

# NORWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## GRACE FARRAR COLE SCHOOL WILLIAM G. VINAL SCHOOL

### PRESCHOOL STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026

#### **GRACE FARRAR COLE MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of the Grace Farrar Cole School is to promote curiosity, creativity, and opportunities in learning as we strive for excellence. We will promote appreciation of individual learning styles, skills and talents to maximize learning and growth. We will treat all people with dignity, kindness and respect. We will foster intellectual curiosity and risk taking through creative problem solving.

#### **WILLIAM G. VINAL MISSION STATEMENT:**

Our mission at Vinal School is to cultivate courage, integrity, and respect in our students; to encourage students to be more active and responsible contributors to their families and community; to involve students in stimulating and diverse learning experiences so that they may become confident and capable lifelong learners and clear and concise thinkers; and to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment to foster a wholesome and responsible lifestyle.

# PRESCHOOL

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# WELCOME

September 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Norwell School Committee and Norwell Public Schools, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to a new school year and to introduce you to our new ***PRESCHOOL STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK***.

Norwell Public Schools is committed to the concept that a child's education is the product of the school **and** home. We believe that a strong partnership between school and your family will result in success for your child. You can help with this partnership in many ways. By regularly showing interest in your child's schoolwork, asking questions, and giving praise for accomplishments, you can reinforce what the school is trying to accomplish. Similarly, stressing the need for regular attendance conveys to your child the importance of school. Visiting school and attending as many school activities as possible also send a message to your child that education has a high priority in your family.

For our part, we need to keep you informed on a regular basis about school activities and your child's progress. We also need to provide you with as much information about the school as possible. To that end, the ***PRESCHOOL STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK*** has been developed and can now be accessed at <http://www.norwellschools.org>. It contains information common to Cole and Vinal elementary schools. Coupled with specific information provided by each school, we certainly hope that these handbooks will be useful for you, our partners in education. After you have read and discussed the *Student-Parent Handbook* with your child, please log in to the Aspen Parent Portal and complete the digital ***Receipt Confirmation*** for this *Handbook* by **Friday, September 5, 2025**.

Please feel free to call the school for clarification of any rule, regulation, or policy. Also, please do not hesitate to contact me personally at 781-659-8800 or via e-mail [matthew.keegan@norwellschools.org](mailto:matthew.keegan@norwellschools.org), if you have concerns or questions regarding school matters.

I wish you and your child a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Keegan  
Superintendent of Schools

Norwell Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of NPS from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles)\*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

### **Mission Statement**

*Norwell Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is dedicated to providing all students an exceptional education in an inclusive and supportive environment, igniting curiosity, fostering integrity, and empowering students to navigate and contribute to a dynamic, global society.*

### **Core Values**

- *Children First*
- *Excellence and High Expectations*
- *Safety and Well-Being*
- *Collaboration and Community Engagement*

### **Vision**

*Anchored in tradition, inspired to learn, confident to explore, prepared to navigate*

# GRACE FARRAR COLE SCHOOL

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Grace Farrar Cole School is to promote curiosity, creativity, and opportunities in learning as we strive for excellence.

## Core Values

- We will promote appreciation of individual learning styles, skills and talents to maximize learning and growth.
- We will treat all people with dignity, kindness and respect.
- We will foster intellectual curiosity and risk taking through creative problem solving.

# WILLIAM G. VINAL SCHOOL

## Mission Statement

Our Mission at Vinal School is to cultivate courage, integrity, and respect in our students; to encourage students to be more active and responsible contributors to their families and community; to involve students in stimulating and diverse learning experiences so that they may become confident and capable lifelong learners and clear and concise thinkers; and to provide a safe, clean, and healthy environment to foster a wholesome and responsible lifestyle.

## Core Values

### **Responsibility**

Our students will assume responsibility for their actions, words, and choices.

### **Respect and Kindness**

Our students will treat others and their environment with respect and kindness.

### **Risk Taking**

Our students will have the courage to take appropriate social and intellectual risks.

# DIRECTORY

## GRACE FARRAR COLE SCHOOL

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# THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

## Program Contacts

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## Overview

The purpose of Norwell Public Schools preschool program is to provide a structured learning environment for children with special needs whose needs cannot be met in a typical preschool setting. The program is integrated and consists of children eligible for special education and other preschoolers. Children with special needs are given additional support as directed by their IEPs. This is provided by not only the preschool staff but also the speech / language therapist, occupational therapist and physical therapist in an integrated service learning approach. The therapists work within the preschool classrooms and specialized locations throughout the buildings. All of the children in the program work toward the same overall goals (self-help, language, fine and gross motor, listening and social skills) as defined by the preschool curriculum frameworks. What differs between the children with special needs and the other children is the level at which the outcomes are achieved and the amount of emphasis put upon each goal. The Preschool Program follows a developmentally appropriate curriculum that incorporates a hands-on, language-based philosophy. The Handwriting Without Tears and the Second Step curriculums are implemented. Teachers follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy, and the Preschool Learning Experience Guidelines.

## Developmental Milestones

All children develop along defined pathways, but it is normal for children to achieve skills at their own rate depending upon environmental factors and cognitive ability. Children differ in their awareness, perception, interest and capabilities. Understanding the developmental stages in early childhood will not only help each parent to teach their child but will enable parents to recognize their child's strengths and weaknesses. Most importantly, however, understanding the stages in early childhood will allow each parent to enjoy the child's passage through the various stages of development. The activities and lists presented are only some of the many skills that can be developed through play. They are not meant to be all-inclusive, but as a place to take our first steps together.

## **YOUR THREE YEAR OLD**

<b>SPEECH DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>COGNITIVE SKILLS</b>
Even, normal volume; low, soft tone; expressive inflection (excitement in voice)	Shows interest in explanations of “why” things are and “how” things function	Matches colors, patterns and shapes
Speech is almost completely intelligible in context	Carries out three simple verbal commands given in one long utterance	Knows body parts
Uses frequent repetitions (I, I, I did it)	Demonstrates an understanding of prepositions (such as on, front, behind, etc.)	Begins imaginative play
Some “blocking” or hesitation in saying words (I d-id it)	3-4 word sentences; uses some pronouns and action words	Recognizes 5-6 colors
Commonly uses <b>m, w, p, k, g, n, t,</b> <b>d</b> and <b>h</b> in words	Sings songs for pleasure	Recognizes different textures

<b>GROSS MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>FINE MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>SELF-HELP SKILLS</b>
Can kick a stationary ball	Strings large beads	Washes and dries hands when prompted
Pedals a small bicycle with training wheels	Builds a ten block tower	Uses toilet appropriately with supervision
Catches a bounced ball with arms and body	Copies a circle	Removes all clothing except for fastenings
Hops on one foot 1-3 times	Draws a man with 3 parts	Puts on underpants, socks, shoes and coat
Climbs up and down stairs using railing; does not alternate feet	Weaves through sewing board	Snaps snaps, zips zippers with assistance

# **YOUR THREE YEAR OLD**

## **Activities for Learning and Fun**

Play with large block beads;  
Match some colors, sizes or shapes

Play with large puzzles, talking toys,  
Puppets, blocks

Go to a playground that has lots of equipment

Dress up games

Experiment with clay, paint, chalk, etc.

Ball games  
Catching, throwing, bouncing, rolling, kicking

Riding toys, bicycle with training wheels

Water play and sand play

Listen carefully to whatever your child says;  
Make an appropriate response to all questions

Read to your child daily;  
Choose big picture books, texture books, and short stories

Imaginative play;  
Make believe that you are at the zoo, hospital, etc.

Singing and dancing

## **YOUR FOUR YEAR OLD**

<b>SPEECH DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>COGNITIVE SKILLS</b>
Subdued volume, although loud when excited; uses dramatic inflection	Questioning is at a peak; carries on long involved conversations	Sorts shapes by size and color
Speech is intelligible in context	Recites nursery rhymes	Counts to 9 by rote and can count 3-7 objects by matching
Masters <b>b, t, d, k, g</b> sounds, but <b>r</b> and <b>l</b> may still be faulty	Follows commands involving 3 unrelated actions	Points to colors
Developmental stuttering is prominent	4-5 word sentences	Relates picture to story
Can speak of imaginary conditions (I hope, I wish)	Responds to questions involving time	Little distinction between fact and fiction

<b>GROSS MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>FINE MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>SELF-HELP SKILLS</b>
Kicks rolling ball	Strings small beads	Washes and dries face and hands spontaneously
Throws ball overhand, little body motion	Laces sewing cards	Brushes teeth
Catches bean bag with hands and body	Enjoys paints, crayons, markers, and clay	Dresses and undresses with some supervision
Climbs stairs using alternating feet	Copies cross, circle, lines	Can combine talking with eating or dressing activity
Hops on one foot 7-9 times	Completes 6-8 piece puzzle	Likes to help prepare meals

# **YOUR FOUR YEAR OLD**

## **Activities for Learning and Fun**

Many opportunities for large muscle activity:

Running, jumping, skipping

Play activities that promote problem-solving including

Sand, water, block play and cooking

Playing house, zoo, office, etc.

Simple board games (Candyland, Memory, etc.)

Action games (Duck, Duck, Goose)

Setting the table, helping sort laundry

(comparisons, matching, etc.)

Classifying toys, putting blocks together by size or shape

Grocery shopping

Playing with balls, bean bags

Riding toys

Praise all efforts for verbal communication;

Never ask your child to slow down or repeat words

Read to your child daily

Musical games and finger plays

## **YOUR FIVE YEAR OLD**

<b>SPEECH DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>COGNITIVE SKILLS</b>
Well modulated voice signifying newly found confidence in language	Identifies objects by use and material (wood versus plastic)	Identifies 6 basic colors and shapes
Attempts humor	Names colors, coins	Knows right and left hand
Speech is readily intelligible	Knows age	Matches numerals and letters
Masters <b>f, v</b> sounds; may distort <b>r, l, s, z, sh, ch, j, th</b> sounds	Tells a story from pictures	Counts objects up to 10
Few omissions of initial or final consonants	Uses 5-6 word sentences	Counts from 1-10 and tells next number

<b>GROSS MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>FINE MOTOR SKILLS</b>	<b>SELF-HELP SKILLS</b>
Running is well established and used in play	Draws 6-7 part person	Bathes without assistance; needs help drying
Catches bounced ball with two hands	Copies a house	Dresses unsupervised except for difficult fasteners
Begins to ride small bicycle without training wheels	Uses scissors, with some difficulty	Independent toileting skills
Begins to skip	Completes 11-15 piece puzzle	Uses utensils
Jumps with a rope 2-3 times	Makes simple objects from clay	Is a good helper

# **YOUR FIVE YEAR OLD**

## **Activities for Learning and Fun**

Composing stories for wordless books

Read to your child daily

Dramatic play

Wood working, gardening

Creative block play including  
Building forts, towns, and structures

Let child dictate letters to family members and friends

Collages of specific types of items, family members,  
Favorite activities, and community helpers;  
Make them of a variety of materials

Visits to playgrounds with peers

# **SUPPORT SERVICES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

## **After-School Programs**

The Norwell Recreation Commission (781-659-8046) provides numerous after-school activities for children, and the South Shore YMCA (781-829-8585, ext. 227) conducts an after-school program for Norwell K-5 students at both Cole and Vinal Schools.

## **Release of Liability for Co-Curricular Activities**

Students participating in voluntary co-curricular activities are required to return a signed release of liability to the director of the event/activity. As these activities are voluntary, the student's participation in an event/activity is conditioned upon receipt of the signed and returned release of liability form. Use of such releases for school-related voluntary co-curricular activities is permitted by Massachusetts's law. Release forms will be shared with interested students by the activity coordinator.

## **Communication**

Communication between home and school is a priority at both elementary schools in Norwell, and staff is committed to developing and implementing effective strategies for facilitating strong connections between home and school. In the instance that a question or concern arises, there are several avenues by which that question or concern can be answered or resolved.

Generally, matters concerning the classroom should first be directed to the teacher. If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it should then be brought to the attention of the student's school counselor, school psychologist, or school nurse (depending on the concern). If necessary, the school counselor, school psychologist, or school nurse will arrange for a meeting with the parent, the teacher, the school counselor, the assistant principal and/or the principal.

Any emergency issue, or problem related to school policy or protocol, should be brought to the immediate attention of the assistant principal. The principal works with students, staff, and parents to be sure that inquiries are responded to by school staff in a timely and sensitive manner and to ensure that the steps to resolving concerns outlined above are followed.

The process below outlines steps to resolving student or parent questions and concerns that may arise. At any point in time, students and parents are welcome to contact the principal directly, who can provide direction and guidance.

1. The student discusses the issue with the teacher;
2. Should the conflict not be resolved, a meeting between the parent, student, and teacher can be arranged;
3. If the conflict is still not resolved, a meeting between the parent, student, teacher and school counselor can be arranged.

A meeting with an assistant principal may be requested if a resolution cannot be reached through the steps outlined above.

## **Communication Mechanisms**

One of our top priorities is to communicate with parents. To this end, parent-teacher conference times are

scheduled twice a year and at other times as needed. Everyone benefits from parent-teacher conferences. Shared information helps teachers understand the child better, helps parents learn new things about their child, and helps meet individual needs of the child.

Coverage of Norwell Public Schools can be found via Norwell Spotlight TV, [norwellspotlighttv.com](http://norwellspotlighttv.com). Each school has a site on Norwell Public Schools' webpage. Please check out information about Cole School at <http://www.norwellschools.org/cole>, and information about the Vinal School at <http://www.norwellschools.org/vinal>. Information pertaining to pre-school is available at <http://www.norwellschools.org/domain/19>.

### **Community Programs**

The Norwell Recreation Commission (781-659-8046) provides numerous after-school activities for children, and the South Shore YMCA (781-829-8585, ext. 227) also offers programs for preschoolers. In addition, both the Norwell Public Library and the James Library offer story hour for preschoolers. For a list of community Preschools and other (early childhood) recreational preschool activities please see [www.norwellschools.org](http://www.norwellschools.org)

### **District Curriculum Accommodation Plans (DCAP)**

School districts in Massachusetts are required to develop a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) Chapter 71 M.G.L. Section 38Q ½. The district must adopt a DCAP to ensure that all efforts are made to meet a student's needs in regular education. Curriculum Accommodation Plans specific to each school are included in each handbook. These plans are reviewed each year and are designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate regular education support. (See pages 18-22.)

### **Counseling**

Each elementary school has the services of a school counselor. You may contact the school office to make an appointment to discuss your child's guidance needs with the counselor. A full description of the Elementary School Counselor Program is available.

### **Health Services**

Management of health services is the responsibility of the school nurse. Registered nurses are employed to serve the needs of students under the direction of the school administration and the school physician. Responsibilities of the school nurse include assessment of illness and injuries, health promotion, and infection control.

#### **Illness and Communicable Disease**

Management of common communicable diseases shall be in accordance with Massachusetts Department of Health guidelines. A student who exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease may be temporarily excluded from school attendance. The school reserves the right to require a physician's statement authorizing the student's return to school.

Any student who becomes ill during the school day must report directly to the nurse's office. If the nurse determines the student is too ill to remain at school, the parent/guardian will be contacted, and a plan will be made for the student to be dismissed from school.

In the event a student is dismissed from school by the school nurse due to illness one should not return until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. The student may return to school when symptoms improve, with no vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours and nasal discharge/cough well controlled.

The parent/guardian of a student who is absent due to illness should call the school nurse to report symptoms. Students who are ill should not return until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, symptoms improved, no vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours and nasal discharge/cough well controlled.

If your child has a communicable disease, please notify the school nurse. Students may return to school as follows:

- Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever, and Conjunctivitis – 24 hours after the first dose of prescribed medication.
- Impetigo - 24 hours after medical treatment has begun, lesions should be covered in school.
- Chicken Pox– 7 days from appearance of first eruption, lesions crusted and fever free for at least 24 hours.
- COVID: Please contact your school nurse should your child test positive for the latest guidance on the quarantine protocol.
- Head lice: Remember to check your child’s head frequently for head lice, as they can be a common occurrence in children. If found at school, parent/guardian will be notified and directed to treatment options to occur outside of school.

### Emergency Contact Information

Current emergency contact information is available for review on the Aspen Parent Portal. At the beginning of the school year, parents / guardians should review the information and submit changes through the Aspen Parent Portal. At any point in the year, changes can be submitted through the Aspen Parent Portal.

### Immunizations

Students registering in the district and all students entering grade 4 will be required to present a physician's certificate attesting to immunization against communicable diseases as may be specified from time to time by the Department of Public Health. The only exception to these requirements will be made on receipt of a written statement from a doctor that immunization would not be in the best interests of the child, or by the student's parent or guardian stating that vaccination or immunization is contrary to the religious beliefs of the student or parent/guardian. Exemptions must be renewed yearly. Refer to the Massachusetts School Immunizations web page for details: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/school-immunizations>.

### Physical Examination

Physical Examinations As required by M.G.L. c. 71, s. 57 and related amendments and regulations (105 CMR 200.000-200.920) physical examinations are required at intervals designated by the School Committee.

Updated Physical Examination and Immunization history are required for:

- New students to the district
- All students entering grade 4

### Accidents

Norwell Public Schools takes care to provide a safe environment at school. All accidents should be reported promptly to the school nurse. If an accident or sudden illness occurs, the school nurse will make an assessment and appropriate interventions, and a parent/guardian will be notified. In non-emergency situations, parents/guardians are responsible for providing transportation. In emergency situations, a student may be transported to the hospital by ambulance at the parent’s or guardian’s expense. Every attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian immediately.

### Prescription and Non-Prescription Medications

Students are not to carry medications of any kind. The school nurse shall be the supervisor of the medication program in the school, including over-the-counter medications such as calamine lotion, ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc.

ALL medications, prescription or non-prescription, can only be administered under the following conditions:

- A written medication order form is required for prescription medication and over-the-counter medications not including the standing orders written by the district physician
- A written parent/guardian authorization form is required for all medications
- All medications must be in the original pharmacy labeled container
- All medications must be brought to school by the parent/guardian and given directly to the nurse.

Under Chapter 369 of the Acts of 2012, “An Act for the Humanitarian Medical Use of Marijuana,” codified in M.G.L. c. 94C, App. §§ 1-1 – 1-17 (“Law”), registered marijuana patients’ possession and consumption of medical marijuana is legal in Massachusetts. The law expressly states that a school is not required to accommodate on-site medical marijuana use, however. (See c. 94C, §1-7). In stark contrast, marijuana remains a Schedule I illicit drug under federal law, regardless of medical need/registration. Students who violate the above policy may face disciplinary action, including suspension.

A student with a parental authorization form and the physician’s order may carry special medications, such as epi-pens or inhalers, for those students with severe allergic conditions and for whom an emergency treatment has been prescribed by a physician, which must be on file in the nurse’s office.

All medical information is confidential.

### Body Mass Index (BMI)

In February 2009, Massachusetts promulgated amendments to the regulations of Physical Examination of School Children, 105 CMR 200, to improve the screening and monitoring of the health assessment of children across the Commonwealth. The amended regulations require screenings for height and weight and the recording and reporting of the Body Mass Index in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10th. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a number calculated from a child's weight and height and is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and teens.

## 2025-2026 District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

		<b>District</b>	<b>Cole School &amp; Vinal School</b>
1.	To assist regular education classroom teachers in analyzing and accommodating various students' learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Support Team (ST) is in place in each school. The role of the Support Team is to confer with teachers on specific students and offer suggestions for instructional practices that may benefit students in the regular education program. The ST documents and reviews these efforts as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty participate in the Instructional Support Team (IST) and confer on best approaches to meeting student needs.</li> <li>• Faculty consult with English Language Learner (ELL) specialist when an ELL student is in their classroom. Faculty are encouraged to obtain Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsement and in some situations required as mandated by the state.</li> <li>• Differentiated and multi sensory instruction takes place in the classroom.</li> <li>• Small group instruction in and out of the classroom.</li> <li>• Faculty are provided resources, technology and professional development to deliver curriculum and differentiate instruction.</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities (both within and outside of district) related to improving curriculum and instruction is available to teachers.</li> </ul>
2.	To provide support services to students through the regular education program.	<p><b>Academic Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direct and systematic instruction for all students.</li> <li>• Teachers use formative and summative assessment data to monitor student progress and adjust as necessary.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Emotional Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Support staff consult with regular education teachers on issues that may interfere with learning.</li> <li>• Individual and/or small group counseling and social skills groups in specific areas are available.</li> </ul> <p><b>English Language Learners (ELL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content area teachers have received SEI endorsement.</li> <li>• An ELL student, after a language screening assessment, will be placed in an English language development program (ELD) that will provide English language instruction, individually or in small groups, from an EL teacher, appropriate for the student's level of English language proficiency.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academic Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty are certified in subject area and level of courses they instruct.</li> <li>• Faculty administer and analyze formative and summative assessments to adjust instructional materials and provide support for students.</li> <li>• Faculty are provided with professional development as well as SEI training to provide additional support to students who have interrupted formal education.</li> <li>• A literacy specialist, reading specialist, and math specialist are available to support students and faculty. The specialists confer with teachers regarding students' literacy and/or math skills and support students as needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The K-12 Social Health Curriculum provides training in understanding differences.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are available from a Behavioral Specialist and Inclusion Specialist as appropriate.</li> <li>• School Counselors may offer individual and /or small group counseling and social skills groups in specific areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>English Language Learners (ELL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELL teachers will provide services for ELL students based on individual student needs.</li> </ul>
3.	To encourage teacher mentoring and collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwell Public Schools has a formal Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program in place to assist teachers who are new to the teaching profession and/or new to the district through their third year.</li> <li>• NPS' Professional Development Program requires that teachers meet regularly during the year to exchange ideas and promote continuous learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teachers new to Norwell are assigned a mentor. Peer observations are conducted by mentors and mentees.</li> <li>• New teachers are allotted time with their mentors throughout the year to discuss curriculum, instruction, and school culture topics.</li> <li>• Grade-level and cross-grade level meetings are held to share curriculum and teaching strategies.</li> <li>• Paraprofessional training is conducted by professional support staff.</li> </ul>
4.	To encourage family involvement in their children's education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families are provided with on-going opportunities to engage with their child's learning and partner with the school community.</li> <li>• Active community organizations provide support to enrich students' educational experiences.</li> <li>• School Councils participate actively in the annual budget development, developing school improvement plans, and reviewing school handbooks.</li> <li>• Families are encouraged to contact teachers through email, meetings, websites, etc. about their concerns for their child, and is available in their home language.</li> </ul>	<p>Families are invited in for the Open House/Curriculum Night in September.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent home-school communication exists through newsletters, phone calls, e-mail, and Schoology.</li> <li>• Families participate in Team Meetings and the decision-making process.</li> <li>• Families are part of the interviewing team for new hires.</li> <li>• Volunteers are welcome to assist throughout the building.</li> <li>• Active PTO supports instruction financially and through volunteerism.</li> <li>• School Council consists of faculty, parents, and community representatives.</li> <li>• Parent meetings on relevant topics are presented by staff.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty respond promptly to emails and phone calls.</li> </ul>
5.	To review local curriculum in relation to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A curriculum adoption cycle is in place to examine and correlate curricula to the Massachusetts State Frameworks.</li> <li>• A process is in place for reviewing the Massachusetts State Frameworks.</li> <li>• The curriculum review process provides an opportunity to procure supplementary teaching materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers serve on committees to review frameworks and programs.</li> <li>• A curriculum cycle is intended to review and revise curriculum documents and texts.</li> <li>• Regular reviews of the Massachusetts Frameworks occur throughout the year during faculty meetings.</li> <li>• Supplementary resource materials are available for teachers.</li> <li>• Teachers serve on committees to review and update content area scope &amp; sequence.</li> </ul>

# ORGANIZATIONS

## **School Sponsored Organizations**

**School Improvement Councils:** The Education Reform Act of 1993 mandated that school councils be formed at every school. A school council has a role in shaping the policies and programs of the schools. The school council is comprised of the principal, teacher representatives, parent representatives, and a community representative, and at the secondary level, students. These groups meet monthly to review school budgets, formulate school improvement plans, and advise the school principal.

**Special Education Parent Advisory Council:** The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a district-wide organization of parents that supports the total special education community. The SEPAC members provide guidance and assistance to parents, staff, the community and special needs students. Parents may contact the school or the Special Education office for program information.

