

North Reading Public Schools

STUDENT / PARENT  
HANDBOOK



L.D. Batchelder School  
J.T. Hood School  
E.E. Little School

# North Reading Public Schools

**SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE** 189 Park Street (978) 664-7810

PATRICK C. DALY, Ed.D.

*Superintendent of Schools*

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS** (978) 664-7810

MICHAEL A. CONNELLY, M. Ed., *Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations*

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING** (978) 664-7810

SEAN T. KILLEEN, M.Ed., *Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning*

NICOLE ORLANDO, *Admin. Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent*

JIM SGROI, *Digital Learning Coordinator*

**STUDENT SERVICES OFFICE** (978) 664-7810

CYNTHIA M. CONANT, *Director of Student Services*

GINA SACCO, *Assistant Director of Special Education*

ROBERT GANNON, *Coordinator of Secondary Special Education*

MICHAEL ROSA, *Coordinator of School Counseling Services*

**PARENT INFORMATION CENTER** (New Student Registration) (978) 664-7810

NICOLE ORLANDO, *Administrative Assistant*

**NORTH READING HIGH SCHOOL** (978) 664-7800

189 Park Street

MIRIAM MEYER, *Principal*

BARRIANN ALONZO, *Assistant Principal*

**NORTH READING MIDDLE SCHOOL** (978) 664-7806

189 Park Street

CATHERINE O'CONNELL, Ed.D., *Principal*

LAURA OLIVETO, *Assistant Principal*

**L.D. BATCHELDER SCHOOL** (978) 664-7814

175 Park Street

MICHAEL MALONEY, *Principal*

**J. TURNER HOOD SCHOOL** (978) 664-7817

298 Haverhill Street

GLEN S. McKAY, Ed.D., *Principal*

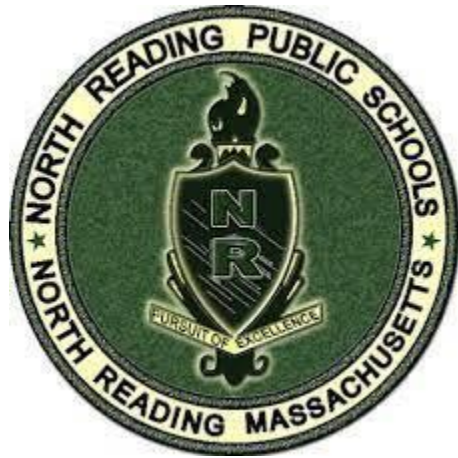
**E. ETHEL LITTLE SCHOOL** (978) 664-7820

7 Barberry Road

JULIE FAHEY, *Principal*

The North Reading School Committee supports Title IX and Chapter 622, and its policy is not to discriminate either in employment or in educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, or homelessness.

# NORTH READING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## *Student Experience Vision Statement*

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

## *Mission Statement*

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

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THE POLICIES HEREIN ARE “SELECTED” NORTH READING SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICIES. THE COMPLETE POLICY MANUAL OF THE NORTH READING SCHOOL COMMITTEE MAY BE FOUND AT:

[HTTPS://WWW.NORTH-READING.K12.MA.US/DISTRICT/SCHOOL-COMMITTEE/PAGES/SCHOOL-COMMITTEE-POLICY-MANUAL](https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/school-committee/pages/school-committee-policy-manual)

ANY ERRORS, OMISSIONS, OR EDITS TO THE POLICIES THAT ARE FOUND ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE UNINTENDED AND ARE SUPERSEDED BY THE CURRENT NORTH READING SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY MANUAL AND ANY APPLICABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

**UPDATED: AUGUST 2025**

## ARRIVAL

### MORNING ARRIVAL

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

### BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Before-school care is available to families of students and begins at 7:00 a.m. on the first day of school. A minimum number of ten (10) students must be enrolled for the program to operate. Transportation is not provided. The monthly tuition for the program, based upon the number of days enrolled each week, is due in advance by the fifteenth of the previous month. For example, September's payment is due by August 15<sup>th</sup>; October's payment is due by September 15<sup>th</sup>. If tuition payments fall more than one month behind, we reserve the right to withdraw your child(ren) from the program.

Students are expected to follow school rules at the Before School Program. Failure to do so could result in suspension/dismissal from the program.

We are closed when the school is closed (vacations, holidays, and snow days). We factor these days into the tuition. There are no refunds or reductions in tuition due to school being closed. Therefore, there is no fee charged for the month of June. However, if you enroll your child(ren) after April 1<sup>st</sup>, you are responsible for June's payment.

Children in the program are dropped off at a designated entrance of the school and go directly to the before-school program where they are met by a member of the school staff. Students proceed to their classrooms at the start of the school day. On days when there is a 90-minute school delay, before-school care is canceled. Please call the school department's Business Office at (978) 664-7811 if you are interested in the before-school program. Students who arrive earlier than ten (10) minutes prior to the start of school and who do not have a prior appointment will be sent to the Before School Care Program and a payment will be requested. Families who need to access the Before-School program on a per diem basis will be charged \$10.00 per day, per child, and will need to complete an application which can be found at the Business Office. Breakfast will be available to those attending the Before School Program during the 2021-2022 school at no cost.

