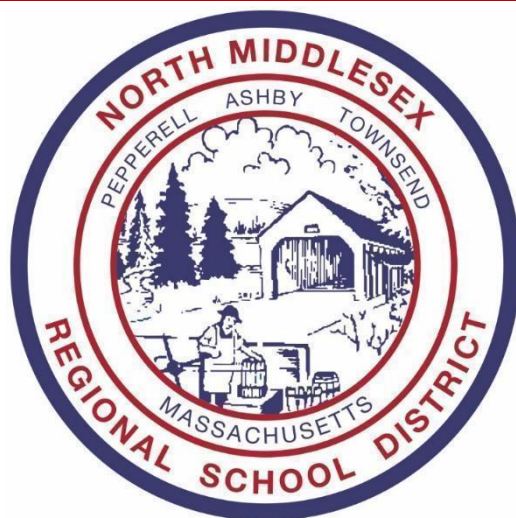




Employee Handbook

2026-2027

Sections of this Employee Handbook are updated throughout the school year in accordance with changes to School District Committee Policies. Employees will be notified of significant policy updates, and the most current version will always be available on the district website. In the event of a conflict between the contents of this Handbook and official School District Committee Policy, official policy shall govern.

North Middlesex Regional School District
19 Main Street
Townsend, MA 01469
www.nmrtd.org

Welcome! North Middlesex Regional School District (NMRSD) considers its employees to be one of its most valuable resources. The goal of this Employee Handbook is to provide you with information about matters significant to your employment in the North Middlesex Regional School District. This handbook also includes district policies and regulations that are pertinent to all personnel and students within the North Middlesex academic community.

The NMRSD School Committee has numerous policies in place that inform decision-making and apply to the activities, rights, and other aspects of employment. This Handbook in certain instances reproduces some of those policies as they are in effect at the time of publication. Because all policies are subject to modification by the School Committee at any time during the year, you are advised to ALWAYS confirm the current content of a policy should you need to access it. The School Committee policies are posted online, to find the policy manual please go to: [Policy Manual - North Middlesex Regional School District](#) The policies are listed by their general subject areas. [A list of policies that apply to employees is attached as Attachment A to this Handbook.]

If you have questions regarding School Committee policies or the information contained in this Handbook, please contact Human Resources at the Central Office at (978) 597-8713 extension 1600.

NOTICE

The laws, School Committee policies, and rules stated in this handbook are intended to ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operations of the schools in the North Middlesex Regional School District. In addition to these written provisions, there may be times where, to further ensure the safe, orderly, and educationally sound operation of these schools, the school administration may enforce a standard of conduct upon students and employees of the District that furthers this end. Furthermore, the school administration has the right to enforce any law, ordinance or School Committee policy that is not set forth in this handbook. If laws or policies are amended or new laws or policies are enacted, they supersede anything to the contrary in this Handbook.

This Handbook is not intended as, nor does it constitute, a contract between the school district and its employees.

This Handbook is intended only as a general guideline. Discrepancies may exist between this Handbook and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements or the provisions of individual employment contracts. Where any discrepancies exist the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement or the individual contract will control. Copies of the collective bargaining agreements are available from the Human Resources Department and from union representatives. A copy of an employee's individual contract is available from the Human Resources Department.

The District maintains a policy of employment at-will for any employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement or individual contract. Employment “at-will” means that employment can be terminated with or without notice at any time and for any lawful reason at either the option of the employee or the District. Accordingly, as noted above, neither the School Committee policies nor this Handbook create a contract and make no enforceable promises or guarantees.

Nothing in this handbook is intended to infringe on or restrain the rights of employees who are covered by the Massachusetts Collective Bargaining Law, M.G.L. chapter 150E.

GENERAL NORTH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT SCHOOL INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

As an employee of the North Middlesex Regional School District, it is understood that the North Middlesex Regional School District and the individual school buildings where one is employed, often contain sensitive information. School employees are often exposed to student information as part of their duties, including student and family information of a highly sensitive nature. This information is protected by law from disclosure to others except in very limited, specific situations. These restrictions continue to apply even after an employee is no longer employed by the school district. In addition, in connection with their duties employees may be exposed to confidential employment and medical information of other employees. This information also is protected from disclosure by law and the restrictions continue to apply even after an employee is no longer employed by the school district. These and other types of confidential information that an employee may have access to must be kept in the strictest confidence. Should an employee believe that such information is required to be disclosed in a given circumstance they must first obtain express authorization from a supervisor and may disclose only to the extent expressly authorized. Employees found to be in violation of these rules are subject to disciplinary action that may include termination.

NEWS MEDIA RELATIONS/NEWS RELEASES

Every effort will be made to assist the press and other communications media to obtain complete and adequate coverage of the programs, problems, planning, and activities of the North Middlesex Regional School District.

All representatives of the media will be given equal access to information about the schools. General releases of interest to the entire community will be made available to all the media simultaneously. There will be no exclusive releases except as media representatives request information on particular programs, plans or problems.

In order that North Middlesex Regional School District publicity is given wide coverage and is coordinated to serve a District purpose, the following procedures will be followed in giving official information to the news media:

1. News releases that are of a system-wide or a sensitive nature or pertain to established School Committee policy are the responsibility of the Superintendent.
2. News releases that are of concern to only one school or to an organization of one school are the responsibility and require approval of the head administrator of that particular school/building.
3. All statements made to the media by school district employees must be first approved by the Central Office.
4. All press releases should be forwarded to the Superintendent or his/her designee for approval prior to their release.

While it is impossible to know how news releases or statements will actually be described by the media, every possible effort should be made to ensure that coverage of school activities will create and maintain a dignified and professionally responsible image for the North Middlesex Regional School District.

STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS REGULATIONS

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The North Middlesex Regional School District is an equal opportunity employer. The North Middlesex Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender identity, age, homelessness, sex, military service, pregnancy and pregnancy related medical conditions, sexual orientation, genetic information or disability in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs or activities.

Any inquiries concerning the practices or application of this policy may be addressed to the Superintendent or Human Resources Offices.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

The North Middlesex Regional School District affirms its responsibility to provide for the safety and well-being of students. School employees have legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students in the schools. The law requires that employees report to the Department of Children and Families any information where it is suspected that a student may have been, or is being, abused or neglected.

NONDISCRIMINATION

Public schools have the responsibility to overcome, insofar as possible, any barriers that prevent children from achieving their potential. This commitment to the community is affirmed by the following statements that the North Middlesex Regional School Committee intends to:

1. Promote the rights and responsibilities of all individuals as set forth in the State and Federal Constitutions, pertinent legislation, and applicable judicial interpretations.
2. Encourage positive experiences in human values for children, youth and adults, all of whom have differing personal and family characteristics and who come from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic groups.
3. Strive towards a more integrated society and to enlist the support of individuals, as well as groups and agencies, both private and governmental, in such an effort.
4. Use all appropriate communication and action techniques to air and reduce the grievances of individuals and groups.
5. Carefully consider, in all the decisions made in the school system, the potential benefits or adverse consequences that those decisions might have on the human relations aspects of all segments of society.
6. Conduct an ongoing review of policies and practices of the school system in order to achieve to the greatest extent possible the objectives of this statement.

The Committee's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, employees, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against because of their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, their complaint should be registered with the District Civil Rights Coordinator or building principal. The name of the District's Civil Rights Coordinator is listed on the district's website and in the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedure.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY - Policy AC

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

The Committee's policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, employees, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a District school or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, military service, pregnancy and pregnancy related medical conditions, or age. If someone has a complaint or feels that they have been discriminated against

because of their race, color, national origin, sex, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, homelessness, military service, pregnancy and pregnancy related medical conditions, or age, their complaint should be registered with the District's Civil Rights/Title IX Coordinator, a building principal, an immediate supervisor or Human Resources.

Inquiries regarding compliance with these laws may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools, North Middlesex Regional School District (978) 597-8713, or any of the agencies below. Any student, parent, or employee who chooses not to use the district's internal complaint procedures or who is not satisfied with the district's internal complaint procedures may file a complaint of discrimination or harassment with an appropriate state or federal agency. Some of these agencies (MCAD and EEOC) have a short window in which a claim can be filed (300 days).

1. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of students:

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square, Suite 900 Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: 617-289-0111
FAX: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

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

OR

Program Quality Assurance Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Telephone: 781-338-3700
TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370
FAX: 781-338-3710

2. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of parents:

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02109-3921

Telephone: 617-289-0111
FAX: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

Program Quality Assurance Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Telephone: 781-338-3700
TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370
FAX: 781-338-3710

3. For complaints related to discrimination/harassment of employees:

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights
8th Floor, 5 Post Office Square, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02109-3921
Telephone: 617-289-0111
FAX: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

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

OR

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

NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The North Middlesex Regional School District is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment in accordance with the district's non-discrimination policy. Harassment by administrators, teachers, certified and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school or at school-sponsored events is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The North Middlesex Regional School District requires all employees and students to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner with respect to their fellow employees, students and all members of the school community.

Individuals seeking to make a complaint about sexual harassment should refer to the procedures outlined in Policy ACAB – Sexual Harassment.

Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A. A "complaint" is defined as an allegation that a student, third party, or employee has been discriminated against or harassed in accordance with the district's non-discrimination policy.
- B. "Discrimination" means discrimination or harassment in accordance with the district's non-discrimination policy by which an individual is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the school.
- C. "Harassment" means unwelcome conduct in accordance with the district's non-discrimination policy that is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive to create a hostile environment for the individual at school. Harassment may include insults, name-calling, off-color jokes, threats, comments, innuendoes, notes, display of pictures or symbols, gestures, or other conduct, which rises to the level of a hostile environment.

Harassment and Retaliation Prohibited

Harassment in any form or for any reason is absolutely forbidden. This includes harassment by administrators, personnel, students, vendors and other individuals in school or at school related events. Retaliation against any individual who has brought harassment or other inappropriate behavior to the attention of school officials or who has cooperated in an investigation of a complaint under this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated by the North Middlesex Regional School District.

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

How to Make a Complaint

- A. Any student, employee or third party who believes that they have been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to the school principal, immediate supervisor or Human Resources. If the school principal receives the report, the principal will notify the Civil Rights Coordinator of the complaint. Students or employees who are unsure whether

discrimination or harassment has occurred are encouraged to discuss the situation with the school principal.

- B. District staff must report possible incidents of discrimination or harassment of students and fellow employees. Parents and other adults are also encouraged to report any concerns about possible discrimination or harassment of students or employees, which have allegedly occurred on school grounds, at school related events, or actions, which occurred outside of school but possibly create a hostile environment for a student or employee while he/she is at school.
- C. Students and employees will not be retaliated against for making a complaint. Any retaliation by students or school staff will result in disciplinary measures, up to and including expulsion or dismissal.
- D. Students and employees are encouraged to utilize the District's Complaint Procedure. However, students and employees are hereby notified that they also have the right to report complaints to:

The United States Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1491
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
Fax: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172

OR

Program Quality Assurance Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Telephone: 781-338-3700
TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370
FAX: 781-338-3710

Complaint Handling and Investigation

- A. The school principal shall promptly inform the relevant Civil Rights Coordinator and the person(s) who is the subject of the complaint that a complaint has been received.
- B. After notifying the appropriate Civil Rights Coordinator, the school principal or designee may pursue an informal resolution of the complaint with the agreement of the parties involved. Informal resolution is optional, and the Complainant may elect to proceed according to the formal resolution procedure at any time prior to the completion of the informal resolution.
- C. Under the formal resolution procedure, the complaint will be investigated by the school principal or other individual designated by the school principal or Civil Rights Coordinator.
- D. Any complaint about an employee who holds a supervisory position shall be investigated by a person who is not subject to that supervisor's authority. Any complaint about the

Superintendent should be submitted to the School Committee Chair, who will consult with legal counsel concerning handling the investigation of the complaint.

