

# NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



2024-2025

## NMRSD PRE-K-12 SCHOOL HANDBOOK

**Should you need this information translated, please contact the principal of your child's school.**

En caso de necesitar esta información traducida, por favor comuníquese con el director de la escuela de su hijo. 如果您需要翻譯此資訊,請與您孩子的校長聯繫

Rúguǒ nín xūyào zhèxiē xìnxi fānyì, qǐng liánxì nín háizi de xuéxiào de xiàozhǎng.

**The North Middlesex Regional School District does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its services, programs, and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, or age.**

## NMRSD VISION STATEMENT

We are NM: A safe, inclusive, student-centered community of persevering and empowered learners.

## NMRSD SCHOOLS' MISSION

At NM, we are committed to creating a diverse learning environment where students are provided a meaningful education through academic, social, and emotional learning experiences. Together with parents, caregivers and the community, students are encouraged to ignite and embrace their individual potential to find success within NM and beyond.

## CORE VALUES

***To support the vision and mission statements, all members of the NMRSD community will:***

- respect yourself and others;
- be responsible and take ownership of your actions;
- always be the best version of yourself;
- contribute to maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment;
- be open to new challenges; and
- stay positive and communicate respectfully.

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**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ASHBY - PEPPERELL - TOWNSEND, MASSACHUSETTS**

**2024 – 2025 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

FIRST	LAST	POSITION	MEMBER	TERM EXPIRES	RESIDENCE	DISTRICT EMAIL
William	Hackler	Member	Townsend	2025	Townsend	whackler@nmrsd.org
Lisa	Martin	Chair	At-Large	2026	Pepperell	lmartin@nmrsd.org
Jill	Twigg	Member	Pepperell	2027	Pepperell	jtwigg@nmrsd.org
Patrick	McPhillips	Member	Pepperell	2027	Pepperell	pmcphillips@nmrsd.org
Thomas	Casey	Member	Pepperell	2025	Pepperell	tcasey@nmrsd.org
June	McNeil	Member	Ashby	2025	Ashby	jmcneil@nmrsd.org
William	Burg	Member	Townsend	2027	Townsend	wburg@nmrsd.org
Randee	Rusch	Vice Chair	At-Large	2026	Townsend	rrusch@nmrsd.org
Lisa	Bloom	Member	At-Large	2026	Townsend	lbloom@nmrsd.org

**District Office Administration - 978-597-8713**

Mr. Brad Morgan, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Gary Burboa-Reese, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Ms. Erin Upton, Director of Special Education

**504 Coordinators**

Special Education Director (978) 597-8713 X1501

**Coordinators for the Homeless**

Special Education Director (978) 597-8713 X1501

**Title VI**

Assistant Superintendent (978) 597-8713 X1301

**Title IX**

Assistant Superintendent (978) 597-8713 X1301  
Director of Human Resources (978) 587-8713 X 1601

**DISTRICT COMMITTEES**

The following district committees have been developed over the years as vehicles to develop communication. They include Superintendent Parent Advisory Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee, School Councils, and numerous building and district curriculum committees. For further information, please contact the principal's office.

## WELCOME LETTER

Dear Students and Families:

Welcome to the North Middlesex Regional School District. This year we have combined all three school handbooks into one joint handbook. We encourage you to use this handbook, which provides important guidelines for our schools and the North Middlesex Regional School District. Becoming familiar with procedures and district policies will assist you in making informed decisions. North Middlesex Regional School District reserves the right to implement guidelines from the Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education at any time.

The towns of Ashby, Townsend, and Pepperell schools that provide a quality education for kindergarten through twelfth grade students. Our seven schools work together to ensure a consistent, unified experience and preparation for years beyond high school.

The mission of our District is to provide a comprehensive educational experience focused on students becoming contributing members of society. Our schools encourage all students to strive for excellence academically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Our goal is to work in partnership with caregivers and our three communities to create an engaging learning experience. Our students will have opportunities to inspire, explore, discover, and create.

As part of our goal for frequent communication from our schools to your home, we encourage you to utilize our online tools. Our individual school websites can be located on our district webpage (<http://www.nmrtd.org/>). During the school year, notices and newsletters will be sent home regularly or made available electronically to support our ongoing commitment to communication.

Please note: The *Student Handbook Addendum*, the district *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan*, and the *Bullying Incident Report Form* can all be found on the district website under the "For Families" tab.

We look forward to partnering with you in your child's educational journey.

Sincerely,  
NMRSD Principals

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## SCHOOL HOURS

### REGULAR STARTING AND DISMISSAL SCHEDULE

School	Arrival	Start	End
SECC AM		9:15 a.m.	11:45 a.m.
SECC PM		12:15 p.m.	2:45 p.m.
AES	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
SMS	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
VBES	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
HBMS		8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
NMS		8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
NMRHS		7:15 a.m.	1:54 p.m.

### **REGISTERING NEW STUDENTS OR WITHDRAWAL OF STUDENTS**

Online Registration through Aspen is now available for families registering new students. Directions can be seen at Registration / Online Registration ([nmrsd.org](http://nmrsd.org)). A physical is required within one year of transfer into our school system.

Students moving from North Middlesex to another community will be processed through the Principal's Office. A transfer card will be issued, as well as a record release form signed. NMRSD may forward student records to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the signed consent of a caregiver or eligible student, in accordance with 603 CMR 23.07(4)(g). All library books must be returned to the library.

### **EMERGENCY CARDS**

Two emergency cards are required for every student. These cards will be sent home soon after school opens. Parents are requested to complete them, sign and return them promptly. The cards should list neighbors, relatives, or childcare providers who can be notified in case a child becomes ill at school and needs transportation from school if a caregiver is not available. Those listed must live within a reasonable driving distance of the school.

For the safety of your child: PLEASE MAKE US AWARE OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS, EMERGENCY PERSON TO CONTACT, CHANGE IN CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS, ETC., AS THEY OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR.

### **ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS/DISMISSALS**

(Please see policy JH Student Absences and Excuses. Updated policy will be made available after School Committee adoption on August 22, 2024)



## **TARDINESS**

Students are expected to arrive at school on time and prepared to learn. Any student who has not reported on time will be marked tardy and must sign in at the office. If the late arrival is excused (e.g. doctor appointment), documentation should be provided at that time. Students who are repeatedly tardy may face disciplinary action.

At the high school level, for every seven (7) unexcused tardies to school that a student accumulates in a quarter, he/she may have to serve a mandatory after school detention. Students and families will be given a week's notice prior to serving a detention. Failure to attend an assigned detention after school can result in further disciplinary action, which could include Saturday School detention.

Students that accrue in excess of fifteen (15) tardies in one quarter are subject to loss of privileges such as, but not limited to: parking on campus, participation in extracurricular activities, opportunities to attend non-academic field trips, membership in National Honor Society, and/or other clubs/organizations that the student may be part of.

## **DISMISSALS**

If a parent/guardian wishes to dismiss a student early, a note from the parent/guardian should accompany the student to school. The parent/guardian should state the reason for dismissal and come into the school office to pick up the student. For safety reasons, students are not permitted to wait outside for rides during the school day. Anyone dismissing a child must be prepared to show proper identification and must be listed on a student's emergency card. We urge parents/guardians to not dismiss their children within 15 minutes of the close of school. If transportation changes are required, office notification from parent/guardian must be provided to the office ahead of me. If the bus requested is at capacity, the student may not be granted permission.

Excessive, unexcused dismissals may be dealt with the same way that excessive tardiness is addressed by administration. Thus, at the high school level, if a student accumulates more than 7 unexcused dismissals in a quarter, s/he may be required to serve an after school detention. Students will not be permitted to be dismissed from school during lunch block and return for their next academic block.

## **BATHROOMS**

To ensure all students feel comfortable and safe using the bathroom facilities, students are not to loiter and /or congregate in or around bathrooms. No more than one student should be in a bathroom stall at any time. Stalls should always be closed and locked when in use. Private, single-use all-gender bathrooms are available on each floor of the building.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

The goal of the [North Middlesex Extended Day Program](#) is to provide an invaluable service to working parents of children in the North Middlesex Regional School District. The early start (K-4) and after school (K-6) sessions provide a safe and harmonious environment in which your child can make age-appropriate choices that lead to sound social, emotional, and physical development.

Our program is located in three buildings (provided numbers warrant it) for students entering Kindergarten through Grade 6: Varnum Brook, Spaulding, and Ashby. Elementary students will use their own buildings both before and after school. For the afternoon session, (Grade 5-6) students from Nissittissit will be bussed to Varnum Brook and students from Hawthorne Brook will be bussed to either Spaulding or Ashby.

Children must be potty-trained before attending our program. We do not have changing facilities.

The Extended Day Program is a self-supporting program that is funded solely by parent tuition and donations. The program receives no money from the regular school budget.

### **MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL**

Breakfast is available at all buildings, 15 minutes before the start of the day.

Fifth and sixth graders are eligible for the after school program at the elementary schools. Please see the “elementary school” section above for more information.

After dismissal, all students must vacate the premises unless they are involved in a staff-facilitated activity (e.g. an extra-curricular activity, athletics, tutoring). No students should be in any district building unsupervised by a district staff member.