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

Burbank YMCA -Batchelder School: (781) 315-3802  
Burbank YMCA-Hood School: (781) 424-7306  
Burbank YMCA-Little School: (857) 321-2584

## ATTENDANCE

### REGULAR ATTENDANCE

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

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

### ABSENCE

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

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

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

If, as a result of your child's absence, restrictions are required on the child's return to school and participation in normal school activities, an explanatory note signed by the parent/guardian is required and must be presented to the homeroom teacher. The note must state the reason for the absence and indicate any restrictions due to the illness or injury. Any student absent for a school day(s) due to illness may not return to participate in an after school activity.

### ATTENDANCE REPORTS

The school system is required to report attendance information to the state. In order to ensure that we are aware of students' cumulative attendance and in compliance with state law, parents/guardians of students who have accumulated excessive absences will receive a letter bringing the number of days absent, tardy and dismissed to their attention. We realize that some students may have extended periods of illness causing the number of days absent to be

elevated. In some instances, the nurse is aware of these circumstances, and in some instances, she is not. Please understand that being issued a letter is simply a reminder. Absences can certainly add up quickly.

## VACATIONS

School vacations are planned well in advance so there is ample time for families to arrange vacations when school is not in session. In its policy on attendance, the North Reading School Committee rejects the notion that vacations and travel undertaken during the school year are equal in value to regular school attendance. Vacation absenteeism is not condoned. Teachers should not be expected to use their personal time, or take time away from classroom teaching and planning to prepare lessons and materials for students going on vacation. Student work WILL NOT be provided in advance of vacations. Teachers should not be expected to privately tutor children who have missed lessons nor should they be expected to arrive early, stay late, or use their lunch time to administer missed tests and assessments.

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

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

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

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

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

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

## **TARDINESS**

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

## **DISMISSAL**

### **DISMISSAL DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

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

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

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

### **END OF DAY DISMISSAL**

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

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

All students should have a dismissal procedure on file. Variations of these procedures are discouraged. Changes to the student's regular dismissal, must be communicated to the school.

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

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

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **WALKERS**

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

### **STUDENT PICK UP**

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

### **BUSES**

Bus transportation is planned so that there is enough room on each bus to accommodate only those children assigned to the bus; therefore, children are not allowed to change buses. Only in cases where the principal determines that health, safety or other substantive issues are at stake may a transfer be made, and only then with the expressed consent of the principal.

Bus passes are required for all students who ride the bus. Bus passes may be obtained through the Business Office at Central Office. A Bus User Fee is charged for all students who live less than two miles from the school. Families who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch may have their fee waived if an application is submitted. Bus passes must be visible on the child's backpack.

### **BUS SAFETY**

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

- Parents/Guardians/Caretakers of kindergarten students must be at the assigned bus stop to greet the kindergarten student. Bus drivers are instructed to return the student to school if someone is not there to accept the kindergarten student.
- Plan to be at the bus stop in time for the bus.
- Follow the directions of the driver immediately.
- Use sidewalks where available.
- Stay back from the road while waiting for the bus.
- Respect one another and the property of others.

- Stay completely clear of the bus while it is moving.
- Form an orderly line to board the bus.
- Use the handrail going up the stairs.
- Find a seat immediately.
- Share your seat with another student.
- Remain seated at all times.
- Talk quietly and respect everyone on the bus.
- Keep the aisles clear.
- No food/drink permitted on the bus.
- Keep arms, heads, and objects inside the bus.
- Ask permission from the bus driver before opening or closing windows.
- Wait for the bus to completely stop before leaving your seat to get off the bus.
- Use the handrail going down the stairs.
- Always cross in front of the bus.
- Never attempt to return to the bus once you leave unless instructed to do so by the bus driver.
- Use of cell phones and other personal devices with video imaging capabilities is prohibited.
- Other guidelines mandated by law.

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

Students who disregard bus safety rules may be assigned a specific seat and/or have their individual riding privileges suspended. The principal, as a result of an investigation or on the recommendation of the bus driver, may remove a student for a period of time to be determined by the principal or his/her designee. A longer suspension and/or termination of bus privileges may be recommended for continued offenses.

## **BUS SCHEDULE**

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

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

## **CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL**

### **NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements canceling school may be heard over the following television and radio stations: WBZ - Channel 4, Radio AM 1030, WCVB - Channel 5, WHDH - Channel 7, Radio

AM 680 and WFXT – Channel 25. Information about school cancellation will also be transmitted by telephone message, email, and text message via the Blackboard Connect/Messages XR system for participating families. In the event that Blackboard Connect/Messages XR is unavailable due to technical difficulties, please consult the television or radio stations. Parents/guardians and students should not telephone the Police Department, Fire Department, or any of the town or school offices for cancellation information. Information about school cancellation and other emergencies will also be made on the call-in number (978) 664-7810.

## **TWO HOUR DELAY**

In the event of a 2 hour delay due to inclement weather conditions, students in full-day pre-kindergarten, full-day kindergarten and grades 1-5 will begin school 2 hours later than their usual start time. Children that ride the bus will be picked up at their regular bus stops 2 hours later than usual. Schools will not be ready to receive students earlier than the start time indicated. The morning session of the half-day pre-kindergarten and the half-day kindergarten are canceled and, if applicable, the afternoon pre-kindergarten and afternoon kindergarten students will begin at the regular time. There is no before-school care on days with a 2 hour delay. Dismissal is at the regular time.