1. The Complainant shall have the opportunity to present witnesses and other relevant evidence to the investigator.
 2. The person who is the subject of the complaint will be provided with an opportunity to be heard as part of the investigation including the opportunity to provide relevant information and identify witnesses for the investigator's consideration.
 3. The privacy rights of all parties to the complaint shall be maintained in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.
 4. The investigator will keep a written record of the investigation process.
 5. The investigator may take interim remedial measures to reduce the risk of further discrimination or harassment while the investigation is pending.
 6. The investigation and the notification of the outcome to the Complainant and the subject of the complaint shall be completed within fifteen (15) school days of the date of the receipt of the complaint.
 7. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond fifteen (15) school days because of extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant of the extension.
 8. If a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment is received after June 1 of a given school year, the investigator will attempt to complete the investigation by the end of the school year. In the event that the investigation extends beyond the last day of school, the District will make reasonable efforts to complete the investigation within the above-referenced time frame, but may extend the investigation period to account for the availability of witnesses during the summer vacation period. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant of the extension and make reasonable efforts to interview the witnesses during the summer vacation period.
 9. Nothing in this procedure will preclude the investigator, in his or her discretion, from completing the investigation sooner than the fifteen (15) school days described above.
- E. If the investigator determines that discrimination or harassment has occurred, he/she shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which may include but is not limited to: determining what disciplinary action should be taken against the person(s) who engaged in discrimination or harassment, if any; determining what steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate; and informing the Complainant and the person(s) who was the subject of the complaint of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the complaint of the notice of the outcome of the complaint, unless the investigation is extended under the provision described above.
- F. This notice of the outcome of the investigation will inform the complainant as to whether or not the investigation determined that the conduct occurred, any individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant or any sanctions imposed on the perpetrator that directly relate to the complainant (e.g., stay away order or no contact order), and other steps the school has

taken to eliminate the hostile environment, if one has been found to exist, and prevent recurrence. The perpetrator should not be notified of the individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant (e.g., counseling, alternative classes, etc.)

- G. If the Complainant or alleged perpetrator and their parents/legal guardians are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the appropriate Civil Rights Coordinator within ten (10) school days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation. In the appeal, the appellant should identify any specific alleged factual or legal errors and explain why the errors should result in a different conclusion. The Civil Rights Coordinator shall review the investigation and may conduct further investigation if deemed appropriate. Within five (5) school days of receipt of any such appeal, the Civil Rights Coordinator shall decide whether or not to reopen the investigation, uphold the principal or designee's determination, or reverse the principal or designee's determination. The Civil Rights Coordinator shall provide written notification of that determination to both the Complainant and the accused. The Civil Rights Coordinator's decision shall be final, subject to further appeal to the Superintendent.
- H. If the employee or the student's parents or legal guardians are dissatisfied with the decision of the Civil Rights Coordinator, an appeal may be submitted to the Superintendent within seven (7) calendar days after receiving notice of the Civil Rights Coordinator's decision. The Superintendent will consider the appeal. The Superintendent's decision shall be final.

The name of the District's Civil Rights Coordinator is listed on the district's website as well as in student handbooks.

SEX-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT (Policy ACAB)

Sex-based discrimination, sex-based harassment and sexual harassment (collectively, "sex discrimination") in the education programs, activities and workplace of the North Middlesex Regional School District is unlawful and prohibited in the District's education program and activity. All persons associated with the North Middlesex Regional School District including, but not necessarily limited to, School Committee members, District employees, volunteers and students are expected to conduct themselves at all times to maintain a workplace, education program and activity free from sex discrimination.

Any person who engages in sex discrimination while participating in the education program or activity or acting as a member of the school community, will be in violation of this policy. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sex discrimination or retaliation against individuals for cooperating in an investigation of a sex discrimination complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Because the North Middlesex Regional School Committee takes allegations of sex discrimination seriously, it will respond promptly to complaints of sex discrimination and where it is determined that inappropriate conduct, whether or not such conduct constitutes sex discrimination, has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action as is necessary, including disciplinary action where appropriate.

Please note that while this policy sets forth the goal of promoting a workplace and school environment that is free of sex discrimination; the policy is not designed or intended to limit our authority to discipline or take remedial action for workplace or school conduct which we deem unacceptable,

regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sex discrimination. This policy shall be located and accessible within the School Committee policy manual.

Definitions:

Complainant – A student, employee, or other person participating or attempting to participate in the District’s education program or activity at the time of the alleged sex discrimination.

Complaint – An oral or written request to the District that objectively can be understood as a request for the recipient to investigate and make a determination about alleged discrimination.

Confidential Employee – A North Middlesex Regional School District employee: (1) whose communications are privileged or confidential under federal or state law; or (2) who the District has designated as confidential for the purposes of providing services to persons related to sex discrimination.

Day – When used in this policy, “day” shall mean: (1) during the school year, school days; or (2) during the summer, business days except for holidays.

Respondent – A person who is alleged to have violated the North Middlesex Regional School District’s prohibition on sex discrimination.

Retaliation – Intimidation, threats, coercion or discrimination against any person by the North Middlesex Regional School District, a student, an employee or another person authorized to provide an aid, benefit or service to the District’s education program or activity for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX or its accompanying regulations, or because the person has reported information, made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing under this policy¹.

Sex-based Discrimination – Discrimination on the basis of sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

Sex-based Harassment – A form of sex discrimination, including but not limited to sexual harassment and other harassment on the basis of sex, that is:

(1) *Quid pro quo harassment*. An employee, agent, or other person authorized by the North Middlesex Regional School District to provide an aid, benefit, or service under the District’s education program or activity explicitly or impliedly conditioning the provision of such an aid, benefit, or service on a person’s participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

(2) *Hostile environment harassment*. Unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person’s ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient’s education program or activity (*i.e.*, creates a hostile environment). Whether a hostile environment has been created is a fact-specific inquiry that includes consideration of the following:

(i) The degree to which the conduct affected the complainant’s ability to access the recipient’s education program or activity;

¹ Nothing in this definition precludes the North Middlesex Regional School District from requiring an employee or another person authorized to provide an aid, benefit or service to the North Middlesex Regional School District’s education program or activity to participate as a witness in, or otherwise assist with, an investigation pursuant to this policy.

- (ii) The type, frequency, and duration of the conduct;
- (iii) The parties' ages, roles within the recipient's education program or activity, previous interactions, and other factors about each party that may be relevant to evaluating the effects of the conduct;
- (iv) The location of the conduct and the context in which the conduct occurred; and
- (v) Other sex-based harassment in the recipient's education program or activity; or

(3) *Specific offenses.*

(i) Sexual assault meaning an offense classified as a forcible or nonforcible sex offense under the uniform crime reporting system of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(ii) Dating violence meaning violence committed by a person:

(A) Who is or has been in a social relationship of a romantic or intimate nature with the victim; and

(B) Where the existence of such a relationship shall be determined based on a consideration of the following factors:

- (1) The length of the relationship;
- (2) The type of relationship; and
- (3) The frequency of interaction between the persons involved in the relationship;

(iii) Domestic violence meaning felony or misdemeanor crimes committed by a person who:

(A) Is a current or former spouse or intimate partner of the victim under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction of the recipient, or a person similarly situated to a spouse of the victim;

(B) Is cohabitating, or has cohabitated, with the victim as a spouse or intimate partner;

(C) Shares a child in common with the victim; or (D) Commits acts against a youth or adult victim who is protected from those acts under the family or domestic violence laws of the jurisdiction; or

(iv) Stalking meaning engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to:

(A) Fear for the person's safety or the safety of others; or

(B) Suffer substantial emotional distress.

Supportive Measures – Individualized measures offered as appropriate, as reasonably available, without unreasonably burdening a complainant or respondent, not for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and without fee or charge to the complainant or respondent to: (1) restore or preserve that party's access to the recipient's education program or activity, including measures that are designed to protect the safety of the parties or the recipient's educational environment; or (2) provide support during the complaint procedure.

The Title IX Coordinators:

Anne Marie Tucciarone-Mahan (Staff)
Director of Human Resources
19 Main Street, Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-8713 ext. 1601
hr@nmrsd.org

Dr. Gary Burboa-Reese (Students)
Assistant Superintendent
19 Main Street, Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-8713 ext. 1301
greese@nmrsd.org

The Superintendent will annually appoint one or more Title IX Coordinators who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of managing all sex discrimination complaints. The Title IX Coordinator shall be responsible for handling inquiries about the applicability of Title IX, unless a person prefers to contact one of the governing agencies addressed below.

Any person may report sex discrimination, including sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment). Reports may be made at any time including during non-business hours. Reports may be made in person, by mail, by telephone, or by electronic mail, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report.

All employees who are not confidential employees must immediately notify the Title IX Coordinator upon receipt of information of conduct toward another individual/s that may constitute sex discrimination under this policy.

All employees who are confidential employees who are made aware by another individual of conduct toward that individual that may constitute sex discrimination under this policy must inform that individual: (1) of the employee's status as a confidential employee who is not required to notify the Title IX Coordinator of the alleged conduct; (2) how to contact the Title IX Coordinator and make a complaint of sex discrimination; and (3) that the Title IX Coordinator may be able to offer and coordinate supportive measures, as well as initiate an informal resolution process or an investigation under this policy.

Reporting Sex Discrimination:

Receipt of Complaint

Upon notice of allegations that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination, and in treating the complainant and respondent equitably the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) treat the complainant and respondent equitably; (2) contact the complainant to discuss the availability of and coordinate supportive measures; and (3) notify the complainant or individual reporting the conduct of the informal resolution and investigation processes under this policy.

If a complaint is made under this policy, the Title IX Coordinator will then: (1) contact the respondent to discuss the availability of and coordinate supportive measures; and (2) notify the respondent of the information resolution and investigation processes under this policy.

The Title IX Coordinator must determine whether to initiate a complaint of sex discrimination pursuant to this policy: (1) in the absence of a complaint but where there is notice of allegations that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination; (2) in the absence or termination of an informal resolution process; or (3) if complaint is withdrawn in whole or in part. In making this determination, the Title IX Coordinator will consider the following factors:

- (1) The complainant's request not to proceed with the initiation of a complaint;
- (2) The complainant's reasonably safety concerns regarding the initiation of a complaint; (3) The risk that additional acts of sex discrimination would occur if a complaint is not initiated;
- (4) The severity of the alleged sex discrimination, including whether the discrimination, if established, would require the District to remove the respondent or impose another disciplinary sanction to end the discrimination and end its recurrence;
- (5) The age and relationship of the parties, including whether the respondent is a District employee;
- (6) The scope of the alleged sex discrimination, including information suggesting a pattern of ongoing sex discrimination or sex discrimination alleged to have impacted multiple individuals;
- (7) The availability of evidence to assist a decisionmaker in determining whether sex discrimination occurred; and
- (8) Whether the District could end the alleged sex discrimination and prevent its recurrence without initiating a complaint.

If, after considering these and other relevant factors, the Title IX Coordinator determines that the conduct as alleged presents an imminent and serious threat to the health or safety of the complainant or other person, or that the conduct as alleged prevents the District from ensuring equal access on the basis of sex to its education program or activity, the Title IX Coordinator may initiate a complaint. However, if the Title IX Coordinator reasonably determines that the conduct as alleged could not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or this policy, the District is not obligated to initiate an investigation into the allegations.

The Title IX Coordinator will notify the complainant prior to initiating the complaint and appropriately address any of the complainant's reasonable concerns about their safety or the safety of others, including the provisions of supportive measures. Regardless of whether or not a complaint is initiated, the Title IX Coordinator will take other appropriate prompt or effective steps to effectuate remedies to deter further instances of the alleged sex discrimination.

If a complaint is initiated under this policy, the District will notify the known parties as to:

- (1) Sufficient information available at the time concerning the allegations which may reasonably constitute sex discrimination under this policy;
- (2) The District's procedures for the informal resolution and investigation process;
- (3) The District's prohibition against retaliation;
- (4) The parties' equal opportunity to access relevant and not otherwise impermissible evidence or descriptions of evidence.

If during the course of an investigation additional allegations are uncovered that were not included in the notice or a consolidated complaint, the District will provide a supplemental notice to the known parties.

The District may remove a respondent on an emergency or administrative leave basis after undertaking an individualized safety and risk analysis and determining that an imminent and serious threat to the physical health or safety of any employee, student or other individual arising from the allegations justifies removal. The District will provide the respondent with written notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal in accordance with any applicable laws, collective bargaining agreements and student handbooks.

Supportive Measures

The District shall offer and coordinate supportive measures through the Title IX Coordinator and other appropriate staff. However, the District is not required to alter the alleged discriminatory conduct for the purpose of providing supportive measures.

Supportive measures vary depending on reasonably available resources and circumstances. These measures may include, but are not limited to: counseling; extensions of deadlines and other course-related adjustments; escort services; increased security and monitoring of certain areas within a school building; contact restrictions between one or more parties; leaves of absence; changes in classes, work or other education program or activities; and training and education. Supportive measures cannot unreasonably burden either party and must be designed to protect the safety of the parties of the District's educational environment, or to provide support during an informal resolution or investigation process. These measures will not be imposed for punitive or disciplinary reasons, and may be modified, continued or terminated at the conclusion of the informal resolution or investigation process or at any time upon request of a party if circumstances have materially changed and the Title IX Coordinator grants such request. If the Title IX Coordinator denies a party's requested supportive measures, or if circumstances it will provide the party an opportunity to seek a review of the decision to a Central Office administrator. Information concerning supportive measures will be kept strictly confidential unless necessary to preserve a party's access to the District's education program or activity.