### **BICYCLES**

Because of the large volume of traffic at each school’s location and for safety reasons, elementary children are not permitted to ride bikes to school unless approved by the administration.

### **BOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY**

All books, chromebooks and other materials or equipment issued to students are the property of the North Middlesex Regional School District. Lost or damaged books, chromebooks or other school property must be paid for by the student or parent/guardian. Outstanding obligations from non-payment of goods, books, and official documents could result in the loss of student privileges.

Accidental damage of school property should be reported immediately. Willful damage will be treated as a major disciplinary infraction, the student will be held financially responsible and disciplinary action may also be administered.

For questions regarding chromebooks, please see the chromebook agreement. [Policy IJNDB-R](#)

### **BUILDING ENTRANCE**

The doors for school will open 10-15 minutes prior to the start of the school day

### **CALENDAR**

The NMRSD 2024-2025 calendar is available [here](#).

### **CANCELLATION/DELAY FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES**

In an effort to assist families and support student safety, the administration of the North Middlesex Regional School District offers the following important information about emergency school closings during the school year. In the North Middlesex Regional School District, the decision to close school is usually made the evening prior or early morning hours by district administrators. Please note the following about those early morning decisions.

The Superintendent of Schools will send out a Connect-Ed message to all families if there is a decision to close schools. The call may come between 4:30 – 6:30 AM. You can check the following radio and television stations if you miss the call or look on the NMRSD website.

**WBZ-TV (Channel 4)**

**WCVB-TV (Channel 5)**

**WHDH-TV (Channel 7)**

**FOX25-TV (Channel 25)**

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

At North Middlesex Regional School District, we are always willing to respond to questions or to hear your concerns. However, to ensure a quick resolution, please contact the person who is closest to the situation which generally follows this flow of communication:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LvvgyiYIQ0-UoVbmEfgSWfetenSPPpUo2z6iBI5LMag/edit?usp=sharing>

## **DRESS CODE**

Expectations for student dress are important to create a positive environment that is conducive to the learning and safety of students as well as providing a positive working environment for our staff. It is commonly accepted that student behavior and the school environment are strongly influenced by the dress and appearance of students. These expectations inherently teach students the importance of respectable appearance which can positively impact self-respect and self-esteem. Since school is primarily a place of learning and work, students are expected to dress appropriately for those tasks. Diversity within our school population is appreciated and the need for individual expression is respected. We strongly believe that those values can be celebrated and maintained while at the same time meeting the following expectations. Students shall not wear clothing items that contain messages that are vulgar, obscene or libelous; that denigrate others on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability; that promote alcohol or drug use or violence; or that are otherwise disruptive to the educational process. Undergarments should not be worn alone and must be covered by another layer of clothing.

Caregivers may be contacted to bring a change of clothes if apparel is deemed to be unacceptable.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CHROMEBOOK AGREEMENT**

[Policy IJNDB](#)

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Students are encouraged to participate in various field trips that or which serve as an extension of the classroom program. These enrichment trips are funded through grants, student fees, school budgeting, private donations and the PTO. If participation causes a financial hardship for a family, the student is encouraged to speak with his/her school administration. Funds are available to assist these students. Students and families will receive ample notification with the necessary permission slips and guidelines relative to the trip. All school rules apply to behavior standards while on field trips. Children are expected to show cooperation and self-control. Students who display poor academic effort and/or poor behaviors may find themselves excluded from future field trips during the same academic year. Students who display poor academic effort and /or poor behaviors and/or are not safe to be on an off school campus field trip may find themselves excluded from said fieldtrip. If an exclusion from a field trip is warranted, parents/guardians will be notified within a reasonable time before the trip. The school will provide an alternative educational program for those students not attending a class trip.

## **HALL PASSES**

Students are not allowed to leave any classroom without following proper classroom sign-out procedures. Students are to report as quickly as possible to the destination specified on the pass. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in a teacher detention. At the elementary level, teachers have a responsibility to make sure that students have a signed pass when leaving their

classrooms. Passes must have a date, time and destination on them.

Constant requests by the same student for a pass to the bathroom should be brought to the attention of the school nurse to determine if the student has a medical problem.

Any student who abuses the pass policy by repeatedly being out of classes for extended periods of time, visiting/disrupting other classes or lunch, or forging or altering a pass in any manner, may be placed on the “no pass list” prohibiting him/her from leaving the classroom without an escort. Forgery of the time on a pass or a teacher’s signature will necessitate disciplinary action. Unauthorized possession of NMRHS pass forms will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.

### **HOMELESSNESS**

Please see MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT (Homeless Students Enrollment Rand Services File: JFABD.

### **HOMEWORK/ABSENCES**

Students who are absent for one or two days are requested to contact a classmate for assignments. If the absence is for three or more consecutive days, parents/guardians may call the school for assignments. However, if a parent/guardian is certain that their child will be absent from school due to illness or injury, they may request assignments earlier. Requests received by 8:30 a.m. should be available at 3:00 p.m. that day. Parents must pick these up at the office.

The North Middlesex Regional School District does not support the use of school days for the purpose of family vacations. Each school day is vital to the progress and development of every child. Homework and class assignments will not be provided in advance of family vacations. Students are required to follow-up on assignments, missed quizzes, and/or tests by speaking with their teachers upon returning from their school absences. The teacher will use appropriate discretion for when assignments are due.

### **HOMEWORK GUIDELINES**

In the North Middlesex Regional School District, we value study that occurs beyond the classroom and school day largely because we have learned through research and practice that good homework accelerates achievement and establishes a positive work ethic invaluable in later pursuits. To this end, the assignment of homework aligns with what educators and others believe to be the primary purposes of homework: the reinforcement of skills and knowledge learned in the classroom, the application of learning to a new situation, and the independent acquisition of skills and knowledge. Additionally, educators offer these justifications for the assignment of homework.

- To provide opportunity for parents/guardians and children to work together on academic pursuits
- To keep parents/guardians abreast of the curriculum

- To serve as a guide to the teacher in planning instruction
- To develop study habits and a work ethic among students
- To provide activities that support other learning styles

With these thoughts in mind, the following guidelines for homework have been established:

All projects assigned will reflect the primary purpose(s) of homework, will be given sufficient time for completion, and will not be due immediately upon return from vacation. Recognizing the difficulties associated with determining individual student contributions and equitable grading, teachers are discouraged from assigning out-of-school group projects unless these issues can be assessed with certainty.

Elementary students may receive 10 minutes of homework per grade level. Middle and high school students may receive homework based on their coursework.

The teacher and the student will assess all homework assignments. Collected homework will be returned to the student in a timely fashion.

Teachers will communicate in a timely manner with parents when homework assignments are not being completed. Parents will communicate with teachers if their children are experiencing difficulty with assignments.

When assigning homework, teachers need to be aware of extra-curricular school events in which many students are involved.

Parents are encouraged to utilize the resources available through the school to assist students with the successful completion of assignments.

Failure to complete assignments may result in a detention or working lunch.

### **IDLING MOTOR VEHICLES**

Operators of any bus or motor vehicle are restricted from unnecessarily idling such vehicles on school grounds pursuant to M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B. Fines of up to \$100 may be imposed for a first offense and \$500 for second and subsequent offenses.

### **INTERNET ACCESS**

Because the Internet is an open system, some of the material that is available on the Internet may not be suitable for students. The school does provide a filter, which denies access to inappropriate Internet sites, and staff always monitors student use of the Internet.

Student access to private e-mail is not allowed. Parents and students have the responsibility for discussing the appropriate usage of the Internet Access Network. An Internet Policy will go home with the opening packet. All students and caregivers must return this signed policy handout to school. ([Acceptable Use for Technology Pre-k-12 - File IJNDB](#))

### **INSTRUCTIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (ISST)**

The Instructional Support Services Team (ISST) consists of building administrators, guidance counselors, the school resource officer, nurses, teachers, and the athletic director. The ISST meets once per cycle to review student attendance, disciplinary, and academic data. The ISST will identify students who may be at risk for academic failure in addition to attendance related issues. If a student is identified as being at risk for excessive absenteeism or academic failure, the team will determine a course of action that could include, but not be limited to:

- Phone calls to the parent/guardian
- Meeting with the student and/or parent/guardian
- Behavior intervention plans
- Daily “check-ins” with a counselor or administrator
- Home visits
- Filing referrals to child protection services and/or juvenile court (if deemed necessary)

### **KINDERGARTEN SCREENING**

The Massachusetts State Department of Education requires kindergarten screening. Appointments will be made at the time of registration. The purpose of this screening is to identify children who may be unable to progress effectively in a regular education program. It is not designed to determine whether or not the child is ready for kindergarten.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

Each school has an area for lost and found clothes and other items. Families are invited to claim articles at any time. Lost books, glasses, and jewelry can be found at the school office. If a student finds school material or personal property belonging to someone else, please return it to the secretary or teachers. Lost and found designated spaces are in the building. At the end of the year, all unclaimed articles will be given to charity.

Please do not send valuables to school with your child. The school will not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items under any circumstances.

### **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION**

Each school has a very active caregiver-teacher organization with many supportive members. Functions and events are held throughout the school year, which encourages family involvement and provides opportunities for participation in school activities. Some of these events produce funds that allow for the purchase of educational materials and other supplies for each grade level. We encourage your attendance as we value your input and ideas in establishing our plans for the year’s activities.