## **Booster Organizations**

**Norwell High School Boosters:** The Norwell High School Boosters is an association formed to advocate for the importance of athletics for all students, build awareness in the community of the many competitions and events that occur for our student-athletes, and raise funds through community volunteer involvement to support the athletic programs of the Norwell Public Schools. For more information, please visit the Norwell High School Boosters website.

**Norwell Arts:** The Norwell Arts is an association formed to advocate for the importance of arts education for all students, build awareness in the community of the many arts performances and events that occur in our schools, and raise funds to support the visual art, theatre and music programs of Norwell Public Schools.

## **Parent Organizations**

**Parent-Teacher Organization:** Our school has an active parent-teacher organization that provides support for programs and educational and extracurricular activities that benefit all students at our school. The PTO provides grants to teachers for classroom activities and to enhance curriculum. The PTO serves as a communication forum for parents, administration and staff. The PTO holds monthly meetings and all parents are invited to attend. For more information contact the Principal's office or consult the school PTO web page for calendar and organization information.

## **Community Organizations**

**Norwell Education Foundation (NEF):** The Norwell Education Foundation (NEF) is a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to support educational activities and programs that encourage academic excellence for all students in the Norwell Public Schools. Annually, NEF grants are awarded to Norwell Public Schools educators on a competitive basis. Programs throughout the grade levels (PreK-12) have received support from NEF.

# **PRESCHOOL PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION**

## **Prohibition On Use of Tobacco Products**

Norwell Public Schools prohibits all individuals, including school personnel, from using any form of tobacco product within school buildings, school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses, pursuant to MGL c. 71 s 37H.

## **Prohibition Against Idling On School Grounds**

All persons operating a school bus, school-related transportation vehicle, and/or personal motor vehicle, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, are prohibited from idling such vehicles on school grounds, pursuant to MGL c. 90, s. 16B. Please see Policy EEAJ: Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds on page 45 of the 2025-2026 District Policies and Regulations in the back of this handbook.

## **Student Records**

Please see page 91 of the 2025-2026 District Policies and Regulations in the back of this handbook.

M.G.L. c. 71, Section 37H provides, in relevant part:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Arrival**

Children should not arrive prior to the Preschool start time. We are unable to provide supervision for children before and after the Preschool day. Your child's teacher will provide you with information regarding pick up and drop off locations and procedures.

## **Attendance**

If your child is absent from school, please notify the office before 8:55 a.m. Following an absence, a student shall bring a note to the teacher signed by a parent/guardian that specifies the date or dates and explains the reason for the absence. If the absence was due to a communicable disease, a doctor's certificate is to be brought to school the day the child returns (please see *Illness and Medications*). If your child must be dismissed because of an emergency, you may come to the school office to pick him/her up.

**We do not expect that students will be absent for vacations when school is in session. The principal must be contacted in advance of any extended absences.** Generally, schoolwork will not be provided in advance of student absences. Missed schoolwork will be made up upon a student's return to school. Please note that the dynamic nature of teaching and learning that takes place in a classroom cannot be replicated through written assignments.

## **Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Hazing**

It is the policy of the Norwell School Committee to promote a safe and professional learning and work environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Therefore, bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and hazing in any form will not be tolerated. It is an expressed violation of School Committee policy for any employee, student, volunteer or visitor to engage in or condone bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or hazing, or fail to report or fail to take corrective measures when they become aware of such actions or activities in school, on school grounds, at school events, or in any way connected to school. For more information regarding the District's policies regarding bullying, please see the District Policies and Regulations Handbook: Policy JICFB: Bullying Prevention on Page 10 and Hazing on Page 38.

## **Change of Student Information**

Please notify the school immediately of any change in student information, for example, address or telephone number. If you are moving from Norwell, please come to the office to sign a records release form. Parents are able to make change using the Aspen portal themselves.

## **Clothing**

Children should be appropriately dressed for the weather. Boots, hats, mittens, snow pants, and jackets are a must in the winter as we do go out to the playground on a daily basis. Sunscreen may be needed in the warmer weather. Comfortable clothing is a must every day. Since we follow a hands-on sensory stimulating curriculum children should wear clothes that are easy to wash. Parents should keep in mind that we do use paints, clay, markers, etc. on a daily basis when selecting preschool attire. Children are also asked to bring in an extra set of clothes and an extra large shirt to be used as a smock to keep at school. This is not just for the occasional bathroom accident but also for messy art accidents. Children feel more comfortable in their own clothing, should the need for a change of clothes occur.

Clothing must not state, imply, or depict hate speech or imagery that targets groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other classification.

## **Code of Conduct**

We are a community of learners who treat each other with respect, kindness, and responsibility. Every student, teacher, and family member helps make our school a safe and welcoming place to learn and grow.

### ***Behavioral Expectations***

#### **In the Classroom**

- Listen when others are speaking
- Raise your hand before speaking
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Follow directions the first time given
- Use quiet voices during work time
- Clean up after yourself
- Ask for help when you need it

#### **In the Hallways**

- Walk (no running)
- Keep voices quiet
- Stay in line and follow your teacher
- Keep hands to yourself
- Hold doors for others

#### **In the Lunchroom**

- Use table manners
- Talk quietly with friends at your table
- Clean up your eating area
- Raise your hand for help from lunch supervisors
- Stay seated until dismissed

#### **On the Playground**

- Include others in games and activities
- Take turns and share equipment
- Use equipment safely and as intended
- Tell an adult if someone is hurt or needs help
- Line up quickly when called

#### **In Restrooms**

- Keep restrooms clean
- Use quiet voices
- Wash hands thoroughly
- Return to class promptly

#### **On the School Bus**

- Wait safely at your bus stop away from the street
- Enter and exit the bus in an orderly way
- Sit on your bottom, face forward, and talk quietly/kindly to your neighbors
- Keep the aisle clear of bags, feet, and belongings

- Keep food and drinks in your backpack
- Be respectful to the bus driver and other students
- Follow the bus driver's directions immediately
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before standing up

## ***Positive Choices***

### **Being Respectful**

- Use kind words and actions
- Listen to others
- Follow school rules
- Take care of school property
- Accept differences in others

### **Being Responsible**

- Complete your work
- Bring needed materials to class
- Tell the truth
- Make good choices even when no one is watching
- Ask for help when needed

### **Being Safe**

- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Walk in the building
- Report problems to adults
- Use playground equipment properly
- Follow safety rules

## ***Problem-Solving Steps***

When conflicts arise, we use these steps:

1. Stop and take a deep breath
2. Think about the problem
3. Talk it out calmly
4. Get help from an adult if needed

## ***Consequences for Poor Choices***

We believe in learning from mistakes. When students make poor choices:

### **First Steps**

- Reminder of expectations
- Problem-solving conversation with teacher
- Practice the correct behavior

### **If Problems Continue**

- Time-out to think and reflect

- Conference with teacher or principal
- Contact with parents/guardians
- Loss of privileges (recess, special activities)
- Additional consequences listed below

### **Serious Situations**

Some behaviors require immediate adult intervention:

- Hurting others physically
  - Damaging school property
  - Using inappropriate language
  - Bringing unsafe items to school
- See also, the section below about weapons, illegal drugs, or assault on school staff.

### **Support and Success**

We want every student to succeed! If a student is having trouble following our code of conduct, they should:

- Talk to your teacher - they want to help
- Ask a counselor for support
- Practice positive behaviors at home
- Remember that everyone makes mistakes and can improve

### **Family Partnership**

Families play an important role in supporting our code of conduct:

- Review these expectations with your child
- Practice respectful behavior at home
- Communicate with teachers about concerns
- Celebrate your child's positive choices
- Support school consequences when needed

Together, we create a positive learning community where every student can reach their full potential.

### **Court Documents**

Court documents such as restraining orders and custody agreements must also be on file in the school office.

### **Dismissal from School**

If you need to have your child dismissed early from school, please notify the office **in writing** with the date, time, and reason for dismissal, as well as a telephone number for verification. When picking your child up, please report to the school office where children will be dismissed only after parents or guardians have introduced themselves to the secretary or administrator. In cases of emergency, please call the school office so appropriate arrangements can be made to have your child ready for dismissal. Children will not be dismissed to another adult, including a non-custodial parent, without the written permission of the custodial parent or guardian.

## **Early Release Days**

Early Release Days are provided throughout the school year for Professional Development activities for staff. On these days, which are designated on the Norwell Public Schools' yearly calendar, students will follow their usual schedule on release days. There is no afternoon kindergarten or preschool on these days.

## **Electronic Devices**

Using personal electronic devices including smartphones and smartwatches is not permissible during the school day (including bus rides to and from school). If brought to school, all personal electronic devices including smartphones and smartwatches must be turned off and kept inside their backpack. The school will not be responsible in the event that the device is lost, stolen, or damaged while on school property. Unauthorized student use of electronic devices during the school day will result in the device being confiscated. The device will be returned to the student and/or the parent after a conference with an administrator. In the event that a parent deems it necessary to contact their child during the school day, they may do so by contacting the main office directly.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Each classroom has a prominently displayed Crisis and Emergency Manual, developed with the safety and security of Norwell students as its imperative. This manual is updated each summer with information that we have learned through the school year. The single most effective way of dealing with a critical incident or crisis situation is through the use of a Crisis Management Team. Each building has staff members identified for specific roles and responsibilities should an emergency arise.

### **Fire Drill, Lockdown, Evacuation**

Each school practices evacuation and lockdown procedures each year. Procedures for leaving the building are posted at the front of each room. Students should leave the building with teachers as quickly as possible and go quietly to their designated areas. Teachers explain the purpose of these drills using developmentally appropriate language. The drills are conducted with the collaboration and support of the Norwell Police and Fire Department.

### **Emergency Notification**

In case of an emergency that affects all students, the Superintendent of Schools makes an emergency phone call that will reach the emergency numbers that you have submitted to your school office. The principal may also access this emergency notification system in the case of a building emergency. Parents are responsible to ensure that your school office has updated phone numbers for an emergency.

### **Emergency School Cancellation**

Regular school attendance reinforces the importance of education and prepares students for the responsibilities they will face after graduation. It is this fundamental conviction along with child care concerns, belief that children are often safer in school, promotion of a strong work ethic, and the dependable performance of Norwell's highway Department that result in the practice of keeping Norwell schools in session, even during most snowstorms. However, there are situations when extremely heavy snowfall, ice covered roads, or other emergency conditions lead to the cancellation of school. Delayed openings are even more rare and will only be employed in those unique circumstances when weather conditions are likely to improve substantially and additional time is needed to treat road surfaces. Early dismissal due to impending storm conditions will only be employed in extreme cases; however, from time to time, it may be necessary to dismiss middle and high school students slightly earlier so that the buses are able to transport kindergarten to grade five students in a timely

fashion. While very infrequent, there may be occasions when afternoon kindergarten is cancelled due to hazardous weather conditions. In those instances when school is cancelled the Superintendent will place an emergency phone call to all students' homes. **NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS** will be broadcast on the following stations:

	<u><b>RADIO</b></u>	<u><b>TELEVISION</b></u>
WBZ	AM 1030	Channel 4 - WBZ
WRKO	AM 680	Channel 7 - WRKO
WATD	FM 95.9	Channel 5 - WCVB
WEEI	AM 850	Channel 25 - WFXT
WBUR	FM 90.9	Channel 6 or 13 - NECN

Since telephone lines must be kept open for communication and safety purposes, please **DO NOT** call the radio and television stations, Town Offices, Communication Center, the schools, or the Superintendent. The decision to cancel school is a judgment call based on the best information available in the very early morning hours. New England's variable and rapidly changing weather conditions and unforeseen events such as the loss of electrical power make the decision-making process even more difficult. ***The decision to send a child to school ultimately belongs to the parent. Consequently, parents should feel free to keep their children at home if they disagree with a decision to keep school in session and are uncomfortable with the weather conditions.*** In those instances, please inform the Principal about your child's absence and make arrangements for make-up work. As is the case with all absences, please follow up with a signed note explaining the circumstances.

In time of inclement weather, parents are strongly encouraged to keep students from driving to school by insisting they use the school bus.

### **Field Trips**

Class field trips may be scheduled from time to time. Parents will be notified in advance and may be asked to pay for transportation. Teachers and parent volunteers serve as chaperones for pupils on these trips.

### **Holidays**

Appropriate ceremonies and observances of national holidays and events of national, state, and local significance shall be encouraged and shall conform to statutory requirements of the Commonwealth. In addition, at various times throughout the school year, classes set aside time for activities that celebrate such holidays as Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving. However, it is recognized that not all families wish to observe or have their children observe these holidays. These activities are ordinarily planned in advance and parents should assume that some sort of celebration would usually occur during these times of the year. Parents who would like their child to be exempted from specific celebrations should contact the principal.

### **Curriculum Content Accommodation**

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the Norwell Public Schools, through its curricula and materials, encourages respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. In accordance with district guidelines, families may request information from the building principal on available accommodations related to curriculum content.

### **Lost and Found**

Each school designates an area for lost and found items. Parents and students are encouraged to check this area

periodically. Valuable items such as watches, jewelry, eyeglasses, and money are returned to the school office. (Please write student names in clothing and other belongings to facilitate return of misplaced items.)

### **Parents in the Classroom**

All parents are welcome in preschool classes. Please notify the classroom teacher of the date and time you will be coming and the probable length of your visit. When parents visit in the preschool, the teacher, specialists, and aides are not able to have conversations during class time. The structure and rhythm of preschool classrooms are carefully orchestrated and require the concentration of the preschool staff.

Please respect the confidentiality of all students in the classroom when sharing your preschool volunteer experience.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences (two) are scheduled during the school year. Parents may also request a conference at any time during the year. Preschool conferences/reports are sent home two times per year in December and May. Additionally, students with special needs will have written progress notes as defined by their current IEP.

### **Preschool Lottery**

Any Norwell preschooler who will be 3 or 4 before September 1 of the following school year is eligible for the Norwell Public Schools Preschool Lottery. Eight children for each preschool class are chosen from the lottery list in January. In the case of twins, the odds of both twins being chosen for a given class depend upon the size of the lottery pool. These preschoolers must be potty trained. Regular attendance and full classroom participation is required.

Non-resident Norwell Public Schools teachers are eligible to enter the lottery.

If a three-year-old is accepted as a community preschooler and the parents choose to continue him/her in the 4-year-old program, the child is automatically in the program the following year. Individual exceptions to this rule occur only with approval by the Director of Student Services, and only if /when enrollment warrants it.

Tuition plans must be created using the districts tuition management system by August. Students who have not enrolled in a tuition management plan prior to the start of school will not be allowed to attend.

The 2025-2026 preschool tuition rates for the three-year old program is \$2,700 and for the four-year old program is \$3,510.

### **Publication of Names, Photographs, and Recordings**

A student's parent/guardian must inform the Principal in writing of their desire to allow their child's name, photograph and/or video/audio recordings to be released to other students or the school community as a part of virtual learning, the news media, printed in school programs, or exhibited on school websites. (Please see digital *Receipt Page in Aspen*). This is in compliance with the student's record release regulations and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

### **Registration**

All preschool students must be registered by the school office prior to the first day of school. Registration consists

of completing an online school registration form (medical record completed by up-to-date student's physician), an official birth certificate, and home language survey.

### **Report Cards**

Report Cards are issued twice per year for preschoolers -- once in the Winter and again in the Spring.

### **School Hours**

#### **A.M. Session (Tuesday – Thursday):**

<u>School</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Dismiss</u>	<u>Early Release</u>
Cole	8:55 a.m.	11:25 a.m.	11:25 a.m.
Vinal	8:55 a.m.	11:25 a.m.	11:25 a.m.

#### **P.M. Session (Tuesday – Friday):**

<u>School</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Dismiss</u>	<u>Early Release</u>
Cole	12:40 p.m.	3:10 p.m.	---
Vinal	12:40 p.m.	3:10 p.m.	---

### **School Pictures**

School pictures are taken at school each year and are offered to families for purchase or return. Parents are under no obligation to purchase portraits. Specific dates and other details will be made available to you. Any parent who does not want their child photographed for any reason should notify the school.

From time to time, events that occur within the schools receive media coverage. On occasion, photographs and newspaper articles include the names or pictures of students. If, for any reason, you do not wish to have your child's photograph in the newspaper (or any other form of publication), please be certain to opt out in Aspen on the Parent Sign Off tab.

### **Snack**

Children should bring a snack with them each day. Please include a drink and food in your child's backpack. If your child has any food allergies, communicate this in writing to your child's teacher and the school nurse. Snacks containing peanuts/nut ingredients are discouraged and, based on the needs of the individual students in the classroom, sometimes prohibited.

### **Supplies**

Basic school supplies (texts, pencils, paper and crayons) are supplied to students. Other specific items may be requested for students by individual teachers.

### **Visitors to the Schools**

Following district procedures, parents and citizens are cordially invited to visit the schools throughout the year for various activities. To ensure the proper climate of safety and wellbeing in each school building, all visitors must report to the office to be signed into a visitor's log with a date, time and purpose for the visit. A valid ID must be left at the office in exchange for a visitor's badge. The ID will be returned when the visitor returns to the

office to sign out. Please note that staff members will approach visitors who are not properly identified. In addition, a buzzer system will be employed at each of the schools. Visitors will need to be buzzed in and will report to the office immediately. This is necessary in order to ensure a climate of safety and well-being for our students.

### **Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement**

There are federal and state laws that protect the privacy rights of students, families, and staff. In a school situation, there are many instances in which confidential information is discussed in order to better understand students and how we can help them. When working in the schools as a volunteer there may be times when this information is overheard. Our staff will make every effort to prevent this from happening; however, as a volunteer you must agree that if you do hear information, about a student or family you will not repeat this outside of the school. This will ensure the protection of our students' interest and their families, thus creating a better environment for all.

- Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing that happens to or about him or her will be repeated to anyone other than authorized school department employees, as designated by the administrators at your school. Even when discussing a student with those who are directly involved in a student's education, such as a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor, you may not share otherwise confidential information with them unless it is relevant to the student's educational growth, safety, or well being.
- You may not share information about a student even with others who are genuinely interested in the student's welfare, such as social workers, scout leaders, clergy, or nurses/physicians (a grave medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's care, is the only exception). Thus, you must refer all such questions to the school employees so authorized and indicated to you, typically the student's teacher or principal.
- Parents, friends, or community members may in good faith ask you questions about a student's problems or progress. Again, you must refer all such questions to the authorized school employees. You may not share information about a student even with members of your own family or the student's family.

## **OTHER PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**

### **Child Find**

It is the responsibility of Norwell Public Schools to identify any child who is a resident of Norwell who may have a disability, regardless of the severity of the disability. Further it is the responsibility of Norwell Public Schools to evaluate these students to determine if any of these students are eligible for special education and/or related services. under IDEA 2004 (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) or the Massachusetts Special Education Regulations.

Norwell Public Schools reaches out to groups in the community who may be aware of students in need of special education and/ or related services. These groups include shelters servicing students eligible for support according to the McKinney Vento Education Act for Homeless Children, group homes, agencies, parental and community organizations, other private or public schools, early intervention and health care agencies.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's development and would like to have him/her screened, you may call for an appointment at (781) 659-8800. If you or your pediatrician believes your child should be

evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services, please either request verbally by calling the Office of Student Services at (781) 659-8800, ext. 1026 or by making the request in writing (please include your child's date of birth, name, address and telephone number and a brief description of your concerns) and send it to: Suzan A. Theodorou, Director of Student Services, Norwell Public Schools, 322 Main Street, Norwell, MA 02061.

### **Related Services**

Related services (Speech/Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, transportation, etc.) are available to eligible students whose TEAM has identified that the related service is necessary for the student to receive a free and appropriate public education.

### **Home-Based Programming**

The Early Childhood Educators may deliver services and consult to the child's home.

### **Community Preschool Consultation**

The Early Childhood Educators may provide consult services to the community preschools. The Early Childhood Educators provides information to the school and home to support development in all areas.

### **Extended School Year Programming**

Summer preschool is available only for those children on an individual education program who are determined by the team to regress substantially during periods away from the school setting.

## **APPENDIX A:** **Federal Law and State Citations**

Norwell Elementary Schools ensures compliance with all Federal and State Laws and regulations including:

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** – Discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** – Discrimination in employment

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972** - Discrimination based on sex

**Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973** – Discrimination based on disability

**Age Discrimination Act of 1975** – Discrimination based on ages

**American Disabilities Act of 1990** - Discrimination based on disability

**Individual Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.), Part B § 34 CFR 300**

**Massachusetts General Law C. 76 § 5** – Discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation

**Massachusetts General Law C. 119 § 51A** – Child abuse/neglect

**Massachusetts General Law C. 151B §** - Discrimination in employment

**Massachusetts General Law C. 151B § 4** – Prohibition of sexual harassment

**Massachusetts General Law C. 151C** – Fair Educational Practices Act – prohibition of sexual harassment

**Massachusetts General Law C. 214 § IC** – Right of freedom from sexual harassment

**Massachusetts General Law C. 12 § 11 H and I** - Prohibition of threats, intimidation and coercion in violation of civil rights

**Massachusetts General Law C. 265 § 37** – Use of force for threat of force or in violation of civil rights

**Massachusetts General Law C. 265 § 39** – Assault and battery or damage to property for the purpose of intimidation in violation of civil rights

**Massachusetts General Law C. 291** - Sex education

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974** - Right of privacy of educational records

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 57** – Physical examinations are required at intervals designated by the School Committee

**Massachusetts Educational Reform Act of 1993** - School councils

**Massachusetts General Law C. 76, § 16** – Exclusion of students from school

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 37H 1/2** - Expulsion

**Massachusetts General Law C. 15A, § 39** – Dual Enrollment

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 37H** – Weapons, drugs and alcohol

**Massachusetts General Law C. 150§ 37H** – Possession of dangerous weapons

**Massachusetts General Law C. 268 and 269, § 32** – Interference or tampering with police or fire signal system; false alarms

**Massachusetts General Law C. 269, § 17 and 18** - Hazing

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 34h** - Rights of non-custodial parents

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 34A, 34B, 34E, and C. 71B, § 13** - Rights of confidentiality, inspection amendment and destruction of student records

**Massachusetts General Law C. 150, § 10, C. 269, § 10, C. 648, C. 71, § 37L** - Weapons

**Massachusetts General Law C. 71, § 37H 1/2** - Felony complaint or conviction of student; suspension; expulsion; right to appeal.

**603 CMR 28.00** – Massachusetts Special Education Regulations

**603 CMR 23.00:** Student Records.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act**

**Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. section 1232h; 34 CFT Part 98)**

## Section Two of Student-Parent Handbooks

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*Norwell Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of Norwell Public Schools from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.*

# 2025 - 2026

## DISTRICT POLICIES and REGULATIONS

### For Student-Parent Handbooks

#### **Academic Counseling**

With regards to general curricular and occupational/vocational opportunities, all students from linguistic, racial, and ethnic minorities; males; females; homeless students; and students with disabilities all receive the same information and academic counseling as other students on the full range of general curricular and any occupational/vocational opportunities available to them.

To ensure that counseling and counseling materials are free from bias and stereotypes on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities, all counselors encourage students to consider programs of study, courses, extracurricular activities, and occupational opportunities on the basis of individual interests, abilities, and skills. All counselors also examine testing materials for bias and counteract any found bias when administering tests and interpreting test results. Counselors communicate effectively with limited-English-proficient and disabled students and facilitate their access to all programs and services offered by the district and provide limited-English-proficient students with the opportunity to receive guidance and counseling in a language they understand. All counselors support students in educational and occupational pursuits that are nontraditional for their gender.

#### **Access to a Full Range of Education Programs**

All students, regardless of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational/vocational education programs offered by the district.

### **Accessibility of Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities sponsored by the district are nondiscriminatory in that the school provides equal opportunity for all students to participate in intramural and interscholastic sports and extracurricular activities or clubs sponsored by the school do not exclude students on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

### **Accommodating Students with Life Threatening Food Allergies**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes that students with documented life-threatening food allergies are considered disabled and are covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 93-112, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A clearly defined “Individual Health Care Plan” shall be developed and implemented for all such identified students. Necessary accommodations shall be made to ensure full participation of identified students in student activities. The appropriate staff, the parent/guardian of the student, and the student’s physician, shall sign such plan.

All Norwell schools are responsible for developing and implementing guidelines for the care of food-allergic students. Such guidelines shall include, but not be limited to, staff development, strategies for identifying students at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions, means to manage the student’s allergy including avoidance measures, designation of typical symptoms, and dosing instructions for medications.