If either party is a student with a disability with an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan, the Title IX Coordinator shall consult, confidentially and as appropriate, with one or more members of the student's team to determine how to comply with the student's IEP or 504 plan in implementing supportive measures.

Confidentiality

The District will not disclose personally identifiable information ("PII") obtained in the course of following processes under this policy unless:

- (1) It has obtained prior written consent to disclose such information from a person with such legal right of consent;
- (2) The information is disclosed to a parent, guardian or other legal representative with the legal right to receive disclosures on behalf of the person whose PII is at issue;
- (3) Necessary to carry out the purposes of Title IX or its accompany regulations or to address conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination;
- (4) As required by federal or state law; or
- (5) To the extent such disclosures do not otherwise conflict with Title IX, when required by state/local law or if permitted by FERPA or its accompanying regulations.

During an informal resolution or investigation process, the District will take reasonable steps to protect the privacy of parties and witnesses without restriction to a party's ability to obtain and access evidence, including speaking with witnesses (with witness consent and in a non-retaliatory manner); consulting with family members, confidential resources or advisors; or otherwise preparing for or participating in either process.

Informal Resolution

After a complaint is filed, the District may offer and facilitate an informal resolution process (such as but not limited to mediation or restorative justice) before a determination is made. This process is not available when the complaint alleges sex-based harassment by a Committee member, District employee or volunteer towards a student or if such process would conflict with federal, state or local law. The District retains the right to decline to offer or facilitate an informal resolution at its own discretion, even if one or more parties seeks to pursue this process.

The parties must give voluntary, written consent to participate in this informal process. When both parties consent to an informal process, the District shall facilitate a resolution-based meeting as soon as practicable, subject to the availability of the involved parties and any mediator or facilitator. Prior to initiating the informal resolution process, the District will provide each party a written notice explaining the allegations and requirements of the informal resolution process. The individual facilitating an informal resolution process will not be the same individual that is investigating or deciding the outcome of the complaint.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the complainant may choose to continue the investigation process by providing written notice to the Title IX Coordinator within three (3) days of the unsuccessful informal resolution meeting. In this event, the District will commence or resume the investigation.

Consolidation of Complaints

If the allegations are against more than one respondent or by more than one complainant, the District may consolidate multiple formal complaints where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

Investigation

All evidence will be weighed objectively using the preponderance of the evidence standard. Credibility determinations are not based on an individual's status as a complainant, respondent or witness. The investigator will presume that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the investigation process.

The Title IX Coordinator shall assign an individual to investigate the matter. The investigator shall have no conflicts with or biases against either the complainant or the respondent. If the District has appointed more than one Title IX Coordinator, the individual not assigned to be the Title IX Coordinator in the matter may serve as the investigator. The investigator will collect and review evidence, interview parties and witnesses, and complete an investigative report.

The investigator shall strive to complete investigations within twenty-five (25) school days of the filing of the complaint or resumption of the investigation after an unsuccessful informal resolution meeting, which may be extended for good cause with notice to the parties. The timeline for an investigation may be suspended during any informal resolution procedure or meeting.

During the investigation, the investigator shall take the following steps:

- 1) Interview the complainant and respondent and provide each party with the opportunity to identify fact witnesses and submit relevant, legally permissible evidence to the investigator.

- 2) Interview available witnesses, including those identified by the complainant or respondent provided the witness is available.
- 3) Provide the parties with an equal opportunity to access relevant, legally permissible gathered evidence or an accurate description of such evidence and to respond to the investigator regarding the gathered evidence or accurate description of such evidence. The District will take reasonable steps to ensure that the parties do not engage in authorized disclosure of gathered evidence.

The investigator will draft an investigation report that fairly summarizes the relevant evidence including, but not limited to, interviews with parties and witnesses, written evidence, audio/video recordings, and site visits.

Determinations

The investigator will provide the decision maker with a report including all evidence obtained during the course of the investigation. The decision maker assigned will have no conflicts with or biases against either the complainant or the respondent, and the Title IX Coordinator or investigator may also be the decision maker for the complaint.

The decision maker shall review all of the evidence. If the decision maker is a different person than the investigator and the investigator's report leaves a party or witness's credibility in dispute when it is relevant to evaluating one or more allegations, the decision maker may engage in supplemental interviews in order to adequately assess the party or witness's credibility.

The decision maker shall then issue a written determination within fifteen (15) days of the conclusion of the investigation, absent extenuating circumstances. The decision maker shall thereafter notify the parties in writing of the determination as to whether sex discrimination occurred and the procedures and permissible basis for appeal.

If it is determined that sex discrimination occurred, the Title IX Coordinator shall coordinate and implement any necessary remedies and disciplinary actions. An employee found responsible for engaging in sex discrimination is subject to discipline up to and including termination. A student found responsible for engaging in sex discrimination is subject to discipline consistent with state law and applicable student handbook.

Dismissal of a Complaint

The District may dismiss a complaint if:

- (1) The District is unable to identify the respondent after taking reasonable steps to do so;
- (2) The respondent is not participating in the District's education program or activity and is not a District employee;
- (3) The complainant voluntarily withdraws any or all of the allegations in the complaint, the Title IX Coordinator to initiate a complaint, and the District determines that, without the complainant's withdrawn allegations, the conduct that remains alleged in the complaint, if any, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or this policy even if proven; or
- (4) The District determines the conduct alleged in the complaint, even if proven, would not constitute sex discrimination under Title IX or this policy.

Upon a dismissal of this section, the District will promptly send written notice of the dismissal and reason(s) to the parties, as well as the procedures for appeal. The District will offer supportive

measures to the parties as appropriate and take other necessary and effective measures to ensure that the conduct does not continue to recur.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

While Title IX allegations may be withdrawn, the District may investigate under other state and federal laws and District policies.

Appeals

Either party may appeal the outcome of the investigation for one of the following reasons:

- (1) Procedural irregularity affected the outcome;
- (2) New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time that the determination was made which could affect the outcome;
- (3) The Title IX Coordinator, investigator, and/or decision-maker had a conflict of interest or bias.

Appeals must be submitted to the Title IX Coordinator within three (3) days of the District's understood date of receipt of the written determination and contain a written statement in support or challenge of the outcome.

When an appeal is filed, the District shall notify the other party and ensure that the individual deciding the appeal is not the same person as the decision maker who reached the determination regarding responsibility and that the individual has no conflicts of interests and is free of bias. The non-appealing party shall have three (3) days from the date of receipt of the notice of the appeal to submit a written statement to support or oppose the outcome.

The individual deciding the appeal shall issue a written decision describing the result of the appeal and rationale for the decision and provide the decision to both parties generally within ten (10) days of receipt of the non-appealing party's written statement, or in the event no statement is submitted, the date the statement would have been due.

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to sex discrimination, you may file a complaint with any of the governing agencies set forth below.

- 1) United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights – Region 1
J.W. McCormack Post Office and CourtHouse
Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 289 – 0111
- 2) Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
JFK Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475
Boston, MA 02203
(800) 669 – 4000
- 3) The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)
One Ashburton Place – Room 601

Boston, MA 02108
(617) 994 – 6000

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

Amended: August, 2024

NONDISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY - Policy ACE

Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, and activities of the District or be subject to discrimination. Nor shall the District exclude or otherwise deny services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known disability of a person with whom the individual is known to have a relationship or association.

Definition: A "qualified individual with a disability" is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the District.

Reasonable Modification: The District shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the District can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

Should an applicant or employee feel that a health or medical condition is impacting, or is likely to impact, performance or the ability to meet job requirements and/or perform the essential functions of the employee's position, the District encourages the employee to notify the principal or his/her designee in advance of impact on performance or conduct to explore what reasonable accommodations may be available. Even if the condition does not qualify as a disability/handicap, the District welcomes dialogue with employees to address how/if it may meet the employee's needs and requests.

A reasonable accommodation may be any adjustment or modification to a job or the way a job is done, employment practice, or work environment that makes it possible for a disabled/handicapped individual to perform the essential functions of the position involved and to enjoy equal terms, conditions and benefits of employment.

If any of our employees feels that she or he has been unfairly denied reasonable accommodation, she or he is encouraged to contact the principal or his/her designee, or utilize the District's grievance procedure, as they choose.

Communications: The District shall take the appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the District shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services where necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the District. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the District shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individuals with disabilities.

Auxiliary Aids and Services: "Auxiliary aids and services" includes (1) qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assisted listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments; (2) qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Braille materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individuals with visual impairments; (3) acquisition or modification of equipment or devices and (4) other similar services and actions.

Limits of Required Modification: The District is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision that, in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication for individuals with disabilities, would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the District shall be made by the Superintendent after considering all resources available for use in funding and operating the program, service, or activity. A written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion shall accompany the decision.

Notice: The District shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the District. The information shall be made available in such a manner as the School Committee and Superintendent find necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

Compliance Coordinator: The District shall designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under ADA. The District shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA. The school system receives federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, the School Committee is of the general view that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair; and
2. To the extent possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in the mainstream of life in the school community. Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above

requirements of the law and policy statements of this Committee to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

In accordance with federal and state law, the District will provide reasonable accommodations to an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause an undue hardship as that term is defined under federal and/or state law. Depending on the circumstance, such accommodations may include reasonable adjustments to the work environment that will allow an employee to practice his or her religion. This policy not only gives consideration to requests for schedule changes or leave for religious observances but may also give consideration to such things as dress or grooming practices that an employee has for religious reasons. When an employee or applicant needs an accommodation for religious reasons, he/she should notify the principal or his/her designee or his/her supervisor that he/she requests such an accommodation for religious reasons.

Non-Discrimination and Reasonable Accommodation for Pregnant Workers

The District complies with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and other applicable state, local, and federal laws providing for nondiscrimination in employment practices to applicants and employees based on pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, including, but not limited to, lactation and the need to express breast milk for a nursing child. In addition, the District will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant employees consistent with the law.

It is the District's policy to:

- Ensure that employees are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner based on pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition in the pre-employment process and that employees are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner in all terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.
- Engage in a timely, good faith and interactive process with an employee requesting a reasonable accommodation related to pregnancy to determine effective reasonable accommodations to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the job.
- Provide employment opportunities and not take adverse action against an employee because of the employee's request for or use of a reasonable accommodation for a pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition.

Reasonable Accommodation

If a pregnant employee seeks a reasonable accommodation, such a request should be made to the principal or his/her designee. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment that allows the employee or job applicant to perform the essential functions of the job while pregnant or experiencing a pregnancy-related condition, without undue hardship to the District. The District will communicate with the employee about such requested accommodation and will provide an accommodation unless it poses an "undue hardship," which means that it would cause the District significant difficulty or expense.

Upon receipt of an accommodation request, the principal or his/her designee will meet with the requesting individual to engage in the interactive process to determine effective reasonable accommodations to enable the individual to perform the essential functions of the job. After consultation with others in the District as appropriate and necessary, the principal or his/her designee

will determine the feasibility of the requested accommodation and whether it is required by law, and then will respond to the employee about the requested accommodation.

Documentation

The District may require documentation about the need for a reasonable accommodation, and extension of time for accommodation beyond the originally-agreed to accommodation, from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional. The District will not require documentation for the following accommodations: (i) more frequent restroom, food or water breaks during pregnancy; (ii) seating during pregnancy; (iii) limits on lifting over 20 pounds during pregnancy; and (iv) private non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk.

Questions/Concerns

Any employee with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace is encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the principal or his/her designee. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal or retaliation. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected discriminatory treatment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies.

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
475 Government Center
Boston, MA 02203
800-669-4000

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination
Boston Headquarters
One Ashburton Place – Suite 601
Boston, MA 02108
617-994-6000

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY - Policy JICFB

The North Middlesex Regional School District is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards and strictly prohibits the bullying of students in any form. Bullying and cyber-bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home.

Bullying is strictly prohibited:

- on school grounds;
- on property immediately adjacent to school grounds;
- at school-sponsored or school-related activities;

- at functions or programs whether on or off school grounds;
- at school bus stops;
- on school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district;
- through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the North Middlesex Regional School District; or,
- in rental facilities used by the school department.