## **RECESS**

All students at the elementary level will have a recess after lunch. Recess is a time for relaxing, exercising, playing, socializing, and renewal for learning. The school rules and classroom rules are guidelines for appropriate behavior at recess. The school playgrounds are always supervised by school personnel. Children wishing to play on the equipment cannot wear flip-flops. Children who disobey rules may lose recess privileges. Bullying, fighting, biting, threatening, swearing, or sexual harassment is strictly forbidden and may result in other disciplinary measures. Please dress your child appropriately for all weather conditions. Children will go outside, weather and or situation permitting.

**PLEASE NOTE: Children who cannot participate in outdoor recess due to any type of medical or health issue MUST HAVE A DOCTOR'S NOTE EXCUSING THEM FROM OUTDOOR RECESS.** Children will not be excused from outdoor recess with only a caregiver's or guardian's request.  
**PLEASE NOTE: Parents may not attend recess with their child.**

Middle schoolers have an opportunity to go outside before or after lunch for approximately ten minutes.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards / marking periods are at the following frequency:

- PreK-K           two (2) times per year
- Grades 1-8      three (3) times per year
- Grades 9-12    four (4) times per year

Report cards are issued through Aspen. Report cards at the elementary school level are standards-based; report cards in the middle and high school follow a traditional format. Please consult the website calendar for the dates on which report cards will be sent home.

## **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Educational Reform Act of 1993 called for the establishment of a school council at each school within the Commonwealth. School Council meetings are held regularly throughout the school year and are open to the public.

The School Council is made up of the following members: the building principal, who serves as one of the two co-chairs, caregivers who are elected by each school; teachers who are elected by the faculty; and one community representative.

## **SCHOOL COUNSELOR**

The school counselor/ adjustment counselor is integral to your child(ren)'s school. His/her role is multifaceted and interconnects with a wide range of people. These include, for example, caregivers, teachers, students, administration, agencies, and community organizations. Through these interactions, communication is enhanced, understandings are developed, and a range of



concerns are resolved.

Through counseling students, individually or in groups, consulting with caregivers, teachers and others, coordinating the efforts of various people, and co-teaching in a classroom alongside the classroom teachers, the counselor contributes greatly to the overall development of the students.

### **SEPAC**

Massachusetts law requires school districts to create a districtwide special education caregiver advisory council (SEPAC) offering membership to all caregivers of eligible students. The caregiver advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.

In instances where districts have not had success with generating strong interest in creating a SEPAC (such as ours), districts may work with other districts or through an Educational Collaborative to establish a Regional SEPAC.

The NMRSD participates in a Regional SEPAC with several neighboring districts. SEPAC meeting dates are sent out annually, and the meetings generally are located at the offices of the CAPS Collaborative in Westminster.

For SEPAC information, please contact the Special Education Office.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SECTION 504 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Rights and information relating to special education and students with disabilities, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are available through the school and special education departments. Such rights are pertinent when students are not progressing effectively in regular education programming due to a suspected mental or physical impairment or when students are unable to access the regular education curriculum without disability-related accommodations. Caregivers or professionals concerned about the student's development have the right to request a special education or Section 504 evaluation of the student.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY**

Following a referral, the Team determines if a student is eligible for special education based on a thorough evaluation. Prior to any special education evaluation, caregiver consent is required. Not every student will require all of the assessments offered by the school. Each evaluation must have an educational assessment as well as an assessment by one or more specialists in all areas related to the suspected disability. Eligibility is based upon the determination of presence of a disability (as defined by state and federal regulations), the lack of progress in the general

education program as a result of the disability, and the need for specially designed instruction/related services in order for the student to make effective progress.

### **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLAN (IEP)**

If a student is found eligible for special education, the Team develops an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) that highlights, among other things, the student's strengths, areas of concern, strategies for accommodating the student's disability, modifications to the curriculum, services that the student will receive and important goals and objectives developed to ensure student progress. Caregiver involvement during the evaluation and IEP development is an integral part of the process. An IEP is a vehicle for improving the educational experience for a student with disabilities.

Progress reports shall be provided at least as often as caregivers are informed of the progress of students without disabilities.

The Parents' Rights Brochure from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education is available in the school special education office. Caregivers are encouraged to contact the student's special education teacher, school counselor, principal or special education director with questions about special education.

### **Special education and transfer of parental rights at the age of majority.**

Upon a student reaching the age of eighteen (18) years of age, the district will continue to send the caregiver written notices and information, but the caregiver will no longer have decision-making authority, except as provided below:

a. If the caregiver has sought and received educational guardianship from a court of competent jurisdiction, then the caregiver retains full decision-making authority. The caregiver does not have authority to override any decision or lack of decision made by the student who has reached the age of majority unless the caregiver has sought or received educational guardianship or other legal authority from a court of competent jurisdiction.

b. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to share decision-making with his or her caregiver, including allowing the caregiver to co-sign the IEP. Such a choice is made in the presence of the Team and is documented in written form. The student's choice prevails at any time that a disagreement occurs between the adult student and the caregiver or another adult with whom the student has shared decision-making.

c. The student, upon reaching the age of majority and in the absence of any court actions to the contrary, may choose to delegate continued decision-making to his or her caregiver or other willing adults. Such a choice is made in the presence of at least one representative of the school district and one other witness and is documented in written form and maintained in the student record.

## **SECTION 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . ." The Section 504 regulations also require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability. Under Section 504, a FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met.

Any questions about Section 504 or requests for evaluations of Section 504 or IEP eligibility may be directed to the district's Section 504 Coordinator and Director of Student Support Services, Ms. Erin Upton, at the Central Administration Office. A Notice of Rights under Section 504 is available in the school's office. The school counselor is responsible for monitoring each student's Section 504 plan. The principal is responsible for the successful implementation of each student's Section 504 plan.

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

## **STUDENT COUNCIL**

All NMRSD Schools have a Student Council body. During the course of the year, the council communicates information to classroom members and pursues activities to promote school spirit and a sense of community for our school.

## **STUDENT DRIVING AND PARKING POLICY**

Enrolled students with a valid driver's license, registered automobile or motorcycle are eligible to park on the school grounds with a valid parking permit obtained from the main office. Students terminating enrollment during the school year are required to surrender their parking permit to the main office. Students are expected to use vehicles on school grounds in a careful and safe manner. The school administration reserves the right to issue a limited number of parking permits to students for extenuating circumstances.

There are a limited number of parking spots available and they are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. The assigning of parking permits begins in late August. The school will release a

schedule for pick up dates and times, with seniors having first access, followed by juniors. Any additional parking permits are distributed on a first come, first serve basis until no spots are available. Parking passes are \$180.

If there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated or is in violation of either the law or rules of school, a school official can legally search a student's car on school property or at a school-related event. See the provisions relative to Student Search.

The following documents will be required with your application:

- A photocopy of valid Massachusetts Driver's License
- A photocopy of automobile registration
- A completed application form

### **TRANSPORTATION- SCHOOL BUS REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

The regulations for school bus use for all students Grades K-12 in the North Middlesex Regional Schools are:

#### **Prior to Loading: (on the road and at the school)**

- Be on time at the designated bus stop.
- Stay off the road at all times while waiting for the bus. Bus riders should conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting.
- Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to step onto the bus.
- Do not crowd and push getting on the bus.
- Respectfully follow the instructions of school staff members on duty.

#### **WHILE ON THE BUS:**

- Keep hands and head inside the bus.
- Keep your hands to yourself and don't touch others inappropriately.
- Horseplay and fighting are not permitted on or around the school bus at any time.
- Assist in keeping the bus safe and sanitary. (DO NOT throw things on the bus, spit or litter the bus.)
- Keep voice tone at a moderate level.
- There is no eating or drinking on the bus.
- Do not swear, use vulgar or derogatory language.
- As written in the school district's sexual harassment policy, sexual harassment or assault will not be tolerated on the bus and will result in disciplinary action.
- Treat bus equipment/property as you would the furniture in your own home. Damage to bus equipment/property will be paid for by the offender.

- DO NOT leave books, lunches, or other articles on the bus.
- Keep books, packages, coats, and all other objects out of aisles.
- Help look after the safety and comfort of small children.
- DO NOT throw objects inside the bus or out the bus window.
- DO NOT leave or change your seat while the bus is in motion.
- Be courteous to fellow pupils and the bus driver.
- Remain quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
- Remain on the bus unless requested to leave by the bus driver in an emergency situation.
- Sit where you are told.
- Do not use Technology inappropriately on the bus.

A written permission slip from the parent/guardian is necessary in order for a student to get on/off the bus at a place other than his/her regular bus stop, or to ride a different bus. Students should bring their parent's note to the office in the morning and they will receive a bus pass that must be presented to the driver. *Allowing students to ride a different bus is at the discretion of the school administration and bus company as some buses are filled to capacity.* Otherwise, students must get on or off the bus at their assigned stop. Continued refusal to promptly obey the directions of the driver or refusal to obey bus regulation may cause a student to be referred to the principal for disciplinary action.

Possessing a weapon, lighting matches, smoking, alcohol and drug use on the bus are prohibited and will result in disciplinary action as is outlined in this handbook.