## **UNEXPECTED EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

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

## **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Early release days are scheduled throughout the year for teacher professional development, parent/guardians conferences and holidays. Families should make appropriate arrangements for their children. Please refer to the school calendar for these early release days.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **PARENTS' ORGANIZATION**

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

## **TELEPHONE / E-MAIL COMMUNICATION**

The School Department utilizes a rapid communication system (Blackboard Connect) to contact parents/guardians via telephone and e-mail. Use of this system is limited to emergency notification and/or the release of specific information from either the Superintendent of Schools and/or the building principals. An annual sign-up of contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses will be completed in September. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the Main Office of any email or telephone changes over the course of the school year to ensure receipt of school/district communication.

The district will be transitioning over to a new communication tool called XR Messages. The change should happen sometime in the fall.

## **WEBSITE**

The School Department and each school maintain a website that can be accessed at [www.north-reading.k12.ma.us](http://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us).

## **PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION**

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

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

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

## **VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS**

Parents, guardians, visitors and volunteers must sign in at the main office upon entering the school and sign out when leaving. This is the only point of entry to the building unless other directions are given by the administration. Under Massachusetts law volunteers in classrooms, school activities and field trips must sign a release form for a CORI (criminal background check) by October 15<sup>th</sup>. All volunteers must complete a “Statement of Confidentiality” prior to volunteering in the school. Forms (paper or electronic) are available in the Main Office of each school.”

## PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year in the fall and spring. This year, conferences are scheduled in December and March after each of the first two trimesters. Please refer to the school calendar for exact dates. Parents/guardians will receive notification to schedule an appointment online. Please note that on conference days there is an early dismissal from school.

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

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

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

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

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

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

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

## STUDENT PHONE CALLS

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

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

## **WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Personal wireless communication devices (cell phones, watches, hand held gaming devices, etc.) must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours. Students and parents/guardians should not utilize electronic communication devices to communicate during school hours. Personal devices with video, audio, or other imaging capabilities are prohibited. This includes while riding the bus (please refer to the Bus Safety section).

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

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

## **DELIVERY OF ARTICLES**

If it is necessary to deliver any articles to your child during the school day, please leave them with the school secretary in the main office. She will be sure they arrive in your child's classroom. Please be sure your child brings what he/she needs each day. Parents/guardians will not be allowed to deliver belongings to the classroom during the day unless previously arranged by the principal or teacher.

## **SCHOOL NOTICES**

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

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

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards will be issued each trimester and will be available on the parent portal (under the student's E-Locker tab). Parents/guardians must have an active account in order to access the parent portal.

## **THE SCHOOL COUNCIL**

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act established the presence of School Councils in every public elementary school. The School Council supports school initiatives and is responsible for assessing the needs of the school and serves in an advisory role to the

principal. In the spring of each year, it prepares and presents a "School Improvement Plan" to the School Committee. After approval, this plan is filed with the Department of Education. Meetings of the Council are held regularly during the school year. Members include the principal, faculty members, parents/guardians, and a community resident. Faculty and parent members are elected to the Council by their peers. All meetings of the School Council are open to the public.

## **SNACKS AND LUNCHES**

### **SNACKS**

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

### **LUNCHES**

Lunches are available for students in full-day pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and grades 1–5. For the school year 2025 - 2026, school lunches will be free for all students.

Monthly menus are given to students to bring home and are displayed in each classroom. In addition, menus are posted on the school district website.

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

### **FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCHES**

Free and reduced lunch applications are available on the District website. The information contained in the application is strictly confidential. Parents/guardians wishing to apply should respond to all questions.

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

## LUNCHROOM PROCEDURES

Students are asked to talk quietly during lunch and use appropriate table manners. All students are responsible for cleaning up their table areas after eating and disposing of any trash they may have. Students are supervised by school personnel during lunch and are expected to be respectful to staff while at lunch.

## RECESS

All classes are scheduled for 20 minutes of recess each day. Paraprofessionals supervise recess. Baseball bats, hard balls, roller skates, and roller blades are not permitted on the playground. Pile-on games, tackle, or overly rough play is not permitted. Children are expected to remember to demonstrate courtesy, kindness, and consideration when playing. Inappropriate behavior at recess could result in the temporary loss of recess privileges. Students should be dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. Flip-flops, platform shoes and sneakers with wheels are not considered safe footwear at school and shall not be worn.

## SCHOOL FORMS

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

- Emergency Information Forms (*now online*)
- Health Forms
- Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Forms, if appropriate
- Special Education Forms, when applicable
- Permission for Field Trips or Extra Curricular Activities
- Student Pictures
- Acceptable Use Policy / Picture/Video Forms (*now online*)
- CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) Form for chaperones and volunteers
- Statement of Confidentiality (for volunteers)

Money sent to school (payment in the form of check/money order) should be sealed in an envelope with the child's name, room number, and amount and purpose written clearly on the front. Online payment may be available in some cases. Cash will not be accepted.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM

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

### Curricula

Consistent with Massachusetts regulations, 603 CMR 26.05(1), the North Reading 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.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS and LITERACY

**The Massachusetts curriculum frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy are aligned to the state standards. There are four main strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language.**

Key Features of the Standards in each Strand

### ***Reading: Text Complexity and the Growth of Comprehension***

The Reading standards place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade “staircase” of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts; considering a wider range of textual evidence; and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts.