Bullying is also prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the North Middlesex School District if the act or acts in question:

- creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- infringes on the rights of the target at school; and/or
- materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

Definitions

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

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

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

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

Cyber-bullying also includes the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one

or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying

“Aggressor” is a student or a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

“Target” is a person against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

“Hostile environment” 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 and staff’s workplace.

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

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall oversee the development of the [2026-2028 NMRSD Bullying Prevention Plan.pdf](#) in consultation with all district stakeholders, which includes teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, school volunteers, administrators, community representatives, local law enforcement agencies, students, parents and guardians, consistent with the requirements of this policy, as well as state and federal laws. The plan shall recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming a target of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics and shall include the specific steps that the school district shall take to support vulnerable students and to provide all students with the skills, knowledge and strategies needed to prevent or respond to bullying or harassment. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least biennially.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall apply to students and members of a school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessionals. The Principal is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan within the school.

Reporting

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

the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or building equity coordinator who will promptly notify the building principal. Parents/guardians, students, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

Investigation Procedures

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

Any student, or a member of a school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional, who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The school principal or principal's designees shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged aggressor, staff members, students and/or witnesses. Appropriate strategies will be implemented to protect the safety and privacy of the target and witnesses during the investigation. The Principal shall also promptly assess an alleged target's needs for protection and, if appropriate, shall develop and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student. The Principal shall also make a preliminary determination as to the need for referral to law enforcement authorities. The investigation shall be completed within fifteen (15) school days from the date of the report.

If the school principal or principal's designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall promptly notify the parents or guardians of the student who has been the target and/or aggressor, of bullying consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00. Additionally, the school principal or equity coordinator shall take appropriate corrective and disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal shall consult with the school's liaison to the police department 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.

Disciplinary actions for students or staff members 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.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be strictly prohibited. Retaliation in any form will result in disciplinary action including suspension from school or termination of employment.

Target Assistance/Aggressor Assistance

The North Middlesex Regional School District shall provide counseling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students,

families and staff members affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

Ongoing training shall be provided for school employees and for 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.

Publication and Notice

Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.

Annual written notice of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan including the duties of faculty and staff 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.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan shall be posted on the North Middlesex Regional School District Regional School District's website.

PROHIBITION OF HAZING - Policy JICFA

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

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

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

Any student who participates in the hazing of another student or other person may, upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, be removed from school.

Any student determined by the Principal to be the organizer of a hazing activity may be recommended for expulsion from school but will receive no less disciplinary action than that of a participant. In all cases relating to hazing, students will receive procedural due process.

HAZING – Policy JICFA-E

M.G.L. c. 269, § 17. File: CRIME OF HAZING; DEFINITION; PENALTY

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

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conductor method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to be contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

M.G.L. c. 269, § 18. DUTY TO REPORT HAZING

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

M.G.L. c. 269, § 19. HAZING STATUTES TO BE PROVIDED; STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE AND DISCIPLINE POLICY REQUIRED

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public or private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing.

The Board of Regents and, in the case of secondary schools, the Board of Education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such a report.

WHISTLE BLOWER LAW

Employees of the North Middlesex Regional School District are hereby advised of their rights in accordance with M.G.L. c. 149, § 185. The School District as employer shall not take retaliatory action against an employee because the employee does any of the following:

- Disclose or threaten to disclose an activity, policy or practice which the employee reasonably believes is a violation of the law, or which the employee believes poses a risk to public health, safety or the environment.
- Provide information or testify before a public body conducting an investigation into any violation of the law or risk to public health, safety or environment.
- Object to or refuse to participate in an activity which the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to law, or which the employee reasonably believes poses a risk to public health, safety or the environment.

In order to assert rights under this statute the employee must, by written notice, bring the activity, policy or practice in question to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools unless: (A) the employee is reasonably certain that the activity, policy or practice is known to one or more supervisors and the situation is emergency in nature, or (B) the employee reasonably fears physical harm as a result. Employees aggrieved by a violation of this law may institute civil action in the Superior Court in accordance with M.G.L. c. 149, § 185 (d).

DUTY TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT – M.G.L. c.71, § 37L

Section 37L. The school committee of each city, town or regional school district shall inform teachers, administrators, and other professional staff of reporting requirements for child abuse and neglect under section 51A of chapter 119 and the reporting requirements for fines under section 2A of chapter 148.

In addition, any school department personnel shall report in writing to their immediate supervisor an incident involving a student's possession or use of a dangerous weapon on school premises at any time.

Supervisors who receive such a weapon report shall file it with the Superintendent, who shall file copies of said weapon report with the local chief of police, the department of children and families, the office of student services or its equivalent in any school district, and the local school committee. Said superintendent, police chief, and representative from the department of children and families, together with a representative from the office of student services or its equivalent, shall arrange an assessment of the student involved in said weapon report. Said student shall be referred to a counseling program; provided, however, that said counseling shall be in accordance with acceptable standards as set forth by the Board of Education. Upon completion of a counseling session, a follow-up assessment shall be made of said student by those involved in the initial assessment.

School department personnel and school resource officers, as defined in section 37P, shall not disclose to a law enforcement officer or agency, including local, municipal, regional, county, state and federal law enforcement, through an official report or unofficial channels, including, but not limited to, text, phone, email, database and in-person communication, or submit to the department of state police's Commonwealth Fusion Center, the Boston Regional Intelligence Center or any other database or

system designed to track gang affiliation or involvement, any information relating to a student or a student's family member from its databases and other recordkeeping systems including: (i) immigration status; (ii) citizenship; (iii) neighborhood of residence; (iv) religion; (v) national origin; (vi) ethnicity; or (vii) suspected, alleged, or confirmed gang affiliation, unless it is germane to a specific unlawful incident or to a specific prospect of unlawful activity the school is otherwise required to report. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit the sharing of information: (i) for the purposes of completing a report pursuant to section 51A of chapter 119; (ii) upon the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student, parent or guardian; (iii) to comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena; (iv) in connection with a health or safety emergency pursuant to the provisions of 603 C.M.R. 23.07(4)(e); or (v) for the purposes of filing a weapon report with the local chief of police pursuant to this section.

A student transferring into a local system must provide the new school system with a complete school record of the entering student. Said record shall include, but not be limited to, any incidents involving suspension or violation of criminal acts or any incident reports in which such student was charged with any suspended act.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Information about staff members is required for the daily administration of the North Middlesex Regional School District, for implementing salary and other personnel policies, for budget and financial planning, for responding to appropriate inquiries about employees, and for meeting the School Committee's education reporting requirements. To meet these needs, the Superintendent will implement a comprehensive and efficient system of personnel records maintenance and control under the following guidelines:

1. A personnel folder for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the central administrative office. In addition to the application for employment and references, the folders will contain records and information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, discipline and any other pertinent information.
2. The Superintendent will be the official custodian for personnel files and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law.
3. Personnel records are considered confidential under the law, are not public records, and will not be open to or provided for public inspection. Access to personnel files will be limited to persons authorized by the Superintendent to use the files for the reasons cited above.
4. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of his/her own personnel file and to obtain a copy, up to twice during a calendar year.
5. An employee shall be notified within 10 days of placing in the employee's personnel record any information to the extent that the information is, has been used or may be used, to negatively affect the employee's qualification for employment, promotion, transfer, additional compensation or the

possibility that the employee will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Employees may submit a written statement explaining the employee's objections to any information contained in the file. Any written objection must be signed by the employee and will become part of the employee's personnel file.
7. Lists of school system employees' home addresses will be released only to governmental agencies as required for official reports or by the law.

BACKGROUND CHECKS: Policy ADDA

It shall be the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District that, as required by law, a state and national fingerprint criminal background check will be conducted to determine the suitability of full or part time current and prospective school employees, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School employees shall include, but not be limited to any apprentice, intern, or student teacher or individuals in similar positions, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The School Committee shall only obtain a fingerprint background check for current and prospective employees for whom the School Committee has direct hiring authority. In the case of an individual directly hired by a school committee, the chair of the School Committee shall review the results of the national criminal history check. The Superintendent shall also obtain a state and national fingerprint background check for any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children. The School Committee, Superintendent or Principal, as appropriate, may obtain a state and national fingerprint criminal background check for any volunteer, subcontractor or laborer commissioned by the School Committee, a school or employed by the city or town to perform work on school grounds, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. School volunteers and subcontractors/laborers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children must continue to submit to state CORI checks.

The fee charged by the provider to the employee and educator for national fingerprint background checks will be \$55.00 for school employees subject to licensure by DESE and \$35.00 for other employees, this fee may from time to time be adjusted by the appropriate agency. The employer shall continue to obtain periodically, but not less than every 3 years, from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) for any current and prospective employee or volunteer within the school district who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children.

Direct and unmonitored contact with children is defined in DESE regulations as contact with a student when no other employee who has received a suitability determination by the school or district is present. "Contact" refers to any contact with a student that provides the individual with opportunity for physical touch or personal communication.

This policy is applicable to any fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check made for non-criminal justice purposes and requested under applicable federal authority and/or state statute authorizing such checks for licensing or employment purposes. Where such checks are allowable by law, the following practices and procedures will be followed.

I. Requesting CHRI (Criminal History Record Information) Checks

Fingerprint-based CHRI checks will only be conducted as authorized by state and federal law, in accordance with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations. If an applicant or employee is required to submit to a fingerprint-based state and national criminal history record check, he/she shall be informed of this requirement and instructed on how to comply with the law. Such instruction will include information on the procedure for submitting fingerprints. In addition, the applicant or employee will be provided with all information needed to successfully register for a fingerprinting appointment.

II. Access to CHRI

All CHRI is subject to strict state and federal rules and regulations in addition to Massachusetts CORI laws and regulations. CHRI cannot be shared with any unauthorized entity for any purpose, including subsequent hiring determinations. All receiving entities are subject to audit by the Massachusetts Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and the FBI, and failure to comply with such rules and regulations could lead to sanctions. Federal law and regulations (Title 28, U.S.C. §534, Pub. L. 92-544 and Title 28 C) provide that the exchange of records and information is subject to cancellation if dissemination is made outside of the receiving entity or related entities. Furthermore, an entity can be charged criminally for the unauthorized disclosure of CHRI.

III. Storage of CHRI

CHRI shall only be stored for extended periods of time when needed for the integrity and/or utility of an individual's personnel file. Administrative, technical, and physical safeguards, which are in compliance with the most recent CJIS Security Policy, have been implemented to ensure the security and confidentiality of CHRI. Each individual involved in the handling of CHRI is to familiarize himself/herself with these safeguards.

In addition to the above, each individual involved in the handling of CHRI will strictly adhere to the policy on the storage, retention and destruction of CHRI.

IV. Retention and Destruction of CHRI

Federal law prohibits the repurposing or dissemination of CHRI beyond its initial requested purpose. Once an individual's CHRI is received, it will be securely retained in internal agency documents for the following purposes only:

- Historical reference and/or comparison with future CHRI requests; and,
- Dispute of the accuracy of the record; and,
- Evidence for any subsequent proceedings based on information contained in the CHRI.

CHRI will be kept for the above purposes in a secure location in the office of the superintendent.

When no longer needed, CHRI and any summary of CHRI data must be destroyed by shredding paper copies and/or by deleting all electronic copies from the electronic storage location, including any backup copies or files. The shredding of paper copies of CHRI by an outside vendor must be supervised by an employee of the North Middlesex Regional School District.

V. CHRI Training

An informed review of a criminal record requires training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to receive and/or review CHRI at the North Middlesex Regional School District will review and become

familiar with the educational and relevant training materials regarding SAFIS and CHRI laws and regulations made available by the appropriate agencies, including the DCJIS.

VI. Determining Suitability

In determining an individual's suitability, specific factors will be considered, which may include, but not necessarily be limited to: the nature and gravity of the crime and the underlying conduct, the time that has passed since the offense, conviction and/or completion of the sentence, nature of the position held or sought, age of the individual at the time of the offense, number of offenses, any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof, and any other factors deemed relevant by the district.

A record of the suitability determination will be retained. The following information will be included in the determination:

- a. The name and date of birth of the employee or applicant;
- b. The date on which the school employer received the national criminal history check results; and,
- c. The suitability determination (either "suitable" or "unsuitable").

A copy of an individual's suitability determination documentation must be provided to another school employer, or to the individual, upon request of the individual for whom the school employer conducted a suitability determination.

