



**Francis T. Bresnahan
Elementary School
Student & Family Handbook
2026-2027**

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July						
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27	28	29	30			

NEWBURYPORT
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2026 - 2027
School Calendar
approved by School Committee 2/25/26

T = Teachers First Day SD = Staff Development Day
FDS = First Day Students NS = No School - closed
H = Holiday ER = Early Release Day
V = Vacation PLD = Projected Last Day

Mon., Aug. 31 First Day Teachers
Tue., Sept. 1 Staff Development Day (no students)
Wed., Sept. 2 First Day Students Grades 1-12
Fri., Sept. 4 No School (students & staff)
Mon., Sept. 7 Labor Day
Tue., Sept. 8 First Day for Grades Pk-K
Oct. 12 NO SCHOOL - Indigenous People Day
Nov. 11 NO SCHOOL - Veteran's Day
Nov. 26 & 27 NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 24 thru Jan. 1 NO SCHOOL - Holiday Break
Jan. 4 SCHOOL RESUMES
Jan. 15 - NO SCHOOL Students - Staff Deve Day
Jan. 18 NO SCHOOL - MLK, Jr. Holiday
Feb. 15 thru 19 NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
Mar 26 1/2 Day AFSCME Union (GOOD FRIDAY)
April 19 thru 23 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
May 31 NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day
June 6 Graduation Day - Class of 2027
June 11 Projected Last Day (Pk & K students)
June 16 Projected Last Day (Grades 1-12) - ERD
June 17 Projected Last Day (Teachers)
June 18 NO SCHOOL - Juneteenth Observed
June 17 thru 24 Snow Make-up Days - [if needed]

ER - Early Release Days (for staff development)
September 18, October 9, November 3, December 11,
February 5, March 26, April 16, May 7, and June 4

ER - Other Early Release Days (staff & students)
Wed., November 25 Thanksgiving Break
Wed., December 23 Holiday Break

G = Graduation Day - on Sunday, June 6th @ 11AM
(180 days - students) (184 days - teachers)

NPS District Calendar

NPS Central Office Administration Contacts

Name	Title	Email	Phone #
Sean Gallagher	Superintendent	sgallagher@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4456
Lisa Furlong	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	lfurlong@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4456
Bradley Brooks	Director of Student Services	bbrooks@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4456
Pam Kealey	Director of Human Resources	pkealey@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4456
Tom Abrams	District Literacy Coordinator	tabrams@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4447
Michelle Rybicki	Nurse Leader	mrybicki@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4447

School Administration Contacts

Name	Title	Email	Phone #
Jamie Sokolowski	Principal	jsokolowski@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4431
Allison Hamilton	Assistant Principal	ahamilton@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4431
Leigh Curtis-Pare	Assistant Principal	lcurtispare@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4431

Special Education Contacts

Name	Title	Email	Phone #
Brenda Palmisano	Special Education Team Facilitator	bpalmisano@newburyport.k12.ma.us	978-465-4435

Bresnahan School Council

The school council is responsible for providing input into the Bresnahan improvement plan, budget and student handbook. The council consists of the building principal, parents, teachers and community members.

Name	Title	Email
Jamie Sokolowski	Principal	jsokolowski@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Allison Hamilton	Assistant Principal	ahamilton@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Leigh Curtis-Pare	Assistant Principal	lcurtispare@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Molly Farrell	Math coach K-5	mfarrell@newburyport.k12.ma.us
John Gangemi	Math Interventionist	jgangemi@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Haley Budden	Grade 2 Teacher	hbudden@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Matt Valli	PE Teacher	mvalli@newburyport.k12.ma.us

Parent Teacher Organization

A Message From the PTO:

Welcome to the Newburyport PTO! Together we support the students, families, and staff of the Bresnahan, Molin, and Nock Schools. In addition to raising substantial funds to support student activities, the PTO aims to build a welcoming family community at our schools. As a parent or caregiver of a child, you are automatically part of the PTO. There are many ways to get involved!

Attend a PTO General Meeting

Most of our meetings are held at The Poynt restaurant at 6:30pm. Our first meeting will be on Tuesday, 8/25. We will publish all future dates on our calendar: <https://www.newburyportpto.com/calendar>, and are planning to hold them on the second Tuesday of each month. Please check the weekly school newsletter or our website newburyportpto.com for locations. We hope to see you there!