### ***Writing: Text Types, Responding to Reading, and Research***

The Writing standards acknowledge the fact that whereas some writing skills, such as the ability to plan, revise, edit, and publish, are applicable to many types of writing, other skills are more properly defined in terms of specific writing types: arguments, informative/explanatory texts, and narratives. Standard 9 stresses the importance of the writing-reading connection by requiring students to draw upon and write about evidence from literary and informational texts. Because of the centrality of writing to most forms of inquiry, research standards are prominently included in this strand, though skills important to research are infused throughout the document.

### ***Speaking and Listening: Flexible Communication and Collaboration***

The Speaking and Listening standards require students to develop a range of broadly useful oral communication and interpersonal skills, including but not limited to skills necessary for formal presentations. Students must learn to work together; express and listen carefully to ideas; integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources; evaluate what they hear;

use media and visual displays strategically to help achieve communicative purposes; and adapt speech to context and task.

***Language: Conventions, Effective Use, and Vocabulary***

The Language standards include the essential “rules” of standard written and spoken English, but they also approach language as a matter of craft and informed choice among alternatives. The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their nuances, and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.

**MATHEMATICS**

**The Massachusetts curriculum frameworks for Mathematics are aligned to the state standards.**

The Standards for Mathematical Practice complement the content standards so that students increasingly engage with the subject matter as they grow in mathematical maturity and expertise throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years.

STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.</li><li>2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.</li><li>3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.</li><li>4. Model with mathematics.</li><li>5. Use appropriate tools strategically.</li><li>6. Attend to precision.</li><li>7. Look for and make use of structure.</li><li>8. Look for an express regularity in repeated reasoning.</li></ol>

There are also several domains that students will learn K-5:

- Counting and Cardinality (K)
- Operations and Algebraic Thinking (K-5)
- Number and Operations in Base Ten (K-5)
- Number and Operations – Fractions (3-5)
- The Number System (5)
- Measurement and Data (K-5)
- Geometry (K-5)

Each grade level has a focus:

In kindergarten, instructional time should focus on two critical areas: (1) representing, relating, and operating on whole numbers, initially with sets of objects; and (2) describing shapes and space. More learning time in kindergarten should be devoted to number than to other topics.

In grade 1, instructional time should focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of addition, subtraction, and strategies for addition and subtraction within 20; (2) developing understanding of whole number relationships and place value, including grouping in tens and ones; (3) developing understanding of linear measurement and measuring lengths as iterating length units; and (4) reasoning about attributes of, and composing and decomposing geometric shapes.

In grade 2, instructional time should focus on four critical areas: (1) extending understanding of base-ten notation; (2) building fluency with addition and subtraction; (3) using standard units of measure; and (4) describing and analyzing shapes.

In grade 3, instructional time should focus on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of multiplication and division and strategies for multiplication and division within 100; (2) developing understanding of fractions, especially unit fractions (fractions with numerator 1); (3) developing understanding of the structure of rectangular arrays and of area; and (4) describing and analyzing two-dimensional shapes.

In grade 4, instructional time should focus on three critical areas: (1) developing understanding and fluency with multi-digit multiplication, and developing understanding of dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends; (2) developing an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers; (3) understanding that geometric figures can be analyzed and classified based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry.

In grade 5, instructional time should focus on three critical areas: (1) developing fluency with addition and subtraction of fractions, and developing understanding of the multiplication of fractions and of division of fractions in limited cases (unit fractions divided by whole numbers and whole numbers divided by unit fractions); (2) extending division to 2-digit divisors, integrating decimal fractions into the place value system and developing understanding of operations with decimals to hundredths, and developing fluency with whole number and decimal operations; and (3) developing understanding of volume.

## **HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

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

In history, students explore the relationship and chronology of events. They learn about the effects of individual and group actions and the possible consequences of those actions. Students consider ideas different from their own and learn to differentiate among texts they read. The similarities and differences of background of American citizens are explored.

American contributions and individual and shared responsibility are discussed. They learn the school is a community where everyone is equal and considerate of each other. Students are taught the "Golden Rule" and learn about the inventions and discoveries that make their lives different from people of long ago and the recent past.

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

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

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

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

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

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

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

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

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

## **DIGITAL LEARNING**

Teachers and students utilize technology as a resource to enhance opportunities for learning. Each school has a computer lab as well as carts of mobile devices that are equipped with internet access and travel to each classroom. Our library media centers and student issued dev are equipped digital databases, eBooks, and print materials and are supported by our Digital Learning Paraprofessionals.

Student digital learning competencies are part of the total school program, enriching and supporting units of study. Classroom teachers and digital learning teachers co-teach and collaborate in the computer labs and digital classrooms, providing students with opportunities to integrate skills and meet classroom goals. Students also come to understand the meaning of digital citizenship and are introduced to computer science and robotics as early as Kindergarten.