Norwell Public Schools each year shall register with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in order that school nurses will be eligible to train unlicensed personnel to administer epinephrine by auto injector (epi-pen) to students with life-threatening allergic conditions, consistent with 105 CMR 210.000.

*Please note:* The risk of life-threatening allergic reactions can never be fully eliminated in the school environment. Parents with allergic children are asked to provide the school with an individualized action plan prepared by the student’s physician and reviewed by the school nurse. Parents are strongly encouraged to instruct their children in how to avoid contact with substances to which they are allergic. The school cafeteria can never be fully free of allergens.

### **Administering Medicines to Students – Policy JLCD**

Medication administration to students is one of the most common health related activities in schools. It ensures that students who require medication during the day will be able to

attend school and encourages collaboration between parents/guardians and the school district.

The school nurse is the supervisor of the medication administration program in each school. When necessary for medication to be administered to a student during a school day the nurse will ensure there is a proper medication order form from a licensed prescriber and a written parent guardian consent on file in the nursing office. The prescribed medication must be provided to the school nurse by a parent/guardian or responsible adult, in the original pharmacy-labeled container or manufacturer's container for over-the-counter medication. All medications must be renewed at the beginning of each school year by the licensed prescriber and a new parent/guardian consent must be signed. Faxed orders from the licensed prescriber's office are acceptable.

Standing orders: Prior to the start of each school year, the Norwell Public Schools' school physician reviews and renews the standing orders in collaboration with the Nursing Department.

The Norwell Public Schools shall, through a nurse leader, register with the Department of Public Health for a partial delegation of medication administration and in the use of epinephrine auto-injectors.

Following consultation with the school nurse, parent, and the development of a care plan, students who fall into the following exceptions may self-administer medications:

1. Students with asthma or other respiratory diseases may possess and administer prescription inhalers.
2. Students with cystic fibrosis may possess and administer prescription enzyme supplements.
3. Students with diabetes may possess and administer glucose monitoring tests and insulin delivery systems.
4. Students with life threatening allergies may possess and self-administer epinephrine auto injectors.

SOURCE: MASC 2011

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:54B

Dept. of Public Health Regulations: 105 CMR 210.00; 244 CMR 3.00

### **Athletic Concussion Policy – Policy JJIF**

Norwell Public Schools, as an agent of the Town of Norwell, recognizes its role in the provision of information and standardized procedures for persons involved in the prevention, training management and return to activity decisions regarding students who

incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities<sup>1</sup> including, but not limited to, interscholastic sports, in order to protect their health and safety as required by Massachusetts law and regulations. The requirements of the law apply to all public middle and high schools, however configured, serving grades six through high school graduation.

In addition to any training required by law, the following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on its website: coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents.

The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that DPH receives an affirmation on school district letterhead that the district has developed policies and the School Committee has adopted a final policy in accordance with law. This affirmation shall be updated by September 30, 2013 and every two years thereafter upon review or revision of its policies.

The Superintendent, or designee, shall maintain or cause to be maintained complete and accurate records of the district's compliance with the requirements of the Concussion Law, and shall maintain the following records for three years or, at a minimum, until the student graduates, unless state or federal law requires a longer retention period:

- Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
- DPH Pre-participation forms and receipt of materials;
- DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents;
- DPH Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms, or school-based equivalents;
- and
- Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

This policy also applies to volunteers who assist with extracurricular athletic activities. Such volunteers shall not be liable for civil damages arising out of any act or omission relating to the requirements of law, unless such volunteer is willfully or intentionally negligent in his act or omission.

The associated *Concussion Prevention and Intervention Support Protocol* (included in "Student Services" section above) shall discuss and outline what a concussion is, the mechanism of injury, signs and symptoms, management and return to play requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracurricular Athletic Activity means an organized school sponsored athletic activity generally occurring outside of school instructional hours under the direction of a coach, athletic director or band leader including, but not limited to, football, skiing, field hockey, gymnastics, cheer leading, swimming, soccer, lacrosse, hockey, baseball, basketball, softball, and wrestling. All interscholastic athletics are deemed to be extracurricular athletic activities.

Lastly, this protocol shall discuss the importance of education for our athletes, coaches and parents and other persons required by law.

This protocol should be reviewed on a yearly basis with all staff to discuss the procedures to be followed to manage sports-related concussions. This protocol will also be reviewed on a yearly basis by the athletic department as well as by nursing staff. An accurate synopsis of this policy shall be placed in the student and faculty handbooks.

**Legal References:** M.G.L. 111:222; 105 CMR 201.000

### **Background Checks – Policy ADDA**

It shall be the policy of Norwell Public Schools to obtain Federal and State background information through both SAFIS (Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification Services) and CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information), to the extent allowed by existing law or as subsequently amended of all employees, volunteers and prospective employees of the school department including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation (including taxi cab drivers) to children. Any fees associated with such background checks shall be the responsibility of the individual unless the District can rely on a previous suitability determination but chooses to conduct a new background check.

In accordance with 603 CMR 51.00 regulations an employee shall be defined as “an individual working, applying to work, in a Massachusetts public or private school. Employees shall include any substitute employee, apprentice, intern, or student teacher, or individuals in similar positions.” A subcontractor is defined as “an individual not employed by the school employer but commissioned by the school committee or school, or employed by the city or town, or employed by a non-school employer under contract or lease with the school, school district, city, or town to perform work on school grounds with students. Such individuals may be the employees of a contractor or vendor hired by a school, or may be independent contractors or service providers hired by a school or may be performing services on school grounds under a contract or lease with the school, school district, city or town.” A volunteer is defined as “an individual who performs a service for a school employer on an unpaid basis, who is not an apprentice, intern, or student teacher.”

The School Committee may require that chaperones, volunteers, subcontractors, fellow school committee members, student teachers, and practicum students be required to submit to a federal background check through SAFIS in addition to the already required CORI if they have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Any fees associated with such background checks shall be the responsibility of the individual unless the District can rely on a previous suitability determination but choose to conduct a new background check.

The Superintendent, or certified designees, shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services on all employees, individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees, and

volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, during their term of employment or volunteer service.

The Superintendent, or certified designees, may also have access to Criminal Offender Record Information and/or Statewide Applicant Fingerprint Identification Services for any subcontractor or laborer who performs work on school grounds, and who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, and shall notify them of this requirement and comply with the appropriate provisions of this policy.

Pursuant to Massachusetts Regulation 603 CMR 51.00 “Direct and unmonitored contact with children shall mean contact with students when no other employee, for whom the employer has made a suitability determination pursuant to 603 CMR 51.00 of the school or district is present. “Contact” refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication. The school employer may determine when there is potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children by assessing the circumstances and specific factors including but not limited to, whether the individual will be working in proximity with students, the amount of time the individual will spend on school grounds, and whether the individual will be working independently or with others. An individual shall not be considered to have potential for direct and unmonitored contact with children if he or she has only the potential for incidental unsupervised contact in commonly used areas of the school grounds.”

If an individual is required to submit to a SAFIS or CORI criminal history record check, he/she shall be informed of this requirement and instructed on how to comply with the law. Such instruction will include information on the procedure for submitting fingerprints for SAFIS or personal information for CORI. In addition, the applicant or employee will be provided with all information needed to successfully register for a fingerprinting appointment.

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign a request form authorizing receipt by the district of all available federal and state background check data from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services. In the event that an individual has questions concerning the signing of the request form, he/she may meet with the Superintendent; however, failure to sign the CORI request form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed request forms must be kept in secure files.

The School Committee, Superintendent, or their designees certified to obtain information under this policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of CORI information unless requested by the individual or required to report the information to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education or his/her designee. All federal and state background records will be kept in a locked cabinet, separate from personnel files in the Business Office. SAFIS and CORI results are not subject to the public records law.

Following the completion of an employment decision and any requirements set forth in 603 CMR 51.07, criminal offender record information will be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files. Documentation of suitability determinations must be retained for the employee's employment or for seven years, whichever is longer. The following information will be included in the determination – the name, date of birth of the applicant; the date on which the school employer received the national criminal history check results; and the suitability determination (either “unsuitable” or “suitable”). A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation must be provided to another school employer, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom the school employer conducted a suitability determination.

All background check information is subject to strict state and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Criminal history information cannot be shared with any unauthorized entity for any purpose, including subsequent hiring determinations. All receiving entities are subject to audit by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services, the FBI, and the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security. Failure to comply with such rules and regulations could lead to sanctions. Federal law prohibits the exchange of records and information and could be subject to cancellation if dissemination is made outside of the receiving entity or related entities. Furthermore, an entity can be charged criminally for the unauthorized disclosure of criminal history information.

Access to CORI or SAFIS material must be restricted to those individuals certified to receive such information. In the case of prospective employees or volunteers, CORI or SAFIS material should be obtained only where the Superintendent has determined that the applicant is qualified and may forthwith be recommended for employment or volunteer duties.

Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, which are in compliance with laws, rules, and regulations, have been implemented to ensure the security and confidentiality of information. Each individual involved in the handling of such information is to familiarize himself/herself with these safeguards. In addition to the above, each individual involved in the handling of such information will strictly adhere to the protections of this policy on the storage, retention, and destruction of such information. SAFIS and CORI results are not subject to the public records law.

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision. The employer may consider the following factors when reviewing a federal or state background check: the type and nature of the offense; the date of the offense and whether the individual has been subsequently arrested, as well as any other factors the employer deems relevant. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI or SAFIS checks will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.

If the district is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of any federal or state background check, the applicant will be notified immediately. The applicant shall be

provided with a copy of the criminal record and the district's Background Check policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position or license, given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy of the CORI or SAFIS record, and provided with a copy of state and FBI information regarding the process for correcting CHRI.

The Superintendent shall ensure that on the application for employment and/or volunteer form there shall be a statement that as a condition of employment or volunteer service the school district is required by law to obtain Criminal Offender Record Information for any employee, individual who regularly provides school related transportation, or volunteer who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. Current employees, persons regularly providing school related transportation, and the Superintendent, prior to the periodic obtaining of their Criminal Offender Record Information, shall also inform volunteers in writing.

Pursuant to state law and regulation, if the school district dismisses, declines to renew the employment of, obtains the resignation of, or declines to hire a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts Educator License because of information discovered through a state or national criminal record check, the school district shall report such decision or action to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing within 30 days of the employer action or educator resignation. The report shall be in a form requested by the Department and shall include the reason for the action or resignation as well as a copy of the criminal background checks. The school district shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to the regulations to the Commissioner.

Pursuant to state law and regulation, if the school district discovers information from a state or national criminal record check about a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts Educator License that implicates grounds for licensure action pursuant to the regulation, the school district shall report to the Commissioner in writing within 30 days of the discovery, regardless of whether the school district retains or hires the educator as an employee. The report must include a copy of the criminal record check results. The school employer shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to regulation to the Commissioner and shall also send a copy of the criminal record check results to the employee or applicant.

The Superintendent shall revise contracts with special education schools and other providers to require a signed statement that the provider has met all the legal requirements of the state where it is located relative to criminal background checks for employees and others having direct and unmonitored contact with children.

As soon as possible after the district obtains the certification from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services to receive CORI and/or SAFIS data, the Superintendent shall obtain such data for any person then providing volunteer service, as a condition of continued service.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R; c. 151B; c. 276, § 100A  
P.L. 92-544; Title 28 U.S.C. § 534; Title 28 C.F.R. 20.33(b)

34 U.S.C. § 20962  
603 CMR 51.00  
803 CMR 2.00  
FBI Criminal Justice Information Services Security Policy  
Procedure for Correcting a Criminal Record  
FAQ – Background Checks

### **Breathalyzer Testing – Policy JICHA**

Norwell Public Schools is committed to the promotion of healthful living and to the safety and well-being of its students, faculty and greater community, including but not limited to its best efforts at alcohol education and persuading students to say no to alcohol. In order to ensure a safe environment for all students, faculty and the community-at-large, the Norwell School Committee authorizes the Norwell High School Principal, or properly trained school staff delegated by the principal, to administer breathalyzer tests to students and their guests while on school property or at a school-sponsored event, regardless of whether the event is held on or off school grounds.

The primary goals of utilizing a Breathalyzer are (1) to deter students and their guests from engaging in illegal and/or unpermitted alcohol consumption that could potentially result in harmful or even fatal consequences to students or others, (2) to prevent intoxicated students from harming themselves or others.

Breathalyzer testing may be used, at staff discretion, when a staff member has reasonable suspicion (grounds for reasonable suspicion shall include but not be limited to glassy eyes, slurred speech, unsteadiness on feet, atypical demeanor/behavior, alcohol odor, etc.) to believe that a student or guest may be under the influence of alcohol upon attempting to enter school property or a school-sponsored event, or during a school or school sponsored event. Upon initial testing of a student or guest reasonably believed to possibly be under the influence of alcohol, the student or guest will be escorted to as private a location as is reasonably practicable given the event location for Breathalyzer testing in accordance with standard testing protocols. A minimum of two (2) tests shall be conducted on each individual tested with all results recorded.

If it is determined via Breathalyzer testing that a student and/or a student's guest is under the influence of alcohol, the student's and/or guest's parent or guardian will be notified and asked to transport the student and/or guest home to ensure safety. If it is determined that a student is under the influence of alcohol, the student will also be subject to discipline in accordance with the Norwell Public Schools drug, alcohol and discipline policies. A student may also be required to participate in a drug/alcohol awareness program. Any student or guest who refuses a Breathalyzer test when asked by staff to submit to testing will be considered to have been using alcohol and be treated in the same manner as a student or guest testing positive for alcohol consumption. In the event that the principal or a designee is unable to contact the student's or guest's parent or guardian at the time of the incident, emergency personnel will be contacted to transport the student or guest as needed for his or her own safety.

For each incident, staff shall write a separate, brief written report indicating the date, time and location of the event as well as the name of any student or guest suspected of using alcohol and specific reasons for suspecting the individuals of using alcohol. Staff shall also record on each incident report the Breathalyzer results, the name of the individual(s) conducting the testing, the means and result of parent/guardian notification or attempted notification, and the circumstances of student removal/transportation from the event.

Staff shall ensure that the individual administering a Breathalyzer test has been properly trained and designated to administer the test and that all equipment is functioning correctly prior to each event for which it may be used.

### **Bullying Prevention – Policy JICFB**

Norwell Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyber-bullying.

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

- causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target’s property;
- places the target in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property;
- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

“Cyber-bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- electromagnetic
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber-bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.

For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying or cyber-bullying.

Bullying is prohibited:

- On school grounds;
- On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- At school-sponsored or school-related activities;
- At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds
- At school bus stops;
- On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,
- Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by Norwell Public Schools;

Bullying and cyber-bullying are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by Norwell Public Schools if the act or acts in question:

- create a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

#### Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of a prevention and intervention plan, in consultation with all district stakeholders, which may include teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation plan within his or her school.

## Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviors are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

## Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly initiate investigations procedures aligned with JICFB-R: Regulations for the Implementation of the Bullying Prevention Policy.

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

## Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying, shall be prohibited.

## Target Assistance

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

## Training and Assessment

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

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

### Publication and Notice

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

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

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

The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on Norwell Public Schools' website.

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

**CROSS REFS:** AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment  
JICFA, Prohibition of Hazing  
JK, Student Discipline Regulations

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY – POLICY JICFB-R**

### *I. Officials for Reporting*

The building principal (or his/her designee) is responsible for receiving reports and complaints of violations of this Policy at the school level. A report or complaint of a violation of this Policy involving a principal should be filed with the District Complaint Officer (Director of Student Services), the Alternate District Complaint Officer (Director of Finance, Operations & Technology), or the Superintendent of Schools. Upon receipt of complaint, the Superintendent of Schools may notify the District Complaint Officer to conduct an investigation on his behalf.

The District Complaint Officer is responsible for receiving and addressing reports or complaints of violations of this Policy at the district level. A report or complaint involving the District Complaint Officer should be filed with the Superintendent of Schools; a report

or complaint involving the Superintendent of Schools with the School Committee. Upon receipt of complaint regarding the Superintendent of Schools, the Norwell School Committee may notify the District Complaint Officer to conduct an investigation on its behalf.

## II. *Reporting Procedures: General Overview*

1. Any school employee, school committee member, independent contractor, or school volunteer who becomes aware or has a reasonable belief that bullying/cyberbullying is occurring, has occurred or may have occurred on school property or in a school-related activity must promptly report the alleged incident(s) to the designated official.

2. Any student or other person (who is not a school employee, independent contractor or school volunteer) who becomes aware or has a reasonable belief that bullying/cyberbullying is occurring, has occurred or may have occurred on school property or in a school-related activity is strongly encouraged to and should promptly report the incident(s) to a designated official. In situations where a student or other person does not feel comfortable reporting the incident to a designated official, they may report it to a trusted school employee, who must promptly transmit the report to a designated official.

3. When a report or complaint involves physical injury, the building principal (or his/her designee) will promptly report the incident to the Superintendent of Schools and the District Complaint Officer and/or his designee.

4. All complaints or reports about a violation of this Policy must be documented on the District's *Reporting/Complaint Form*. The form is available from designated officials. If a complainant or reporter is either unwilling or unable to complete the District's *Reporting/Complaint Form*, the designated official who receives the oral complaint or report will promptly prepare a written report, by filling out the District's *Reporting/Complaint Form*, using, to the extent practicable, the reporter's or complainant's own words to describe the potential violation.

5. If the complaint occurs at the school level, the designated official will promptly provide the principal with the completed *Reporting/Complaint Form* (or to the District Complaint Officer, if the principal is the subject of the complaint), with a copy to the District Complaint Officer. If the complaint occurs at the district level, the designated official will promptly provide the completed *Reporting/Complaint Form* to the District Complaint Officer.

## III. *Filing a Complaint or Report*

1. The complainant or reporter files a written complaint or report with a designated official, using the District's *Reporting/Complaint Form*, identifying the name(s) of the subject of the complaint, if known; describing the facts and circumstances of the incident or pattern of behavior; providing the time(s) and date(s) of the incident(s); and identifying any witnesses and relevant documentary information.

2. A complainant or reporter may also file an oral complaint or report. In those circumstances, a designated official will complete the District's Reporting/Complaint Form based on the oral information, using, to the extent practicable, the complainant or reporter's own words. The complainant will sign the Reporting/Complaint Form.

3. Anonymous reporting of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation can be made either through the completion of an online anonymous report (available on our main website at [www.norwellschools.org](http://www.norwellschools.org) and also on all school website). Additionally, anonymous reports can be made via telephone to any school or district office or via completed and mailed report forms (mailed to any district office or school building).

4. Even where the designated official does not obtain the identity of, or cooperation by, the alleged victim(s), the District will investigate the allegations, and proceed to Informal or Formal Proceedings, to the extent practicable.

#### IV. *Formal vs. Informal Proceedings*

1. After the school principal (or his/her designee), or the District Complaint Officer, receives a complaint or report, the District must determine whether to resolve the complaint or report through Formal or Informal Proceedings
2. After receipt of a report, the designated official will initially investigate the veracity of the claims and shall verbally notify the parents of both the alleged target and alleged aggressor. The parents of the alleged target will receive a letter, copied to the Norwell Police Department, which outlines their right to report the alleged incident to the Norwell Police Department at any time throughout the process.
3. In reports of bullying/cyberbullying among staff members the designated official will meet with both the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator to gather additional information, as necessary.
4. If the designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, determines that:
  - a. the allegation is serious enough that it appears to place the complainant or any other person at physical risk;
  - b. the incident has resulted, or may result, in a criminal charge;
  - c. the incident involves a referral to the Department of Children and Families;
  - d. the allegation involves a serious form of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
  - e. the District has intervened with the alleged student offender under the purview of this policy or procedures;
  - f. there is a pending Formal Proceeding against the subject of the complaint;
  - g. the subject of the complaint has previously been found to have violated this Policy after Formal Proceedings;
  - h. or that a Formal Proceeding is otherwise appropriate under the circumstances, then the designated official must commence a **Formal Proceeding** (as delineated under Section VI). If none of the aforementioned factors are

- variables in the presenting complaint then Informal Proceedings (as delineated under Section V) must commence.
5. For allegations or incidents that do not require a Formal Proceeding, a designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, may at his/her discretion apply either the Student Code of Conduct or initiate an Informal Proceeding. If the designated official deems it appropriate, (s)he may initiate an Informal Proceeding to obtain a voluntary agreement between the complainant and alleged offender that will effectively correct the problem and end the complained of conduct. The primary focus of an Informal Proceeding is resolution through non-disciplinary corrective action, although a resolution may also include disciplinary action.
  6. Nothing in these procedures limits the District or school taking immediate interim disciplinary action as set forth in the school's disciplinary code and policies.

#### *V. Procedures for Informal Proceedings*

##### STEP ONE: Investigation and Explanation

Upon the initiation of an Informal Proceeding, the designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint and any/all reported witnesses to ascertain the veracity of the complaint. Following the informal investigation, the District Complaint Office, or designee, will meet with the involved parties to provide an overview of the process, the information ascertained through the process, the nature of the complaint, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the corrective action the complainant seeks.

##### STEP TWO: Proposed Resolution

If appropriate after adequate investigation, the designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will propose a resolution. If the complainant, the alleged offender and their parent(s) or guardian(s) agree with the proposed resolution, the designated official will write down the resolution, and the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and their parent or guardian, if present, will sign it, and each person will receive a copy. At the meeting, the designated official will again explain the prohibition against retaliation.

##### STEP THREE: Monitoring

A designated official will monitor the situation, and will follow up with the complainant at least weekly for two months to determine whether there are further incidents or concerns. The designated official will maintain a written record of the follow-up.

##### STEP FOUR: Initiate Discipline and/or Formal Proceeding

If the complainant and alleged offender cannot agree to an informal resolution, or if at any time after resolution the designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, determines that the problem is not corrected, the District may apply the Student Code of Conduct or commence a Formal Proceeding.

*File Retention:* If the complaint occurs at the school level, the principal (or the District Complaint Officer, if the principal is the subject of the complaint), will maintain *in a separate confidential file* the District's Reporting/Complaint Form, information obtained through inquiry and investigation, and the proposed and agreed-to resolution, if any, and will provide a copy of the file to the District Complaint Officer and maintain a copy of the file in the applicable student record or employee personnel file.

If the complaint occurs at the district level, the District Complaint Officer will maintain the file.

The confidential file shall travel from school official to school official as the student progresses through their educational career in Norwell Public Schools.

## VI. *Procedures for Formal Proceedings*

### STEP ONE: Preliminary Investigation and Explanation

The designated official will separately meet in a timely manner with the complainant and the subject of the complaint, and, if students, with their parent(s) or guardian(s), to tell them about the formal process, explain the prohibition against retaliation, and determine the remedy the complainant seeks.

The designated official will also explain that the investigation will be kept as confidential as possible, but that the District cannot promise absolute confidentiality, and may not be able to withhold the complainant's identity from the subject of the complaint, since such a promise could interfere with the District's ability to enforce its Policy, conduct a fair and thorough investigation, or impose disciplinary or corrective action.

### STEP TWO: Formal Investigation

A designated official will conduct an investigation in accordance with the procedures described in Section VII, Procedures for Conducting Formal Investigations.

### STEP THREE: Findings and Written Report

The designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will determine whether the allegations have been substantiated, and whether the Policy, or if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct has been violated. If the complaint is substantiated, the designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will decide, based on the investigative findings, on the appropriate

action. If legal issues arise, the designated official will seek the advice and guidance of legal counsel for the District.

The designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will prepare a written report that includes the investigative findings, the investigative steps taken, and the reasons for those findings. These findings will specify whether the allegations have been substantiated, whether the Policy, or if the subject of the complaint is a student, the Student Code of Conduct, has been violated, and any decision for disciplinary and corrective action.

#### STEP FOUR: Notification and Disposition

The designated official will promptly notify the complainant and the subject of the complaint in writing to let them know whether the complaint has been substantiated. If the complaint is substantiated, the designated official will also promptly notify the complainant of any non-disciplinary corrective action imposed to protect him/her from future Policy violations.

If the complaint is substantiated and the offender remains a student in the school, the designated official will meet with the offender and his/her parent or guardian, to describe the disciplinary and/or corrective action imposed, the school's expectations for future behavior and the potential consequences for retaliation or future violation of the Policy. If the subject of the complaint is an employee, the principal, the employee's supervisor or the Superintendent will impose any disciplinary or corrective action.