VII. Relying on Previous Suitability Determination

The school employer may obtain and may rely on a favorable suitability determination from a prior employer, if the following criteria are met:

The suitability determination was made within the last seven years; and

The individual has not resided outside of Massachusetts for any period longer than three years since the suitability determination was made; and either

The individual has been employed continuously for one or more school employers or has gaps totaling no more than two years in his or her employment for school employers; or

If the individual works as a substitute employee, the individual is still deemed suitable for employment by the school employer who made a favorable suitability determination. Upon request of another school employer, the initial school employer shall provide documentation that the individual is still deemed suitable for employment by the initial school employer.

VIII. Adverse Decisions Based on CHRI

If inclined to make an adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI, the North Middlesex Regional School District will take the following steps prior to making a final adverse determination:

- Provide the individual with a copy of his/her CHRI used in making the adverse decision;
- Provide the individual with a copy of this CHRI Policy;
- Provide the individual with the opportunity to complete or challenge the accuracy of his/her CHRI; and

- Provide the individual with information on the process for updating, changing, or correcting CHRI.

A final adverse decision based on an individual's CHRI will not be made until the individual has been afforded a reasonable time, depending on the particular circumstances (not to exceed thirty days), to correct or complete the CHRI.

If a school employer receives criminal record information from the state or national fingerprint-based background checks that includes no disposition or is otherwise incomplete, the school employer may request that an individual, after providing him/her a copy of said background check, provide additional information regarding the results of the criminal background checks to assist the school employer in determining the applicant's suitability for direct and unmonitored contact with children, notwithstanding the terms of General Laws chapter 151B, S. 4,(9,9 ½). After exhausting several preliminary steps as contained in the above referenced regulation, the district may require an individual to provide information regarding the individual's history of criminal convictions; however, the individual cannot be asked to provide information about juvenile adjudications or sealed convictions. The superintendent is advised to confer with legal counsel whenever he/she solicits information from an individual concerning his/her history of criminal convictions.

IX. Secondary Dissemination of CHRI

If an individual's CHRI is released to another authorized entity, a record of that dissemination must be made in the secondary dissemination log. The secondary dissemination log is subject to audit by the DCJIS and the FBI.

The following information will be recorded in the log:

- Subject Name;
- Subject Date of Birth;
- Date and Time of the dissemination;
- Name of the individual to whom the information was provided;
- Name of the agency for which the requestor works;
- Contact information for the requestor; and
- The specific reason for the request.

X. Reporting to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Pursuant to state law and regulation (M.G.L. c. 71, §38R and 603 CMR 51.07), if the District dismisses, declines to renew the employment of, obtains the resignation of, or declines to hire a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license because of information discovered through a state or national criminal record check, the District shall report such decision or action to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing within 30 days of the employer action or educator resignation. The report shall be in a form requested by the Department and shall include the reason for the action or resignation, as well as a copy of the criminal record checks results. The superintendent shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to the regulations to the Commissioner.

Pursuant to state law and regulation (M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R and 603 CMR 51.07), if the District discovers information from a state or national criminal record check about a licensed educator or an applicant for a Massachusetts educator license that implicates grounds for license action pursuant to regulations (603 CMR 7.15 (8)(a)), the Superintendent shall report to the Commissioner in writing

within 30 days of the discovery, regardless of whether the District retains or hires the educator as an employee. The report must include a copy of the criminal record check results. The school employer shall notify the employee or applicant that it has made a report pursuant to regulations (M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R and 603 CMR 51.07), to the Commissioner and shall also send a copy of the criminal record check results to the employee or applicant.

C.O.R.I. REQUIREMENTS

It shall be the policy of the District to obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services of prospective employee(s) or volunteer(s) of the school departments including any individual who regularly provides school related transportation to children, who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, prior to hiring the employee(s) or to accepting any person as a volunteer.

State law requires that school districts obtain CORI data for employees of taxicab companies that have contracted with the schools to provide transportation to pupils.

The Superintendent, Principal, or their certified designees shall periodically, but not less than every three years, obtain all available Criminal Offender Record Information from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services and all employees, individuals who regularly provide school related transportation to children, including taxicab company employees, and volunteers who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children, during their term of employment or volunteer service.

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

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

In accordance with state law, all current and prospective employees, volunteers, and persons regularly providing school related transportation to children of the school district shall sign an acknowledgement form authorizing receipt by the district of all available CORI data from the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services. In the event that a current employee has a question concerning the signing of the acknowledgement form, he/she may meet with the Principal or Superintendent; however, failure to sign the CORI acknowledgement form may result in a referral to local counsel for appropriate action. Completed acknowledgement forms must be kept in secure files. The School Committee, Superintendent, Principals or their designees certified to obtain information under the policy, shall prohibit the dissemination of school information for any purpose other than to further the protection of school children.

CORI is not subject to the public records law and must be kept in a secure location, separate from personnel files, and may be retained for not more than three years. CORI shall be shared with the individual to whom it pertains, pursuant to law, regulation and the following model policy, and, in the event of an inaccurate report, the individual should contact the Department of Criminal Justice Informational Services.

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

The hiring authority, subject to applicable law and the model policy, reserves the exclusive right concerning any employment decision.

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

The Superintendent shall amend employment applications to include questions concerning criminal records which the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination has determined may be legally asked of prospective employees. Any employment application, which seeks information concerning prior arrests or convictions of the applicant, shall include the following statement: "An applicant for employment with a sealed record on file with the Commission of Probation may answer 'no record' with respect to an inquiry herein relative to prior arrests or criminal court appearances. In addition, any applicant for employment may answer 'no record' with respect to any inquiry relative to prior arrests, court appearances and adjudications in all cases of delinquency or as a child in need of service which did not result in a complaint transferred to the superior court for criminal prosecution."

Records sealed pursuant to law shall not operate to disqualify a person in any examination, appointment or application for public service on behalf of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof.

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

DCF CENTRAL REGISTRY CHECKS

In addition to CHRI background checks pursuant to G.L. c. 71, § 38R and SORI checks, as set forth above, all current and prospective employees of the North Middlesex Regional School District will be required to consent to a check of the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") Central Registry regarding supported reports of child abuse or neglect. To facilitate this process, all employees, current and prospective, must consent to this check by completing the "Applicant/Employee Consent" portion of the DCF "Department Central Registry Record Request" form authorizing the District to request supported reports from the Central Registry. The Central Registry background checks are a critical part of maintaining a safe educational environment by ensuring that everyone who works with children has

been thoroughly examined for their suitability for such work. The District will require that the Central Registry Record Request be authorized every three years.

Preventing abuse and neglect of minors, including but not limited to sexual abuse, is a core mission that requires clear policies to protect children. The District will review all substantiated reports. The District considers a supported report of abuse or neglect to be presumptive grounds for rejecting an employment application or for termination, subject to the District's exercise of discretion as set forth below and subject to any requirements imposed by law. The District in its discretion may choose to delay employment action due to the appeals process. The District reserves the exclusive right to make adverse employment decisions as a result of a supported report in the Central Registry.

Factors influencing whether an adverse employment decision will be made based on a supported report may include, but are not limited to:

the type and seriousness of the conduct;

whether the conduct in the supported report also resulted in criminal charges;

the date of the conduct;

whether the individual is the subject of multiple supported reports

The District will consider unique factors such as the school environment, the student population, health and safety needs, and other relevant District policies and procedures when making decisions based on supported reports obtained from the Central Registry.

If the District is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the Central Registry Record Request, the individual will be notified. The individual shall be provided with a copy of the information obtained and a copy of this policy; shall be advised of the portion of the information obtained that makes the individual unsuitable for the position or license; and shall provide the individual an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and/or relevance of the information obtained. The District shall otherwise maintain the confidentiality of information obtained from the Central Registry pursuant to this Policy.

SAFETY & SECURITY

STAFF PERSONAL SECURITY AND SAFETY

Through its overall safety program and various policies pertaining to school personnel, the North Middlesex Regional School Committee will seek to assure the safety of employees during their working hours and assist them in the maintenance of good health.

The Superintendent may require an employee to submit to a physical examination by a physician appointed by the North Middlesex Regional School District whenever that employee's health appears to be a hazard to children or others in the school district or when a doctor's certificate is needed to verify need for sick leave.

ASBESTOS HAZARD EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT of 1986: AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act

This notification is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986, (AHERA, 40 CFR Part 763 of Title II of the Toxic Substances Control Act):

It is the intention of the North Middlesex Regional School District to comply with all federal and state regulations controlling asbestos and to take the necessary steps to ensure students and employees a safe and healthy environment in which to work and learn.

You are welcome to review the Asbestos Management Plan located in each school's administrative office during school hours. Contact David Amari, Director of Building and Grounds at (978) 597-8713.

TOBACCO USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY BY STAFF MEMBERS

Smoking or the use of tobacco, including vapor/E-cigarettes (nicotine or non nicotine) within school buildings, school facilities or on school property or buses by any individual, including school employees, is prohibited. Employees who violate this policy will be referred to their immediate supervisor for possible discipline up to and including termination.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

The District maintains a drug-free workplace and prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, in its workplace and such conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

LABOR AND RELATIONS

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

North Middlesex Regional School District offers leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") to eligible employees.

Eligible employees are entitled to 12 weeks (in some cases 26 weeks) of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- The placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition;
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job; or
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty."

For the above listed reasons, an eligible employee is entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave during any rolling 12-month period, measured backward from the date of the employee's last day of FMLA leave.

Leave provided under FMLA will run concurrently with any and all available leave under the MPLA/Parental Leave Act, or other applicable laws or statutory or contractual benefits, to the full extent permitted by law.

Leave taken for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a son or daughter, and in order to care for that child, must be completed within 12 months of the child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12 week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in out-patient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Where FMLA leave is granted to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty on active duty, an eligible employee will be entitled to a total of 26 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave during any rolling 12-month period, measured backward from the date of the employee's last day of FMLA leave. FMLA leave for this purpose will only be provided during a single 12-month period.

Note: During the 12-month period in which an employee takes leave to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of active duty, an eligible employee shall be entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of leave for all purposes.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, NMRSD will maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Where NMRSD employs spouses, and each spouse meets the eligibility requirements for FMLA leave, the total length of leave to which both spouses will be entitled during any rolling 12 month period shall be a combined 12 weeks for the following purposes:

- birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a son or daughter, and in order to care for that child; or
- to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition.

Eligibility

Employees are eligible if they have worked for NMRSD for at least one year for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. An instructional employee is presumed to be eligible for FMLA leave unless NMRSD records reflect that the employee has not worked the requisite amount of hours over the last 12 months.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Use of Leave

FMLA leave may be taken either on a reduced working schedule basis, or on an intermittent basis, for the following purposes:

- to care for a son, daughter or parent with a serious health condition;
- because of the employee's serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job;
- because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter or parent of the employee is on active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation; or
- because the employee is the spouse, son, daughter parent or next of kin caring for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty on active duty.

When an employee seeks FMLA leave due to his/her own serious health condition, the serious health condition of a son, daughter or parent or to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury, the Medical Certification provided by the employee must establish a medical necessity that such leave be provided on a reduced working schedule or intermittent basis.

Unless otherwise approved by NMRSD, FMLA leave taken for the birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child, and to care for that child, may not be taken on an intermittent or reduced work schedule basis, and must be taken at one time.

When an employee receives approval to take leave on a reduced work schedule or an intermittent basis that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee, a family member, or a covered service member, including during a period of recovery from one's own serious health condition, a serious health condition of a spouse, parent, son, or daughter, or a serious injury or illness of a covered service member, or if NMRSD agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the birth of a child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, NMRSD may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period that the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified if the alternative position would better accommodate the recurring periods of medical leave, and subject to applicable legal requirements

Subject to their medical limitations, employees taking leave on reduced schedule or intermittent basis must consult with Human Resources in an effort to schedule such leave in a manner that will minimize disruption to the operations of NMRSD.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days' advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with NMRSD's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform NMRSD if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave and fitness to return to duty.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

- An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer. FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Employees who are not eligible under the FMLA nonetheless may be eligible under Massachusetts law for Parental leave. Under this leave, the following conditions must be met in order to be eligible for leave under this policy:

- The employee has either completed their probationary period or, in the event that the probationary period does not apply, has been employed consecutively for three months.
- The employee must provide two weeks' written notice of the anticipated date of departure and state in writing the intention to return to their position or provide notice as soon as practicable based on the situation
- The employee must state the anticipated date of return to work.

Employees are eligible for up to eight (8) weeks of unpaid leave for the purpose of giving birth to or for adopting a child under the age of eighteen, or for adopting a child under the age of twenty-three if the child is mentally or physically disabled.