The computer lab, library, and all classrooms have Internet access. Students are not allowed to view anything on the Internet or contribute to the school's web site without signed parent/guardian permission. The use of the Internet is carefully directed and supervised by teachers and the digital learning paraprofessional. Children are never given the opportunity to "surf" on their own. Under no circumstances are addresses, phone numbers, last names, or other vital personal information about students ever posted on the school's web site or given out over the Internet. Student images are not posted without prior parent/guardian consent on our Acceptable Use Form.

## **ART**

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

## **MUSIC**

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

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION / HEALTH**

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

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

Age appropriate health education is incorporated into our physical education program. In addition, our fifth grade students participate in a growth and development unit in the spring. Parents/Guardians are provided the opportunity to view the video, prior to students viewing, and will provide parents/guardians the option of having their child participate. Please look for more information in the spring of their fifth grade school year.

## **LIBRARY**

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

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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

provides services for children with severe special needs from their third to twenty-second birthday.

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

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

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

## **COUNSELING**

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

## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

Combined half-day/full-day programs are provided as needed. If there is both an AM and PM (half-day) program at a school, the classes will switch at the mid-point of the school year. The full day program offers additional opportunities for children to learn. The flexible schedule affords teachers and students more time together to explore, experience and internalize the kindergarten curriculum. Tuition is charged for participation in the full day program. An orientation session is held for all parents/guardians of incoming kindergarten students and parents/guardians are notified about the dates of kindergarten registration.

## **HOMEWORK**

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

Parents/guardians are asked to provide their children with a quiet study place and check to see if there are assignments. Problems with homework should be brought directly to the teacher, who is best able to clear up any confusion or difficulty a child may have. Homework assignments that require the cooperative efforts of the parent/guardian include learning spelling words and math facts. This particularly applies to students in the first, second, and third grades. In addition to regular homework assignments, children are to read alone or with their families each night.

## **MCAS (MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM) TEST SCHEDULE**

Students at all three elementary schools will participate in the MCAS assessment in third, fourth, and fifth grade for English Language Arts and Literacy, and Mathematics. Additionally, all students in fifth grade at all elementary schools will take the Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS assessment. All assessments will take place during the testing window established annually by the DESE. The dates will be communicated to you by each school and will be published on the district and school websites

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **BEHAVIORAL OBLIGATIONS**

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

### **LEARNING OBLIGATIONS**

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

### **CARE OF PROPERTY (SCHOOL & PERSONAL)**

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

Students are responsible for personal items brought from home.

## **STUDENT DRESS**

Students are expected to come to school dressed for their health, safety and learning. To ensure safety during physical education class, students must wear rubber soled sneakers. Student attire cannot harass, threaten, intimidate or demean an individual or group of individuals because of sex, color, race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, national origin or sexual orientation. Additionally, student dress may not be scanty or revealing. Staff is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

The following items are not acceptable for school:

- Sunglasses
- Hats and hoods
- Flip flops
- Any article of clothing or accessory that advertises and/or demonstrates drug/alcohol/nicotine/substance use
- Any article of clothing or accessory that is deemed by administration to be unsafe, obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, violent or disruptive to the learning environment

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

## **LANGUAGE**

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

## **DISCIPLINE**

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

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

## **GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES**

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

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

## **BULLYING, THREATS, FIGHTING**

Every student is guaranteed the right to a safe, secure school environment free from bullying, threats or violence. This right extends from the classrooms, to the corridors and lavatories, to the playground and cafeteria, and to the school buses. Students are urged to bring serious concerns about bullying or other threats to their teacher or the principal. A student should never attempt to manage a difficult situation alone. Parents/guardians are also asked to bring concerns to the attention of their child's teacher immediately so that appropriate steps may be taken to remedy any problems.

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

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

## **BULLYING POLICY**

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

Bullying Report form at the district and/or school website.

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

**Definitions:**

**Aggressor** is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation towards a student.

**Bullying** as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, §370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of the school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

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

**Cyberbullying** is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 370 for the legal definition of cyberbullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include:

- (i) The creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or,
- (ii) The knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.

Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v) , inclusive, of the definition bullying. Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures, audio recordings, or images of others.

A **hostile environment** as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

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

**School Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.**

#### **A. Where Bullying Is Prohibited**

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

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

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

#### **D. Reporting Obligations**

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

- (i) School staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, shall immediately report any instance of bullying or retaliation he or she has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or his or her designee.
- (ii) The district expects students and parents/guardians who witness or become aware of any instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the school

principal or his or her designee. An individual may make an anonymous report of bullying or retaliation; however, no disciplinary action may be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report. A student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

- (iii) In the event that bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the school principal or his or her designee will notify the local law enforcement agency if he or she believes that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor. In addition, if an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in a local school district, charter school, non-public day school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, the Superintendent of the North Reading Public Schools or his or her designee will notify law enforcement if she or he believes that criminal charges may be pursued.
- (iv) If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved private day or residential school or collaborative school, and the North Reading Public Schools is the first to be notified of the bullying and retaliation, then the Superintendent of North Reading Public Schools or his or her designee must, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school district or school so that both may take appropriate action.
- (v) Members of the North Reading community are encouraged to report incidents of bullying, including cyber-bullying, as defined in Section A, to the Superintendent as appropriate.