**AFTER LEAVING BUS:**

Cross the road, when necessary, immediately after getting off the bus, at least ten feet in front of the bus, and only after looking to be sure that no traffic is approaching from either direction.

**Extra-Curricular and Field Trips:**

Bus rules and regulations will apply to any trip under school sponsorship. Pupils shall respect the wishes of teachers and chaperones appointed by the school.

**Bus Contractor:**

Dee Bus Service, 978-597-2860

**Bus Disciplinary Actions:**

[Policy JICC](#)

**VISITORS**

All persons entering the school must enter at the front of your child(ren)'s school and sign in at the Main Office; you are not to go directly to a classroom. Visitor badges will be issued to

individual visitors and volunteers while they are in school. For security reasons, all visitors and volunteers are asked to visibly wear their stickers/badges.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Anyone who wishes to volunteer to chaperone a field trip or support the school through volunteering must complete a CORI form. If you are selected to volunteer, you must follow appropriate visitor procedures. Please remember that volunteers may not take pictures or videos of students.

### **WORK PERMITS**

Students who need a work permit should see the secretary in the main office. Students between the ages of 14 and 17 must have a job before they can be issued a work permit.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Mission**

The mission of the NMRSD Health Services Department is to promote the health and wellbeing of the NMRSD community, and to ensure that every student is healthy, safe and ready to learn each day in school.

### **ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS PRESCHOOL**

A child with special needs is eligible for enrollment in the preschool program when he/she becomes three (3). Children without special needs must be three (3) years of age before August 31st. It is the expectation that all students be completely toilet trained. The only exceptions would be for students who have a documented medical diagnosis accompanied by a health 504 and/or students who have a disability and require toileting assistance as outlined in their individual education plan (IEP). Completely toilet-trained children are considered:

- 1) Those who do not wear diapers or pull-ups.
- 2) Can let an adult know when they have to go to the bathroom.
- 3) Have two or fewer accidents per week.

A copy of the child's birth certificate must be presented to the school before the entrance date.

A physical examination within one year of the entrance is a school health requirement. The following immunizations are required\*, and immunization records a listed below must be presented:

- DTaP – 4 doses
- Polio – 3 doses
- MMR – 1 dose (given after their first birthday)
- Hepatitis B – 3 doses
- Varicella (chickenpox) 1 dose or the date of the disease in written form from the doctor
- Hib 4 doses
- Physical examination - within one year of start date
- Lead level - should include date and results

**KINDERGARTEN/FIRST GRADE:**

[Policy JEB](#)

Children entering the kindergarten program must be five (5) years of age prior to September 1 of the year they enter school. Children entering 1st grade must be six (6) years of age prior to September 1 of the year they enter school. It is the expectation that all students be completely toilet trained. The only exceptions would be for students who have a documented medical diagnosis accompanied by a health 504 and/or students who have a disability and require toileting assistance as outlined in their individual education plan (IEP). Completely toilet-trained children are considered:

- 1) Those who do not wear diapers or pull-ups.
- 2) Can let an adult know when they have to go to the bathroom.
- 3) Have two or fewer accidents per week.

A copy of the child's birth certificate must be presented to the school prior to the entrance date.

A physical examination within a one-year period of entrance is a school health requirement.

The following immunizations and records are required\*:

- DTaP/Tdap – 5 doses (DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP)
- Polio – 4 doses
- MMR – 2 doses
- Hepatitis B – 3 doses
- Varicella (chicken pox) – 2 doses or the date of the disease in writing from the doctor.
- A lead test - must include date of exam and results
- A physical exam

### **NEW TRANSFERS INTO DISTRICT:**

All students transferring into the district must meet the immunization requirements consistent with their grade level **and** provide a current physical exam done within one year of transfer in date\*.

\*If the above requirements are not met, your child will be denied entrance into school. Exceptions will be made in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Please call the school nurse if you have any questions.

### **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS IN GRADES 1-12**

#### **Immunizations**

##### **Grades 1-6**

The following immunizations and records are required\*:

- DTaP/Tdap – 5 doses (DT is only acceptable with a letter stating a medical contraindication to DTaP)
- Polio – 4 doses
- MMR – 2 doses
- Hepatitis B – 3 doses
- Varicella (chicken pox) – 2 doses or the date of the disease in writing from the doctor.

##### **Grades 7-10**

In addition to the above requirements, the following additional immunizations are required for entrance into 7th grade\*:

- Meningococcal (1 dose)
- Tdap (1 dose)

##### **Grades 11-12**

In addition to the above requirements, the following additional immunization is required on or after the 16th birthday for all students in grade 11\*:

- Meningococcal (2nd dose)

#### **Physicals**

Physical exams are required for entrance to Grades PreK, K, 4, 7 and 10. They should be completed within one calendar year of entrance to the grade, by the student's primary care provider (PCP). If the student does not have a PCP, the school nurse will work with the family to facilitate finding a PCP and getting a current physical exam.

Physical exams are expected for students participating in after-school sports (per MIAA regulations). The physical must be within one calendar year of the beginning of the sport. If needed, many urgent cares offer sports physicals, but **not** the standard, annual physical provided by primary care providers.

#### **IN SCHOOL SCREENINGS**

The state of Massachusetts Department of Public Health mandates certain health screenings be performed annually in all public schools (Massachusetts Department of Public Health



Regulation: 105 CMR 200.000). The purpose of these screenings is to identify potential barriers to academic success and refer those students for treatment as needed.

Notices of upcoming screenings are sent out via email blasts, in newsletters and notices sent home with students. These will include an explanation of the screening as well as a relative time frame when it will be done in your student's school. Parents do have the right to opt their student out of any screening by submitting a written request to the school nurse that states the specific screening they are choosing to opt out of. Opt out forms are sent out for postural and SBIRT screenings. Any parent who chooses to opt out of any screening is strongly encouraged to follow up with their primary care provider to get that screening performed and help to ensure their student's health and success in school.

### **Vision Screenings**

- Vision is screened in grades Prek-5, 7 and 10
- Students in grades PreK and K will be screened using the SPOT Vision Screener.

### **Hearing Screenings**

- Hearing is screened in grades K-3, grade 7 and 10

### **Height & Weight Screenings**

- Height and weight is screened for all students in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10.

### **Postural Screenings**

- Postural Screening (for scoliosis and other growth related back/posture concerns) is completed in grades 5 through 9.

### **SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, & Referral to Treatment) Screenings**

- SBIRT Screening is completed in grades 7 and 10.

## **HEALTH OFFICE & ILLNESS MANAGEMENT**

Students should feel free to see the school nurse when they have any problems or questions pertaining to health. A student who wishes to see the nurse during school time must secure a pass from the teacher and present it to the nurse. If a student attempts to misuse the nurse's office, parents/guardians, administration, and counseling will be notified. Parents/guardians of students who habitually visit the nurse's office will be notified of these frequent visits and advised to consult their physician.

The school nurse's responsibility includes various screenings and participation in a host of activities in addition to the emergency treatment of students who are injured or become ill in school. It is not the responsibility of the nurse to provide parents/guardians with medical diagnoses about health-related issues. Parents/guardians must seek the opinion from other sources such as a family physician, public health nurse, public health clinics, etc.

While it is important for students to be in school as much as possible, students should remain at home if they are experiencing a fever of over 100°F, a disruptive cough or cold, or if they have been vomiting or have diarrhea. They may return to school after they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication or 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting/diarrhea. For additional information on illness management and return to school after illness protocols, please refer to the Health Services page of the school website.

### **PROLONGED ABSENCES**

Any student who has been absent due to a long-term illness, injury, or hospitalization is required to have a re-entry meeting before returning to school. Contact the nurse's office to schedule an appointment.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The school nurse will review all medical forms for students going on field trips and will determine whether a nurse is needed to accompany the students on the trip. All field trip medication forms need to be submitted well in advance of the trip to allow for appropriate preparation to address student health needs. All medications for field trips must comply with the NMRSD Medication Administration Policy and follow the instructions listed below under "Medication".

If the school nurse determines that no nurse is needed to accompany the students on the field trip, then the nurse and teacher will review health concerns and proper medication administration prior to the trip. Students may self-carry inhalers during the field trip if they have written parental/guardian permission and with approval from the school nurse (per CMR 105.210). Proper administration of EpiPens will be reviewed with teachers prior to field trips.

### **LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES**

Written medical documentation of allergy, signs and symptoms, and treatment must be renewed annually. All EpiPens are kept in the nurse's office. All staff members are trained annually on signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and the correct use of an EpiPen. The school nurse will work with the parents/guardians and primary care provider of the student with life-threatening allergies to prepare an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and an emergency response plan for non-medical staff to guide their actions in the event of an allergic reaction at school.