Attend a Family Event

The PTO will host a **Fall Festival in October** and a **Spring Fling in June**. These events are free and open to all Bresnahan families. We also offer sensory-friendly times so families can enjoy these events before the crowds get too large.

Volunteer Your Time and Talents

We always need volunteers to help support our events or activities! This is also a great way to meet other families and feel connected to the school community. Please go to newburyportpto.com to see ways to get involved, and click on Get Involved to complete our Volunteer Opportunities form. To sign up to receive our email updates, please click on [Subscribe](#) on the bottom of our website.

Support Our Fundraisers

The Newburyport PTO is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization. In 2026-2027, we aim to raise \$95,000, which will be used to fund transportation for field trips, bring enrichment activities to the schools, and fulfill teacher needs. Our largest fundraisers are the **Clipper Readathon in March** and the **Newburyport Kitchen Tour in May**. You can also support the PTO by purchasing **Newburyport Spirit Wear, Holiday Raffle Calendars** and **Valentine Candygrams**, or **donating funds directly** to the PTO by visiting newburyportpto.com and clicking the Donate button in the top right corner. In addition, there is an **EcoSmith Bin** along the Bresnahan driveway for recycling textiles and shoes. The PTO receives a percentage of the proceeds from the total volume of material collected. Please consider recycling your textiles here; it makes a big impact on our schools!

For more information, please email us at newburyportpto@gmail.com

Our 2026-2027 Board

Co-Presidents: Sara Collins and Phoebe Lonborg-Lewis

Vice President: Christy Teel

Treasurer: Shannon Cormier

Secretary: Corey Wainwright

Communications Co-Chair: Katie Carpenter and Ashley Mahoney

Fundraising Chair: John Ricci

Volunteer Chair: Claire Contrada

Technology Chair: *Open Position*

School Enrichment Co-Chairs: Mary Byrnes

Bresnahan Parent Representatives: Kaitlin Umbro, Jessica Little, Lindsay Ogilvie

Bresnahan Teacher Representatives: Marianne Gasbarro

Parent Speaker Series Representative: Marianne Gasbarro

School Committee Contacts

Name	Title	Email
Sean Reardon	Mayor / Chair	sreardon@cityofnewburyport.com
Sarah Hall	Vice Chair	shall@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Andrew Boger	Member	aboger@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Breanna Higgins	Member	bhiggins@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Brian Callahan	Member	bcallahan@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Juliet Walker	Member	jwalker@newburyport.k12.ma.us
Kathleen Shaw	Member	kshaw@newburyport.k12.ma.us

NPS Mission, Vision, & Strategic Objectives

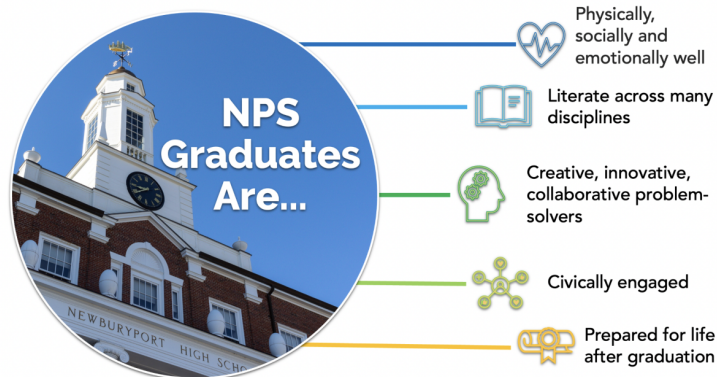
NPS Mission

The mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, is to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped for life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who:

- Practice kindness and perseverance
- Celebrate each unique individual
- Value creative, experiential and rigorous educational opportunities, scholarly pursuits, and life-long learning
- Provide nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth
- Understand and embrace their role as global citizens

NPS Vision: Portrait of Graduate

NPS graduates are prepared with deep content knowledge, healthy habits, and diverse skills.