## **E. Investigation**

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

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

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

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

## **F. Determination**

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred, he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against

the aggressor, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents/guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents/guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis. Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

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

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

#### **G. Target Assistance**

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

#### **H. Closing the Complaint and Possible Follow-Up**

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

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

#### **I. Training and Assessment**

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

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

## **J. Publication and Notice**

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

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

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

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

## **DISOBEDIENCE**

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

## **DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY**

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

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **DUE PROCESS**

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

## Definitions

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

*In-School Suspension:* the removal of a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

*Short-Term Suspension:* the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. A principal may, in his or her discretion, allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.

*Long-Term Suspension:* the removal of a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days, or for more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple disciplinary offenses in any school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. Except for students who are charged with a disciplinary offense in subsections (a) or (b) of M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½, no student may be placed on long-term suspension for one or more disciplinary offenses for more than ninety (90) school days in a school year beginning with the first day that the student is removed from school. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed, except in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or 37H ½.

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

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

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

**All school principals and principal's designees and the Superintendent and Superintendent's designees when acting as a decision-maker at a disciplinary hearing or appeal to consider student discipline for violations of school rules other than offenses involving drugs, weapons, assaults on school staff and felony offenses, shall, when deciding the consequences for the student, consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process. The principal or designee shall not suspend the student until alternative remedies have been employed, and their use and results documented, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies would be unsuitable or counter-productive, or unless the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. Alternative remedies may include, but shall not be limited to: (i)**

**mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4(b).**

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

A principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. In such a case, the principal shall immediately notify the superintendent in writing of the removal and the reason for it, and describe the danger presented by the student.

The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the principal shall:

- (a) make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and the other matters set forth in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (b) provide written notice to the student and parent/guardian as provided in 603 CMR 53.06(2);
- (c) provide the student an opportunity to have a hearing with the principal that complies with the requirements for a short-term suspension or long-term suspension, as applicable, and as set out below, and the parent/guardian an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent/guardian; and
- (d) render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, and in writing no later than the following school day, which meets the requirements of notice of the decision for short-term suspension or long-term suspension, as set forth below, whichever is applicable.

A principal may not remove a student from school on an emergency basis for a disciplinary offense until adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation. In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4

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

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

*Principal's Decision, In-School Suspension, M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4*

On or before the day of suspension, the principal shall send written notice to the student and parent/guardian about the In-School Suspension, including the reason and the length of the In-School Suspension, and inviting the parent/guardian to a meeting with the

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

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

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

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

The principal shall provide oral and written notice to the student and the parent/guardian in English and in the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall set forth in plain language: the disciplinary offense; the basis for the charge; the potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension; the opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent/guardian to attend the hearing; the date, time, and location of the hearing; the right of the student and the student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate; and, if the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal: the rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b), and the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.

The principal shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent/guardian orally of the opportunity to attend the hearing. To conduct a hearing without the parent/guardian present, the principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent/guardian. The principal is presumed to have made reasonable efforts if the principal has sent written notice and has documented at least two (2) attempts to contact the parent/guardian in the manner specified by the parent/guardian for emergency notification.

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

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

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

The principal shall notify the student and s of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a Long-Term Suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent/guardian by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent/guardian for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent/guardian. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall: (1) identify the

disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing; (2) set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal; (3) identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school; (4) include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school as provided in M.G.L. c. 76, § 21; (5) inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension.

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

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

A student who is placed on Long-Term Suspension under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent. The student or parent/guardian shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the Long-Term Suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent/guardian may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For offenses that fall within M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H1/2, a principal may long-term suspend a student for more than ninety (90) days or permanently expel a student if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in G.L. c. 71, §§37H or 37H½.

The procedures below apply to M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H and 37H 1/2 suspensions that exceed ten (10) consecutive days.

Dangerous Weapons, Drugs or Assaults on Staff

- (1) Any student who is found on school premises or at school-sponsored or school-related events, including athletic games, in possession of a dangerous weapon, including, but not limited to, a gun or a knife; or a controlled substance as defined in chapter ninety-four C, including, but not limited to, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin, may be subject to long-term suspension and/or expulsion from the school or school district by the principal.
  - a. Building principals or designees are required to report to the police department the presence of any weapon on school premises.

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

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

Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraphs 1 or 2 shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing; provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal.

After said hearing, the principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the Principal to have violated either paragraphs (1) or (2) above.

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

Any student who has been expelled pursuant to these provisions shall have the right to appeal to the superintendent. The expelled student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the date of the expulsion in which to notify the superintendent of his appeal. The student has the right to counsel at a hearing before the superintendent. The subject matter of the appeal shall not be limited solely to a factual determination of whether the student has violated any provisions of this section.

Felony Complaints/Convictions

Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Upon a student being convicted of a felony or upon an adjudication or admission in court of guilt with respect to such a felony or felony delinquency, the principal may expel said student if said principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

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

The student shall receive written notification of the charges and the reasons for such suspension prior to such suspension taking effect. The student shall also receive written notification of his right to appeal and the process for appealing such suspension/expulsion; provided, however, that such suspension/expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing conducted by the superintendent.