Any disciplinary or corrective action against a student or employee must conform to the due process requirements of federal and state law. Any right of appeal from a disciplinary decision is governed by the Student Code of Conduct, the school's disciplinary code, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and Massachusetts and federal law.

If the District's investigation results from a third-party report, the designated official will inform that person that the District has taken steps consistent with the Policy, while not providing information about any disciplinary action imposed or any other information that would violate applicable state and federal confidentiality laws or student record regulations.

#### STEP FIVE: Police Referral

After the investigation has concluded, if the findings identify that bullying has occurred, the principal or District Complaint Coordinator shall report the findings of the formal investigation to the Norwell Police Department. It is the responsibility of the Norwell Police Department to initiate a criminal investigation, if deemed necessary, through its independent evaluation of events.

*File Retention:* If the complaint occurs at the school level, the principal (or the District Complaint Officer, if the principal is the subject of the complaint), will maintain *in a separate confidential file* the District's Reporting/Complaint Form, information obtained

through inquiry and investigation, and the proposed and agreed-to resolution, if any, and will provide a copy of the file to the District Complaint Officer and maintain a copy of the file in the applicable student record or employee personnel file.

If the complaint occurs at the district level, the District Complaint Officer will maintain the file.

The confidential file shall travel from school official to school official as the student progresses through their educational career in Norwell Public Schools.

#### STEP SIX: Monitoring and Follow-Up Actions

A designated official will monitor the situation, and will follow up with the complainant at least weekly for two months to determine whether there are further incidents or concerns, and whether the corrective action imposed has been effective.

The designated official will maintain a written record of the follow-up.

The complainant may ask the District Complaint Officer to review, and, if appropriate, revise any non-disciplinary corrective action imposed through a Formal Proceeding, if the complainant believes that the corrective action is not adequate to protect him/her from future bullying/cyberbullying.

### *VII. Procedures for Conducting Formal Investigations*

#### Prompt and Thorough Investigations

Except where Informal Proceedings are initiated, the school or District, through a designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will promptly investigate all reports or complaints of an alleged violation of this Policy (even where the offender is unknown), as set forth below. The nature and duration of an investigation will depend on the circumstances, including the type, severity and frequency of the alleged conduct.

The goal of an investigation is to obtain an accurate and complete account of all incidents and circumstances deemed relevant to the allegations of the complaint. No complaint is considered frivolous; on the other hand, culpability is never presumed. These procedures are intended to protect the rights of a victim and the rights of a wrongfully accused individual.

#### Emergencies

School officials will immediately call 911 in case of a threat of imminent physical harm or actual physical harm to a school community member or where police, fire, medical, or other emergency assistance is needed.

### Opening the Formal Investigation

Upon receipt of a report or complaint, a designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will promptly undertake an investigation.

### Investigative Procedure

The designated official investigating the incident will gather and preserve evidence, and identify all involved parties and witnesses. The investigation will generally consist of personal interviews with the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint and others who witnessed or may have potentially relevant knowledge about the alleged incident or circumstances giving rise to the report or complaint. Interviews will be conducted in a manner that protects the privacy of individuals to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

The designated official should take notes during interviews, or prepare them soon thereafter, for the purpose of maintaining accurate records. The designated official will also generally review and evaluate any other information or document, including video recordings, voice mails, e-mails, websites, text messages, instant messages, or other items deemed relevant to the allegations, and information regarding any prior incident(s) committed by the subject of the complaint.

### Communication during Investigation

Throughout the investigatory and complaint resolution process, the designated official will make reasonable efforts to regularly inform the complainant and the subject of the complaint and their parent(s) or guardian(s) of the status of the complaint, and the anticipated timing for concluding the investigation, and making a determination. The designated official will notify each person interviewed or made aware of the investigation that the investigation is confidential and should not be discussed with other students or District employees. The designated official will tell them that the District will not tolerate retaliation against the complainant or reporter, or anyone else who cooperates with the investigation.

### Timeline for Formal Investigations

The designated official will complete their investigation as soon as practicable, not normally to exceed more than fifteen (15) business days after receipt of the complaint or report, except for good cause or with consent of the parties (as documented in the investigatory file). The designated official will expedite the investigation of any claim involving physical violence or serious threats of harm.

### Ensuring Safety during Investigation

The designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will take any step he/she determines is necessary and/or advisable to protect, to the extent practicable,

the complainant, witnesses, and other individuals from further incidents or from retaliation pending the outcome of the investigation. Those steps for students may include, but are not limited to, ordering interim disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct, appropriate adult supervision, reassigning classroom seating, temporarily transferring the student subject of the complaint from his/her class(es) with the complainant or to an alternative school assignment, instructing the subject of the complaint to avoid communication or contact with the complainant and to maintain a safe distance (for e.g., fifteen feet) from the complainant while on school property or in school-related activities, and monitoring compliance and reporting non-compliance of protective orders issued by a court.

Prior to a resolution of the complaint or report, the designated official will make reasonable efforts to monitor the success of the interim measures in achieving their goals. At the discretion of a school and/or District administrator, a student complainant may also temporarily transfer classes or schools, where available, but only where the student and his/her parent or guardians voluntarily consent to the transfer.

#### Target Assistance

The designated official (or his/her designee) will make appropriate referrals for target assistance, including counseling and crisis intervention, if requested, or as needed.

#### Target Non-Cooperation

Where a violation of the Policy has been reported by a third party and the alleged victim fails to cooperate with the investigation, or denies the incident occurred, disciplinary and corrective action may be precluded, or limited, depending on the circumstances and the availability of information from other sources.

#### False Charges

Any person who makes knowingly false charges or brings a malicious complaint is subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action.

#### Law Enforcement Notification

After an investigation has concluded that had determined that bullying has occurred, the principal or District Complaint Coordinator shall report the findings of the investigation to the Norwell Police Department. It is the responsibility of the Norwell Police Department to initiate a criminal investigation, if deemed necessary through its evaluation of events.

#### *VIII. Basis for Determining whether Policy has been violated*

A designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, will determine whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of this Policy. The determination will be based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances, including the

context, nature, frequency and severity of the behavior, how long the conduct continued, where the incident(s) occurred, the number of persons involved in the wrongful conduct, the ages of and relationships between the parties, past incidents or patterns of behavior, and whether the conduct adversely affected the education or school environment of the victim or other school community member.

#### *IX. Confidentiality*

The District will respect the privacy of the complainant, the subject(s) of the complaint, and the witnesses to the extent possible consistent with its obligations under federal and state law and regulations and its Policy to investigate, report, and take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action, and consistent with applicable and state and federal confidentiality laws and student record regulations.

#### *X. Disciplinary and Corrective Action*

If a designated official, in consultation with the District Complaint Officer, concludes that the subject of the complaint has violated this Policy, the District will in a timely manner impose disciplinary measures and/or corrective action reasonably calculated to end the complained of conduct, deter future conduct, and protect the complainant(s) and other similarly situated individuals. In imposing disciplinary and corrective measures, the District will take into account harm the victim and other members of the school community suffered and any damage to school climate or property. The decision whether discipline is imposed and the nature of any disciplinary action must comply with the District and school's disciplinary policies.

#### Disciplinary and Corrective Action Concerning Students

Disciplinary and corrective action concerning a student may include, but is not limited to, a written warning; classroom or school transfer; short-term or long-term suspension; exclusion from participation in school sponsored functions, after-school programs, and/or extracurricular activities; limiting or denying access to a part or area of a school; exclusion, expulsion, or discharge from school; adult supervision on school premises; parent conferences; an apology to the victim; awareness training (to help students understand the impact of their behavior); participation in empathy development, cultural diversity, anti-harassment, anti-bullying or intergroup relations programs; mandatory counseling, or any other action authorized by and consistent with the Student Code of Conduct and/or school disciplinary code.

#### Discipline for Students with Disabilities

The District complies with the federal and state law requirements that apply to the discipline of students with disabilities, including the federal "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004" ("IDEA 2004").

### Disciplinary and Corrective Action Concerning Employees

Disciplinary and corrective action concerning a school employee may include, but is not limited to, a written warning, suspension, transfer, demotion, removal from certain duties, employment termination, supervision, training, and counseling.

### Disciplinary and Corrective Action Concerning Independent Contractors

Disciplinary and corrective action concerning an independent contractor may include, but is not limited to, a request to the employer of the independent contractor to warn, suspend or terminate its employee; limiting or denying the individual contractor access to school premises or school-related activities; terminating the contract with the District or school, and training.

### Disciplinary and Corrective Action Concerning School Volunteers

Disciplinary and corrective action concerning a school volunteer may include, but is not limited to, a written warning, suspending or terminating the volunteer relationship, limiting or denying access to school premises or school-related activities, supervision and training.

### Disciplinary and Corrective Action Concerning Other School Community Members

Corrective action concerning any other school community member, including parents and legal guardians of students, and visitors to District schools may include, but is not limited to, a warning; counseling; and limiting or denying the parent, guardian or visitor's access to school premises or school-related activities.

## **Buses**

### **Student Conduct on School Buses – Policy EEAEC also JICC**

The School Committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing School Committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the Principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the School Committee.

### **School Bus Safety Program – Policy EEAE**

The safety and welfare of student riders will be the first consideration in all matters pertaining to transportation. Safety precautions will include the following:

1. Children will be instructed as to the proper procedure for boarding and exiting from a school bus and in proper and safe conduct while aboard.
2. Emergency evacuation drills will be conducted at least twice a year to acquaint student riders with procedures in emergency situations.
3. All vehicles used to transport children will be inspected periodically for conformance with state and federal safety requirements.
4. Classroom instruction on school bus safety will be provided.

The decision of the building principal on these matters is final.

### **Bus Policies and Practices**

#### **Bus Policies: General**

1. No persons other than school or bus company personnel will be allowed to board the bus while carrying students without the express permission of the superintendent or designee.
2. No standees, shuttling or doubling of bus routes shall be permitted without written approval from the superintendent or designee.
3. Students will be picked-up and dropped-off only at designated stops. Designated stops will be determined based upon location of students and safety in order to maximize timeliness of transportation service.
4. All students who ride buses are permitted to ride only the bus to which they are assigned. Only in cases of an emergency may a student be given permission to switch buses. To acquire permission in cases of emergency, a note from home must be given to the office on that morning. Students may not change buses for social visits or for after school activities. Bus stops cannot be changed without permission from the building principal.
5. Elementary students shall be picked-up and dropped-off on both sides of the following streets, and students shall not be allowed to cross in front or back of the bus for any reason:  

Main Street, Route 123  
Washington Street, Route 53  
Grove Street, Norwell Avenue, Central Street  
River Street
6. Only cul-de-sacs that are greater than .5 miles long (provided there is ample room to turn) are eligible for bus service with approval from an annual review by the

Director of Finance, Operations & Technology. The review will consider safety, ages of students and location of students on the street. All exceptions must be approved by the School Committee.

7. Students will be picked up and dropped off at day care or employment (in Norwell), upon written request by the parent or guardian and after approval by the principal. These arrangements must be permanent, pre-arranged and the same for all days.
8. Noon drop-offs of kindergarten students will only be made after an adult can be physically seen by the bus driver. If visual contact is not made by the bus driver the student will be returned to the school.

### Bus Driver Responsibilities

1. The bus driver must remain on the bus at all times when there are one or more students on the bus.
2. At the end of each and every bus run the driver must walk the interior length of the bus to inspect for the possibility of an undelivered student.
3. Drivers shall be responsible for the reasonable conduct of students while on the bus and will report inappropriate behavior to the student's principal. Discipline for misbehavior on a bus is the responsibility of principal not the driver. However, bus drivers will contact the Norwell Police Department and have a student removed off the bus if the student is endangering the safety of other riders on the bus.

### Bus Rider Rules

1. Follow the driver's instructions.
2. Do not eat or drink on the bus. Food consumption on buses compromises the safety of children with food allergies.
3. Keep all harmful materials off the bus.
4. Keep all parts of your body and all objects to yourself and inside the bus.
5. Keep the noise level down and remain seated facing forward.
6. Keep the aisle clear and do not litter, write on, or damage the bus.
7. All misbehavior on the bus will be reported to the principal.

### Bus Stop and Routes

All bus routes and the Director of Finance, Operations & Technology determines stops.

They are developed with consideration for maximum safety and time efficiency. To the extent feasible (recognizing both safety and service/ timeliness requirements), bus routes will be designed to facilitate the practice of “first on/first off”.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect**

The school recognizes a duty to be aware of and sensitive to children who educators have reasonable cause to believe have suffered physical or emotional abuse.

Because school personnel are in a position to notice the needs of a child and have an affirmative duty under law to make a report if they have reasonable cause to believe a child being abused. The first goal of school intervention in such cases is always to protect children from potential abuse and use available resources towards this end.

#### *Legal framework:*

Under M.G.L., c.119, sec.51A, a mandated reporter who, in their professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from: (i) abuse inflicted upon him which causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse; (ii) neglect, including malnutrition; or (iii) physical dependence upon an addictive drug at birth, shall immediately communicate with the department orally and, within 48 hours, shall file a written report with the department detailing the suspected abuse or neglect; or (iv) being a sexually exploited child; or (v) being a human trafficking victim as defined by M.G.L. c. 233, § 20M.

If a mandated reporter is a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school or facility, the mandated reporter may instead notify the person or designated agent in charge of such institution, school or facility who shall become responsible for notifying the department in the manner required by this section. A mandated reporter may, in addition to filing a report under this section, contact local law enforcement authorities or the child advocate about the suspected abuse or neglect.

A report filed under this section shall contain: (i) the names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or other person responsible for the child's care, if known; (ii) the child's age; (iii) the child's sex; (iv) the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; (v) the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment or neglect; (vi) whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, shelter or otherwise assist the child; (vii) the name of the person or persons making the report; (viii) any other information that the person reporting believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries; (ix) the identity of the person or persons responsible for the neglect or injuries; and (x) other information required by the department.

A mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has died as a result of any of the conditions listed in subsection (a) shall report the death to the district attorney for the county in which the death occurred and the office of the chief medical examiner as

required by clause (16) of section 3 of chapter 38. A fine of not more than \$1,000 shall punish any person who fails to file a report under this subsection.

Any person may file a report under this section if that person has reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering from or has died as a result of abuse or neglect. No mandated reporter shall be liable in any civil or criminal action for filing a report under this section or for contacting local law enforcement authorities or the child advocate, if the report or contact was made in good faith, was not frivolous, and the reporter did not cause the abuse or neglect. No other person filing a report under this section shall be liable in any civil or criminal action by reason of the report if it was made in good faith and if that person did not perpetrate or inflict the reported abuse or cause the reported neglect. Any person filing a report under this section may be liable in a civil or criminal action if the department or a district attorney determines that the person filing the report may have perpetrated or inflicted the abuse or caused the neglect.

Legal References: M.G.L., Chapter 119, Section 51A

Definitions:

The following definitions may be found under the Department of Children and Families Regulations (110 CMR, section 2.00):

*Abuse:* the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under age 18 which causes, or creates a substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury; or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

*Neglect:* Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home setting).

*Emotional Injury:* an impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior.

*Physical Injury:* Death; or fracture of a bone, subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, and any other such nontrivial injury; or soft tissue swelling or skin bruising, depending upon such factors as the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises; or addiction to a drug or drugs at birth; or failure to thrive.

*Institutional Abuse or Neglect:* Abuse or neglect which occurs in any facility for children, including, but not limited to, group homes, residential or public or private schools,

hospitals, detention and treatment facilities, family foster care homes, group day care centers and family day care homes.

Each case of child abuse or neglect is individual. The child who has been hurt is always the student/victim. If you believe a child may be the student/victim of abuse or neglect, speak with your principal and/or guidance counselor.

### Reporters

By its nature, child abuse can evoke strong emotional reactions. Reporters need to be sensitive to their own feelings and attitudes, and realize that parents need understanding and help, and often feel relief when it is offered. The process is a non-criminal proceeding.

### **Procedures for Reporting Suspicion of Child Abuse/Neglect**

The following school procedures will be followed for reporting suspicion of child abuse/neglect:

1. Report situation to Principal.
2. Principal will convene and chair a team to further establish cause and reason for filing.
3. Principal or referring person will call the Department of Children and Families Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200 or our DCF Area Office at 781-682-0800; ask for the screener. Please describe the situation to him/her and you will be advised:
  - a. Whether a report has already been filed (sometimes multiple child abuse/neglect forms need to be filed to establish patterns).
  - b. If advice is needed to proceed on the situation.
4. Principal and referring person will complete and file required form within 48 hours. Forms may be obtained from Coastal Area Office. Forms should be sent with 48 hours to:

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families  
Metro Area Office  
541 Main Street, South Weymouth, Massachusetts 02189  
(781) 682-0800

5. Forward a Xeroxed copy of the report to the Director of Student Services.
6. The parent(s) guardian(s) will be informed that a child abuse/neglect form is being filed with the Department of Children and Families, except in rare cases where a child's life might be endangered to do so. It is helpful to designate a team member who may know the parents and be concerned for them, to inform the parents of this situation.
7. If a neighbor calls a school with a report, he/she should be given the Department of Children and Families Child-at-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200 and be urged to

call. (This can be done anonymously.) School personnel should not act on these calls, but can help by giving appropriate numbers to call.

### **Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness - Policy JFABD**

To the extent practical and as required by law, Norwell Public Schools will work with students experiencing homelessness and their families to provide stability in school attendance and other services. Special attention will be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of students experiencing homelessness not currently attending school. Students experiencing homelessness will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable pre-school programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, English Language Learning services, vocational and technical education programs, and school nutrition programs.

Students experiencing homelessness are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:

1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Being abandoned in hospitals;
5. Awaiting foster care placement;
6. Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings;
7. Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings;
8. Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples.

It shall be the role of the District Social Worker, in collaboration with the Office of Instruction, to serve as the district's liaison for students experiencing homelessness and their families.

To the extent feasible, students experiencing homelessness will continue to be enrolled in their school of origin while they remain homeless or until the end of the academic year in which they obtain permanent housing. Instead of remaining in the school of origin, parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness may request enrollment in the school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living, or other schools. Attendance rights by living in attendance areas, other student assignment policies, or intra and inter-district choice options are available to families experiencing homelessness on the same terms as families resident in the district.

If there is an enrollment dispute, the student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The parent or guardian shall be informed of the district's decision and their appeal rights in writing. The district's liaison will carry out dispute resolution as provided by state rule. Unaccompanied youth will also be enrolled pending resolution of the dispute.

Once the enrollment decision is made, the school shall immediately enroll the student, pursuant to district policies. If the student does not have immediate access to immunization records, the student shall be admitted under a personal exception. Students and families should be encouraged to obtain current immunization records or immunizations as soon as possible, and the district liaison is directed to assist. Records from the student's previous school shall be requested from the previous school pursuant to district policies. Emergency contact information is required at the time of enrollment consistent with district policies, including compliance with the state's address confidentiality program when necessary.

Students experiencing homelessness are entitled to transportation to their school of origin or the school where they are to be enrolled. If the school of origin is in a different district, or a student experiencing homelessness is living in another district but will attend his or her school of origin in this district, the districts will coordinate the transportation services necessary for the student, or will divide the costs equally.

The district's liaison for students experiencing homelessness and their families shall coordinate with local social service agencies that provide services to homeless children and youths and their families; other school districts on issues of transportation and records transfers; and state and local housing agencies responsible for comprehensive housing affordability strategies. This coordination includes providing public notice of the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness in schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens. The district's liaison will also review and recommend amendments to district policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless students.

### **Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities – Policy JJ**

The Norwell School Committee believes that student activities are a vital part of the total educational program and should be used as a means for developing wholesome attitudes and good human relations and knowledge and skills. Therefore, the schools will provide a broad and balanced program of activities geared to the various ages, interests, and needs of students.

Co-curricular and extracurricular activities are those which, though they are not addressed in the classroom setting, form an integral part of the school's educational program. These activities include, but are not limited to, student government, student publications, music, drama, subject-related clubs, as well as social, political, hobby, and service organizations. These programs provide students with opportunities to pursue established interests and explore new interests.

Through participation, students are encouraged to form productive and satisfying relationships with others based on respect, trust, and caring. Experiences that foster leadership, cooperation, and a sense of community educate young people for citizenship in a democratic society. Co-curricular and extracurricular activities enable students to fulfill their creative capacities, to develop school spirit, and to supplement or enrich classroom experiences. In addition, students earn through achievement the respect of peers, school personnel, parents, and the community.

The following will serve as guides in the organization of student activities:

1. The schools will observe a complementary relationship to the home and community, planning activities with due regard for the widespread and rich facilities already available to students.
2. The assistance of parents in planning activity programs will be encouraged.
3. The goal for each student will be a balanced program of appropriate academic studies and activities to be determined by the school, the parents, and the student. This should be a shared responsibility.
4. Guidance will be offered to encourage participation of all students in appropriate activities and to prevent over-emphasis on extracurricular activities at the cost of academic performance.
5. All activities will be supervised; all clubs and groups will have an advisor.

**LEGAL REFS.:** M.G.L. 71:47; 603 CMR 26:06

### **Communication of Non-School Related Information to Students and Families – Policy KN**

The primary function of the school district is to educate students. Therefore, home-school communication regarding non-school related matters from non-parent organizations (as defined in policy KBE) should be kept to a minimum. No information or materials related to non-instructional issues may be distributed within the schools without the prior approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

The Norwell School Committee recognizes that, from time to time, the provision of information to our student and family population is needed and best serves the needs of the community.

To this end, the Committee hereby approves the use of school newsletters (community events section only) through which information and materials may be shared, upon Superintendent's approval.

The Norwell School Committee hereby reserves the following means of communication to be used exclusively by school personnel, without exception:

- District and School Websites
- Email Announcements
- Phone Calls
- School Calendar/s
- School bulletin boards, doors, windows, and walls

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use of any/all means of communication in the event of an emergency or disaster. The Norwell School Committee allows for the use of school communication to relay information to its constituents from the local, state, and federal government given that the Superintendent of Schools has approved such communication.

### **Conflict Of Interest Law**

The Norwell School Committee hereby incorporates the provisions of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, M.G.L. c. 268A, into its policies. A summary of the law can be found on the State Ethics Commission's website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/summary-of-the-conflict-of-interest-law-for-municipal-employees>. A summary of how the law applies to public school teachers can be found on the State Ethics Commission's website at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/conflict-of-interest-law-explanation-for-public-school-teachers#:~:text=A%20teacher%20may%20not%20accept,contribute%20to%20the%20class%20gift>.

### **Curriculum Accommodation Plans – Policy IHBA**

Norwell Public Schools strives to develop programs and learning opportunities for all students in the least restrictive environment in the spirit of appropriate state and federal law. General and special education staff, in partnership with administration and parents, are encouraged, as a matter of school committee policy, to work together to develop comprehensive educational programs for students in need to curriculum accommodations.

The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) holds that all students may benefit from interventions that focus on curriculum accommodations. For some students, these accommodations may enable them to meet success within the general education classroom without the need to be identified as a student with a disability or impairment. Such curriculum accommodations may include, but are not limited to, small group instruction, individualized tutoring, and supplemental services. Conversely, there are those students who may require alternative teaching methodologies or strategies and additional support through the special education delivery model that provides a flexible system of opportunities for all eligible students.

It is the goal of the Norwell Public Schools' DCAP to strengthen and continually improve the general education program for all students through:

- Assistance to general education classroom teachers, such as professional development to support their analysis and accommodation of various learning profiles, including students with English Language Learners, and student behavior management;
- Support services that are available to students through the general education program, including those students whose behavioral or social-emotional presentations may interfere with learning;

- Direct and systematic instruction and support in reading, literacy, and mathematics for all students;
- Encouragement of teacher mentoring and collaboration; and
- Encouragement of parental involvement in each student's education.

Each building principal, in collaboration with the School Council and Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology, shall develop a Curriculum Accommodation Plan (CAP) to address the needs of all students in their school consistent with the DCAP. Each school's CAP shall be published in the student/parent handbook and will support the maintenance of school cultures that strive to meet the needs of all students.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L. c. 71, § 38Q1/2; c. 71, § 59C  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

**Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Use by Students Prohibited – Policy JICH**

A student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product, including vapor/E-cigarettes; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. The School Committee prohibits the use or consumption by students of alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs on school property, at any school function, or at any school sponsored event.

