are subject to the fee under the same provisions as all other students.

Mileage Guidelines for Bussing

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 68 requires free public transportation for students only if they are in grades K-6 and only if they live more than two miles from the school they are entitled to attend.

The Northbridge School Committee (File: EEAA) has set the following mileage guidelines:

All Students Grades K through 5:

- Students who live more than two (2) miles from school: Eligible for free bus transportation by law
- Students who live more than one (1) mile, but not more than 2 miles from school: Eligible for bus transportation, subject to bus fee
- Students who live (1) mile or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Grade 6:

- Students who live more than two (2) miles from school: Eligible for free bus transportation by law
- Students who live two (2) miles or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Grades 7 through 12:

- Students who live more than two (2) miles from school: Eligible for bus transportation, subject to bus fee
- Students who live two (2) miles or less from school: Not eligible for bus transportation from home residence

Fees

The School Committee may make bus transportation available on a fee-for-service basis to students who do not qualify for free bussing under state law on a space-available basis.

- The School Committee will establish the level of service and fees for the next school year.
- Fees will be due during the month of May, and the District will notify parents and guardians of the specific due date each year.
- All fees will be due on or before the annually established due date.
- The Bus Privilege Fee is set at \$200 per student with a family cap of \$600. This fee is subject to change upon School Committee vote.
- A late fee of \$50 per student with a family cap of \$100 will be assessed for registrations submitted after 4PM on the first Friday in June.
- Online registration and electronic payment are recommended.
- Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are entitled to free transportation provided that all necessary documentation is submitted by the required deadlines.
- Students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch are still required to register for school bus transportation, and will be subject to the late fee if all necessary documentation is not submitted by the required deadline.
- Bus fees are not refundable and will not be prorated for partial years or one-way transportation.
- Refunds will only be issued on a case by case basis subject to the approval of the Superintendent for requests made one week prior to the start of the school year. A processing fee of \$25 per student with a family cap of \$50 will be deducted from the refund.

Request/Complaint Procedure for Bus Management

Requests/complaints regarding the bus management procedure must be submitted in writing to the transportation coordinator. A response will be provided within five (5) school days of receipt. In accordance with the Massachusetts General Law, a complaint concerning the district's compliance with the law may be made to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:7A; 71:68; 71B:5

Use of Video Cameras on Buses

Students should be aware that they may be under audio and videotaped surveillance while riding on Northbridge Public School buses.

Cameras may be used to monitor students' behavior on buses in order to promote the safe transportation of students. Videotapes of students riding on buses may be used to foster security, promote students' safety and monitor student misconduct.

Prior notice must be given to the Superintendent before any video is reviewed. The Superintendent or designee shall review any videotape if any misconduct is alleged.

This is the last page of the general NPS Handbook. All Appendices are linked at the end of the Table of Contents.