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

The student shall have the right to appeal the suspension to the superintendent in writing of his request for an appeal no later than five (5) calendar days following the effective date of the suspension/expulsion. The superintendent shall hold a hearing with the student and the student's parent/guardian within three (3) calendar days of the student's

request for an appeal. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony on his behalf, and shall have the right to be represented by counsel at student's own expense. The superintendent shall have the authority to overturn or alter the decision of the principal, including recommending an alternate educational program for the student. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal within five (5) calendar days of the hearing. Such decision shall be the final decision with regard to the suspension.

## **OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ACADEMIC PROGRESS**

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

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

## **DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

- a. A suspension of longer than ten (10) consecutive school days, or a series of short term suspensions that exceeds ten (10) school days and constitute a pattern of removal, are considered to constitute a potential disciplinary change in placement.
- b. Prior to a suspension that would result in a disciplinary change in placement of a student with a disability, the building administrators, the parents/guardians and relevant members of the student's IEP/504 Team will convene to determine whether the violation for which the student is subject to a disciplinary change in placement was caused by or directly and substantially related to the student's disability or was the direct result of a failure to implement the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- c. If the Team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability, the student may be disciplined in accordance with the policies and procedures applicable to all students except that students eligible for special education services shall be entitled to a free appropriate public education as of the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) day of disciplinary exclusion in the school year.
- d. If the team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, then the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment or review any existing behavior

intervention plan and takes steps (with the consent of the parent/guardian) to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan and the student will not be suspended for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability.

- e. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the District may place the student in an interim alternative setting (as determined by the Team) up to forty-five (45) school days if:
  - 1) The student was in possession of a dangerous weapon on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;
  - 2) The student was in possession of or using of illegal drugs on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;
  - 3) The student engaged in solicitation of a controlled substance on school grounds or at school-sponsored events; or
  - 4) The student inflicted serious bodily injury to another at school or at school-sponsored events.

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

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

- f. The parent/guardian shall have the right to appeal the Team's manifestation determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student's placement in an interim alternative educational setting. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on the appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.  
(Approved July 27, 2017)

## REPORTING

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

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

## **GRADES**

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

North Reading students receive a standards-based report card. Children learn at different rates, in different ways, and in different sequences. Students are evaluated based on their own individual mastery in relation to standards rather than in comparison with peers. Report cards are published on a trimester basis (December, March and June). Parent conferences follow the first and second trimester report cards.

## **STUDENT RECORDS / FERPA**

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

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

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;

- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents/guardians and eligible students about directory information and allow parent/guardians and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Please contact the school principal for more information about FERPA.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips are considered to be part of the school day. Field trips have a connection to a class' learning theme, unit, or program. Children must have written permission from their parents/guardians to participate in a field trip. Appropriate permission slips are sent home ahead of time stating the destination and cost to the student. School buses are used to transport students to and from their destination unless the destination is within easy walking distance. Parents/guardians often accompany students on field trips and should let teachers know if they are available to chaperone. Parents/guardians who serve as chaperones must complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) Release Form by October 15<sup>th</sup>, prior to serving as a chaperone.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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

## **CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

### **FALL PARENTS’ ORIENTATION NIGHT**

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

## **PARTY INVITATIONS**

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

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

The celebration of birthdays is an important time in the life of each child and each family recognizes this special day in a different way. Birthdays are recognized throughout the school year and each child is made to feel special on his/her birthday. Given the concern over allergies and the varied nutritional needs of children, classroom birthday celebrations that include food (cupcakes, candy, etc.) are not allowed.

## **FIELD DAY**

In the spring, field day programs are coordinated for students at each school. This is a fun day for all. The participation of parents/guardians is encouraged. All volunteers should have an approved CORI on file with the North Reading Public Schools.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES**

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

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

Our first line of defense in all health-related areas are our school nurses. Should you have any health-related questions, please contact your school nurse.

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

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORM**

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

## ILLNESS OR INJURY IN SCHOOL

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

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

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

- Fever (oral temperature over 100°F without the aid of Tylenol or Motrin), especially with sore throat or rash
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Children diagnosed with conjunctivitis and prescribed antibiotic treatment should remain at home until the day after treatment begins
- Children who have vomiting or diarrhea should remain at home for 24 hours after vomiting or diarrhea has stopped
- Children who have a fever should remain at home for 24 hours after fever has subsided-this means without the use of fever-reducing medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- Children diagnosed with conjunctivitis should remain at home until they have received two doses of antibiotic **and** no longer have eye drainage.
- Children diagnosed with strep throat should remain at home for 24 hours after antibiotics have started.

Any child with the above illnesses is considered contagious until the time specified above - sending them back to school too early will only continue to spread illness. Parents/guardians will be called and asked to immediately pick up any child that has not met the appropriate waiting period for the above illnesses.