Additionally, any student who is under the influence of drugs or alcoholic beverages prior to, or during, attendance at or participation in a school-sponsored activity, will be barred from that activity and may be subject to disciplinary action.

The school district shall utilize, in accordance with law, a verbal screening tool approved the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to screen students for substance abuse disorders. The tool shall be administered by trained staff on an annual basis at grades 7 and 9.

Parents/guardians shall be notified prior to the screening to the opening of school each year. Parents/guardians shall have the right to opt out of the screening by written notice prior to or during the screening.

All statements made by a student during a screening are confidential and shall not be disclosed except in the event of immediate medical emergency or in accordance with law. De-identified results shall be reported to the Department of Public Health within 90 days of the completion of the screening process.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents of this policy in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

**LEGAL REF:** M.G.L. 71:2A; 71:96; 71:97; 272:40A

## **Emergency Closings – Policy EBCD**

The Superintendent may close the schools or dismiss them early in the event of hazardous weather or other emergencies that threaten the health or safety of students and personnel. While it may be prudent, under certain circumstances, to excuse all students from attending school, to delay the opening hour or to dismiss students early, the Superintendent has the responsibility to see that as much of the administrative, supervisory and operational activity is continued as may be possible. Therefore, if conditions affect only a single school, only that school will be closed.

In making the decision to close schools, the Superintendent will consider many factors, including the following principal ones relating to the fundamental concern for the safety and health of the children:

1. Weather conditions, both existing and predicted.
2. Driving, traffic, and parking conditions affecting public and private transportation facilities.
3. Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make the operation of schools difficult or dangerous.
4. Inability of teaching personnel to report for duty, which might result in inadequate supervision of students.

The Superintendent will weigh these factors and take action to close the schools only after consultation with public works and public safety authorities and with school officials from neighboring towns. Students, parents and staff will be informed (via the Student-Parent Handbooks) each school year of the procedures that will be used to notify them in case of emergency closings. When schools are closed for emergency reasons, staff members will comply with School Committee policy in reporting for work.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Each classroom has a prominently displayed Crisis and Emergency Manual, developed with the safety and security of Norwell students as its imperative. This manual is updated each summer with information that we have learned through the school year. The single most effective way of dealing with a critical incident or crisis situation is through the use of a Crisis Management Team. Each building has staff members identified for specific roles and responsibilities should an emergency arise.

## **Fire Drill, Lockdown, Evacuation**

Each school practices evacuation and lockdown procedures each year. Procedures for leaving the building are posted at the front of each room. Students should leave the building with teachers as quickly as possible and go quietly to their designated areas.

Teachers explain the purpose of these drills using developmentally appropriate language. The drills are conducted with the collaboration and support of the Norwell Police and Fire Department.

### Emergency Notification

In case of an emergency that affects all students, the Superintendent of Schools makes an emergency phone call that will reach the emergency numbers that you have submitted to your school office. The principal may also access this emergency notification system in the case of a building emergency. Parents are responsible to ensure that your school office has updated phone numbers for an emergency.

### **Equal Educational Opportunities – Policy JB**

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, Norwell Public Schools will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles)\*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law. Every available opportunity will be taken in order to assure that each applicant for a position is selected on the basis of qualifications, merit and ability.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law (known as Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971), which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, support services, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

**SOURCES:** MASC February 2019, MASC August 2022

**LEGAL REFS:** Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the  
Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972

Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375

Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

M.G.L. 76:5; 76:16 (Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971)

BESE regulations 603 CMR 26:00

BESE regulations 603 CMR 28.00

The McKinney-Vento Act and Title 1 Part A, as Amended by the  
Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

\*Acts of 2022, Chapter 117

## **Family Life/Sex Education – Policy IHAMA**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes the fact that sexuality is fundamental to all life and is of primary importance in nature, in society, and in the life of every individual. Since the acquisition of knowledge related to those areas is important, the School Committee accepts the responsibility to provide information concerning sexuality as a part of the educational opportunities available to students. The Superintendent of Schools, or designee, is authorized to develop and implement such programs in accordance with this policy.

The School Committee further recognizes that the family has the primary responsibility for the education of children in the area of human sexuality. Although the district has a responsibility to provide information concerning sexuality, it is the family that provides the specific value system through which students translate knowledge into decision and action. In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 32A, the School Committee recognizes the rights of parents and guardians of our students in relation to curriculum that primarily involves human sexual education or human sexuality issues.

At the beginning of each school year, all parents/guardians in the district will be notified in writing of the courses and curriculum we offer that primarily involve human sexual or human sexuality issues. The Building Principal shall be responsible for sending the notice(s). Parents/guardians of students who enroll in school after the start of the school year will be given the written notice at the time of enrollment. If planned curricula change during the school year, to the extent practicable, parents/guardians will be notified of this fact in a timely manner before implementation.

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

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

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

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

A copy of this policy shall appear annually in the Student-Parent Handbooks of each school.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L. 71:1; 71:32A; 603 CMR 5:00

### **First Aid – Policy EBB**

Norwell Public Schools attempts to provide a safe environment. If an accident or sudden illness occurs, school personnel will administer first aid and, if warranted, call the school physician.

First aid is defined as the immediate and temporary care given in case of an accident or sudden illness, which enables the child to be taken safely home or to a physician. It does not include diagnosis or treatment. Any care beyond first aid will not be given.

At each school, procedures will be developed for the proper handling of an injury to, or sudden illness of, a child or staff member. These will be made known to the staff and will incorporate the following requirements:

1. The school nurse or another trained person will be responsible for administering first aid.
2. When the nature of an illness or an injury appears in any way serious, every effort will be made to contact the parent and/or family physician immediately.
3. No young child who is ill or injured will be sent home alone, nor will any older child unless the illness or injury is minor. A young child who is ill or injured will not be taken home unless it is known that someone is there to receive him or her.
4. In extreme emergencies, the school nurse, school physician or Principal may make arrangements for immediate hospitalization of injured or ill students, contacting parent or guardian in advance if at all possible.
5. The teacher or other staff member to whom a child is responsible at the time an accident occurs will make out a report on an official form providing details about the accident. This will be required for every accident for which first aid is given.
6. All accidents to students and staff members will be reported as soon as possible to the Superintendent and, if the Superintendent deems appropriate, to the School Committee.

### **Hazing (See MGL Chapter 269, Sections 17-19)**

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

The term “hazing” as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

### **Hazing- Reporting**

Whoever knows that another person is the student/victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

### **Hazing – Requirement**

Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution’s compliance with this section’s requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution’s recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or

organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution that fails to make such report.

### **Holidays**

Appropriate ceremonies and observances of national holidays and events of national, state, and local significance shall be encouraged and shall conform to statutory requirements of the Commonwealth. In addition, at various times throughout the school year, classes set aside time for activities that celebrate such holidays as Halloween and Thanksgiving. However, it is recognized that not all families wish to observe or have their children observe these holidays. These activities are ordinarily planned in advance and parents should assume that some sort of celebration would usually occur during these times of the year. Parents who would like their child to be exempted from specific celebrations should contact the principal.

### **Home and Hospital Tutoring – Policy IHGB**

Norwell Public Schools provides home and hospital tutoring for students who, in the judgment of their physician, should remain at home or in the hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination or both, for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year. Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that a student enrolled in the Norwell Public Schools must remain at home or in the hospital for medical reasons, the principal of the school that the student attends shall arrange for tutoring services in the home or hospital. Before a student can receive these services, a licensed physician must complete the state required form. Forms are available through the Guidance Office or the Office of Instruction.

Home or hospital tutoring is considered short-term and is not a replacement for regular attendance at school. According Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The goal of home/hospital tutoring is to minimize the educational loss that might occur during the period the student is confined at home or in a hospital (603 CMR 28.03 (3)(c)).

### **Home Schooling – Policy IHBG**

Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home School program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

When a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for his/her child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the Office of Instruction 14 days before the program is established, and submit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment.

The parent/guardian must certify in writing the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents to teach the children,
3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents.
4. Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards.

A student being educated in a home-based program within the District may have access to public school activities of either a curricular or extracurricular nature upon approval of the Superintendent.

A student, with the approval of the School Committee, may be awarded a high school diploma if he/she or she has satisfied the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's competency requirements and has met the District's educational standards for graduation.

**LEGAL** M.G.L. 69:1D; 76:1, Care and Protection of Charles  
**REFS:** Care and Protections of Charles - MASS. Supreme Judicial Court 399  
Mass. 324 (1987)

### **Information to be Translated into Languages other than English**

Translated versions of all information and documents (e.g., handbooks and codes of conduct) can be provided into the major languages spoken by parents or guardians with limited English skills. Requests for translated documents should be made to the school principal. To the extent possible, Norwell Public Schools will communicate with families in their native languages, as identified on the Home-Language Survey that is completed upon student registration.

Additionally, the district has established a system of oral interpretation to assist parents/guardians with limited English skills, including those who speak low-incidence languages. To access this service for school-based meetings, please notify your school principal. To the extent possible, Norwell Public Schools will automatically establish this service for families in their native languages, as identified on the Home-Language Survey that is completed upon student registration

All school and/or program recruitment and promotional materials are disseminated to residents in the area served by the school or programs are translated into the major languages spoken by residents with limited English skills.

### **Internet, Digital Information and Communication Technologies Acceptable Use – Policy EGAEC**

It is the policy of the Norwell School Committee, and an agent of the Town of Norwell, to provide safe and reliable internet, digital information and communication technologies to students and staff. The Internet and other digital information and communication technologies allow users to communicate with people and organizations all over the world through a number of discussion forums and websites, as well as through electronic mail and media. In addition, many files of educational value are available for downloading. Because of their widespread use, the potential of these digital technologies is without boundaries. It is possible to communicate with prominent scientists, world leaders, other educators, and close friends. With such great potential for education also comes the potential for transmission or retrieval, intentionally or inadvertently, of inappropriate material.

The Norwell School Committee recognizes its responsibility relative to the Children’s Internet Protection Act (P.L. 106-554,47 USC Sec. 254 (i)) and has implemented appropriate filtering tools to promote the safe and appropriate use of the Internet and other digital information and communication technologies in the schools. A copy of this policy is to be published in each school’s Student-Parent Handbook and Faculty Handbook. Furthermore, a contract acknowledging and agreeing to follow this policy shall be executed

by all students and staff utilizing any of these digital resources in school.

All users should keep in mind that when they use the Internet and other digital information and communication technologies, they are entering a global community, and any actions taken by them will reflect upon Norwell Public Schools. In that regard, all users must behave in an ethical and legal manner.

The district's primary purpose in making these digital technologies available to users is educational, and not for personal or social use. Personal or social use of these technologies will not be permitted if, in the judgment of the school district, such use is excessive, inappropriate to the school setting, disruptive to the learning environment, inconsistent with the position of an educator or student or in conflict with one's job duties or studies. In addition, anyone using the district's network or gaining Internet access through the district's resources for purposes other than classroom-related instruction may be required to log off at any time.

The use of the district's digital information systems, network and technology resources is a privilege and not a right. These privileges may be revoked, limited or suspended as appropriate, and appropriate disciplinary measures may also be imposed, for inappropriate or abusive conduct committed by use of the district's resources, including the computer network. In addition, the school's electronic mail (email) system is a resource that is provided as a communication tool for our employees and students. All users of Norwell Public Schools' email system must use good judgment in the composition of electronic mail and in the selection of recipients. Any information sent via email becomes a record that may be accessed and its contents disclosed by Norwell Public Schools.

Such inappropriate or abusive conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Using any profane, vulgar, threatening, abusive, prejudicial, discriminatory, libelous, or criminal language or media in any form.
2. Cyberbullying in any form (see Norwell School Committee Policies JFCJK and GBEBD).
3. Posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization, or posting information that could cause damage, panic, or disruption.
4. Accessing any prohibited sites on the Internet.
5. Bypassing or interfering with the operation of the content filtering software used on school computers or its network.
6. Overriding or encouraging users to override any firewalls used to prevent unauthorized access into another computer or network, commonly called "hacking," or bypassing or attempting to bypass the district's filtering tools to gain access to blocked sites or content.
7. Permitting another individual to use their password, using another person's password, or pretending to be someone else when sending information over the computer network.
8. Disseminating passwords, codes, access telephone numbers, or account numbers and, if a student, revealing one's residential address or telephone number over the

Internet.

9. Accessing Norwell Public Schools' networks without authority to view or modify data that contain private student records and information.
10. Attempting to harm, modify, or destroy data of another user.
11. Discussing highly sensitive or confidential school department information in email communications, except where such communications are necessary to comply with the provisions of educational plans or in the discharge of one's job duties. Email communications are to be treated with the same discretion and judgment as all other forms of written communication.
12. Exhibiting any other action whatsoever that would in any way subject the employee and/or employer to a possible criminal action.
13. Placing unlawful and/or inappropriate information on a system.
14. Sending messages that are likely to result in the loss of a recipient's work or systems.
15. Sending "chain letters" or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals.
16. Participating in other types of use which would cause congestion of the network or interfere with the work of others.
17. Using the Internet in a manner that would violate any U.S. or state law including, but not limited to copyright infringement, spreading of computer viruses or using public resources for political campaigning purposes.
18. Installing or modifying software or data on any component of the district system without first having the information scanned by the technology department personnel for viruses or other incompatibility.
19. Failing to log off the computer at the conclusion of a work session or at the request of administration.
20. Damaging or vandalizing computers, computer systems, or networks either through physical alteration or through the introduction of malicious digital agents.
21. Vandalizing, damaging, or disabling the property of another person or organization, or disrupting equipment, software, or system performance.
22. Creating, accessing or transmitting materials, including but not limited to emails, pictures and/or videos, that are obscene, sexually explicit or harmful to minors.
23. Any behavior or use of the district's digital information systems, network or technology resources that is inconsistent with our policies or the district's mission.

Many kinds of materials eventually find their way to the Internet, even with the use of filtering tools. If a user finds materials which are inappropriate while using a Norwell Public Schools account, he or she shall refrain from downloading this material and shall not identify or share the material. It should be understood that the transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal and punishable by a fine or jail sentence. Additionally, Norwell Public Schools takes no responsibility for any information or materials that are transferred through our network or over the internet with district resources and shall not be held liable for the actions of users of the district's network or technology resources when those actions are inconsistent with our policies.

Norwell Public Schools makes no guarantees, implied or otherwise, regarding the quality or reliability of our network resources. Norwell Public Schools shall not be liable for any

loss or corruption of data resulting while using the Internet or our network. Additionally, Norwell Public Schools takes no responsibility for any information or materials that are transferred through our network or over the internet with district resources and shall not be held liable for the actions of users of the district's network or technology resources when those actions are inconsistent with our policies

By authorizing use of the school district technologies, the school district does not relinquish control over any of the components of the system, materials stored in the system, or files contained in the system. Users should expect only limited privacy in the contents of personal files on the school district system. Norwell Public Schools reserves the right to examine all data stored in the machines and on the network to make sure that all users are in compliance with these regulations. Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that all users are using the system responsibly. Users should keep in mind that email is considered a written communication subject to public records laws. As such, the district is required to maintain, store and produce such communications, depending on their content, to the same extent as any other record created or maintained by a public entity. Email messages, and all files or attachments included therein, sent and received by Norwell Public Schools' staff or students via the Norwell Public Schools email system are backed up and archived by the district in accordance with state and federal law.

During school time, teachers of younger students will guide them towards appropriate materials. All students may be provided individual access passwords and may have the opportunity to communicate via email and access the World Wide Web in connection with independent, self-directed research.

No user shall use the school's network to perform any act that may be construed as illegal or unethical, including the use of the network to gain unauthorized access to other systems on the network. Norwell Public Schools strongly condemns the illegal distribution (otherwise known as pirating) of software. Any users caught transferring such files through our network, and any whose accounts are found to contain such illegal files, shall immediately have their accounts permanently revoked. In addition, all users should be aware that software piracy is a federal offense and is punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

Except as otherwise specifically provided, Norwell Public Schools assumes no responsibility for:

1. any unauthorized charges or fees, including telephone charges, long distance charges, per minute surcharges and/or equipment or line costs incurred by individual users;
2. any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the system for the purchase of products or services;
3. any cost, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of this policy;
4. any information or materials that a user transmits over Norwell Public Schools computer network;
5. any other inappropriate use of electronic resources of Norwell Public Schools.

Norwell Public Schools reserves the right to seek restitution from any user for costs incurred by the school district, including legal fees, for such user's inappropriate use of electronic resources. Norwell Public Schools reserves the right to change these rules at any time without notice.

**Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds – Policy EEAJ**

No motor vehicle operator shall cause or allow any motor vehicle operated by him or her on school grounds to idle unnecessarily, except for any of the following reasons: traffic conditions; queuing at a school for the purpose of picking up or discharging students; turbo-charged diesel engine cool down or warm up; maintenance of appropriate temperature for school buses when accepting or discharging passengers not to exceed three minutes in any fifteen minute period or one minute in any fifteen minute period for other motor vehicles; for circumstances involving safety or emergencies and for servicing or repairing motor vehicles; and as these exceptions are more completely described in the below referenced regulations.

The term “school grounds” shall mean in, on or within 100 feet of the real property of the school whether or not it is in session, and shall include any athletic field or facility and any playground used for school purposes or functions which is owned by the municipality or school district, regardless of proximity to a school building, as well as any parking lot appurtenant to such school athletic field, facility or playground.

Reasonable efforts shall be made by the district to identify by signage all known and actual air intake systems, which may be within 100 feet of an idling motor vehicle. A motor vehicle operator shall not idle a motor within 100 feet of such air intake system, unless the district has determined that alternative locations block traffic, impair student safety or are not cost effective.

Norwell Public Schools shall erect and maintain in a conspicuous location on school grounds “NO IDLING” signage as described below. All such signage shall contain appropriate sized font so as to be visible from a distance of 50 feet.

NO IDLING  
PENALTIES OF \$100 FOR FIRST OFFENSE AND \$500  
FOR SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT OFFENSES  
M.G.L. C. 90, § 16B AND 540 CMR 27.00

It shall be the responsibility of the school administration to ensure that each school bus driver employed by the district and not by a school bus contractor shall, upon employment and at least once per year thereafter, sign a document acknowledging the receipt of copies of M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B and 540 CMR 27.00. The prohibitions contained in M.G.L. c. 90, § 16B shall be enforced by state or local law enforcement agencies.

## **Non-Custodial Parents' Rights – Policy KBBA**

As required by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with law and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulations. Norwell Public Schools will follow the law and the regulations developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to standardize the process by which public schools provide student records to parents who do not have physical custody of their children ("non-custodial parents").

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 34H, a non-custodial parent may have access to the student record in accordance with the following provisions.

(a) A non-custodial parent is eligible to obtain access to the student record unless the school or district has been given documentation that:

1. The parent has been denied legal custody or has been ordered to supervised visitation, based on a threat to the safety of the student and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation, or
2. The parent has been denied visitation, or
3. The parent's access to the student has been restricted by a temporary or permanent protective order, unless the protective order (or any subsequent order modifying the protective order) specifically allows access to the information contained in the student record, or
4. There is an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of student records to the parent.

(b) The school shall place in the student's record documents indicating that a non-custodial parent's access to the student's record is limited or restricted pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(5)(a).

(c) In order to obtain access, the non-custodial parent must submit a written request for the student record to the school principal.

(d) Upon receipt of the request the school must immediately notify the custodial parent by certified and first-class mail, in English and the primary language of the custodial parent, that it will provide the non-custodial parent with access after 21 days, unless the custodial parent provides the principal with documentation that the non-custodial parent is not eligible to obtain access as set forth in 603 CMR 23.07 (5)(a).

(e) The school must delete all electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either work or home locations of the custodial parent from student records provided to non-custodial parents. In addition, such records must be marked to indicate that they shall not be used to enroll the student in another school.

(f) Upon receipt of a court order which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to G.L. c. 71, §34H, the school shall notify the non-custodial parent that it shall cease to provide access to the student record to the non-custodial parent.

<b>LEGAL</b>	M.G.L. 71:34D; 71:34H
<b>REFS.:</b>	603 CMR 23.07 (5) Access Procedures for Non-Custodial Parents 20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

**Non-Discrimination Including Harassment and Retaliation – Policy AC**

Norwell Public Schools is committed to maintaining an education and work environment for all school community members that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation. The members of the school community include the School Committee, employees, administration, faculty, staff, students, volunteers in the schools, and parties contracted to perform work for the Norwell Public Schools.

Norwell Public Schools does not exclude from participation, deny the benefits of NPS from or otherwise discriminate against, individuals on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles)\*, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements. The School Committee commits to:

1. Promoting the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encouraging positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Working toward a more integrated society and enlisting the support of individuals as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Using all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and address the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made within the school district, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations.
6. Maintained a process of reviewing policies and practices of the school district in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

Norwell Public Schools requires all members of the school community to conduct themselves in accordance with this policy.

It shall be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to engage in any form of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, or to violate any other civil right of any member of the school community. We recognize that discrimination can take a range of forms and can be targeted or unintentional; however, discrimination in any form, including harassment and retaliation, will not be tolerated.

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any school community member to subject any other member of the school community to any form of retaliation, including, but not limited to, coercion, intimidation, interference, punishment, discrimination, or harassment, for reporting or filing a complaint of discrimination, cooperating in an investigation, aiding or encouraging another member of the school community to report such conduct or file a complaint, or opposing any act or practice reasonably believed to be prohibited by this policy.

**LEGAL REFS:** Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375  
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972  
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975  
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 7905 (The Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act)  
M.G.L. [71B:1](#) et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)  
\*Acts of 2022, Chapter 117

**CROSS REF:** - ACE, Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
GBA, Equal Employment Opportunity  
IJ, Instructional Materials  
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities

### **Complaint Procedure for Discrimination – AC-E1**

Any student or staff member who feels he or she has been a victim of discrimination because of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities should make a report to the Complaint Officer: Suzan Theodorou, Director of Student Services, 322 Main Street, Norwell MA 02061, 781-659-8800; or the Alternate Complaint Officer: Warren MacCallum, Director of Finance, Operations &

Technology, 322 Main Street, Norwell MA 02061, 781-659-8800. *Civil Rights Complaint Forms* are available in all school principal's offices and in the central office.

#### *ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES*

In addition to, or instead of, filing a discrimination complaint through this policy, a person may choose to exercise other options, including but not limited to filing a complaint with outside agencies or filing a private lawsuit.

#### Civil Rights Violations Agencies

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 388-3000

*The Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's Problem Resolution System allows students, parents and others to file a complaint if they believe they have been harassed or discriminated against.*

Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Division  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 727-2200

*The Attorney General's Civil Rights Division reviews complaints of harassment, intimidation and discrimination in schools and determines appropriate legal action, including obtaining a restraining order.*

United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights  
John W. McCormack Building  
Post Office and Court House, Room 701  
Boston, MA 02109  
(617) 223-9662

*The Office for Civil Rights receives and investigates complaints of discrimination and harassment.*

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108  
(617) 994-6000

*The MCAD investigates complaints about discrimination in any public school program or course of study. Filing must occur within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory educational practice or harassment incident.*

Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS)  
*1-800-KIDS-508: Statewide Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Line*  
*1-800-792-5200: Child at Risk Hotline/evenings, nights and weekends*

*DSS investigates reports involving a student under 18 years old who suffers physical or emotional injury from abuse (including sexual abuse) or severe neglect (including malnutrition).*

United States Department of Justice - Community Relations Service (CRS)  
*99 Summer Street, Suite 1820*  
*Boston, MA 02110*  
*(617) 424-5715*

*CRS is a specialized federal conciliation service that assists school districts to manage and prevent racial and ethnic conflicts and disruptions in schools.*

*Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)*  
*One Ashburton Place*  
*Boston, MA 02108*  
*(617) 727-3990 or (413) 739-2145*

The MCAD investigates complaints about discrimination in any public school program or course of study. Filing must occur within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory educational practice or harassment incident.

*Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF)*  
*1-800-KIDS-508: Statewide Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Line*  
*1-800-792-5200: Child at Risk Hotline/evenings, nights and weekends*

DCF investigates reports involving a student under 18 years old who suffers physical or emotional injury from abuse (including sexual abuse) or severe neglect (including malnutrition).

*United States Department of Justice: Community Relations Service (CRS)*  
*99 Summer Street, Suite 1820*  
*Boston, MA 02110*  
*(617) 424-5715*

CRS is a specialized federal conciliation service that assists school districts to manage and prevent racial and ethnic conflicts and disruptions in schools.