NPS Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives: <i>REIMAGINE...</i>				
Teaching and Learning	Supports so All Students are Ready and Able to Learn	A Culture of Self Discovery and Personal Achievement	Organization Design and Operations	An Active Community of Stakeholders
District Strategic Initiatives 2022-2027				
(1) Implement a comprehensive PK-5 Literacy Plan.	(4) Build a comprehensive, evidence-based language-based program (grades 3-12).	(7) Expand college and career readiness programs at the middle and high school.	(10) Establish a continuous system for monitoring, reporting and revising the strategic plan.	(13) Implement an effective and accessible district communication plan.
(2) Develop and execute a comprehensive district technology plan.	(5) Expand the use of Trauma Sensitive Teaching Practices throughout the district.	(8) Design and implement innovative summer and out-of-school time programs for all learners.	(11) Implement tuition-free full day kindergarten for all.	(14) Collaborate with community organizations to ensure every student and family feels welcome and included.
(3) Update and publish district curriculum maps.	(6) Implement a comprehensive PK-12 behavioral health support plan.	(9) Promote program development to elevate student voice.	(12) Establish district level structures to support operational growth and changing district needs.	(15) Create community-wide connections to expand music programs within and outside the school day.

School Improvement Plan

Our School Improvement Plan outlines our goals, priorities, and action steps for continued growth and improvement at Bresnahan. Our detailed School Improvement Plan is available on the Bresnahan Elementary School website for families and community members to review.

We encourage families to explore the plan to learn more about our school priorities and the work we are doing to support student learning and success.

School Operations

Admission

Admission to Newburyport Public Schools is granted to all families residing in Newburyport. Plum Island residents must live within the Newburyport portion of Plum Island. Please note Residency is determined by where the child sleeps at night at least 50% of the time. Owning property in Newburyport but not living in it does not qualify as residency. Each year the School Committee considers School Choice. Most years Newburyport does not offer School Choice for families who do not reside in Newburyport.

Students must be three years of age as of September 1 in order to meet the age requirements to enter our Preschool program, four years as of September 1 of age in order to enter PreKindergarten and five years of age as of September 1 to enter Kindergarten.

Enrollment

Please click on the [LINK](#) for Enrollment. These enrollment forms are always available in the front office.

School Hours

Bresnahan School Hours are as follows:

- PS/PK: 8:30 - 1:00
- K-Grade 3: 8:20 - 2:50

On **Early Release Days**, preschool and PreK programs dismiss at 11:15AM.
Kindergarten through Grade 3 dismiss at 11:40AM.

Family Portal

Newburyport Public Schools is pleased to provide parents/guardians access to their students' records online through the Aspen Family Portal.

With the Aspen Family Portal parents/guardians will have access to student attendance, contact information, grades, homework assignments, schedules and homeroom teachers when available (available information depends on your child's grade level).

If you do not have a Family Portal User Name and Password please email: aspen@newburyport.k12.ma.us and indicate that you need a Family Portal Account and include the following information:

- Your Name
- Your Child's Name
- Your Child's Date of Birth
- Your Child's Year of Graduation

Annual Verification & Family Connection

Beginning this year, families can access a program called *Family Connection* through the Aspen homepage. Families will be asked to complete an **Annual Verification Form**, where they can review and update important information, including emergency contacts, address, guardianship information, and other student records.

Family Connection will also provide access to the school handbook acknowledgment and optional permissions, such as the photo restriction form. Families will be asked to review and acknowledge these materials and complete any applicable permissions.

Please note that the **Annual Confidential Health Form** is not available through Family Connection. A paper copy will be sent home with each student and must be returned to the school as a hard copy to protect the privacy of this information.

This [link](#) provides directions on how to access Family Connection.

Emergency Contacts

As part of the enrollment process, parents are asked for emergency contact information. It is very

important that emergency information be kept up to date. Parents may review this information in X2. We send home a paper copy of the emergency contact information each fall. Please review the information, make any corrections, sign the form and return it to school, even if there are no changes. Please contact the office to add new names and numbers, or make corrections at any time during the year.

Visitors

We are honored to welcome parents at the Bresnahan School. We deeply value the partnership between home and school as we work together to provide the best educational programs for all students. If you plan to visit the school, please park in the N. Atkinson St entrance. Visitor parking spots are available to all guests (more information below). Please walk along the sidewalk and up the steps/ramp to proceed to Door 1 (Bus loop, High St entrance).

Sign-In Procedures

1. Always report to Door 1 and press the buzzer. Our office staff will buzz you in and welcome you to the building.
2. Please bring your driver's license to be scanned by our security check-in system, Verkada Technology.

Please always inform the school secretary of the purpose of your visit and where you are heading. Please do not sign-in and leave the office without speaking to the secretary. At times, the office can be very busy and your patience is greatly appreciated.