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

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

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

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

A note from the medical provider is required for any student who will be using crutches or a wheelchair in school. The note must include the student's diagnosis, activity restrictions, weight bearing status and the length of time the student will be on crutches. The school nurse must be provided with updated information regarding activity restrictions, etc. after each follow-up appointment with the medical provider. The school nurse cannot provide crutches or a wheelchair for use during the school day. These must be provided from home if prescribed to use any durable medical equipment. Please reach out to the school nurse if you need assistance.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

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

### **Chicken pox**

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

### **Conjunctivitis**

Student may return the day after treatment begins.

### **Hepatitis**

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

### **Hepatitis B**

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

### **Impetigo**

Student may return after 24 hours of the antibiotic medication.

### **Mononucleosis**

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

### **Pediculosis (Head Lice, Nits)**

Parents/guardians will be notified by the school nurse, and treatment information will be offered and encouraged. Upon return to school, the student will be checked by the school nurse to ensure effective treatment has begun.

### **Ringworm**

Student may return to school once treatment begins.

### **Scabies**

Student may return the day after treatment begins.

### **Streptococcal Infections**

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

### **COVID-19**

**Students may return to school after current guidelines/protocols are followed/met.**

## **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS**

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

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

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

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

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

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

## **ALLERGIES/ANAPHYLAXIS**

Please bring to the attention of the school nurse all known allergies in your child. Any child with a known allergic reaction at risk for anaphylaxis should have their own EpiPen and/or *Benadryl* in school that is immediately accessible at all times. A written medication order by a

licensed prescriber is required. In addition, written consent from a parent/guardian must be on file. The child's EpiPen and/or *Benadryl* must be delivered to the school nurse by an adult. Please contact the school nurse to complete a "Food Allergy Action Plan" which must be completed by the student's medical provider.

## INDIVIDUAL HEALTH PLAN

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

## SCHOOL SCREENING PROGRAMS

(Mandated by State Law)

Height and Weight: Grades 1-4

Vision: Grades Pre K-5

Hearing: Grades K-3

Scoliosis: Grade 5

## SCHOOL INSURANCE

Optional student accident insurance is available to interested families of North Reading Public Schools' students. Those interested in purchasing this optional insurance, or have questions may contact the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations at the District Administration Office at (978) 664-7810.

## SCHOOL ADMISSION / RESIDENCY

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

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

the determination to the Superintendent of Schools, whose decision shall be final. Please consult the building principal and/or Superintendent on all questions of residency.

Legal References: MGL c. 76, sec. 5; McKinney – Vento Homeless Assistance Act

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

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

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

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

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

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

Legal References:

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

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

Each school will develop an Emergency Operations Plan. Specific emergency responses may include "shelter in place," "lock down," and "evacuation/relocation." Fire drills and other emergency response drills will be conducted periodically. Parents/guardians will be notified via

the Blackboard Connect communication system about the specific nature of any conditions which require an emergency response and/or the need for relocation of students.

## **USE OF SECURITY CAMERAS**

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

## **ASBESTOS NOTIFICATION**

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

## **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS**

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

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

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

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION: DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT PROHIBITED**

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

## **TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972**

The North Reading Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex and strictly prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, including in admission and employment. North Reading Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions in its educational programs and employment activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; M.G.L. c. 151B; M.G.L. c. 151C; M.G.L. c. 76, § 5. The District's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admissions, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

The District has adopted and implements a Title IX Grievance Procedure to ensure the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment. A copy of the North Reading Public Schools Title IX Grievance Procedure may be accessed on the District website at the following link:

<https://www.north-reading.k12.ma.us/district/pages/title-ix-and-civil-rights-procedures>  
or through the office of the Title IX Coordinator.

For questions related to the District's Non-Discrimination policy or grievance procedures, to make a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, or for information relative to accommodations and services for individuals based on pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, please contact Sean T. Killeen, who serves as the District's Title IX Coordinator:

Sean T. Killeen; Title IX Coordinator  
North Reading Public Schools  
189 Park Street  
North Reading, MA 01864  
[skilleen@nrpsk12.org](mailto:skilleen@nrpsk12.org)

Inquires or complaints relative to sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, may also be directed to the United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights:

[U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov/office-for-civil-rights)

8 th Floor 5 Post Office Square  
Boston, MA 02109-3921  
Telephone: (617) 289-0111  
Facsimile: (617) 289-0150  
Email: [OCR.Boston@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.Boston@ed.gov)

North Reading Public Schools has also designated certain staff members to serve as Confidential Employees with whom a student or employee may discuss a report of sex discrimination, including sexbased harassment, informally and without concern for further disclose, unless such further disclosure is requested. Contact information for those Confidential Employees is available through the district's Human Resources Administrator, Morgan Soares; [msoares@nrpsk12.org](mailto:msoares@nrpsk12.org).

Any employee or student found to have engaged in sexual harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment may be subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with procedures set forth in Student Discipline section of this handbook and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Staff members determined to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to professional discipline including possible termination of employment.

## SECTION 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities, including schools that receive federal funds. Section 504 provides that: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal Financial assistance."

Section 504 protects all persons with a disability who:

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

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

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

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the identification, evaluation or placement decision, he/she may request an impartial hearing before a hearing officer at the Bureau of Special Education

Appeals, whether or not the party has pursued or is pursuing an internal grievance. Parents/guardians may examine the records relevant to the District's identification, evaluation, and placement actions.

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

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

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