*U.S. Department of Agriculture*  
*Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights*  
*1400 Independence Avenue, SW*  
*Washington, D.C. 20250-9410*

- fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

The USDA investigates complaints relative to Food Service.

### **Non-Discriminatory Administration of Scholarships, Prizes and Awards**

Scholarships, prizes and awards sponsored or administered by Norwell Public Schools are free of restrictions on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities. Norwell Public Schools does not post or print information regarding private restricted scholarships nor will any staff member advise or suggest to a particular student that he or she apply for such a scholarship.

### **Observation of Education Programs by Parents and/or Designees for Evaluation Purposes**

Norwell Public Schools is committed to working collaboratively with parents/designees to ensure that families participate fully and effectively in determining the appropriate educational program for a student found eligible for Special Education and/or related services. To this end, Norwell Public Schools ensures that all parents and or their designees are afforded ample opportunity and proper access within the context of the school day to observe their child's current and/or proposed special education programs, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71B, Section 3.

Norwell Public Schools will accept verbal or written observation requests from the parent or designee, directed to the Building Principal/Assistant Principal or Special Education Case Manager. Should a designee contact the school directly, the parent/guardian must confirm in writing that the designee is acting on their behalf.

Norwell Public Schools will provide timely access for an observation following such a request. Scheduling will be determined based on the student's individual educational program. It is reasonable for the district to designate certain periods of the year in which observations are not generally scheduled (e.g., MCAS testing, first/last week of school, etc.).

Norwell Public Schools will provide an observation of sufficient duration and extent to allow the parent/designee to participate fully and effectively with school personnel in determining an appropriate educational program. Each request will be scheduled on an individual basis taking into consideration the complexities of the student's educational needs as well as the nature and scope of the individual education program. Typically,

observations will range in time from 30-60 minutes per academic or non-academic period.

Norwell Public Schools will not condition or restrict observations except when necessary to protect: (a) the safety of the children in the program during the observation, (b) the integrity of the program during the observation, and (c) confidential or personally identifiable information of children obtained while observing the program. The Building Principal, in collaboration with the Director of Special Education, will be responsible for determining any safety, integrity or confidentiality issues related to a requested observation.

### **Parental Involvement – Title I**

In accordance with Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Norwell School Committee welcomes the participation of parents in support of student learning and recognizes that parental involvement increases the opportunities for student success. It is the policy of Norwell Public Schools to foster and maintain ongoing communications with parents concerning their opportunities for involvement, their children's eligibility for special programs, their children's educational progress, the professional qualifications of their children's teachers, and the status of their children's schools. Norwell Public Schools strives to provide such information in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. To the extent practicable, Norwell Public Schools shall also provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the No Child Left Behind Act in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language such parents understand. Communications with parents shall, at all times, respect the privacy of students and their families.

### **Pest Management – Policy EBAB**

Norwell Public Schools are committed to providing a safe and properly maintained environment for all staff, students and visitors. To achieve this end, the School District will implement integrated pest management procedures for its buildings and grounds.

The integrated pest management procedures shall include implementation of appropriate prevention and control strategies, notification of certain pesticide and herbicide uses, record keeping, education and evaluation.

Integrated pest management procedures will determine when to control pests and what method of control to choose. Strategies for managing pest populations will be influenced by the pest species, location and whether and at what population level its presence poses a threat to people, property or the environment. The full range of action alternatives, including no action, will always be considered.

#### 1. OVERVIEW AND GOALS

1. Norwell Public Schools shall develop and implement an integrated pest management program.
2. An integrated pest management program is a pest control approach that emphasizes using a balanced combination of tactics (cultural, mechanical, biological, chemical) to reduce pests to a tolerable level while using pesticides and herbicides as a last resort to minimize health, environmental and economic risks.
3. Pesticides and herbicides will be used only as a last resort, based on a review of all other available options.
4. The integrated pest management program shall strive to:
  1. Reduce any potential human health hazard.
  2. Reduce loss or damage to school structures or property.
  3. Minimize the risk of pests from spreading in the community.
  4. Enhance the quality of facility use for school and community.
  5. Minimize health, environmental and economic risks.

## 2. RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

- a. When pesticides or herbicides are used, they must be classified as an EPA Category III or IV. Application of any pesticide or herbicide may be performed only by certified applicators.
- b. Application of pesticides and herbicides may only be accomplished during a school break or when the building will be clear of students for at least 48 hours.

## 3. NOTIFICATION OF PESTICIDE AND HERBICIDE USE

- a. When pesticides or herbicides are used outdoors, notice of their use will be provided to parent/guardians, staff and students and will also be posted in a common area.
- b. When pesticides and herbicides are used in a building, the site will provide a 48-hour pre-notification in the form of posting the product name, purpose, application date, time and method and the Material Safety Data Sheet on all entrance doors. A contact person will also be listed.
- c. In the event of an EPA registered pesticide or herbicide application in or around a building site during the school year or summer session, a notice (including the product name, purpose, contact person, and application date, time and method), will be sent home in writing with students in the affected building at least 5 days prior to application.

## 4. RECORD-KEEPING

- a. The District will keep a record of pesticides and herbicides used, amounts and locations of treatments and will keep any Material Safety Data Sheets, product labels and

manufacturer information on ingredients related to the application of the pesticides or herbicides.

b. All records of pesticides and herbicides used and correspondence will be available for public review upon notice and during normal school hours.

## 5. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND EDUCATION

a. Designated staff (School Nutrition, Buildings and Grounds, etc.) will participate in sanitation and pest exclusion procedure appropriate to their roles. For example: keeping doors closed, repairing cracks, removing food waste within 12 hours, keeping lids on garbage receptacles and keeping vegetation properly out.

b. Ongoing education of all appropriate District staff will be a priority to ensure a safe and clean environment.

### **Physical Restraint of Students and Regulations – Policy JKAA**

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. Further, students of the district are protected by law from the unreasonable use of physical restraint. Such restraint shall be used only in emergency situations as a last resort and with extreme caution after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

When an emergency situation arises, and physical restraint is the only option deemed appropriate to prevent a student from injuring himself or herself, another student or school community member, a teacher or employee or agent of the school district may use such reasonable force needed to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

The definitions of forms of restraint shall be as defined in 603 CMR 46.02.

The use of mechanical restraint, medical restraint, and seclusion is prohibited.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR 46.03, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to themselves and/or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed inappropriate under the circumstances.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;

- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the school's method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements including, but not limited to making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition;
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00;
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.

Each building Principal will identify staff members to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These staff members will participate in an in-depth training program in the use of physical restraint.

In addition, each staff member will be trained regarding the school's physical restraint policy and accompanying procedures. The Principal will arrange training to occur in the first month of each school year, or for staff hired after the beginning of the school year, within a month of their employment.

Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.

Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;

The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."

This policy and its accompanying procedures shall be reviewed and disseminated to staff annually and made available to parents of enrolled students. The Superintendent, or designee, shall provide a copy of the Physical Restraint regulations to each Principal, who shall sign a form acknowledging receipt thereof.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00

## **Pregnancy – Policy JEI**

Norwell Public Schools (“district”) does not discriminate in its education program or activity against any student based on the student’s current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions.

### **Title IX Coordinator**

When a student, or a person who has a legal right to act on behalf of the student, informs any employee of the student’s pregnancy or related conditions, unless the employee reasonably believes that the Title IX Coordinator has been notified, the employee will promptly provide that person with the Title IX Coordinator’s contact information and inform that person that the Title IX Coordinator can coordinate specific actions to prevent sex discrimination and ensure the student’s equal access to the district’s education program or activity.

### **Reasonable Modifications**

Specifically, the district must make reasonable modifications to its policies, practices, or procedures as necessary to prevent sex discrimination and ensure equal access to the district’s education program or activity. Each reasonable modification must be based on the student’s individualized needs. In determining what modifications are required, the district will consult with the student. A modification that would fundamentally alter the nature of its education program or activity is not a reasonable modification. The student has discretion to accept or decline a reasonable modification.

Reasonable modifications may include, but are not limited to, breaks during class to express breast milk, breastfeed, or attend to health needs associated with pregnancy or related conditions, including eating, drinking, or using the restroom; intermittent absences to attend medical appointments; access to online or homebound education; changes in schedule or course sequence; extensions of time for coursework and rescheduling of tests and examinations; allowing a student to sit or stand, or carry or keep water nearby; counseling; changes in physical space or supplies (for example, access to a larger desk or a footrest); elevator access; or other changes to policies, practices, or procedures.

The student may voluntarily take a leave of absence from the district’s education program or activity to cover, at minimum, the period of time deemed medically necessary by the student’s licensed healthcare provider. When the student returns to the district’s education program or activity, the student will be reinstated to the academic status and, as practicable, to the extracurricular status that the student held when the voluntary leave began. To request tutoring in these circumstances, a family must fill out the home-hospital form.

The district will ensure that the student can access a lactation space, which will be a space other than a bathroom, that is clean, shielded from view, free from intrusion from others, and may be used by a student for expressing breast milk or breastfeeding as needed.

The district will only require supporting documentation that is necessary and reasonable to determine reasonable modifications. The district will not request documentation for reasonable modifications such as when a student who is pregnant needs a bigger uniform; when the student has previously provided the recipient with sufficient supporting documentation; when the reasonable modification because of pregnancy or related conditions at issue is allowing a student to carry or keep water nearby and drink, use a bigger desk, sit or stand, or take breaks to eat, drink, or use the restroom; when the student has lactation needs.

### **Certification to Participate**

The district will not require a student who is pregnant or has related conditions to provide certification from a healthcare provider or any other person that the student is physically able to participate in the recipient's class, program, or extracurricular activity unless:

- The certified level of physical ability or health is necessary for participation in the class, program, or extracurricular activity;
- The recipient requires such certification of all students participating in the class, program, or extracurricular activity; and
- The information obtained is not used as a basis for discrimination.

### **Recruiting Information (Armed Forces Recruiter Access to Students)**

According to the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA Section 9528), schools are now required to provide students' directory information upon request to military recruiters and/or institutions of higher education. If you do not want your son or daughter's name, address and telephone number to be released to third parties, please notify Norwell High School in writing.

### **Safe Schools Memorandum of Understanding**

#### General Principles

It is the overriding objective of Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department to educate and develop healthy, safe and law-abiding student citizens. To that end, Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department agree to coordinate their knowledge of and response to violent, delinquent, or criminal acts, and alcohol and other drug use by students wherever they may occur. To ensure a safe educational environment in Norwell, this collaborative effort is support between Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department for drugs, alcohol, weapons, hate crimes, and violence. Both students and non-students involved in such acts on school property or at any school function or event shall, in addition to and exclusive of any discipline action which may be taken or imposed by the Norwell School Department under its own policies and procedures, be reported to the Norwell Police Department for appropriate legal action. This policy is intended to supplement and not supplant any policies adopted by the Norwell School Committee pursuant to Standards for Classroom Safety adopted by the Board of Education pursuant to M.G.L. c. 69, § 1B.

It continues to remain the sole prerogative of school officials to impose discipline for infractions of school rules and policies. In cases where the school has reported an incident to the police, as described below, the school agrees to notify the police department when suspending a student under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37H or 37H1/2 and 37H3/4.

M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 37H requires each school district to have a written Code of Conduct reflected in student handbooks stating standards and procedures to assure building security and safety of students and school personnel, and the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism or civil rights violations. A copy of this Memorandum shall also be placed in these handbooks at the middle and high school levels.

### Objectives

1. To create a safe, secure, and healthy school and community environment for students, staff, and residents.
2. To work with the Police Chief or designee who should make recommendations to the appropriate school officials and parent groups concerning more effective ways to promote an awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol use and abuse and sound preventative measures.
3. To develop and implement a process for school officials and local police to coordinate a response to criminal/delinquent behavior and to refer appropriate first time or early offenders, ages 7-17, to the Plymouth County District Attorney's Juvenile Diversion Program. The Juvenile Diversion Program is an alternative to the court system. Participating youth are required to attend counseling/education programs, perform community service and in some cases pay restitution. Under present court procedures, youths who successfully complete the Juvenile Diversion Program will have no court record.

### Procedures for Reportable Acts

While acknowledging school officials are not agents of the police or Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and police are not agents of the school, the school and police agree to develop policies and protocols for coordinated efforts.

The Superintendent of Schools and the various school Principals or their designees are responsible for reporting acts. The Police Chief shall designate an officer (or officers) to coordinate all reported criminal acts.

1. A reportable act on school grounds or at school-sponsored events shall include:

- a. Any serious incident of assaultive behavior, destruction of property, or theft;
  - b. Violation of a restraining order;
  - c. Possession of a dangerous weapon;
  - d. Finding any student who is in actual or constructive possession of alcohol and/or what is reasonably believed to be a controlled substance defined by state law, except that possession of drugs pursuant to a valid prescription is a discretionary reportable act;
  - e. Having a reasonable belief that any student has sold or offered to sell or otherwise distributed alcohol and/or a drug which is believed to be a controlled substance under the law;
  - f. Finding any student, regardless of age, who is reasonably believed to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs;
  - g. Any threat to commit a crime against a person or property of another, e.g., threats over the Internet;
  - h. Any so-called “hate crime” meaning for purposes of this section, any violation of Massachusetts General Laws c. 265, § 37 or 39;
  - i. Any student’s violation of a criminal statute which warrants reporting but is not as urgent as reportable acts described above; and
  - j. Any incident not included in (1) – (9) above which, in the opinion of Norwell Public Schools, constitutes a health or safety emergency as defined in 34CFR 99.36 and 603 CMR 28.08 (7).
2. Any teacher or other school employee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has committed a reportable act, as defined above, shall take (or cause to be taken) the student to the Principal or designee. The Principal or designee shall ask the reporting teacher/employee what happened and take custody of any physical evidence.
  3. The Principal or designee shall inform the student and his/her parent or guardian of the nature of the offense and inform them that such an offense will be reported to the Norwell Police Department. The Principal or designee may offer the student the opportunity to respond to the teacher/employee’s report. The principal shall, as soon as practicable, report all communications to the Norwell Police Department. All contraband seized by the principal or designee (drugs, alcohol, firearms, and dangerous weapons) shall be immediately secured and surrendered to the appropriate police department as soon as practicable. The Principal or designee

shall also notify the Superintendent of all reportable acts. In the event that the principal or designee has any question regarding the nature or scope of any search for or seizure of contraband, the principal shall first contact the police department for assistance.

4. Upon notice of a reportable act, Norwell police may, in its discretion, exercise its power to arrest or place in protective custody. Norwell Public Schools, parents and students are advised that standard operating procedure for arrests and protective custody by Norwell Police Department involves the use of handcuffs.
5. When notice of a reportable act is received by the Norwell Police Department, the police shall investigate and, where appropriate, refer such cases to the District Attorney's office. The police will provide a follow-up report to the Superintendent and the building principal if permitted by law.
6. In addition, the principal will comply with Massachusetts General Laws c.71, §37L requiring that an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time to be reported in writing to the Chief of Police. This report must be submitted in any case involving a student's use or possession of a dangerous weapon on school premises, regardless of whether it occurred during school hours, and whether or not the student has been expelled.

### Searches

In order to maintain a safe environment in its schools, Norwell Public Schools reserves the right to search all school property including, but not limited to lockers assigned to students, for contraband or controlled substances in accordance with state and federal laws. Searches of school property, including lockers, may be conducted on a periodic basis and may include the use of trained K-9 units whose specific mission is drug detection. The police department designee and the appropriate building administrator and Superintendent of Schools will coordinate these searches in an effort to minimize disruption and maximize the security of the search.

School officials may search students and their personal belongings if there exists reasonable suspicion to believe the student is in possession of contraband or illegal substances. Searches of students, their vehicles, and their personal effects, such as coat and pockets, purses, knapsacks, and/or other bags, will be reasonable at their inception and in their scope.

### Records and Collaboration

1. Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department will maintain appropriate records for all school incidents including acts or suspected acts of violence, drug and alcohol use, and criminal acts.

2. The Superintendent of Schools, Chief of Police, middle and high school principals and other designated administrators and police officers will meet to collaborate on the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and establish communication lines to support a safe, secure school and community. They will then continue meeting on at least a semi-annual basis.
3. The Norwell Police Department will continue to provide police services to Norwell Public Schools with a high priority response to reported crimes in progress in and around school facilities. The Norwell Police Department will also maintain visibility of uniformed Norwell police officers when requested by Norwell Public Schools.
4. In addition to the above responsibilities, the designated liaisons from Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department will meet regularly for the following purposes: (1) to discuss the scope of drug and alcohol possession and use and violence in the school setting; (2) to identify strategies to reduce such activities; and (3) to suggest the necessary action plan for implementation of such strategies.

#### Police Department Reports to Norwell Public Schools

1. Subject to applicable state and federal law, the Norwell Police Department will provide Norwell Public Schools with a written report of the arrest or filing of a complaint application against any student from Norwell Middle School or Norwell High School. The appropriate Police Department designated liaison shall report to the appropriate Norwell Public School designated liaison any criminal and non-criminal activity involving students of Norwell Public Schools if the activity poses a serious and imminent threat to the safety of the student, other students, faculty, staff, or administrative personnel, or is in violation of Norwell School Committee and Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association policy.
2. The Norwell Police Department will, subject to state and federal law and if in its discretion this disclosure will not impede the progress of an investigation, report to Norwell Public Schools all reports of missing or abducted children. The appropriate authorities will notify parents.

#### Training

Prior to the effective date of this Memorandum of Understanding and thereafter, Norwell Public Schools and the Norwell Police Department shall provide agency-wide training to their respective staffs to inform them of their roles and responsibilities under this agreement. Said training is to include a review of this Memorandum of Understanding, school policies and procedures contained in the Student-Parent/Handbooks, Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association Regulations, and related rules and regulations. On an ongoing basis, the same training will be provided to new staff members.

### Disclaimer

This Memorandum of Understanding is voluntarily entered into with the consent of both parties and is an internal document between the parties and does not confer any rights, privileges or obligations nor is it enforceable as against the parties hereto in any court, administrative hearing, or other forum. Any written or oral communication between the parties to the Memorandum of Understanding will be protected by all laws relating to privacy and confidentiality. This Memorandum of Understanding is in addition to, and does not supplant policies of Norwell Public Schools with regard to disciplinary procedures and codes of student conduct that are now or may be formulated and published in student handbooks.

### Agreement

Agreement will be interpreted in a manner consistent with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and applicable federal regulations. If any provision of this Agreement is determined to be illegal or in conflict with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or applicable federal regulations, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected, and the Agreement shall be construed as if it did not contain the provision held to be invalid. Nothing in this agreement shall supersede or contravene any school or police department administrative procedures or any collective bargaining agreement.

### **School Admission & Non-Discrimination (M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5)**

Every school-aged resident of Norwell has the right to attend Norwell Public Schools. Norwell Public Schools is not required to enroll any individual who does not reside in the Town of Norwell. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to Norwell Public Schools, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of Norwell Public Schools on the basis of race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles), color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities.

### **School District Wellness Program – Policy ADF**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. Therefore, the school district will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

### Wellness Committee

Norwell Public Schools will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent, student, nurse, school food service representative, school administrator, member of the public, and other community members as appropriate. The school committee designates the following individuals as wellness program coordinators: Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology and the Director of Food Service. Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy.

### Nutrition Guidelines

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. The district will create procedures that address all foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing fat and added sugars, increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment;
- separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
  1. foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses;
  2. foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands;
  3. foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
  4. refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day; and
  5. specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives.

### Nutrition and Physical Education

The school district will provide nutrition education aligned with standards established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in all grades. The school district will provide physical education training aligned with the standards established by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition and physical education.

### Nutrition Education

- Students receive nutrition education that teaches the skills they need to adopt and maintain healthy eating behaviors.

- Nutrition education is offered in the school cafeteria as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the food
- service staff and other school personnel, including teachers.
- Students receive consistent nutrition messages from all aspects of the school program.
- Division health education curriculum standards and guidelines address both nutrition and physical education.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education or core curricula (e.g., math, science, language arts).
- Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
- Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
- The level of student participation in the school breakfast and school lunch programs is appropriate.

#### Physical Education Activities

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes, daily recess periods for elementary school students, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before-and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Schools work with the community to create ways for students to walk, bike, rollerblade or skateboard safely to and from school.
- Schools encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Schools provide training to enable staff to promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among students.

#### Other School-Based Activities

The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, are charged with developing procedures addressing other school-based activities to promote wellness.

- An adequate amount of time is allowed for students to eat meals in adequate lunchroom facilities.
- All children who participate in subsidized food programs are able to obtain food in a non-stigmatizing manner.
- Environmentally-friendly practices such as the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and non-disposable tableware have been considered and implemented where appropriate.
- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designed to benefit staff health have been considered and, to the extent practical, implemented.

### Evaluation

The wellness committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. Wellness program coordinators shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. Wellness program coordinators will report to the School Committee annually.

### **Student Absences and Excuses – Policy JH**

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

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for reasons necessitated by: medical reasons documented by a medical professional, for visits with active-duty military parents or guardians; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; observance of major religious holidays; school-sponsored field trips; or court appearances.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the Principal or designee.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of their character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly. Accordingly, parents must provide either written or verbal explanation for the absence or tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justified.

#### *Student Absence Notification Program*

Each Principal will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

### *Dropout Prevention*

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20

### **School Nutrition Program Charge – Policy EFD**

Norwell Public Schools is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with charges for a la carte purchases.

The school district provides free meals to all students (one free meal per meal service period). However, unpaid charges for additional meals, or a la carte items place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student balances.

### **Charges and Balances**

Each student will be allowed to take one regular meal per meal service period. Students may want to receive additional meals, or to purchase a la carte items. Students will pay for additional meals at the regular rate approved by the School Committee. Student Accounts

will be maintained by the District Food and Nutrition Program as prescribed by the district and delineated in the Student-Parent Handbook.

The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred beyond the free meals provided. If there is a financial hardship, a parent/guardian should contact food services directly to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

### **Payments**

Payments for additional food purchases beyond the regular meal will be made to the District Food and Nutrition Program. Parents will be notified of account balances or deficits at regular intervals as prescribed by the district. At no time shall any staff member give payment notices to students. If parents/guardians have issues with student purchases, they should contact the Food Service office for assistance.

Parents/guardians may pay in advance for anticipated purchases beyond the free meal allowed during each meal service period. Further details are available on the school district webpage and in student-parent handbooks. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without a positive balance in their account on any given day.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents/guardians by setting up an online account (see food service webpage for more details) or by speaking with the school's food service director. The point-of-sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's account status. Parents/guardians will receive automated low-balance notices. If notices do not result in payment, the food service director shall turn the account over to the building principal for further investigation.

### **Refunds**

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. Graduating students also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.

### **Delinquent Accounts/Collections**

The Superintendent shall ensure that there are appropriate and effective collection procedures and internal controls within the school district's business office that meet the requirements of law.

Each school handbook shall contain detailed instructions for family assistance.

## **Policy Communications**

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

**LEGAL REFS:** MGL [71:72](#); USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017, [Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023](#)

**CROSS REFS:** Fees & Payment Options

AC: Nondiscrimination, AC-E: Complaint Procedure for Discrimination

**SOURCE:** MASC – Updated 2023

## **Sexual Harassment / Title IX – Policy ACAB**

Norwell Public Schools (“district”) does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX, including in admission and employment.

Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the district’s Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both. The district’s Title IX Coordinator is Suzan Theodorou, Director of Student Services, 322 Main Street, Norwell MA 02061, [suzan.theodorou@norwellschools.org](mailto:suzan.theodorou@norwellschools.org), 781-659-8800. The district’s Title IX Coordinator may delegate specific duties to one or more designees as the Title IX Coordinator finds appropriate.

The district’s nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located below. The district has adopted these grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints made by students, employees, or other individuals who are participating or attempting to participate in its education program or activity, or by the Title IX Coordinator, alleging any action that would be prohibited by Title IX or the Title IX regulations.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the procedures below.

### **Definitions**

Under state law, sexual harassment is sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment under Massachusetts law when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's advancement (quid pro quo harassment);
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions;
- Such conduct interferes with an individual's job duties; or
- The conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Under Federal law, sex-based harassment is a form of sex discrimination and means sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, that is:

- An employee of the District conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the school district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct ("quid pro quo harassment");
- Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the District's education program or activity ("hostile environment harassment"); or
- "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

The following additional definitions apply:

"Actual knowledge" means notice of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment to any employee of the District, except that this standard is not met when the only official of the District with actual knowledge is the respondent (where the respondent is an employee). Imputation of knowledge based solely on vicarious liability or constructive notice is insufficient to constitute actual knowledge. Complaints will be addressed whenever the District has actual knowledge of the allegation.