Contractual parental leave in a collective bargaining agreement or employment contract will run concurrently with any and all available leave under the MPLA/Parental Leave Act, or other applicable laws or statutory or contractual benefits, to the full extent permitted by law.

Any two employees of NMRSD shall only be entitled to 8 weeks of Parental leave in aggregate for the birth, placement, or adoption of the same child.

While on approved personal medical leave, employees continue to be eligible for group health insurance coverage on the same basis as when they were working, including premium contributions from NMRSD.

An employee returning to work at the completion of the eight week leave will be restored to their previous position or a similar position.

Employee Leave for Family Obligations (Small Necessities Leave)

Eligible employees are able to take up to 24 hours leave for family obligations under the Small Necessities Leave Act ("SNLA"). This law applies to employees who have been employed for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period prior to the request for leave.

Eligible employees may use SNLA leave for the purpose of: (1) participating in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of the employee's son or daughter, such as parent-teacher conference or interview for a new school; (2) to accompany a son or daughter to a routine medical or dental appointment such as a routine check-up or vaccination; or (3) to accompany an elderly (60 year or more) relative to a routine medical or dental appointment or for other professional services such as interviewing at a nursing home.

Leave may be taken in increments of at least one hour for up to 24 hours in a fiscal year. This leave augments leave taken under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, as it is for a different purpose.

Leave provided under SNLA will run concurrently with any and all applicable leaves, or other applicable laws or statutory or contractual benefits, to the full extent permitted by law. This leave does

not diminish any greater leave that may be provided for in a collective bargaining agreement or other school policy. Seven days' notice in writing is required, whenever foreseeable, to the extent possible. If the need is not foreseeable, the employee must notify his/her immediate supervisor as soon as practicable.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE

It shall be the policy of the North Middlesex Regional School District to permit an employee to take up to 15 days of domestic violence leave from work in any 12-month period. In order to be eligible for said leave:

- (i) the employee, or a family member of the employee must be a victim of abusive behavior;
- (ii) the employee must be using the leave from work to seek or obtain medical attention, counseling, victim services or legal assistance; secure housing; obtain a protective order from court; appear before a grand jury; meet with a district attorney or other law enforcement official; or attend child custody proceedings or address other issues directly related to the abusive behavior against the employee or family member of the employee; and
- (iii) the employee must not be the perpetrator of the abusive behavior against such employee's family member.

The employer shall have the sole discretion to determine whether this leave shall be paid or unpaid. An employee seeking such leave shall exhaust all annual or vacation leave, personal leave and sick leave available to the employee, prior to requesting or taking domestic violence leave, unless the employer waives this requirement.

Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of an employee, advanced notice of domestic violence leave shall be required. If such imminent danger exists, the employee shall notify the employer within 3 workdays that the leave was taken. The notification may be communicated to the employer by the employee, a family member of the employee or the employee's counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior. If an unscheduled absence occurs, an employer shall not take any negative action against the employee if the employee, within 30 days from the unauthorized absence or within 30 days from the employee's last unauthorized absence in the instance of consecutive days of unauthorized absences, provides any of the documentation found in (1) to (7) below. An employer may require documentation that the employee or employee's family member has been a victim of abusive behavior and that the leave is consistent with clauses (i) to (iii) as above referenced; provided, however, that an employer shall not require an employee to show evidence of an arrest, conviction or other law enforcement documentation for such abusive behavior. The documentation shall be provided to the employer within a reasonable period after the employer requests it. An employee shall satisfy this documentation requirement by providing any one of the following documents to the employer:

- (1) A protective order, order of equitable relief or other documentation issued by a court of competent jurisdiction as a result of abusive behavior against the employee or employee's family member;

- (2) A document under the letterhead of the court, provider or public agency which the employee attended for the purposes of acquiring assistance as it relates to the employee or family member;
- (3) A police report or statement of a victim or witness provided to police documenting the abusive behavior;
- (4) Documentation that the perpetrator of the abusive behavior has admitted to sufficient facts to support a finding of guilt; or has been convicted of, or has been adjudicated a juvenile delinquent by reason of any offense constituting abusive behavior;
- (5) Medical documentation of treatment as a result of the abusive behavior;
- (6) A sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, provided by a counselor, social worker, health care worker, member of the clergy, shelter worker, legal advocate or other professional who has assisted the employee in addressing the effects of the abusive behavior;
- (7) A sworn statement, signed under the penalties of perjury, from the employee attesting that the employee has been a victim of or is a family member of a victim of abusive behavior.

All information related to the employee's leave shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed, except to the extent that disclosure is:

- (i) Requested or consented to, in writing, by the employee;
- (ii) Ordered to be released by a court of competent jurisdiction;
- (iii) Otherwise required by applicable federal or state law;
- (iv) Required in the course of an investigation authorized by law enforcement, including, but not limited to, an investigation by the Attorney General; or
- (v) Necessary to protect the safety of the employee or others employed at the workplace.

GENERAL EMPLOYMENT ISSUES AND WORKPLACE INFORMATION

STAFF CONDUCT

All North Middlesex Regional School District staff members have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with and abide by the federal and Massachusetts laws that apply to their work; the policies of the School Committee; and the regulations and rules intended to implement them.

In the area of personal conduct, the North Middlesex Regional School Committee expects that teachers and others will conduct themselves in a manner that not only reflects credit to the school system but also sets forth a model worthy of emulation by students.

All employees will be expected to carry out their assigned responsibilities with conscientious concern.

Essential to the success of ongoing school operations and the instructional program are the following specific responsibilities, which will be required of all personnel:

1. Faithfulness and promptness in attendance at work.
2. Support and enforcement of policies of the Committee and their implementing regulations and school rules in regard to students.
3. Diligence in submitting required reports promptly at the times specified.
4. Care and protection of school property.
5. Concern for and attention to their own and the school system's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under supervision at all times.

Consistent with School Committee policies relative to employee conduct, the following are examples of conduct or omissions that are not acceptable. The following list is not intended to be, nor is it, a complete list of all conduct or omissions which may warrant disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- a. Use or possession of narcotics, alcohol or controlled substances, while at work or at work-related events where students are present;
- b. Reporting for work or work-related events where students are present with narcotics, alcohol or controlled substances in the employee's possession or when the employee is under the influence of narcotics, alcohol or controlled substances;
- c. Inappropriate dress or presentation;
- d. Smoking in prohibited areas;
- e. Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives, firearms, or weapons, in the workplace;
- f. Theft, misuse, destruction or unauthorized use of another's property or the property of the District;
- g. Insubordination, disrespectful conduct, or failing to consistently carry out the directions of their supervisor;
- h. Falsification of any work-related or student-related record or document;
- i. Lying to a supervisory or administrative employee;
- j. Use of threats/intimidation, assault, abusive language, unreasonable punishment (including corporal punishment), and harassing (including sexual harassment) conduct

or speech to any student, employee, or any other person with whom the employee has a work-related contact;

- k. Endangering the health, safety, or welfare of a student or other person through neglect or misconduct;
- l. Sleeping on duty;
- m. Inappropriate use of telephones, computers, vehicles or other employer-owned equipment.
- n. Administering medications to students unless otherwise lawfully authorized to do so;
- o. Soliciting parents and/or students without specific approval or soliciting employees during work hours or at school-related events;
- p. Failing to fulfill their own and the District's legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of students, including the need to ensure that students are under proper supervision at all times;
- q. Failure to maintain professional confidences and respect the confidentiality of students and families (including student data and records) and failure to interact with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators in a professional, respectful, and ethical manner;
- r. Failure to stay informed about, or to comply with, Massachusetts, federal, and District requirements, policies and regulations;
- s. Failure to perform satisfactorily the duties of the position assigned to the employee;
- t. Criminal, unethical or unsuitable conduct which interferes with the employee's job performance or impairs the reputation of the District or its employees;
- u. Failure to notify the supervisor prior to the employee's workday of the employee's tardiness or absence;
- v. Frequent absences or tardiness.
- w. Inappropriate crossing of proper boundaries with students and families including, but not limited to, communication about personal matters with students; following, "liking", or posting comments on students' social media pages/posts; allowing students to access the employee's own social media page; providing transportation to students without express District authorization; providing gifts to students; spending personal time with students for non-educational purposes; and any conduct that could cause a reasonable and objective person to conclude that the employee and student are engaged in a personal or romantic relationship.
- x. Any other actions or failure to act which in the judgment of the District may compromise the delivery of services to students or the professional reputation of the District.

Any employee who engages or participates in the aforementioned conduct or similar conduct or who violates Massachusetts and federal laws and regulations shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

GIFTS AND SOLICITATIONS

The North Middlesex Regional School District encourages the expression of appreciation to staff without the obligation of formal gift giving.

Gifts

The acceptance of gifts worth \$50 or more by school personnel in a calendar year when the gift is given because of the position they hold, or because of some action the recipient could take or has taken in his/her public role, violates the conflict of interest law. Acceptance of gifts worth less than \$50, while not prohibited by the conflict of interest law, may require a written public disclosure to be made.

In keeping with this policy, no employee of the school district will accept a gift worth \$50.00 or more that is given because of the employee's public position, or anything that the employee could do or has done in his or her public position. Gifts worth less than \$50.00 may be accepted, but a written disclosure to the employee's appointing authority must be made if the gift and the circumstances in which it was given could cause a reasonable person to think that the employee could be improperly influenced. The value of personal gifts accepted is aggregated over a calendar year (4 gifts of \$20.00 value is the same as 1 gift of \$80.00 if given in the same calendar year.)

Class Gifts

There is a specific exception to the prohibition against accepting gifts worth \$50 or more, when the teacher knows only that the gift is from the class and not from specific donors. A single class gift per calendar year valued up to \$150 or several class gifts in a single year with a total value up to \$150 from parents and students in a class may be accepted provided that the gift is identified only as being from the class and the names of the givers and the amounts given are not identified to the recipient. The recipient may not knowingly accept an additional gift from any of the individuals who participated in the class gift.

Gifts for School Use

Gifts given to a teacher solely for classroom use or to purchase classroom supplies are not considered gifts to an individual employee and are not subject to the \$50 limit. However, an employee who accepts such gifts must keep receipts documenting that money or gift cards were used for classroom supplies.

Solicitations

In spirit, the North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee supports the many

worthwhile charitable drives that take place in the community and is gratified when school employees give them their support. However, the solicitation of funds from staff members through the use of school personnel and school time is prohibited by the conflict of interest law. Therefore, no solicitation of funds for charitable purposes should be made among employees. Employees, of course, remain free to support charitable causes of their choosing.

The North Middlesex Regional School District supports the philanthropic activities of our student groups. For school groups, any district-wide solicitation of funds by and from students will be made only as approved by the School Committee.

The solicitation of funds for charitable purposes by and from students at a specific school within the school district will be made only as approved by that school's head building administrator.

For the solicitation of funds by non-school groups, see Policy KHA (Public Solicitations in the Schools).

Any organization desiring to distribute flyers or other materials to students in connection with fund drives may do so only with the approval of the Superintendent.

STAFF ETHICS/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The North Middlesex Regional School District expects members of its professional staff to be familiar with the code of ethics that applies to their profession and to adhere to it in their relationships with students, parents, coworkers, and officials of the school system.

Commitment to The Student

In fulfilling the obligation to the student, the educator:

1. Shall not without just cause restrain the student from independent action in pursuit of learning, and shall not without just cause deny the student access to varying points of view.
2. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which he/she bears responsibility.
3. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
4. Shall conduct professional business in such a way that he/she does not expose the student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
5. Shall not exclude any student from participation in or deny him/her the benefits under any program, nor grant any discriminatory consideration or advantage according to the district's non-discrimination policy (AC).
6. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
7. Shall keep in confidence information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure is required by law.
8. Shall not tutor for remuneration students assigned to his/her classes.

Commitment to The Public

In fulfilling his/her obligation to the public, the educator:

1. Shall not misrepresent an institution or organization with which he/she is affiliated, and shall take adequate precautions to distinguish between personal and institutional or organizational views.
2. Shall not knowingly distort or misrepresent the facts concerning educational matters in direct and indirect public expressions.
3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities.
4. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates or partisan political activities.
5. Shall accept no gratuities, gifts, or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment, nor offer any favor, service, or thing of value to obtain special advantage.