3. At the end of your visit, please report back to the office to sign-out and let office staff know you are leaving.

Dropping Off Student Items

If you are dropping off an item for your child, please make sure the item is labeled with your child's name and teacher. Ring the doorbell and inform the school secretary you are leaving the item on the table next to the door. Someone in the office will bring it to your child.

Parking

There are a limited number of visitor parking spaces located in the front of the building off of 333 High Street with access to the school via the Main Office. This is also where the bus turn around is located. During school hours, parking in this location is prohibited to guests.

There is a parking lot with a number of visitor parking spaces located on the side of the building off of 32 North Atkinson Street. Please note the side parking lot can only be accessed via North Atkinson Street. There is no entry via Murphy Avenue; however, you may exit the parking lot via North Atkinson Street or Murphy Avenue.

The parking spots in the parking lot are numbered, however, they are not assigned. The front row of parking spots is designated as 10 minute parking for Preschool/PreKindergarten drop-off and pick up. If you are dropping off students in grades K-3, please refrain from parking in the main

parking lot in order to leave spaces available for our staff. You are more than welcome to park in the spots across from the book and linen bins (closest to the N. Atkinson entrance). Handicapped spaces are available in the parking lot and in front of the school for people who have a current placard or license plate.

When driving on school property, especially at arrival and drop off times, please keep speed to a minimum. Please also refrain from texting and driving as it puts our students at risk. Driving, speeding or parking infractions may be reported to the police.

Volunteers

All volunteers are required to have CORI checks and/or Fingerprinting based on the type of volunteering they will be doing. For information on completing a CORI check and obtaining Fingerprint approval, please read the section under School Policies.

CORI Check

M.G.L. c. 71, § 38R requires all schools in Massachusetts to conduct criminal background checks on current and prospective employees and volunteers, including those who regularly provide school related transportation to students and those who may have direct and unmonitored contact with children. The CORI law requires a school or district to notify all persons for whom a CORI is requested that such information is being or may be obtained. Prospective employees and volunteers are required to complete and sign a CORI Request Form which is available through the secretary at each of our elementary schools. The Request Form is used to document that we have provided you with notice that a CORI is being conducted and to verify your identity through a government issued form of photographic identification (usually a driver's license). If you have any questions concerning the CORI process please contact the Office of the Superintendent.

Fingerprinting

In January 2013, Governor Deval Patrick signed Chapter 459 of the Acts of 2012, "An Act Relative to Background Checks". This act requires all school district employees to be fingerprinted by 2016. In keeping with Newburyport's continued focus on safety, we are asking volunteers/parents to be fingerprinted in two instances:

1. If you are going on a day or overnight field trip and will have direct and unmonitored contact with children;
2. If you are a lunchroom volunteer and will be bringing children out to the playground. Parents who volunteer in the classroom DO NOT need to be fingerprinted, as there is always another adult present.

MorphoTrust is the company that the state has contracted with to complete the fingerprinting. Fingerprinting is done only once and does not need to be done again, unlike the state CORI checks that must be completed every 3 years.

To book your appointment, visit the website at <http://www.identogo.com/>.

Please be aware there is a \$35 fee for fingerprinting. Fingerprinting does not expire.

Select MA as your state

Select "Online Scheduling"

Enter your name

Agency/Sector: select "PreK - 12th Grade Education (ESE)

Application type: select "All other school personnel"

Confirm your choice.

You will need to enter a Provider ID:

Bresnahan School 02040005

School Dismissal Manager

We use School Dismissal Manager to track absences, tardiness and changes in dismissal. This is our preferred method of communication. No more sending in notes, calling the school or emailing the teacher – now you can do everything from your phone or computer! Download the SDM app to your phone or use it from any computer by going to www.schooldismissalmanager.com and logging in.

You may make changes during the day up until **2:00PM (11:00AM on Early Release Days)**, after which you will need to call the office. We ask that you only make a change after 2:00PM in case of an emergency. We recognize that there may be extenuating circumstances which prevent you from using the app; please call the office as soon as possible at (978) 465-4435 and we will be happy to help.

Logging in to SDM

You should have received an email with your username and password. If you've checked your Spam folder and can't locate the email, please call the office at (978) 465-4435 and we can resend it. Your username and password will stay the same as long as you have a student at the Bresnahan School. If you forget your password you may reset it by clicking on "Forgot Password" next to the username field on the login screen. If you are having additional problems logging in please call the office and we will be happy to help you.