"Administrative leave" means placing an employee on leave pursuant to state law. Nothing in the Title IX regulations precludes a recipient from placing a non-student employee respondent on administrative leave during the pendency of a grievance process, provided that Massachusetts laws are followed.

"Consent" means cooperation in act or attitude pursuant to an exercise of free will of a conscious person with informed knowledge of the nature of the act or actions. A current or previous relationship shall not be sufficient to constitute consent. Consent will not be found when submission to the act or actions is undertaken due the influence of fear, fraud, forcible compulsion, threats, and/ or if the complainant possessed any legal incapacity to consent at the time of the act or actions. Consent is a defense to all types of sexual harassment.

"Complainant" means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Deliberate indifference" means a response to sexual harassment that is clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.

"Emergency removal" means the suspension or expulsion of a student on an emergency basis, consistent with Massachusetts state law. Nothing in the Title IX regulations precludes a school district from removing a respondent from the school district's education program or activity on an emergency basis, provided that the school district follows all procedures under Massachusetts law, undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides

the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal.

“Formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment and requesting that the District investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

The Title IX Coordinator may file a formal complaint, against the wishes of the complainant, when safety or similar concerns lead the Coordinator to conclude that a non-deliberately indifferent response to actual knowledge of Title IX sexual harassment could reasonably require the school district to investigate and potentially sanction a respondent. A Title IX Coordinator’s decision to override the complainant’s decision not to file a formal complaint must be documented in writing along with an explanation of why this decision was necessary in order to avoid deliberate indifference. The following factors go into the decision by the Title IX Coordinator:

- The complainant’s request not to proceed with initiation of a complaint;
- The complainant’s reasonable safety concerns regarding initiation of a complaint;
- The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
- The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the removal of a respondent from campus or imposition of another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and prevent its recurrence;
- The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is an employee of the district;
- The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern, ongoing sex discrimination, or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
- The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
- Whether the district could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating its grievance procedures.

“Disciplinary sanctions” means consequences imposed on a respondent following a determination under Title IX that the respondent violated the district’s prohibition on sex discrimination.

“Relevant” means related to the allegations of sex discrimination under investigation as part of these grievance procedures. Questions are relevant when they seek evidence that may aid in showing whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred, and evidence is relevant when it may aid a decisionmaker in determining whether the alleged sex discrimination occurred.

“Remedies” means measures provided, as appropriate, to a complainant or any other person the district identifies as having had their equal access to the district’s education program or

activity limited or denied by sex discrimination. These measures are provided to restore or preserve that person's access to the district's education program or activity after a district determines that sex discrimination occurred.

"Retaliation" means intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person by the district, a student, or an employee or other person authorized by the district to provide aid, benefit, or service under the district's education program or activity, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its regulations, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing under the Title IX regulations.

"Respondent" means an individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Supportive measures" means individualized measures offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without unreasonably burdening a complainant or respondent, not for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent to:

- Restore or preserve that party's access to the district's education program or activity, including measures that are designed to protect the safety of the parties or the district's educational environment; or
- Provide support during the district's grievance procedures or during an informal resolution process.
- Actively seeking legal custody, guardianship, visitation, or adoption of such a person

### **Complaints and Reports of Sexual Harassment**

The following people have a right to make a complaint of sex discrimination, including complaints of sex-based harassment, requesting that the district investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination under Title IX:

A "complainant," which includes:

- a student or employee of the district who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX; or
- a person other than a student or employee of the district who is alleged to have been subjected to conduct that could constitute sex discrimination under Title IX at a time when that individual was participating or attempting to participate in the district's education program or activity;
- A parent, guardian, or other authorized legal representative with the legal right to act on behalf of a complainant; or
- the district's Title IX Coordinator

Note that a person is entitled to make a complaint of sex-based harassment only if they themselves are alleged to have been subjected to the sex-based harassment, if they have a

legal right to act on behalf of such person, or if the Title IX Coordinator initiates a complaint consistent with the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 106.44(f)(1)(v).

With respect to complaints of sex discrimination other than sex-based harassment, in addition to the people listed above, the following persons have a right to make a complaint:

- Any student or employee of the district; or
- Any person other than a student or employee who was participating or attempting to participate in the district's education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

The district may consolidate complaints of sex discrimination against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against another party, when the allegations of sex discrimination arise out of the same facts or circumstances. The district cannot consolidate if it would violate FERPA. Consolidation would not violate FERPA when a district obtains prior written consent from the parents or eligible students to the disclosure of their education records.

### **Obligation to Report**

All employees must notify the building principal or the Title IX Coordinator when the employee has information about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX.

### **Supportive Measures**

Upon receiving actual notice of alleged sexual harassment without a formal complaint, staff members must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator must then contact the complainant within five school days of receiving the complaint and do the following:

- Discuss and offer supportive measures;
- Consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;
- Explain that supportive measures may be received with or without filing a complaint;
- Determine whether the complainant wishes to file a complaint; and
- Explain to the complainant the purpose of filing a complaint.

The Title IX Coordinator must document in writing the supportive measures offered/provided or why no supportive measures were offered/provided.

A respondent will be offered supportive measures if the district has initiated a Title IX complaint or if the district has offered informal resolution. If the Title IX Coordinator is initiating the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will notify the complainant prior to doing so and appropriately address reasonable concerns about the complainant's safety or the safety of others, including by providing supportive measures.

Supportive measures may include counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of work or class schedules, campus escort services, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, changes in work or housing locations, leaves of absence, increased security and monitoring of certain areas of the campus, and

other similar measures. The district must maintain as confidential any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent, to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the district to provide the supportive measures.

If the complainant or respondent is a student with a disability, the Title IX Coordinator will consult with one or more members, as appropriate, of the student's IEP or 504 Team to determine how to comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.*, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794, in the implementation of supportive measures.

### **Written Notice**

Before any investigation can begin, the District must send written notice to both parties including sufficient details. Sufficient details include the identities of the parties involved in the incident, if known; a description of the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment; and the date and location of the alleged incident, if known. The written notice must include a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process. The written notice must inform the parties that they may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney, and that they may inspect and review evidence. The written notice must inform the parties that the District's code of conduct prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If additional allegations are added during the course of the investigation, additional written notice must be provided.

### **Informal Resolution**

Where appropriate, after the written notice has been issued, and in lieu of resolving a complaint through the district's Title IX grievance procedures, the parties may instead elect to participate in an informal resolution process. The district does not offer informal resolution to resolve a complaint that includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of a student, or when such a process would conflict with Federal, State, or local law.

Facilitators of informal resolution will be designated by the Title IX Coordinator and must not be biased against any of the parties. Prior to beginning informal resolution, the Title IX Coordinator will send notice to the parties of the process and their rights.

Informal resolution is entirely voluntary. Parties may elect to pursue formal procedures at any step in the process of making their complaint, including prior to filing one.

If the complainant and the respondent feel that their grievances have been sufficiently addressed via informal resolution, then no further action needs to be taken. This voluntary conversation must occur within thirty (30) school days after receiving the allegations,

unless both parties agree otherwise. The results of an informal resolution shall be maintained by the facilitator, in writing.

### **Grievance Process Overview**

During the grievance process, the district will treat complainants and respondents equally. The district requires that the Title IX Coordinator, investigator, and decisionmaker not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally, or against any individual complainant or respondent. The Title IX Coordinator may designate an investigator and a decision-maker, but the investigator and decision-maker shall be two separate people. The Title IX Coordinator may serve as either the investigator or decision-maker.

The district presumes that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged sex discrimination until a determination is made at the conclusion of its grievance procedures.

The district has established the following timeframes for the major stages of the grievance procedures:

- Within five business days, the district will decide whether to dismiss or investigate a complaint.
- Investigations into allegations of sexual harassment will be prompt and the formal process will be completed within a sixty (60) school day timeframe where feasible. There may be a temporary delay of the grievance process or the limited extension of time frames for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension and the reasons for the action. Good cause may include considerations such as the absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities. The parties will have ten (10) calendar days to appeal a decision from the decision-maker, or a dismissal of the complaint, to the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent will decide an appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt.

The district will provide all parties with a reasonable extension of time frames on a case-by-case basis for good cause with notice to the parties that includes the reason for the delay. If a party is seeking an extension, they should request an extension from the Title IX Coordinator in writing, explaining the reasons for the requested extension. The Title IX Coordinator will rule on the extension in writing to all parties. If the district requires an extension for good cause, it will notify all the parties of the reasons.

The district will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of the parties and witnesses during its grievance procedures. These steps will not restrict the ability of the parties to obtain and present evidence, including by speaking to witnesses; consult with their family members, confidential resources, or advisors; or otherwise prepare for or participate in the grievance procedures. The parties cannot engage in retaliation, including against witnesses.

The district will objectively evaluate all evidence that is relevant and not otherwise impermissible—including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. Credibility determinations will not be based on a person’s status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.

The following types of evidence, and questions seeking that evidence, are impermissible (*i.e.*, will not be accessed or considered, except by the district to determine whether one of the exceptions listed below applies; will not be disclosed; and will not otherwise be used), regardless of whether they are relevant:

- Evidence that is protected under a privilege recognized by Federal or State law unless the person to whom the privilege or confidentiality is owed has voluntarily waived the privilege or confidentiality;
- A party’s or witness’s records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional in connection with the provision of treatment to the party or witness, unless the district obtains that party’s or witness’s voluntary, written consent for use in its grievance procedures; and
- Evidence that relates to the complainant’s sexual interests or prior sexual conduct, unless evidence about the complainant’s prior sexual conduct is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the alleged conduct or is evidence about specific incidents of the complainant’s prior sexual conduct with the respondent that is offered to prove consent to the alleged sex-based harassment. The fact of prior consensual sexual conduct between the complainant and respondent does not by itself demonstrate or imply the complainant’s consent to the alleged sex-based harassment or preclude determination that sex-based harassment occurred.

**Dismissal of a Complaint:**

The district may dismiss a complaint of sex discrimination if:

- the district is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
- The respondent is not participating in the district’s education program or activity and is not employed by the district;
- The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator declines to initiate a complaint, and the district determines that, without the complainant’s withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX even if proven; or
- the district determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX. Before dismissing the complaint, the district will make reasonable efforts to clarify the allegations with the complainant.

Upon dismissal, the district will promptly notify the complainant of the basis for the dismissal. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations,

then the district will also notify the respondent of the dismissal and the basis for the dismissal promptly following notification to the complainant, or simultaneously if notification is in writing.

The district will notify the complainant that a dismissal may be appealed and will provide the complainant with an opportunity to appeal the dismissal of a complaint. If the dismissal occurs after the respondent has been notified of the allegations, then the district will also notify the respondent that the dismissal may be appealed. Dismissals may be appealed on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that would change the outcome;
- New evidence that would change the outcome and that was not reasonably available when the dismissal was made; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, or decision maker had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that would change the outcome.

If the dismissal is appealed, the district will:

- Notify the parties of any appeal, including notice of the allegations, if notice was not previously provided to the respondent;
- Implement appeal procedures equally for the parties;
- Ensure that the decision maker for the appeal did not take part in an investigation of the allegations or dismissal of the complaint;
- Ensure that the decisionmaker for the appeal has been trained consistent with the Title IX regulations;
- Provide the parties a reasonable and equal opportunity to make a statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome; and
- Notify the parties of the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result.

When a complaint is dismissed, the district will, at a minimum:

- Offer supportive measures to the complainant as appropriate;
- If the respondent has been notified of the allegations, offer supportive measures to the respondent as appropriate; and
- Take other prompt and effective steps, as appropriate, through the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that sex discrimination does not continue or recur within the district's education program or activity.

**Investigation:**

The district will provide for adequate, reliable, and impartial investigation of complaints. The burden is on the district—not on the parties—to conduct an investigation that gathers sufficient evidence to determine whether sex discrimination occurred.

The investigator must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of the investigation. The investigator will be responsible for interviewing parties and witnesses, finding facts, and making determinations related to credibility, all of which will go into a written report. The investigator must avoid all questions that are protected by legal privilege, unless the privilege has been waived, and should avoid asking about the complainant's sexual history unless it is directly relevant to prove consent to the conduct at issue or to prove that the conduct was committed by someone other than the respondent.

Prior to completion of the investigative report, the school district will send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report.

The investigator must avoid making any final determinations of responsibility for sexual harassment.

Findings should be written in a factual way in an investigative report. Credibility determinations may not be based on an individual's status as complainant, witness, or respondent.

During the investigative process and any further hearings, complainants and respondents have a right to have advisors of their choice participate in all aspects of the proceedings. The district will provide both parties with written notice of investigative interviews, meetings, and hearings, with sufficient time to prepare.

### **Findings of Responsibility**

After the investigator has completed the investigation, the designated decision-maker will be assigned to determine final responsibility or lack thereof for violating Title IX. The decision-maker must not be biased against any of the parties at the outset of this process.

Before the district can determine responsibility, an investigative report will be sent to the parties and the decision-maker will offer both the complainant and respondent the opportunity to submit proposed relevant, written questions to ask of any party or witness, to respond to questions posed by another party, and to offer additional limited follow-up. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

After this process is complete, the decision-maker will create a written determination regarding whether sexual harassment has occurred using a preponderance of the evidence standard.

A “preponderance of the evidence” means that it is more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred. The decision-maker shall further recommend what action, if any, is required. If it is determined that sexual harassment occurred, the District will take steps to prevent the recurrence of the harassment and correct its discriminatory effect on the complainant and others if appropriate. Such remedies may include supportive measures.

The written determination must be issued to both parties simultaneously and must include:

- (A) Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- (B) A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather other evidence, and hearings held;
- (C) Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- (D) Conclusions regarding the application of the District’s code of conduct to the facts;
- (E) A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions the District imposes on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District’s education program or activity will be provided by the District to the complainant; and
- (F) The district’s procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal (a copy of, or direct reference to, this policy will suffice).

Formal disciplinary actions may be imposed in the event that the preponderance of the evidence indicates a violation of this policy, up to and including expulsion or termination. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with due process rights under State law and any applicable collective bargaining agreement.

As indicated above, these procedures do not limit the District from removing a student or employee from a program or activity on an emergency basis based on immediate threats to people’s physical health or safety or placing an employee on administrative leave during the pendency of the investigation.

After the grievance process, the district may as appropriate, modify or terminate supportive measures.

### **Appeal**

Any party may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the findings of the formal procedure. Appeal will be allowed on the following, limited basis:

- (A) Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- (B) New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and/or

(C) The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

The Superintendent will notify the other party in writing when an appeal is filed and implement appeal procedures equally for both parties. Both parties will have a reasonable, equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the determination of the decision-maker. The Superintendent or designee, as a further impartial decision-maker, will review the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the investigation and the conclusions, and issue written findings to both the complainant and respondent within thirty (30) calendar days of the appeal.

### **Training**

All employees will be trained annually and upon hire on:

- the district's obligation to address sex discrimination in its education program or activity;
- The scope of conduct that constitutes sex discrimination, including the definition of sex-based harassment; and
- All applicable notice and information requirements.

All investigators, facilitators of informal resolution, decision makers and other persons responsible for supportive measures/Title IX process will have additional training on:

- The district's grievance procedures;
- How to serve impartially, including by avoiding prejudice of the facts at issue, conflicts of interest, and bias;
- The meaning and application of the term "relevant" in relation to questions and evidence, and the types of evidence that are impermissible regardless of relevance; and
- rules and practices associated with the district's informal resolution process and on how to serve impartially, including by avoiding conflicts of interest and bias.

In addition, the Title IX Coordinator and designees will receive training on their specific responsibilities, recordkeeping and any other training necessary to implement Title IX.

### **Records**

A record will be maintained for a period of seven years of any actions, including supportive measures or informal resolution, taken in response to a report or complaint and district staff will document the basis for the district's conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent.

### **External Grievance Procedure**

Any student, parent or employee who chooses not to use the district's internal grievance procedures or who is not satisfied with the district's internal grievance procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency.

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:  
The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone 617-994-6000, TIY: 617-994-6196

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:  
The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:  
The Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
5 Post Office Square, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: 617-289-0111, FAX: 617-289-0150, TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination  
One Ashburton Place  
Sixth Floor, Room 601  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone 617-994-6000, TIY: 617-994-6196

OR

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
Phone: 1-800-669-4000

**Referral to Law Enforcement, Other Agencies**

Some alleged conduct may constitute both a violation of district policies and criminal activity. The building Principal, coordinator, Superintendent, or designee will refer matters

to law enforcement and other agencies as appropriate under the law or district policy, and inform the complainant/ alleged victim of the right to file a criminal complaint.

### **Retaliation**

Complainants and those who participate in the complaint resolution process or who otherwise oppose in a reasonable manner an act or policy believed to constitute discrimination are protected from retaliation by law and district policy. The coordinator or designee will inform all involved individuals that retaliation is prohibited, and that anyone who feels that they have experienced retaliation for filing a complaint or participating in the resolution process should inform the coordinator. The coordinator will investigate reports of retaliation and, where retaliation is found, take separate remedial and disciplinary action.

**LEGAL REFS:** Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended 45  
Federal Regulation 74676 issued by EEO Commission  
Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq. (Title IX)  
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00

### **Student Conduct – Policy JK**

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the Principal and the professional staff of each building. In order to do this, school staff in Norwell Public Schools shall develop specific rules consistent with the law and aligned with School Committee policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by providing greater specificity as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness, shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances, and shall be consistent with adopted School Committee policy.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

### **Student Discipline – Policy JIC**

The Norwell School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not

violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct.

Each principal shall include prohibited actions in the student handbook or other publication and made available to students and parents/guardians.

Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

### **Principal's Discretion**

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed (except for offenses referenced at the end of this policy), the principal, or his/her designee, shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense. The principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning and shall attempt to avoid long term suspension as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. These alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37 ¾, a student may not be suspended or expelled until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school.

### **SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

Short-term suspension is defined as the exclusion of a student from school premises and regular classroom activities for a specified period of not more than ten school days.

#### **Short-Term Suspension Procedures**

The principal, or his/her designee, may suspend students on a short-term basis. Unless a student poses a danger to persons or property, substantially and materially disrupts the order of school, possesses a firearm, controlled substance, or assaults a school staff member, the student will receive the following prior to a short-term suspension:

1. Oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:
  1. The disciplinary offense;

2. The basis for the charge;
3. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
4. The opportunity to have a hearing with the principal and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
5. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
6. The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing; and

2. At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

3. Based on the available information, the principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offences and what remedy shall be imposed. The principal shall notice the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, the reasons for it, and, if applicable, the type and duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and other academic work.

4. If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, before the suspension takes effect.

### **Emergency Removal**

If the student's continued presence poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, the principal shall temporarily remove the student from the school. This temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) days following the day of the emergency removal and the superintendent shall be immediately notified of the removal. Additionally, the principal shall make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the emergency removal, and the other information required in a short-term suspension notification.

The principal will also provide notice in writing to the student and parent with all information required in a short-term suspension notification. The opportunity for a hearing with the principal shall occur within two (2) school days, unless otherwise extended by the school and parent. A decision regarding the student's continued suspension or other removal shall be rendered the same day as the hearing and written notice shall be provided

the following school day. This written notice shall include all the information required based on the type of discipline imposed (short-term suspension, in-school suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion).

The principal may also remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on a student's misconduct. This type of removal is not subject to the procedures for suspension and expulsion outlined in this policy.

### **In-School Suspension**

An in-school suspension may be used as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary events. An in-school suspension means the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in one school year.

If the principal chooses this alternative, the principal shall inform the student of the disciplinary offense charged and the basis for that charge and provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charge and explain the circumstances surrounding the charge. If an in-school suspension is issued, the principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the disciplinary offense, the reasons for concluding that the student committed the offense, and the length of the in-school suspension.

The principal shall also invite the parent to a meeting to discuss the student's academic performance and behavior, strategies for student engagement, and possible responses to the behavior. This meeting shall be scheduled on the day of the suspension, if possible, or as soon as possible thereafter. The principal shall also send written notice to the student and parent about the in-school suspension, including the reason and length of the in-school suspension, and inviting the parent the above-described meeting, if such meeting has not already occurred.

### **LONG-TERM SUSPENSION**

A long-term suspension is defined as the exclusion of a student from school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten school days, or for more than ten school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year.

The principal, or his/her designee, may issue long-term suspensions at the building level. The principal may also issue expulsions for the offenses set forth in M.G.L. c. 71, §37H and §37H½. Expulsions for other offenses are handled by the School Committee pursuant to M.G.L. c. 76, §16 and §17.

1. In the event of a long-term suspension or expulsion, the student will be provided oral and written notice of the charges in English and the primary language of the home if other than English. This notice shall include:

1. The disciplinary offense;
2. The basis for the charge;
3. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the suspension;
4. The opportunity to have a hearing with the principal and the parent concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
5. The date, time, and location of the hearing; and
6. The right of the parent and student to interpreter services at the hearing.
7. In advance of hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making their determination;
8. The right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the student's choice and at the student's/parent's or guardian's expense;
9. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf;
10. The right to cross examine witnesses presented by the school district; and
11. The right to request that the hearing be recorded.

2. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct the hearing without the parent, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent in the manner specified by the parent for emergency notification.

3. In advance of the hearing, the student shall have the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student.

4. The student shall also have the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person at the choice and expense of the student/parent.

5. At the hearing, if the student and/or parent elects to attend, the student shall have the opportunity to present his/her version of the relevant facts and any mitigating circumstances. The student shall also have the right to produce witnesses and the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school. The student may request that the hearing be audio recorded by the principal and may request a copy of the recording. All parties must be made aware that the hearing is recorded in advance of the hearing.

6. The parent, if present, shall have the opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and other information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

7. The principal shall make a determination as to whether the student committed the disciplinary offences and what consequences shall be imposed. The principal shall notice the student and parent in writing of his/her decision, including the following information:

- a. The disciplinary offence, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants in the hearing;
- b. The key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
- c. The length and effective date of the suspension and the date of return to school;
- d. The notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the suspension;
- e. The student's right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or his/her designee if a long-term suspension has been imposed. This notice of appeal shall include the process for appealing the decision, which requires the parent or student to file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension.
- i. The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven additional calendar days.
- ii. The superintendent shall make a good-faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good-faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.
- iii. The hearing shall be conducted to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and, if so, what the consequence shall be. The hearing shall be audio recorded and a copy of the recording shall be provided to the student or parent upon request.
- iv. All the same rights as are afforded in the above long-term suspension principal's hearing shall apply to the student in a superintendent's hearing.
- v. The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or lesser consequence than the principal.
- vi. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district.
- f. If the student is in grades K-3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for the suspension before the suspension takes effect.

## **EXPULSION**

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) days, indefinitely, or permanently. Conduct that may lead to expulsion includes but is not limited to possession of a dangerous weapon, assault on school personnel or upon other students, possession of a controlled substance, and certain criminal convictions and charges. See also, the Policies and Laws Relating to Student Conduct section of the handbook. Procedures associated with expulsion are set forth under the Procedures for Expulsion section of the handbook.

### **ADDITIONAL PROCEDURAL PROTECTIONS FOR ELIGIBLE STUDENTS UNDER IDEA AND SECTION 504**

In general, special education students may be excluded from their programs for up to ten school days per school year just as any other student. However, when the district seeks to exclude a special education student from his/her program for more than ten school days in the school year, the student's special education team must first determine whether the student's behavior was caused by, or was directly and substantially related to his/her disability or whether the conduct in question was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the student's IEP (a "manifestation determination"). If the team determines that the behavior was a manifestation of his/her disability or was caused by a failure to implement the IEP, it must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior plan (or review and modify an existing plan, if necessary), and return the student to his/her current program, unless the student's parents and the district agree to a change in placement.

If the team determines the behavior was not caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or failure to implement the IEP, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that during the period of suspension or expulsion, the district must continue to provide the student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and, if appropriate, conduct a functional behavior assessment and provide intervention services and modifications to prevent the conduct from recurring. If the conduct involves weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, a special education student may be removed to an interim alternative educational placement for up to 45 school days regardless of the behavior's relationship to his/her disability.