Commitment to the Profession

In fulfilling his/her obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall not exclude any student from participation in or deny him/her the benefits under any program, nor grant any discriminatory consideration or advantage according to the district's non-discrimination policy (AC).
2. Shall accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities.
3. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues.
4. Shall withhold and safeguard information acquired about colleagues in the course of employment, unless disclosure serves professional purposes.
5. Shall not refuse to participate in a professional inquiry when requested by the school district or an authorized Massachusetts or federal agency.
6. Shall not misrepresent his/her professional qualifications.
7. Shall not knowingly distort evaluations of other employees.

Commitment to Professional Employment Practices

In fulfilling his/her obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

1. Shall apply for, accept, offer or assign a position or responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.
2. Shall apply for a specific position only when it is known to be vacant and shall refrain from underbidding or commenting adversely about other candidates.
3. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from an applicant or misrepresent

an assignment or conditions of employment.

4. Shall adhere to the terms of a contract or appointment, unless these terms have been legally terminated, falsely represented, or substantially altered by unilateral action of the employing agency.
5. Shall not delegate assigned tasks to employees who are not qualified to perform them.
6. Shall permit no commercial exploitation of his/her school district position or employment.

In order to avoid the appearance of any possible conflict, it is the policy of the School Committee that when a member of the “immediate family” of a School Committee member or a district administrator, as defined in the Conflict of Interest Law, is to be hired into or promoted within the School District, the Superintendent shall file public notice with the School Committee and with the Town or District Clerk at least two weeks prior to the date of hire in accordance with the law.

Please reference the MA State Ethics Commission website for additional information about this and other *Conflict of Interest Law* restrictions referred to in this Handbook:

[Massachusetts State Ethics Commission](http://www.ethics.state.ma.us/)

EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE AGREEMENT- Policy IJNDB-R

Access to the North Middlesex Regional School District (NMRSD) system/network, including the Internet, is a privilege granted to staff, students, and district guests to facilitate communications and access information in support of the district’s educational goals. The system/network will also be used for communication with staff, parents, students, and community members.

All users shall acknowledge that using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, in conjunction with the district network, including access to the internet is a privilege and must be in accordance with the school district guidelines.

District User Accounts

The NMRSD utilizes several applications that are accessed through the Internet and require individual user accounts for access. Examples include a student information system, learning management systems, collaborative tools, authenticated resources, and email. District user accounts for access to these systems are only issued to students and staff after official completion of all registration or hiring procedures and paperwork including a signed Empowered Digital Use Agreement.

Authorized Use

1. Access to the NMRSD system/network will only be granted to staff and students with a signed Empowered Digital Use Policy Agreement.
2. Temporary Internet-Only access to the internet may be granted to district guests following digital acceptance of the Empowered Digital Use Policy Agreement.
3. All use of the NMRSD system/network must be in support of the district’s educational goals and will be in compliance with all applicable laws and district policies.

4. All files stored, viewed, or distributed on the NMRSD system/network are expected to be in support of the district's educational goals and will be in compliance with all applicable laws and district policies.
5. No identifiable student data may be posted without principal and parent/guardian approval. Identifiable student data includes but is not limited to voice, picture, video, and any type of biographical data.
6. Copyrighted software or data shall not be placed on the NMRSD system/network without a district-owned license or legal permission from the holder of the copyright.
7. All hardware and software to be added to the NMRSD network must be approved by the Director of Technology.
8. No user of the NMRSD system/network may deliberately access materials that are in violation of any applicable laws, district policies, or school rules and/or persuade or show others how to access such materials.
9. Commercial use of the NMRSD system/network is prohibited.
10. All district and school-related web pages are subject to the district Internet Publication Policy, IJNDC.
11. All district and school-related email is subject to the district E-Mail Policy, IJNDA.

Integrated Use

1. Students will be taught about internet safety prior to integrating Internet resources and/or tools in the classroom. The Internet safety curriculum will include issues related to social networking, cyber-bullying, Internet predators, acceptable content, information privacy, copyright, and internet etiquette.
2. Students using interactive web tools and digital communications are expected to act safely by keeping ALL personal information out of public posts and communications. A student should NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including address or phone numbers, photographs, school or school team names, or class schedule). Students should not, under any circumstances, agree to meet anyone they met over the Internet.
3. Student digital communications and publications are not guaranteed to be private and may be read by the teacher before the student distributes or sends to others.
4. Staff and students should never link to websites without reviewing the entire site to make sure it is acceptable for a school setting. If a student is unsure, they should ask a teacher, administrator, or parent/guardian first.
5. Use of digital communication and social networking tools must be approved by the principal/supervisor before the link is made public. The principal/supervisor should be notified in writing of all significant changes made to digital communication and social networking tools, and the principal/supervisor reserves the right to request changes and/or removal of published content at any time.

Responsible Use

1. Passwords are confidential! All passwords shall be protected by the user and will not be shared or displayed.

2. Individual users shall, at all times, be responsible for the proper use of accounts issued in their name.
3. Revealing anybody's personal information is prohibited unless specifically authorized by an administrator in compliance with law or district policy.
4. Assuming another's identity while using the NMRSD system/network is prohibited.
5. Any activities designed to harass, bully, or defame others are prohibited.
6. Any malicious attempts to harm, destroy, or vandalize equipment, materials, or data are prohibited.
7. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance are prohibited.
8. Deliberate attempts to bypass or turn off NMRSD security features are prohibited.
9. All users should only access files and/or folders using the network accounts and network folders assigned to them by the district.
10. All files must be saved to the user-assigned network folders if future access is desired.
11. All information accessed through the NMRSD network/system is subject to the United States Copyright Law (Title 17, USC). Downloading, copying, duplicating and distributing software, music, audio files, videos, images or other copyrighted material without the specific written permission of the copyright owner is prohibited. Duplication and distribution of materials are only permitted when such duplication and distribution are within the Fair Use Doctrine of the United States Copyright Law (Title 17, USC) and content is cited appropriately.

District Property

All aspects of the District's Technology Network, which includes computer, technology and communications systems, hardware, software and all message contents, internet access, electronic mail capability, voice mail, and all uses of any stationary/cell telephonic equipment owned by the District are the property of the District. The Network is not a resource intended for use as a public forum or for any purpose that is not directly related to the delivery of educational services.

Expectation of Privacy

Internet traffic may be monitored by the District at any time to ensure compliance. In addition, all incoming and outgoing Emails are archived through our Email Host. Staff should not have any expectation of privacy regarding digital technology resources. An employee's access code or password does not give any right to privacy with respect to using the District's email, internet, and voicemail systems.

The District assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges or fees; any financial obligations arising out of unauthorized use of the Network for purchase of products or services; any costs, liability or damages caused by a user's violation of these policies; and any information or materials transferred through the Network.

Personal Technology

1. The North Middlesex Regional School District will not require any staff or students to supply personal technology in order to achieve any NMRSD-related educational goals, conduct NMRSD business, or participate in any NMRSD activities. All allowed use of personal technology is at the

owner's discretion, and the North Middlesex Regional School District shall not be liable for any loss, damage, or costs related to the use of personal technology.

2. Any personal technology used on a NMRSD campus or in use for NMRSD business is subject to all guidelines in this document and is only to be used in support of educational goals.

3. Staff and/or student provided internet access points are prohibited from use on all NMRSD campuses in order to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and policies.

4. Internet access to personal technology will only be provided in schools with sufficient resources to support those devices without interrupting access to district-provided devices. Internet access to personal electronic devices must be approved by both the Director of Technology and the building principal and/or their designee.

5. Access to NMRSD system/network specific resources from a personal electronic device is prohibited. This includes access to network folders and files, printers, network software, etc.

6. The owner of any personal electronic device is responsible for all expenses and maintenance related to use of that device. Owner responsibilities include, but are not limited to, repairs and upgrades, software, drivers, cables, and other related supplies such as toner, paper, and bulbs.

7. No technology donations will be accepted by the North Middlesex Regional School District unless specifically approved by the Director of Technology.

Digital Files and Communications

Electronic communications and all data including documents, messages, and information transmitted using the NMRSD system/network in any manner are the property of the North Middlesex Regional School District and are subject to all applicable laws. Copies of all information created, sent, or retrieved may be stored on the district's backup systems. The district reserves the right to access and monitor all messages and files on the computer system as it deems necessary and appropriate in the ordinary course of its business. When legally required, communications and data may be disclosed to law enforcement officials or other third parties without prior consent of the sender or receiver.

The user's electronic access to any remaining digital files, communications, and resources will be disabled on or shortly after the last official day of employment or student withdrawal. Requests to extend access must be submitted to the Director of Technology in writing prior to the student or employee's last official day in the district and must include a specific date for the extension to end. Approval for such requests should not be considered granted unless approval has been given by the Director of Technology.

Prohibited Uses

The District, in its sole discretion, can determine what a prohibited use of the Network is; if a user of the Network has any questions about the propriety of a particular use, then the user is cautioned to seek advice and consent from the technology department before the use occurs. Examples of prohibited uses include, but are not limited to:

- engaging in unlawful or inappropriate behavior;
- using the Network for financial gain or for any commercial, political, gambling or any illegal activity;

- transmitting/receiving material that contains offensive or harassing remarks based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, military service, gender identity or expression, pregnancy and pregnancy related medical conditions, or any other classification protected by law;
- transmitting/receiving sexually explicit material, including messages, pictures, jokes and cartoons;
- accessing or visiting websites that contain sexually explicit, racist or other offensive material, or post messages at such websites;
- pirating software or downloading or transmitting/receiving software programs or any other copyrighted or trademarked materials; and
- identifying or sharing the location of inappropriate materials
- leaving one's computer logged in but unsecured, or leaving password information available for others to assume your id.
- using the Network in any way which results in a potential claim concerning a copyright and/or trademark.
- Participating in any communications that facilitate the illegal sale or use of drugs or alcohol; that facilitate criminal activity; that threaten, intimidate, or harass any other person; or that violate any other local, state, or federal laws.
- Attempting to access another person's files, or any network applications that the user does not have permission to be on.
- The use of proxy websites that allows a user to browse the Internet anonymously and intentionally bypasses our firewall and content filters.
- Any form of vandalism, including damage to computers or hardware, and disseminating malicious software programs such as viruses that disrupt the operation of the network.
- Disruption of network/computer performance by changing configurations or attaching devices, physically or wirelessly to the network.

The use of the Network is a privilege, not a right, which may be revoked at any time. Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. It should be further understood that transfer of certain kinds of materials is illegal, and punishable by fine and/or jail sentence.

Content Filtering

As required by law, the NMRSD has implemented an Internet filtering mechanism designed to protect minors from unlawful, obscene, or harmful material and situations. The filtering mechanism is in

compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act, and the district Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

The NMRSD shall not be liable for users' unapproved use of electronic resources, violations of copyright restrictions, users' mistakes or negligence, or costs incurred by users. The NMRSD shall not be responsible for ensuring the accuracy or usability of any information found on networks, nor be liable for any loss, or corruption of data resulting while using the system/network.

While safeguards are in place to protect our staff and students from offensive material, no filter is 100% effective. The District disclaims all liability for the content of material that a staff member or student may access on the Internet, for any damages suffered in the course of or as a result of the Internet use, and any other consequences of a staff member's or student's network use. Under certain conditions, Massachusetts General Law (MGL) holds that email is public record and must be available for public inspection. The District makes no guarantee, implied or otherwise, regarding the reliability of the data connection. The District shall not be liable for any loss or corruption of data resulting while using the network.

Student Digital Publications

Publishing student work promotes learning and collaboration and provides an opportunity to share the achievement of students. With parent/guardian permission, products of grade PK -12 students may be posted on NMRSD websites, provided no identifying captions, locations, or last names are included.

Publishing student photos on the NMRSD websites allows the district to show its pride in its students and their accomplishments. With parent/guardian permission, photos of students may be posted on the NMRSD websites provided no identifying captions, locations, or last names are included.

Written parent/guardian permission must be verified PRIOR to use of any student work, photos, and/or other media in any NMRSD publications.

Enforcement

1. The superintendent or their designee shall be authorized to monitor or examine all data and system/network activities, including documents and electronic mail transmissions, as deemed appropriate, to ensure proper use of electronic resources.
2. Principals/Supervisors or their designees will be notified of any violations of the NMRSD Empowered Digital Use Policy Agreement.
3. Principals/Supervisors or their designees will be responsible for disseminating and enforcing policies and procedures in their respective building(s) and/or departments.