### **MEDICATION**

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law and for the safety of our students, the following procedure will be strictly enforced. The policy for the administration of medications, whether prescribed or over-the-counter, during school hours is as follows:

- Medication must be accompanied by a MEDICATION PERMISSION FORM (available from the nurse) signed by both the physician and parent/guardian. A signed physician's order stipulating specific diagnosis requiring treatment, accompanied by a MEDICATION PERMISSION FORM signed by a parent/guardian, will also be accepted.
- Medication must be supplied by the parent/guardian in the original pharmacy container. (Ask your pharmacist for a second container and send only the amount of medication needed to school.)
- Medication is kept locked in the nurse's office and is dispensed by the school nurse. For their own safety, and the safety of others, students are not allowed to carry medication around during school. When a physician deems it necessary for a student to have immediate access to medication (inhaler), the parent/guardian will provide documentation from the physician stipulating such necessity and confirmation that the student has been advised of cautions and proper use of the inhaler in school.
- All medication orders must be for treatment of a specifically diagnosed medical need and must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.
- There will be NO medications administered without a physician's order; no exceptions.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pick up all unused medication on or before the last day of school. Medication not picked up will be disposed of immediately.
- Students are NEVER allowed to carry medication on their person unless they are authorized to such as an EpiPen, asthma-related inhaler, or insulin pump.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION POLICY REGARDING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL MEDICAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Sometimes special medical circumstances arise that may limit the student's active participation in the traditional physical education program. It must be clearly understood that the intent of this alternative provision is to provide an option for the student to complete their program and not to serve as a waiver from the physical education requirement. In order to accommodate the student's special circumstances while maintaining the integrity of the program, the following process must be followed:

Students should provide a note from a doctor to the school nurse which outlines:

- A special circumstance
- Their ability or limitations to participation
- Estimated duration of the restriction

The school nurse will collaborate with the physical education teacher to determine the student's ability to participate in the regularly scheduled program. If the student can participate with some modifications, this arrangement will be coordinated between the instructor and the student. An alternative assignment will be given if a student is unable to participate in a regular class.

At the elementary and middle school levels an alternative activity will be offered if necessary. This can be a different UA for the duration of the restriction or a study period.

Once the student is medically able to return to a regularly scheduled physical education class, the student will bring a note from the doctor to the school nurse. The note should indicate the student's clearance to return to the physical education program.

## ACADEMICS

### **CLASS RANK (HIGH SCHOOL)**

The grade point average and quality point average are calculated for students at the end of each year. The QPA is used to determine eligibility for National Honor Society. The QPA is also used to determine the valedictorian and salutatorian of the graduating class. In addition, the QPA is recorded on transcripts and is computed at the end of each year.

### **CREDIT MAINTENANCE (HIGH SCHOOL)**

Students with excessive absences are in danger of losing credit in their class(es), even if the student is passing it academically. Loss of credit will impact the student by reducing his or her quality point average (QPA), and class rank. Loss of credit could prevent a student from graduating on schedule and/or being accepted into the college of his/her choice. Students who have passed the course but have lost credit will receive an earned grade on their report card. However, no credit will be awarded until the student is in compliance with a contracted Credit Maintenance Plan.

A Credit Maintenance Plan will include the following: (1) Weekly meeting with an identified member of the counseling team; (2) Scheduling weekly extra help sessions with teachers where work is missing; (3) Agreeing to a goal on future attendance with an action plan and support as necessary. Credit Maintenance Plan will be completed when attendance is improved and action plan is completed with a member of counseling.

### **FINAL EXAMS (HIGH SCHOOL)**

All classes will have a final assessment, which will count towards 10% of the final grade. This assessment may be in the form of an exam, project, presentation, or a series of assignments.

### **GRADING AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

Students will receive one (1) progress report and one (1) report card per quarter at the high school and three times a year for middle and elementary students. Please note that report cards are published digitally in the Aspen Parent Portal at the end of each term. This report will contain information on the student's grades, academic progress, or behavior. Parents/guardians who have not received a copy should contact the main office.

- Teachers are responsible for informing parents/guardians whenever students are experiencing a significant decline in grade(s); however, the ultimate responsibility at the high school level lies with the student to communicate any change of academic status to their parents/guardians.
- All progress reports and report cards can be viewed on ASPEN.

### **HONOR ROLL (MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL)**

The Honor Roll program exists to recognize academic achievement. Honor Roll eligibility is as follows:

HIGH HONORS: A- or above in all subjects; no less than satisfactory conduct in any subject.

HONORS: B- or above in all subjects; no less than satisfactory conduct in any subject.

Pass/Fail (P/F) will not count towards the determination of honor roll.

### **LABORATORY SAFETY (HIGH SCHOOL)**

Due to the hazardous nature of materials and equipment involved in laboratory courses, safety procedures will be maintained in lab settings. Such procedures are necessary to ensure safety and prevent injuries. Any deliberate mishandling of laboratory equipment and/or materials, or acting to endanger the safety of others in a laboratory shall result in disciplinary consequences up to and including suspension.

### **POSTERS & PUBLICATIONS**

All student publications will be expected to comply with the rules for responsible journalism. Libelous statements, unfounded charges and accusations, obscenity, defamation of persons, false statements, material advocating racial or religious prejudice, hatred, violence, the breaking of laws or school regulations, or materials designed to disrupt the educational process will not be permitted. The superintendent will establish guidelines that are in keeping with the above and provide for the review of the content of all student publications prior to their distribution.

Any person wishing to display posters around the school must have them first approved by an administrator who will initial the document to denote his/her approval. Postings must be placed in designated areas.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES (HIGH SCHOOL)**

The course selection process is one that should be a cooperative venture among students, parents/guardians, teachers, and guidance counselors. Classes should be chosen carefully and realistically since schedule changes will only be permitted for academic reasons. At NMRHS, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on requests and registration in certain courses.

Additionally, scheduling conflicts and/or oversubscription in a specific section may prevent a student from being scheduled into his or her first choice.

- Administration reserves the right to alter the Program of Studies as needed.
- Selection of a course during registration does not guarantee placement in a class or that a course will be offered in the next academic year.
- Schedule changes are made for academic reasons only.
- Any change to a student's course selections and/or schedule must be first approved by a parent or guardian. No schedule changes will be made until both the department head and guidance counselor initial the change request form.
- Schedule change requests are not honored without a thorough review.

Any necessary changes must be made during the Add /Drop Period, which takes place only during the first four (4) days of a full year course and the first four (4) days of a semester course. A teacher may initiate a schedule change if he or she is concerned that a student has been placed at an inappropriate level within the first seven (7) days of the course. The teacher and student must complete a form, which is available in the guidance office. The student should continue to attend class based on his or her current schedule until the change(s) have been approved and a copy of the revised schedule has been received from a guidance counselor or teacher.

### **STUDENTS TURNING 18**

Students who are 18 years old have the legal authority to sign medical consent forms, to sign themselves out of the building, and to sign field trip permission slips, because they have reached the age of majority under state law. M.G.L. c. 231 Section 85P.

Parents maintain the right to inspect the student records, even after their child turns 18, so they can always see what the student record documents are that their child is signing. M.G.L. c. 71, Section 34E.

In turn, this affords all students that are 18 and over the following rights:

- sign their own medication consent forms
- sign their own field trip consent forms
- sign themselves out when ill, but notify parents with student consent that they are going home ill.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Some students with disabilities may require specialized instruction and/or supportive services to enable them to make effective progress in school. Parents or teachers may refer students to the NMRSD Special Education Department for an evaluation. Upon receipt of the caregiver(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 a student is found eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Team will develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifying the necessary services.

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

If you would like more information about special education services at NMRSD, please contact the Special Education Department.(Special Instructional Programs and Accommodations File: IHB)

**WEIGHTED GRADE VALUES (HIGH SCHOOL)**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Numerical Equivalent</b>	<b>AP Course</b>	<b>Accelerated Course</b>	<b>College Prep</b>	<b>Introductory Course</b>
A+	100-97	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0
A	96-93	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5
A-	92-93	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0
B+	89-87	4.3	3.8	3.3	2.8
B	86-87	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5
B-	82-80	3.7	3.2	2.7	2.2
C+	79-77	3.4	2.9	2.4	1.9
C	76-73	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5
C-	72-70	2.7	2.2	1.7	1.2
D	69-65	2.4	1.9	1.4	0.9
F	64-0	0	0	0	0
I	Incomplete	0	0	0	0
P	Passing	0	0	0	0

# EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

## **ATHLETICS**

The athletic program at North Middlesex offers a wide range of interscholastic sports that allows our student-athletes the opportunity for participation in both team and individual sports. The sports fields and arenas are an extension of the classroom and learning experience where we can see students develop physically and mentally. The North Middlesex Regional High School administration and staff want all of the students who choose to participate in athletics to enjoy a very rewarding experience.

Specific policies are necessary for a well-organized athletic program. It is the role of the Athletic Department to make rules that govern the spirit of competition. These rules need a broad base of community support, which can only be achieved through communication.

All student-athletes will be charged an athletic user fee of \$245.00 per sport, excluding ice hockey and cooperative team sports. It is important to note that user fees are not for profit, but rather, used to offset expenditures associated with the NMRSD athletic program. All fees may be paid in the form of a check made out to NMRSD or online using FamilyID. In addition, user fees do not guarantee equal playing time for all student athletes. Please adhere to the following timelines and points of clarification:

- Fees must be paid before any student-athlete may begin tryouts or practice.
- If any student-athlete leaves a team during the first two weeks of the season, the user fee will be refunded. After a two week period the user fee will no longer be refunded.
- Any student-athlete who does not make a team following tryouts will have their check returned.
- Students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch program are granted a reduced fee or fee waiver.