### **POSSESSION OF WEAPONS OR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ASSAULT OF EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL**

Massachusetts General Law Ch. 71, §37H authorizes the principal to expel students as follows:

1. Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in Chapter Ninety-Four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
2. Any student who assaults a principal, assistant principal, teacher, teacher's aide or other educational staff on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, may be subject to expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
3. Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (1) or (2) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

a. After said hearing, a principal may, at his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (1) or (2).

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

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

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

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

A copy of this law may be obtained in the main office.

### **SUSPENSION/EXPULSION BASED UPON A FELONY CHARGE/CONVICTION M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>**

Issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal of a school may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal 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. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension

taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

The principal may expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, 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. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and reasons for such expulsion prior to such expulsion taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such expulsion; provided, however, that the expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

A copy of this law may be obtained in the main office.

### **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND ACADEMIC PROGRESS DURING SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSION**

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

student and parent of such opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through a school-wide education service plan. This plan will be developed by the principal and shall describe the services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended for ten (10) or more consecutive days. The plan will include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging the services.

**LEGAL** M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H

**REFS.:** M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾

M.G.L. c. 76, § 21

M.G.L. c. 76:17

603 CMR 53.00

[Chapter 222 An Act Relative to Student Access to Educational Services and Exclusion from School](#)

[Supporting Students with Disabilities and Avoiding the Discriminatory Use of Student Discipline under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and](#)

[Questions and Answers Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's \(IDEA's\) Discipline Provisions.](#)

### **Student Dress Code – Policy JICA**

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

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. Clothing that states, implies, or depicts hate speech or imagery that targets groups based on race (including traits historically associated with race, including, but not limited to, hair texture, hair type, hair length and protective hairstyles),\* color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, active military/veteran status, marital status, familial status, pregnancy, or pregnancy-related condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national condition, homelessness, ancestry, ethnic background, national origin, or any other category protected by state or federal law in the administration of its educational and employment policies, or in its programs and activities, is considered to cause disorder or disruption in violation of this policy. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

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

**LEGAL REFS.:** M.G.L. Chapter 71 Section 82  
M.G.L. Chapter 71 Section 83  
\*Acts of 2022, Chapter 117

### **Student Fundraising Activities – Policy JJE**

In general, the Committee discourages fundraising in the community by students for school activities. Especially discouraged is the sale of goods produced by companies for profit, such as magazines, candy, and similar items.

Exceptions to this policy will be:

1. Sale of advertising space in school publications.
2. A fundraising activity for the purpose of raising funds for recognized non-profit organization and/or fundraising to collect funds to sponsor a student activity approved by the building principal.
3. Proposals to raise funds for charitable purposes or for benefit of the school or community provided the building principal and Superintendent have individually approved such proposals.

No money collections of any kind may be held in the school without the specific consent of the building principal.

### **Student Gifts and Solicitations – Policy JB**

Due to issues relative to equity, students are discouraged from giving gifts to classroom teachers and other school personnel. For the same reason, there will be no formal exchange of gifts between students in the classroom.

Solicitation of funds for charitable purposes from students of the school system will be made only as approved by the School Committee.

### **Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations together are designed to ensure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in carrying out their responsibilities under state and federal law.

The regulations apply to all information kept by a school or school district on a student in a way that the student may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into two parts: the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, credits, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school district for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system.

The temporary record contains all of the information in the student record which is not contained in the transcript. This may include such things as standardized test results; class rank; school-sponsored extracurricular activities; evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; disciplinary records; and other information. The temporary record is destroyed within seven years after the student leaves the school system.

The following is a summary of the major provisions of the Student Record Regulations concerning the rights of parents and eligible students. Under the regulations, "eligible students" are at least 14 years old or have entered the ninth grade; they may exercise these rights just as their parents may.

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school corrects records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a conference with the principal, appeal to the superintendent, and appeal by formal hearing to the school committee.

#### Confidentiality of Records

With a few exceptions pursuant to 603 CMR 23.07(4), including judicial orders, no individuals or organizations but the parents/guardians, student and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent/guardian or the student. The school will make a reasonable effort to notify parents/guardians if the court has ordered records.

Norwell Public Schools also discloses student records without parent/guardian/eligible student consent to officials of other elementary or secondary schools in which a student enrolls, or seeks, intends, or is instructed to enroll, upon the receipt of a request from such officials as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to enrollment. Parents/guardian/eligible student seeking to send records to any other institution will need to provide written consent to the district.

All student-related information – whether spoken, written or in electronic format – involving academics, discipline, attendance, family, special needs or other educational records is strictly confidential.

**Legal Reference:** 603 CMR 23.00

### **Student Surveys**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) (20 U.S.C. section 1232h; 34 CFR Part 98) applies to programs that receive funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). PPRA is intended to protect the rights of parents and students in two ways:

1. It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors make instructional materials available for inspection by parents if those materials will be used in connection with an ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation in which their children participate; and
2. It seeks to ensure that schools and contractors obtain written parental consent before minor students are required to participate in any ED-funded survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:
  - a. Political affiliations
  - b. Mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student and his/her family;
  - c. Sex behavior and attitudes;
  - d. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
  - e. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  - f. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or
  - g. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Parents or students who believe their rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint with ED by writing the Student Privacy Policy Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact, giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.

Student Privacy Policy Office  
U.S. Department of Education

**Student Transportation in Private Vehicles – Policy EEAG**

The School Committee recognizes the need for employees and volunteers (students, parents, and others) to use their own vehicle for school purposes, activities or events, regularly or occasionally. To safeguard the district, employees, and volunteers in matters of liability particularly as this policy relates to the transportation of students, the following policy shall be observed:

1. A “Student Transportation in Private Vehicles Liability Advisory” relating to private transportation for school business or to school related events or activities shall appear in school handbooks and personnel packets.
2. Permission slips for student drivers and passengers are required for school business or school related events or activities that will contain the “Student Transportation in Private Vehicles Liability Advisory” or a reference to this Advisory in the student handbook.
3. Any other known volunteers will be provided with a copy of the “Student Transportation in Private Vehicles Liability Advisory”.
4. Drivers are responsible for proper licensing, and vehicles must be properly inspected and insured as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Drivers should seek the advice of insurance providers as to appropriate coverage.
5. Reimbursement for use of a private vehicle will be made only when the responsible administrator gives prior written approval.

**Student Travel – Policy JJH**

**International**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes the educational benefits of travel to other countries to enhance and support classroom instruction and the School Committee further encourages staff members to organize international excursions. Students may have access to multiple opportunities for international travel throughout their high school experience. The School Committee is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. The School Committee also wishes to minimize any disruption or interference for the remaining students when large numbers of students are absent from classes.

Consequently, the School Committee directs the school administration to establish regulations that establish a formal process for the review, adoption, and planning of all international travel, taking the following points into consideration:

1. International excursions shall occur, to the extent possible, during non-school times.

2. Limited to students in grade 10 and above and/or students engaged in advanced course work (year three or higher).

The school administration, through the establishment of regulations, is further directed to incorporate a formal process to review any exceptions to these points. Prior School Committee approval is required for all international excursions and travel.

### **Class Trips**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes the benefit of travel as an opportunity for students to develop socially and celebrate their school experience with classmates. Occasionally, during the academic career of a student, class trips will be permitted that do not specifically relate to the school curriculum. Such trips may be approved by the principal, followed by formal notification of the Superintendent (or designee) provided they are, to the extent possible, during non-school time, and comply with the conditions set forth in the regulations associated with this policy. Class trips during the school day may only be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

### **Co-Curricular Trips**

Co-curricular and extracurricular activities are those that, though they are not addressed in the classroom setting, form an integral part of the school's educational program. These activities include, but are not limited to, athletics, student government, student publications, music, drama, subject-related clubs, as well as social, political, hobby, and service organizations. These programs provide students with opportunities to pursue established interests and explore new interests. The Norwell School Committee recognizes the importance of co-curricular activities to the overall educational experience of students. Nonetheless, co-curricular trips should not, to the extent possible, occur during the school day. Such trips may be approved by the principal, followed by formal notification of the Superintendent (or designee) provided they are, to the extent possible, during non-school time, and comply with the conditions set forth in the regulations associated with this policy.

### **Domestic Out-of-State Travel**

To the extent that Student Activity Account funds are utilized and pursuant to MGL Chapter 71, Section 47, the School Committee is responsible for approving domestic, out-of-state travel. However, in the event that approval is required before a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, said approval authority is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools who shall notify the School Committee of any such travel.

### **General Provisions**

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 71, § 37N, Trips that include late night (between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.) or overnight travel must have prior approval of the School Committee. Initial approval by the School Committee is required before engaging students in fundraising activities. The School Administration is directed to consider the educational value of the trip in relation to the cost prior to submitting for School Committee approval. Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefit to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip.

Final approval will not be granted until all preparations for the trip have been completed as outlined in the regulations associated with this policy. The School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled trip dates. In the event of an athletic MIAA state tournament or co-curricular competition that requires travel before a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, approval authority is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools who shall notify the School Committee of any such travel.

Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting for privately run trips through the school system and in the schools. No district resources (human or otherwise) shall be used for any privately run trips. The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips. In order to be considered “school sanctioned” the travel must have been approved and/or permitted by the Building Principal and/or the Superintendent of Schools. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

### **In-State Field Trips – Policy IJOA**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum.

Field trips are intended to stimulate student interest and inquiry, providing them with insights, information, or knowledge that cannot be adequately developed through regular classroom instruction. To be educationally beneficial, field trips require thoughtful selection, careful advanced planning and preparation of the class, and relevant follow-up activities. Moreover, field trips must not interfere with the overall academic program of the school due to repeated teacher and/or student absences.

### **General Provisions**

Specific regulations and appropriate administrative procedures shall be developed to screen, approve, and evaluate trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants. These guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures shall ensure that all field trips have the approval of the Principal.

Provisions for comparable instructional experiences during the school day must be made for students not participating in the in-state field trip.

Exchange programs and trips abroad are school-sponsored activities subject to the same regulations and consequences outlined in *this* Handbook.

### **Student Wellness and Physical Activity**

The Norwell School Committee promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive

dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance.

Norwell Public Schools will:

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day shall meet or exceed the district nutrition standards. Emphasis shall be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high quality, nutritious meals, foods shall be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging. No soda or candy is to be sold or served on school grounds during the school day.

- C. Provide more opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity is included in the Norwell School's education program from grades pre-K through 12. Physical activity includes regular instructional physical education, as well as co-curricular activities, and recess.

- D. Maintain a district-wide Wellness Committee to:

- provide guidance to explain this policy
- evaluate policy progress
- serve as a resource to school sites, and
- recommend revisions to this policy as necessary

### **Students Charged with a Felony**

The principal of a school may suspend a student who has been charged with a felony or is the subject of a felony delinquency complaint, 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. The principal may expel a student who has been convicted, adjudicated, or admitted guilt with respect to a felony or felony delinquency, 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.

**Legal Reference:** MGL Chapter 71 Section 37H1/2

This is from the Student Discipline Policy: SUSPENSION/EXPULSION BASED  
UPON A FELONY CHARGE/CONVICTION M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H½

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal of a school may suspend a student for a period of time determined appropriate by the principal 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. The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension; provided, however, that such suspension shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

**Students 16 (or older) Leaving School (Drop-Outs)**

Within five (5) days from a student's tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) consecutive unexcused absence, Norwell High School provides written notice to students age 16 or over and their parents or guardians. The notice is in English and the family's native language and states that the student and the parent or guardian may meet for an exit interview with a representative of the district within ten days from the date the notice was sent. At least two meeting dates will be proposed for the exit interview. At the request of the parent or guardian, the district may consent to an extension of the time for the meeting of no longer than fourteen days.

At the exit interview the participants discuss the reasons that the student is leaving school and alternative educational or other placements. The student and parent or guardian are told that attendance is voluntary after the student turns 16 but are also informed of the student's right to return to school. Norwell High School sends annual written notice to former students who have not yet earned their competency determination and who have not transferred to another school to inform them of the availability of publicly funded post-

high school academic support programs and to encourage them to participate in those programs. Such notice is sent via first class mail to the last known address of each such student who attended a high school in the district within the past two years.

### **Students with Limited English Proficiency**

It is the policy of the Norwell School Committee to comply with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Two federal statutes protect LEP students:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 [42 U.S.C. 2000d] prohibits discrimination by federally funded institutions based upon national origin.
2. The Equal Educational Opportunities Act, [20 U.S.C. § 1703 (f)] requires educational agencies to “take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.”

According to the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education “the question of need for an alternative program is resolved by determining whether language minority students are able to participate effectively in the regular instructional program. If they are not, an alternative program must be provided.” In addition, “OCR allows school districts broad discretion concerning how to ensure equal educational opportunity for [LEP] students...The law requires effective instruction which leads to the timely acquisition of proficiency in English.”

Students who were not born in the United States whose native tongue is other than English and who may be incapable of performing ordinary class work in English or students who were born in the United States of non-English speaking parents and who are incapable of performing ordinary class work in English must be tested by certified personnel for English proficiency upon entrance to Norwell Public Schools. Based on this test, the school principal and guidance counselor will determine with the parent the most appropriate course of study, and support services, if needed. Moreover, state and federal law also requires that LEP students be assessed annually in four areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In addition, Norwell Public Schools encourages teachers and other professional staff certified in bilingual education to maintain that certification, and considers such certification as an asset in those candidates seeking a position in Norwell Public Schools.

### **Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco – Policy IHAMB**

In accordance with state and federal law, Norwell Public Schools shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based drug, alcohol and tobacco education and prevention programs in grades K-12.

The drug, alcohol and tobacco education program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of drug, alcohol and tobacco use. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of Norwell Public Schools should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the Superintendent of Schools, or designee. The Committee wishes to be informed of all new courses and substantive revisions in curriculum and will receive reports on changes under consideration. Its acceptance of these reports, including a listing of the high school program of studies, will constitute its adoption of the curriculum for official purposes.

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents in accordance with state law. Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.

### **Tobacco and Smoking on School Premises – Policy ADC (also GBED)**

Smoking or the use of any tobacco and tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

For purpose of this policy, "smoking" will mean all uses of tobacco products and devices (including but not limited to chewing tobacco, cigars, cigarettes, and pipes) and the use of electronic, "vapor", or other substitute forms of cigarettes and nicotine products.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

A visitor observed smoking or using tobacco products on school property will be asked to refrain from smoking and the use of tobacco products while on school property and s/he will be reminded that the District is required by law to keep school premises tobacco free.

If the individual fails to comply with the request, it may be deemed necessary to call upon the local law enforcement agency to enforce this policy.

### **Traffic and Parking Controls – Policy EDA**

Driving and parking on school property are privileges granted by the Committee to persons who have reasons to be in the schools or on school property.

The school administration will develop, in cooperation with local traffic authorities, a plan for accommodating the flow of traffic on school roadways, and traffic regulations.

The assignment of parking areas to staff, students, and visitors to the school will be the responsibility of the school administration.

### **Tutoring for Pay – Policy GCRD**

Maintaining a high-quality instructional staff and providing a rich and varied program of studies should minimize the need for individual tutoring. Since there may, however, be exceptional cases where tutoring may help students with needed skills or content, and since some parents desire to retain the services of tutors for their children, the Norwell School Committee has established the following policy parameters:

1. A staff member, who has a student currently enrolled in his or her class or program, including athletics and performing arts, may not accept direct employment as a paid tutor for that pupil.
2. Staff members may privately tutor for pay students who are not in their class or program, providing that said tutoring is not done during the staff member's professional workday nor solicited through the staff member's teaching position.
3. Norwell staff members privately tutoring Norwell students may not serve as agents for those students in any school-related activities or proceedings.
4. Staff members may use school facilities for tutoring students for pay with advanced authorization of the principal, submission of and compliance with the *Facility Request & Permit*, and upon payment of established rental fees.
5. Parents are responsible for making arrangements for the supervision of their children before and after tutoring sessions in school buildings, and principals may send home students for whom interim supervision arrangements have not been made.

6. Via attachment of this policy by the building principal to the publicly available *Facility Request & Permit* form, staff members acknowledge that when they are using a school facility as a privately paid tutor, they are acting as an independent contractor and not as a Town of Norwell employee, that no insurance or statutory indemnification extends to them, and that they are doing so entirely at their own risk.
7. The School Committee does not promote, endorse, or provide private tutoring, nor does it establish fees for tutoring. However, as a service for parents, the administration may maintain a list of tutors and tutoring services that may be made available for parents.

The above does not apply to homebound instruction that is authorized by the administration.

### **Universal Free School Meals – Policy EFC**

The School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs, and to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program.

Norwell Public Schools will participate in the National School Lunch Program, the Massachusetts Universal Free Meals Program, and other food programs that may become available to assure that all students in the schools receive healthy, nutritious school meals. In accordance with guidelines for participation in these programs, the district will provide universal free meals to all students in the district.

Students seeking additional meals or a la carte items will be charged accordingly for those additional items.

Each student in the district is entitled to one (1) free breakfast and one (1) free lunch. It remains important that families complete the annual Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals. This form allows the school district to serve families more effectively for other important programs such as P-EBT benefits, fee waivers for school district programs/ services, state and federal grant eligibility, and more.

As required by state and federal regulations, the School Committee approves this policy statement pertaining to eligibility for universal free school meals for all students in Norwell Public Schools.

CROSS REF: AC: Nondiscrimination, AC-E: Complaint Procedure for Discrimination  
LEGAL REFS.: National School Lunch Act, as amended (42 USC 1751-1760);

Child Nutrition Act of 1966; P.L. 89-642, 80 Stat. 885, as amended;

USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017;

M.G.L. [71:72](#); [15:1G](#); [69:1C](#);

Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023 7053-1909

SOURCE: MASC - Complete rewrite 2023

## **Use of Private Vehicles on School Business**

### **Transportation in Private Vehicle Liability Advisory**

The Town's insurance covers volunteers who, under the direction and control of school personnel, transport students to and from school sanctioned or sponsored events or business. Signed permission slips are required for programs, activities and events. Permission slips will inform parents when the driver is a student.

If you volunteer to assist the school in transporting yourself and other students or staff to school-sponsored events in your own vehicle, please be aware that this does not relieve you of the existing legal obligation to be adequately insured under a motor vehicle insurance policy in your own name. Drivers are responsible for proper licensing, and vehicles must be properly inspected and insured as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Drivers should seek the advice of insurance providers as to appropriate coverage.

In the event of an accident, the Town's insurance provider may extend coverage only for injury or damage to others and their property that occurs while you are providing transportation in connection with school-sponsored events. Should you become involved in a motor vehicle accident, even if you are operating your vehicle as a volunteer for the school, you may still be responsible for payment of any damage to your vehicle. The Town's insurance carrier depending on the specific circumstances of each case determines coverage.

If you transport students, parents, teachers and/or coaches to activities that are not in the nature of school-sponsored events, or if you use your vehicle to intentionally injure someone or cause property damage, the Town's insurance provider would probably deny coverage under either of these circumstances.

### **Vandalism – Policy ECAC**

The Norwell School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private property are costly and require positive action through educational programs. Consequently, the Norwell School Committee will support various programs aimed at reducing the amount of vandalism.

Every citizen of the town, staff members, students, and members of the police department are urged by the School Committee to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to property under control of the school department, and the name(s) of the person or persons believed to be responsible. Each employee will report to the Principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to him/her and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press the charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate, as he/she sees fit, authority to sign such complaints and to press charges.

Parents and students will be made aware of the legal implications involved. Reimbursement will be sought for all or part of any damages.

### **Vending Machines – Policy EFC**

It is recognized that the placement of vending machines on public property can serve the public convenience. However, the utilization of public property requires that due recognition be given to the letter and spirit of the law requiring fair and open competition. Therefore, no vending machines shall be placed on school property except upon:

1. adequate notice to and approval of the School Committee which has jurisdiction over said property, and
2. compliance with appropriate safeguards for fair and open competition in the interest of the consuming public and the Town.

The installation and use of vending machines in the school will be controlled so that they will not offer competition to the school lunch program or encourage students in the development of poor eating habits.

### **Video Surveillance – Policy ECAA**

Norwell Public Schools has a responsibility to maintain discipline and protect the safety, security, and welfare of our students, staff, and visitors while at the same time safeguarding district facilities, vehicles, and equipment.

As part of fulfilling this responsibility, the Norwell School Committee authorizes the use of video/digital surveillance cameras in any district building, on district property. Digital or video recorder placements shall be based on the presumption and belief that students, staff, and visitors have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public areas or at events that occur in plain view of other students, staff, or visitors.

### **Public Notice of Video Policy**

Signs shall be posted on district buildings to notify students, staff, and visitors that video or digital cameras may be in use in school buildings. Parents and students shall also be notified through the student handbook that cameras may be in use in school buildings, on school grounds. Students and others will be held responsible for any violations of school rules or law recorded by the cameras.

## Retention and Access to Video

1. The district shall retain copies of video or digital recordings for 15 calendar days. Recordings may be erased by either deletion or copying over with a new recording.
2. Education records, including video or digital records, retain their status as such even when in the possession of a law enforcement unit and thus remain subject to the restrictions on the release of education records contained in FERPA and state student records laws and regulations. The district will store the time intervals of any recordings as long as there is an outstanding request to inspect and review them or a need to preserve evidence.
3. The right to inspect is generally limited to school department personnel and to those parents whose child's recorded behavior is the cause for the retention of the video recordings. All parental requests must be specific as to the date, time and location of behavior believed to be recorded.
4. Parents of students coincidentally recorded but not involved in the behavior giving rise to potential discipline may review the video as follows:
  1. Students' parents may view the video **without** first having to receive permission from the involved student's parent(s). None of the parents of the "incidental" students have to give their permission for the viewing of the video by the "involved" students' parents.
  2. The district is **not** obligated to give a copy of the video to the parent or their lawyer. If, however, the district chooses to give the parent a video, the faces of the "involved" students other than that of the parent's student must be redacted or parents will have to receive written permission from the parents of the other involved students.
    1. The rights of the parents and students to access student records will be consistent with state law and regulation.
    2. Once the video/digital records have been viewed by the parties requesting to view it, the law does not require that the video be kept. The district will retain the video at least until the school disciplinary process is completed and longer if requested by law enforcement.

Videos may be used by Norwell Public Schools and shown to law enforcement officials by the school department, as well as to parents of a student who has been recorded, at the sole discretion of the school department or in response to a lawful subpoena.

Viewing of education records may occur within a reasonable period of time, provided the request for viewing is made within 15 calendar days of the recording. The school will store the time interval of any recording as long as there is an outstanding request for review recorded by the school within the stated retention period or as needed for evidence.

## Role of Law Enforcement

Videos containing evidence of a violation of student conduct rules and/or state or federal law shall be retained until the issue of the misconduct is no longer subject to review or appeal under law or as determined by district policy or student handbook; any release or viewing of such records shall be in accordance with current law.

### Preservation of Equipment

Students who vandalize, damage, disable, or render inoperable surveillance cameras and equipment shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and referral to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **Walkers and Riders – Policy EEAA**

Students are entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. Additionally, the Norwell School Committee additionally provides transportation for students as follows:

**Kindergarten - Grade 6:** All students, regardless of distance from school.

**Grades 7 -12:** All students, regardless of distance from school, with an assigned fee as determined by the Norwell School Committee.

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

### **Weapons**

Whoever not being a law enforcement officer, and irrespective of any license obtained by him under the provisions of MGL Chapter 140, carries on his person a firearm as hereinafter defined, loaded or unloaded, in any school building or on any school grounds without the written authorization of the School Committee or the Superintendent of Schools, shall be punished by a fine of not more than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of this paragraph, "firearm" shall mean any pistol, revolver, rifle, or smoothbore arm from which a shot, bullet, or pellet can be discharged by whatever means.

Whoever carries on his/her person any dangerous weapons in any school building or on any school grounds without the written authorization of the School Committee or the Superintendent of Schools shall be punished by a fine of not more than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both. For the purpose of school discipline, weapons will include the above, as well as knives, any martial arts weapons, incendiary devices, and any other objects and/or materials deemed to be dangerous by the building administration. Included as well are replicas, facsimiles, and toy weapons. They are not allowed on school buses, in school buildings, or on school grounds.

Faculty members and administrators shall report violations of the law or be subject to criminal charges. Any student found to be in possession of a weapon will have that weapon confiscated by the principal or his or her designee. The weapon will be turned over to the police department.

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