Disclaimer

Access to information all over the world via technology brings with it an availability of material that may not be considered educationally valuable. Though the North Middlesex Regional School District will take all reasonable precautions, it is impossible to control access to all materials and a user may unintentionally discover objectionable information. NMRSD policy affirms that the educational value of access to information and interaction on the Internet far outweigh the possibility that users may be exposed to materials not consistent with the educational goals of the district. NMRSD makes no warranties of any kind for the service it provides. The North Middlesex Regional School District, associated towns, or any municipal employees will not be liable for damages or injuries resulting from violations of the Empowered Digital Use Policy Agreement or any misuse of the system/network.

Nothing contained herein shall be held or construed to supersede or conflict with or limit the jurisdiction of the United States Government or any of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In the event that any provisions of these rules and regulations are legally found to be invalid, such decision, invalidity or voidance shall not affect the validity of the remaining provisions.

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY FOR STAFF - Policy GBEE

General Concerns

NMRSD recognizes the proliferation and, in some instances, usefulness, of online conversation between staff members and students and/or their parents or guardians. However, due to the nature of social networking sites, there exists a risk, without care and planning, that the lines between one's professional life and personal life will be blurred. Our staff should always be mindful of how they present themselves to the world, online and otherwise. Should an educator "friend" a student on Facebook, subscribe to a student's "Twitter" account, regularly engage in email "chat" with a student, exchange text messages with students or engage in other electronic communication, the District is concerned, and the educator should be concerned, that such activities may undermine the educator's authority to maintain discipline, encourage inappropriate behaviors and compromise the educator's ability to remain truly objective with his or her students.

In addition, any online communication using one's own personal resources, as opposed to District resources, compromises the teacher's as well as the District's ability to retain public records in accordance with the requirements of the Commonwealth's public records laws. The law requires public employees who send, receive or maintain records in their capacity as public employees to retain, disclose and dispose of such records in compliance with strict provisions of the public records law. This law applies whether or not the record is in the form of a paper document or an electronic communication. When staff members communicate through District-based resources such as staff email, such records are retained and archived through the information technology department. If, however, a staff member communicates outside of these resources, such information is not retained. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with public records laws when using personal email or social network accounts to communicate with students and/or parents and guardians.

Expectations of Staff

With these concerns in mind, NMRSD has instituted this "Social Networking Policy," and announces its expectations for staff members' use of social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter,

Instagram, SnapChat, personal email accounts, text message features of cell phones, use of blogs, and other electronic or technologically based communication systems.

1. Before endeavoring to establish any social networking account, staff members should familiarize themselves with the features of any account they choose to use. For example, Facebook requires account holders to take specific steps to “privatize” the information they place online. You must educate yourself to these features of Facebook or any other social networking site you select. You will be responsible should any information you intended to be “private” becomes “public” due to your own ignorance of the features of the social network you have decided to use or your failure to properly use such features.
2. You must also know that any information you share privately with a recipient could be re-distributed by such recipient, without your knowledge or consent. The same principles you apply to in person communication should be applied to online conversation: use discretion, and do not place your trust in individuals who have not proven themselves trustworthy. In essence, nothing you post online is ever truly “private.”
3. NMRSD expects you to keep the line between your professional life and your personal life clearly drawn at all times. There is no reason why this cannot be done, even in light of the proliferation of social networking sites. All that is required is some forethought before using social networking for both your professional and personal life, to be sure that these lines never become blurred.
4. At all times, and in the use of any form of communications, staff members will always adhere to student privacy rights and the rights of employees to have their personnel and medical information kept confidential. Information that is protected by law from disclosure to third parties will not be communicated online in a way that unreasonably exposes such information to retrieval by those third parties.
5. Staff members are required to communicate with students and parents on educational matters only through District-based resources, such as NMRSD-provided email or web portal accounts.
6. This policy is not intended to infringe upon a staff member’s right to speak publicly on matters of public concern, or to communicate with fellow members of their union on workplace issues, so long as such communication adheres to appropriate time, place and manner restrictions and does not interfere with the performance of your job duties. However, when you speak via social networking sites or tools on matters concerning your work, you are speaking as an employee and not as a citizen and restrictions may be placed upon your freedom to express yourself. Those restrictions are intended to preserve student confidentiality, maintain your status as an educator who should command and receive the respect of students, be able to maintain order and discipline in your classroom, and remain objective with respect to your students.
7. At the same time, the District recognizes that, in limited cases, use of cell phone text messages or cell phone calls or emails outside of regular District hours may be reasonably necessary. For example, in connection with District-sponsored events for which a staff member serves as duly appointed advisors, they may need to convey messages in a timely manner to students and may not have access to District-based email accounts, or District -based web pages. In such limited circumstances, the District anticipates that it will make reasonable use of their cell phones or smart phones to convey time sensitive information on scheduling issues and the like.

8. Staff members are discouraged from accessing their private Facebook or other social media accounts during work hours.
9. In the use of your Facebook account or other social networking site, you may not, without express permission from the Superintendent, use the District's logo, likeness or any NMRSD photographs or other property that belongs to NMRSD.
10. References to "Facebook" are not included to limit application of their policy to use of that program. All online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communications.

TUTORING FOR PAY

Definition: "Tutoring" means giving private instruction or help to an individual or group for which the teacher receives remuneration other than through the School Committee.

A teacher cannot recommend that one of his or her own students get tutoring, and then be paid to tutor that same student in a second job.

A teacher may not tutor students who are currently in his/her class. Even if the teacher does not recommend that the current student receive private tutoring, the teacher should not tutor current students.

Teachers and other public employees may not approach a student, or the student's parents/guardians, seeking private tutoring work. A teacher may provide tutoring when the relationship is initiated by the parents or a student, but, if the student in the future may be, under the teacher's authority, the teacher will need to provide a written disclosure.

A teacher cannot use school resources such as classrooms or materials in connection with a private tutoring business. A public school employee cannot use a school or district website to advertise private tutoring services. Schools cannot send home brochures for a particular tutoring service with the children.

Tutoring is not to be recommended for a student unless the appropriate teacher of the student involved is consulted and agrees that it will be of real help. If tutoring seems advisable, the Principal may give the parents a list of persons who are willing to tutor. This list may include teachers, but not the student's teacher of the subject in which he or she is to be tutored. For the purposes of this policy, music lessons are not considered tutoring.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION IN PRIVATE VEHICLES

In the North Middlesex Regional School District, buses will be used for the transportation of students participating in co-curricular or extracurricular activities. However, when buses are not available, privately owned or district-provided vehicles may be used to transport students to or from school

activities that fall within the academic day or extended school day provided all of the following conditions are met:

1. The activity has the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.
2. The owner of the vehicle being used in transporting students must file evidence with the Superintendent of personal liability insurance coverage on the vehicle in the amounts of \$100,000/\$300,000 or more.
3. The parents of students to be transported in this manner will be fully informed as to this means of transportation and will sign a statement to this effect.
4. The Superintendent may permit a staff member to furnish transportation in privately owned vehicles if circumstances dictate. Individual staff members who provide such transportation on a voluntary basis are to be notified that while the district's insurance policy may include a provision of non-owned vehicles, the primary insurance on the vehicle is the responsibility of the vehicle's owner.
5. Anyone driving students in privately owned or district provided vehicles must complete an authorization form to grant the district permission to obtain the individual's motor vehicle report. If a person's driving record is unsuitable, the district reserves the right to deny the individual permission to transport students.
6. No staff member or volunteer should ever be alone in a vehicle with a student, except direct family members.

DRIVING RECORDS

This section pertains to employees who will be driving district vehicles for their positions. Non-compliance with the following district insurance mandates will not permit staff to drive:

Drivers must be licensed for 6 continuous years;
No 'driving under the influence' violations during that 6 years;
No more than 2 at-fault major accidents during the 6-year period;
No more than 3 total accidents during that 6-year period;
No more than 3 moving violation tickets (seatbelt or equipment are not moving violations) in the last 3 years of the 6-year period;
Employees that have had a change in their driving record must notify the district.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATION

The North Middlesex Regional School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals,

supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee from administrative decisions on important matters, **except those matters that are outside the Committee's legal authority**, provided that the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first-hand the Committee's deliberations on issues of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official school committee communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Office of the Superintendent. The Superintendent will keep the staff fully informed of the Committee's agenda discussions and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Updated information regarding employee benefits, enrollment, forms, and related information can be accessed at [Employee Benefits - North Middlesex Regional School District](#) and the specific links to each benefit at that site.

The summaries in this Handbook refer to benefits that are current as of the date of publication.

Group Health Insurance

Group health insurance offered by the School District is designed to provide employees and their families with access to quality, affordable health care.

Active Employees: Permanent employees who regularly work 20 hours or more per week (or work .5 FTE or more for teachers) are eligible for group health insurance.

Employees currently have the option of participating in one of four Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance plans offered through the School District. The School District currently contributes 75% toward the total premium for each plan and the remaining 25% of the premium shall be deducted from the employee's wages.

Retired Employees: Upon retirement and based on eligibility to receive a pension from their applicable retirement system, employees will be transferred from the active employee group to a retiree group. For retirees under age 65, this group transfer does not change the type of coverage already in place; it is merely a group number change. This transfer also applies to retirees over age 65 who are not Medicare eligible. However, for retirees aged 65 and over who are Medicare eligible, different coverage options exist. Retirees who are eligible for Medicare parts A and B have the option of joining one of two Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Medicare “supplement” plans. This means that Medicare acts as the primary insurance and the supplements are considered the secondary insurance. The School District currently contributes 50% toward the total premium for each plan and the employee contributes the remaining 50% towards the total premium.

Dental Insurance

Plan options currently are available through Delta Dental and include two plans. The Dental Premier Plan is an employee-paid dental plan that provides employees and their families quality, affordable dental care. The PPO Plus Premier Plan is also an employee-paid plan that offers enhanced benefits. New employees may enroll at the time of hire. Current employees may enroll during open enrollment.

Vision Insurance

Currently the School District offers employee-paid EyeMed Vision Insurance, under which employees can realize savings on the retail price of eye exams and glasses at in-network eye doctors.

Long Term Disability

Currently a long-term disability plan is available to all eligible employees through Assurance Employee Benefits/Union Security Life.

Life Insurance

Currently life insurance is offered to eligible employees through Boston Mutual Insurance. Additional protection for employees and their families is offered through Voluntary Life and AD&D.

Flexible Spending

Currently the School District offers a Flexible Spending Account Plan administered by Cafeteria Plan Advisors, Inc. In fiscal year 2026, employees may set aside up to \$3,050 to pay for out-of-pocket medical/dental expenses and up to \$5,000 for out-of-pocket dependent care expenses. The plan year is July 1 through June 30.

403(b) Retirement Plan

The School District offers eligible employees the opportunity to save for retirement by participating in a voluntary 403(b) retirement plan. Employees can participate in this plan and make pre-tax contributions. Currently an employee may contribute up to \$23,000, subject to change based on amendment of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations. An employee 403(b) plan may be started at any time of year – there is no open enrollment. Information can be accessed at:

[2026 Universal Eligibility Notice](#)

Please keep in mind that employee benefits as set forth above are those in effect at the time of publication. Because benefits may change during the course of a school year it is essential that you stay abreast of any such changes through your union representative if your employment is covered by a collective bargaining agreement or by contacting the Human Resources Department.

RETIREMENT

Permanent non-professional employees who regularly work 20 hours or more per week are required to participate in the Middlesex County Retirement System. Information regarding eligibility, enrollment, and other aspects of retirement can be obtained by accessing: [MCRS Eligibility and Enrollment](#)
Payroll deductions will begin automatically upon enrollment.

All permanent educators who regularly work .5 FTE or more per week are required to participate in the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System. Information regarding eligibility, enrollment, and other aspects of retirement can be obtained by accessing: [MTRS membership eligibility](#)
Enrollment is automatic upon hire as a permanent employee or after 6 months in a Permanent Substitute position. Payroll deductions will begin automatically upon enrollment.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

All employees are eligible for direct deposit of payroll in up to five bank accounts. To enroll, employees must complete the authorization agreement form and attach proof of the bank account(s). Forms are available from the Human Resources Office or at: [Direct Deposit Form](#)

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 152, all employees are provided insurance protection to cover the loss of wages and certain expenses arising from injuries incurred while performing their work duties. It is the responsibility of both the injured employee and his/her supervisor or department head to immediately report a job-related injury to the Human Resources Department.

JURY DUTY AND LEAVE

The School District complies with federal and state laws regarding leave for jury duty and related issues such as compensation while on leave. Compensation while on leave beyond that required by law is addressed in the employee's collective bargaining agreement or individual employment contract. An employee dismissed from jury duty during the workday is required to report to work for the balance of the day.