We will adhere to all league and MIAA rules and regulations. In the best interest of the athletes, teams and the school, we have adopted the following rules and regulations governing our program.

For additional information, please see the MIAA regulations and the NMRHS requirements for participation.

## **COACHES/PARENT/CAREGIVERS/FAN CODE OF CONDUCT**

Our student athletes compete in sports to challenge themselves physically, to have fun and for the love of the game. Through sports our students learn to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and cooperative.

As a parent/guardian and as a fan, I will agree to abide by the following rules and guidelines:



- I will remember that this game is for the student-athlete and I will make it a positive event.
- I will be a positive role model for the students and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event.
- I will teach my students to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without hostility or violence.
- I will demand that my students treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- I will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or adult such as booing and taunting or using profane language or gestures. I will respect the coaches and will not question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field or on the court. If I wish to speak with a coach, I will follow accepted protocol and seek this formal meeting through the Athletic Director.
- I will not ridicule or make negative statements about the student, the team, or the coach for making mistakes or losing a competition.
- I will not coach my child or other players during games and/or practices. I understand that I am the parent/guardian or fan and will leave the coaching to those who have been entrusted with the position.
- I also agree that if I fail to follow the rules and guidelines, I will be subject to disciplinary action, that could include, but is not limited to the following:
  - Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or the athletic director or administrators of the school
  - Written warning
  - Parent/Guardian/Fan game suspension
  - Moratorium on attendance of athletic contest for up to one year or more as determined appropriate by the athletic director and the school's administration
  - Expulsion from the venue

### **SPORTSMANSHIP**

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is waging a continuous campaign to provide good sportsmanship at all athletic events. High school students should set an example in the matter of sportsmanship and should quickly condemn unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of other students or adults. To this end, they should:

- Remember that a student spectator represents his/her school the same as does the athlete.
- Recognize that the good name of the school is more valuable than any game won by unfair play.
- Accept decisions of officials without comment.

- Recognize and applaud an exhibition of fine play or good sportsmanship on the part of the visiting team.
- Insist on the courteous treatment of the visiting team as it passes through our school building.
- Acquaint the adults of the community and the younger pupils in the school system with the ideals of sportsmanship acceptable to the high school.
- Advocate that any spectator who continually evidences poor sportsmanship be requested not to attend future contests.
- Insist on fair, courteous, and truthful accounts of athletic contests in local and school papers.

### **TAUNTING**

Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, players, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin, or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Examples of taunting include, but are not limited to: “trash talk,” defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/her skills, efforts, sexual orientation, or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or physical response; and physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, including “in the face” confrontation by one player to another and standing over/straddling a tackled or fallen player.

In all sports, officials are to consider taunting a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul that disqualifies the offending bench personnel or contestant from that contest/day of competition. In addition, the offender shall be subject to existing MIAA Expulsion Rules. Prior to the contest, game officials shall give a warning to both teams.

At all MIAA contest sites and tournament venues, appropriate management may give spectators one warning for taunting. Thereafter, spectators who taunt players, coaches, game officials, or other spectators are subject to ejection.

### **CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES**

The extracurricular activities here at North Middlesex Regional School District provides students with an opportunity for personal and social development.

### **HIGH SCHOOL**

Every fall, a club and activities fair is organized to help promote membership. Students can propose a new club to be formed at any time during the school year. Students must find a faculty member to act as an advisor for the club and prepare a proposal to the principal. Once

approved by the principal, the club must receive final approval by the Superintendent. Upon approval, students may begin advertising and meeting as a club.

### **MIDDLE SCHOOL**

There are a variety of student activities throughout the school year in which children can become involved. Activities such as student council, yearbook, band, drama, and interscholastic sports are available. After school enrichment courses/activities are available for all students throughout the year. NMRSD nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities are provided in such a manner as necessary to afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation. Students will bring home information as the programs are developed each year. Student expectations for behavior during school-sponsored activities or events follow the same guidelines as during the school day. Failure to comply with expectations may result in dismissal from the event and impact eligibility for attending future events. Participation in extracurriculars is a privilege and not an entitlement.

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

We have a Student Council for eligible students. During the course of the year, the council communicates information to classroom members and pursues activities to promote school spirit and a sense of community for our school.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

The Code of Student Conduct is established to outline the faculty and staff's expectations for student behavior to ensure a healthy school climate where all students feel safe to learn. At NMRSD, the administration is primarily responsible for the enforcement of the Code of Student Conduct and employs a progressive discipline system that enables staff to capitalize on "teachable moments" in ways that students can learn from their mistakes. With this in mind, the administration reserves the right to amend, change or modify any disciplinary progression stated within this code when deemed necessary for the best interests of the individual student so long as they do not surpass punishment as laid out by district policy. The Principal and Assistant Principal(s), while mindful of the well-being of all students at NMRSD, attempt to approach each student as an individual and to work with him/her to promote his/her development into a respectful and responsible adult. We believe that by creating an atmosphere of trust and respect for all individuals we will best prepare students. It is important for parents/guardians and students to familiarize themselves with the rules, regulations, and procedures of this school district.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

The primary role of this school is to educate its students. Poor conduct on a student's part not only affects the education of that student but in most cases adversely affects the educational process for other students. This will not be tolerated. Students will cooperate with school officials in all investigative matters concerning the safety and well-being of school students and staff.

The following regulations are established by the school to enhance the educational process. Each student shall:

- Attend school regularly.
- Apply best efforts in studying and learning.
- Behave in a non-disruptive manner with regards to the rights and privileges of others.
- Follow all procedural regulations of this school.
- Be held responsible and accountable for any action potentially dangerous and/or detrimental to individual health and well-being, either physical or emotional.

## **ELEMENTARY LEVEL STUDENT CONDUCT**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner reflecting a sense of responsibility, good citizenship, and consideration for the rights of others.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS TO THE BEHAVIOR CODE**

- Administrators will use professional discretion in determining the appropriate consequence and length for each disciplinary step depending on the severity and/or frequency of offense(s). Consequences may range from the following examples and in no particular order:
  1. Phone Call Home and/or Email home
  2. Apology
  3. Mediation/Counseling
  4. Indoor Recess
  5. Office Lunch
  6. Behavior/Safety Contract
  7. Detention
  8. Out-of-School Suspension

- Students and caregivers will be given 24-hour's notice for teacher detentions and office detentions unless caregivers are notified and agree that the consequence will be served on the same day it was issued.
- Administrators reserve the right to meet with students at any time in order to gather information related to a violation of the student handbook.

## **MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS**

### **LEVEL ONE**

Staff generally handles Level 1 infractions. Level One infractions often result in a warning, phone call to parent and/or teacher detention. Certain offenses may warrant an office detention.

There are two situations in which Level One infractions come to the attention of administrators:

1. Behavior which continues with little or no regard for the consequences assigned by the staff member. OR
2. Behavioral issues that may be considered to be minor infractions and do not fall under the jurisdiction of teachers, such as issues pertaining to student parking, school buses, and the cafeteria.

Examples of Level 1 Offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate use of electronic device (utilizing sites other than those directed by teacher)
- Inappropriate use of bikes, skateboards, roller blades, etc., once a student has arrived at school
- Inappropriate language
- Eating or drinking outside the cafeteria without permission (water not included)
- Inappropriate/disruptive behavior and/or activity in the hallway, classroom, cafeteria, or on any other school property
- Gambling/betting
- Littering
- Unauthorized/inappropriate use of school phones
- Public display of affection
- Behavior not conducive to an effective/safe learning environment
- Violation of an individual teacher's classroom rules
- Loitering - On school property after school hours without adult supervision

## **LEVEL TWO**

Level 2 infractions involve more serious issues and/or the behaviors that occur more often without regard for earlier reprimands, such as repeated Level One behavior. There are several levels of consequences for Level 2 infractions: teacher detention, office detention, Saturday session, community service, loss of parking or extracurricular privileges, suspension, police notification, and implementation of a behavior/safety plan (which may include monthly mandatory drug testing at the student's expense).

Examples of Level 2 Offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Irresponsible use of vehicle on campus or surrounding area
- Skipping a teacher detention
- Skipping an office detention
- Inappropriate behavior on a field trip
- Misbehavior for a substitute
- Misbehavior during fire drills, shelter-in-place, evacuations, or other emergency situations
- Insubordination/verbal assault to ANY staff member
- Disrespectful swears, gestures, or actions that are directed at another person
- Disruptive/injurious behavior
- Being outdoors without permission (this includes going to your car)
- Vandalism (will be held liable for the full cost of repairing the damage. If the payment is not received, the student will not be allowed to advance to the next grade or receive a diploma).
- Misuse of school technology/Violation of Acceptable Use Policy
- Instigating a fight
- Leaving a supervised group
- Using school property without permission
- Use of cell phones or any other electronic devices in the classroom unless granted permission by a staff member (second offense)

## **LEVEL THREE**

Level 3 infractions involve any behaviors or actions that potentially threaten the safety or wellbeing of an individual or the school community as a whole. This includes bullying, harassment, and hazing. All Level Three infractions require the immediate attention of an administrator. There are several levels of consequences for Level 3 infractions: Saturday session, community service, loss of parking or extracurricular privileges, suspension, police notification, mediation/counseling, implementation of a behavior/safety plan (which may include monthly mandatory drug testing at the student's expense), and recommendation for expulsion.

Examples of Level 3 Offenses may include but are not limited to:

- Use of racist language
- Possession, use, or providing of tobacco, alternative smoking devices, alcohol, drugs and/or controlled substance, or paraphernalia
- Possessing or displaying sexually explicit material
- Inappropriate use of social networking sites
- Sexting
- Theft or possession of stolen property
- Presence on school property or school events (including away events that NMRSD is involved in) while on suspension
- Disruption of any school assembly
- Violation of another's Civil Rights/Title IX Violation
- Inappropriate touching
- Violation of restraining order, harassment order or safety plan
- Involvement in a problem while out on school-related intern/externship, or participating in an outside project.

All students who are suspended out-of-school may be required to attend a re-entry meeting with their parents on the day that the student is scheduled to return to school.

Administrators will use professional discretion in determining the appropriate consequence and length for each disciplinary step depending on the severity and/or frequency of offense(s).

Students and parents/guardians will be given 24-hour notice for teacher detentions and office detentions, unless parents/guardians are notified and agree that the consequence will be served on the same day it was issued.

Administrators reserve the right to meet with students at any time (without parent/guardian approval) in order to gather information related to a violation of the student handbook.

Any vaporization or electronic cigarette/cigar paraphernalia or material that is confiscated by the administration will be discarded as waste. Students caught vaping and/or in the possession of vape-related materials are subject to a \$100 fine.

Any controlled substance paraphernalia or material that is confiscated by the administration will be turned over to the Townsend Police Department.

ADMINISTRATORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE ADDITIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE DISCIPLINE CODE IF THE NEED ARISES AND TO IMPOSE ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES WHERE DETERMINED TO BE APPROPRIATE.

## **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

A variety of measures are utilized by the faculty and administration to encourage positive behavior change in students. A progression of both preventive strategies and interventions are used including teacher/student discussion, administration/student conferences, detention, parent/guardian meetings, and suspension. To foster a sense of independence, minor infractions are addressed with the students without parent/guardian notification. The administration feels that students need to have an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and many situations can be efficiently resolved within the confines of the school setting. However, when minor infractions frequently occur or become more severe, parents/guardians will be immediately notified and meetings will be scheduled. The following are descriptions of the various disciplinary actions that may be used with a student:

### **OUT-OF-CLASS REFERRAL**

If a student is asked by a teacher to leave the classroom for disciplinary reasons, the student must immediately report to the main office. Failure to leave the classroom immediately and/or failure to go directly to the main office will result in further disciplinary action. Repeated removals from class due to disciplinary incidents will result in progressive disciplinary action and may require a parental/guardian conference.

### **TEACHER DETENTION**

Teacher detention is served with an individual teacher in his or her classroom. The teacher will determine the length of detention. If a student fails to report for the teacher detention, the teacher will notify the administration. The administration will then address the student and issue an administrative detention.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION**

Students are expected to arrive at the main office immediately following their last class. Individuals arriving after that time will not be permitted to complete the detention. The student will be responsible for making up the detention at the next session and may also be subject to further disciplinary action.

Students are required to complete detentions as assigned. Each student will be given a 24-hour notice to make appropriate arrangements. Consequences assigned for failure to comply with school rules are considered a student's primary responsibility and take precedence over sports, activities and work commitments. Students failing to serve detentions which have been scheduled may be subject to further disciplinary action.



### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

A short-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Parents/guardians will be immediately notified, a written communication will be mailed to the parent/guardian, and the guidance counselor will be informed. Each suspension will require a re-entry meeting between an administrator and other appropriate parties prior to the student returning to school. A safety plan may be developed, and additional disciplinary action may accompany a suspension. Students are responsible for class work missed during a suspension. All assignments will be left at the main office and must be picked up by a parent/guardian. Failure to make up missed work will result in a zero (0) when assignments are due. There is no right of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools with regard to a suspension of less than ten (10) days, either consecutively or cumulatively during the course of a school year.

### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

A long-term suspension means the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

### **EXPULSION**

Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular education activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H and M.G.L. c. 71 § 37H1/2. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

### **DUE PROCESS**

Each student shall have the right to, in the case of any disciplinary action, whether it be the loss of school privileges, after school detention, out of school suspension, or expulsion from school, hear the charges made against him/her and have an opportunity to respond to those charges. In the case of long-term suspension or expulsion, he/she also has a right to a hearing with parents/guardians and legal counsel present. All students shall be provided with appropriate due process, in accordance with state and federal law, prior to the imposition of an in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. In all cases, the consequences for actions deemed inappropriate or in violation of school conduct codes shall be reasonable and appropriate relative to the age and grade of the student in concert with district and state policies.

For disciplinary offenses that do not involve: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents/guardians will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension, and shall inform the parent/guardian and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a long-term suspension, the principal will also notify the student and parent/guardian of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses, the right to review the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped. There is no right of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools with regard to a suspension of less than ten (10) days, either consecutively or cumulatively during the course of a school year.

For disciplinary offenses involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; and/or c) assault on a member of the educational staff, the student will be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing provided, however, that the student may have representation, at his/her own expense, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. If a student is charged with a felony or a felony delinquency complaint is issued against a student, the principal may suspend the student if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. If a student is convicted of a felony or there is an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, the principal may expel the student if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school. Under either of these circumstances, the student will receive written notification of the charges and reasons for suspension/expulsion prior to the discipline taking effect. The student will also receive written notification of his/her right to appeal and the process of appealing, provided, however, that the suspension/expulsion will take effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

### **PRINCIPAL'S HEARING**

#### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

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

## **LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

In addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, a student who is subject to a long-term suspension will have the following rights:

- (1) Right to be represented by counsel or lay person of student's choice, at private expense;
- (2) Right to review student's record and documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend or not;
- (3) Right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the incident;
- (4) Right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
- (5) Right to request that the hearing be recorded by the principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

## **PRINCIPAL'S DECISION**

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. The principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense and, in cases not involving possession of a controlled substance, a weapon, an assault on staff, or felony charges/conviction, shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning and avoid using long-term suspension as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. If the principal decides to long-term suspend or expel the student, written notice of the principal's decision will be sent to the student and parents/guardians in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension/expulsion, and the process for appeal. The principal will also notify the student and parent/guardian of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, § 21.

## **APPEALS**

When a student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. When a student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools. When a student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H3/4, the student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the Superintendent of Schools, but shall be granted an extension of seven (7) calendar days on request. There is no right of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools with regard to a suspension of less than ten (10) days, either consecutively or cumulatively during the course of a school year.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying, discrimination, and harassment are prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Bullying means the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity, or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the right of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Individuals who feel that they have been subjected to bullying, discrimination, or harassment should report these incidents to an adult in the building (teacher, school counselor, or principal). The District has procedures in place for filing a complaint of bullying, discrimination, or harassment, and these procedures are available in the Appendix to this Student Handbook.

See Anti-Bullying Policy; Non-Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures; Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure. (North Middlesex Regional School District Regional School Committee Bullying Prevention Policy File: JICFB)

## **CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM**

Cheating and plagiarism are defined as when a student claims credit for work that is not his or her own. Cheating can include other students if they have provided their work to another. In cases of cheating or plagiarism, a conference with the student, parent/guardian, teacher, guidance counselor, and administration will be held to determine appropriate disciplinary action. Loss of academic credit may be the result.

## **DANGEROUS WEAPON, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE, ASSAULT ON SCHOOL STAFF**

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 knife; or a controlled substance, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, as defined in M.G.L. c. 94C, or who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, paraprofessional, or other staff either on school premises or at a school-sponsored or school-related event may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district. M.G.L. c.71, § 37H.

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Students who attend school or school functions, who are in possession of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia and/or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, will be suspended for up to ten (10) days and may also be subject to expulsion. Additional steps may include an immediate conference with parents/guardians, referral action to local police officials and the probability that the student in question will be prohibited from attending future extracurricular activities for a designated period of time.

Students selling or distributing illegal drugs or alcohol on school property will be penalized as above and may be subject to expulsion by the principal for the first offense. A conviction for selling drugs within 1000 feet of school property in Massachusetts will result in a minimum two-year jail sentence plus a fine of up to \$10,000. The two-year minimum mandatory sentence must be served consecutively with the sentence imposed for the underlying offense. Non-alcoholic beer and wine are not permitted in school at any time.

The school reserves the right to bring drug trained canine units into the school building without prior notification. Marijuana and THC-based products are considered drugs under this policy, despite the decriminalization in the Commonwealth.

## **DISCHARGE OF FIRE EXTINGUISHER**

Students who discharge a fire extinguisher, except for emergency use, will be subject to a minimum of a two-day suspension and responsible for the cost of recharging the extinguisher.

## **FALSE ALARM OF FIRE (M.G.L. c. 269, §13)**

Whoever, without reasonable cause, by outcry or the ringing of bells, or otherwise, makes or circulates or causes to be made or circulated a false fire alarm shall be punished by fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars or by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than one year.

## **FIGHTING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Students who place their hands on other students in a forceful, threatening, or violent manner will be dealt with promptly and seriously by administration and will be subject to suspension, police intervention, and possible criminal and civil charges.

Fighting on school property or at school events may result in a long-term suspension or expulsion if felony charges are filed. Contact with the parent/guardian will be established and a letter will be mailed. A student, parent/guardian, administrator conference is mandatory. Students involved in a fight may participate in a mediation process facilitated by an administrator or designee prior to reinstatement. In more severe confrontations, the incident will be reported to the Townsend Police and court action may be initiated by the school.

## **GAMBLING**

Gambling is not allowed on school property. Gambling includes, but is not limited to, wagering, betting, booking bets, organizing or hosting a contest of chance, accessing online gambling sites and/or gambling apps. Administration shall use its discretion to determine whether student conduct constitutes gambling.

## **STUDENT COMMERCE**

Students should not be buying from or selling any items to other students during the school day unless it is an approved fundraiser.

## **STUDENT SEARCH**

A school official can legally search a student, or his/her possessions on school property, or at a school-related event, if there is reasonable suspicion that the student has violated or is in violation of either the law or rules of the school. This law also applies to a student's car on school property or at a school-related event. The storage of contraband (e.g., weapons, narcotics, alcohol, and stolen property) in school lockers is not permissible. Lockers are the property of the school and are provided only for use consistent with legitimate school functions. To ensure compliance with this policy, all lockers are subject to inspections or searches by an administrator at any time. Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their school lockers.

It is recommended that, insofar as possible, the student to whom the locker is assigned be present for an inspection. It is recommended that two members of the staff conduct the inspection together, particularly when the student is not present.

**SUBSTANCE HAVING PROPERTY OF RELEASING TOXIC VAPORS (M.G.L. c. 270, §18)** No person shall intentionally smell or inhale the fumes of any substance having the property of releasing toxic vapors for the purpose of causing a condition of intoxication, euphoria, excitement, exhilaration, stupefaction, or dulled sense or nervous system, nor possess, or sell any such substance for the purpose of violating or aiding another to violate this section.

Whoever violates the provisions of this section shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars, by imprisonment for not more than six months or both.

Any person who is discovered by a police officer or special police officer in the act of violating this section may be arrested without a warrant by such police officer or special police officer, and held in custody, in jail, or otherwise, until a complaint is made against him or her for such offense; that complaint shall be made as soon as practicable and within twenty-four hours, Sundays and legal holidays excepted.

## **THEFT**

Theft and/or failure to divulge information concerning a theft when requested could result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action, restitution, and a conference with the student, parent/guardian, guidance counselor, and administration will be required. Referral to the local police may ensue.

## **VANDALISM**

It is unlawful to willfully or wantonly destroy, deface, mar, or injure a school, school-related property, and/or the real or personal property of another. This includes the defacement of school lawns, fields, furniture, apparatus, or other paraphernalia belonging to or connected with the school. The perpetrator will be responsible for paying the cost to restore the property to its condition prior to the crime and will receive appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension, commensurate with the severity of the offense. Parents/guardians will be contacted at different stages of the process, and the police will be informed of the incident. Parents/guardians of children between the ages of 14 and 18 are civilly liable for actual damages of up to \$5,000 due to willful acts committed by their children, which result in injury to another person or damage to another person's property.

## **VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS**

Taking pictures or video without permission is prohibited. This includes taking footage of bystanders (for example, staff and students walking down the hallway). Filming or taking still photographs is absolutely prohibited in bathrooms and locker rooms, even if all parties consent. Phones and filming devices such as cameras must be put away out of sight in bathrooms and locker rooms. Filming of fights or conflicts between parties is prohibited, even with consent. Making a voice recording of an individual without their consent is not allowed, and is also a violation of the Massachusetts wire-tapping statute. Uploading unauthorized content to the internet is also prohibited, as is altering existing images of students and staff by means of editing the image and/or adding graphics or text.

## **WEAPONS, CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES, ASSAULT ON SCHOOL STAFF, FELONY CHARGES AND FELONY CONVICTIONS**

All students and visitors to North Middlesex Regional High School are reminded that Massachusetts state law states that the possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon in any building, on a school bus, or on the grounds of any elementary or secondary school is a crime punishable by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37L requires school personnel to report incidents involving a student's possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises. Reports are to be transmitted by the superintendent to the local police department, the Department of Children and Families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local

school committee. An assessment of the student involved shall be arranged, and the student shall be referred to counseling.

The following provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ pertain to dangerous weapons, controlled substances and assault on school staff:

(a) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter 94C of the General Laws, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district.

(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.

(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 recommend expulsion to the superintendent for 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/her appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated 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 pending suspension or expulsion, under M.G.L. c. 76, § 21. 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 M.G.L. c. 76, § 21.

The following provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H1/2 pertain to students who are charged with or convicted of a felony:

(a) Any student who has been charged with a felony or issued a felony delinquency complaint may be subject to suspension if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

(b) Any student who has been convicted of a felony, adjudicated delinquent of a felony in juvenile

who enters an admission of guilt to a felony charge may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district, if the principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.



(c) In both (a) and (b) above, the student shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent, and shall notify the superintendent of his request for an appeal no later than five calendar days following the effective date of the suspension. The superintendent shall hold the hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three calendar days of the student's request for appeal. The student has the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and the right to counsel.

## NMRSD POLICIES

### **School District Policy**

*Over the course of the school year, District policies may be revised or new policies created. When this occurs, the revised or new policy automatically goes into effect. District policies can be found at the School Committee tab - <https://www.nmrso.org/policies>.*

*NMRSD reserves the right to implement guidelines from the Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education at any time.*

- [ACAB - Discrimination & Harassment](#)
- [EBC - Emergency Plans](#)
- [IHAMA - Parental Notification Related to Sex Education](#)
- [IHBG - Home Schooling](#)
- [IHBG\(R\) - Home Schooling Regulations](#)
- [JCA - Assignment of Students to Schools](#)
- [JEB - Entrance Age](#)
- [JF - School Admissions](#)
- [JFBB - School Choice](#)
- [JICJ - Use of Cell Phones & Portable Communication Devices](#)
- [JJH - Student Travel](#)
- [JJH\(R\) - Student Travel Regulations](#)
- [JICC - Student Conduct on School Buses](#)
- [JICFB - Bullying Prevention, Intervention, & Curriculum](#)

### **HAZING**

Hazing is prohibited and will not be tolerated. Please review the Massachusetts Hazing Statutes, M.G.L. c. 269, Sections 17-19, in the Appendix.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

It is the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District not to discriminate against students, parents/guardians, employees, or the general public on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, or age in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, national origin, sex, religion); Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability); M.G.L. c. 76, § 5 (race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation); the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (homelessness); and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age).

Inquiries regarding compliance with these laws may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools, North Middlesex Regional School District (978) 597-8713, or to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148 (state laws) or to the United States Department of Education, Region 1, Office of Civil Rights, John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse, Room 222, Post Office Square, Boston, Massachusetts 02109 (federal laws).

"The North Middlesex Regional School District does not discriminate in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in, its services, programs, and activities, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, or age."

See the Nondiscrimination Grievance Procedures in the Relevant Laws Appendix for further information.

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT PREVENTION & BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

The North Middlesex Regional School District has adopted a Physical Restraint Prevention and Behavior Support Policy and Procedures in accordance with state law. Corporal punishment is never used in the North Middlesex Regional School District. However, reasonable force may be used to protect students, staff, or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

## **SMOKE-FREE SCHOOL POLICY (TOBACCO PRODUCTS ON SCHOOL PREMISES PROHIBITED FILE: ADC)**

The Massachusetts Clean Indoor Air Law, effective April 13, 1988, "prohibits smoking in public and private schools." This law was expanded by the Educational Reform Act of 1993, Section 36 of Chapter 71 which calls for the prohibition of tobacco products within school buildings, facilities, school grounds, and school buses. Tobacco products include cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and/or their packages, cigarette lighters, or matches. No person is allowed to possess these products in part of the school facility, grounds, or school buses including before, during, or after school hours.

Students caught smoking or vaping in the building or on school grounds will be subject to up to a five (5) day external suspension. Students who commit subsequent offenses will be subject to additional days of external suspension. According to Smoke-Free Workplace Law (M.G.L. c. 270, § 22) and the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, the penalty for smoking or use of any tobacco product is a \$100 civil fine that applies to students, staff, and visitors. The fine is payable to the city or town clerk, similar to a parking ticket. School administrators have been designated as agents to issue these citations for the purposes of enforcing this law in school buildings and school buses. Students will receive these citations via certified mail, and fines must be paid or appealed within 21 days. If the fine is not paid, the citation becomes a civil offense, and the student will receive a summons to appear before the Court Magistrate in Ayer District Court. If the fine is still not paid, the civil citation becomes a criminal offense.

North Middlesex also prohibits the possession of any tobacco products, non-FDA approved nicotine delivery devices (e.g., e-cigarettes, hookah pens, or vape paraphernalia), or other tobacco products in school, on school grounds, on school buses, or in school facilities.

NOTE: This policy applies to both students and adults at all events, including inside the facilities and any exterior location on campus.