Important: Set Your Child's Default Dismissal

Please **sign in to SDM** and set your student's appropriate **default dismissal**—how your child typically goes home most days—and make sure it is correct. Use the **Main Default** "Edit Main Default" button to do this.

To set a different default dismissal for a specific day of the week, you may use the **Weekday Default** option.

- A weekday default will **override the main default** on that specific day of the week.
- **Always set the main default first**, then set weekday defaults only as necessary

Absent, Tardy or Dismissed

If your child will be ABSENT, please select "Absent" from the pull down menu under "Create Exception". Please be sure to include the reason in the "Notes" field. Please note our school nurses track illness; please add symptoms if your student is absent due to illness.

If your child will be TARDY, please click the "Late Arrival" button under the student's name.

If your child will be LEAVING EARLY, COMING BACK, please click the "Leaving Early, Coming Back" button and fill in the box with the time, who is picking up and the expected time back.

If your child will be LEAVING EARLY, NOT COMING BACK, choose "Leaving Early, NOT Coming Back" from the drop down menu after clicking on the "Create Exception" box.

We understand there may be extenuating circumstances where you need to call the school to report an absence, tardy or early dismissal. We will be happy to help you.

You may change your student(s) dismissal option by clicking on the down arrow under “Create Exception”. Please note this is an alphabetical listing of all the possible options; you may need to scroll down to find the option you’re looking for.

If you want your student to have the same dismissal option, just with another person (i.e. still a walker but going home with Suzy Smith), select that option under, “Create Exception” choosing their dismissal option, then “Choose Dismissal Instruction” and put the additional information in the “Note” box.

Changing Dismissal for a Future Date

You may set a change in dismissal (or arrival) for any date. You will see two weeks on your calendar. Below the calendar there is a button “Set Dismissal Instructions for a Future Date”, which will allow you to choose any date in the current school year.

Informational Buttons

There are two buttons in a box below below dismissal instructions; “Late Arrival” and “Leaving Early, Coming Back”. Both of these are helpful for the office and teacher to know, but do not affect dismissal. For “Leaving Early, NOT Coming Back”, use the arrow on “Create Exception”, scroll down, select that option and fill in the fields.

As you begin using SDM, if you have questions, please check the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** link found in the **Parent Login area** at the top of the SDM homepage or click on **Help** in your top menu. Here, you will find answers to many of the most commonly asked questions.

Please note School Dismissal Manager is separate from the Family Portal.

We hope you find this as easy to use and time-saving as we have. Please call the office with any questions or problems - we will be happy to help you.

Arrival/Drop Off

We request that you do not drop your student off early as we do not have the staff available to supervise early students. Students may arrive at the building beginning 15 minutes prior to the start of their school session:

8:05 - 8:20 for AM Kindergarten and Grades 1 - 3

8:15 - 8:30 for Preschool and PreKindergarten

While we understand emergencies can arise, we also request you arrive in a timely manner for dismissal.

K-3 Arrival

- Students arriving in the rider line will enter through Door 4.
- Students who walk will enter through Door 1.
- Students arriving by bus will be escorted off the bus and enter through Door 1.

K-3 Dismissal

Students are dismissed at the end of the school day into distinct queues:

- Bus Rider
- Car Rider
- Walker
- YWCA After School Care
- Boys & Girls Club
- Occasional After School Programs (Clipper Courses, NYS, Girl Scouts)

Walkers are picked up outside of Door #1 (the bus turnaround). We request that the person picking up the student bring their placard with them.

Note: We kindly encourage all students and families to form an orderly line during dismissal times to ensure maximum efficiency and the safety of our entire school community.

Car Riders are picked up in the car queue accessed from North Atkinson street (parking lot side of the building). We request you place your placard in the passenger side window of your car. A staff member will see the placard and walkie for your child to exit the building. Your student will then be escorted to your car.

Preschool Arrival

8:15 - 8:30 for Preschool and PreKindergarten. All preschools are riders. Parents should park in the 10 minute spots or visitor spots in the 32 Atkinson Street Parking lot. Parents walk their students to the exterior classroom doors or Door # 3 (your child's classroom teacher will give you specific information).

Preschool Dismissal

Preschool dismisses at 1 pm. Parents should park in the 10 minute spots in the 32 Atkinson Street Parking lot and pick up their child outside the exterior classroom doors or Door # 3 (your child's classroom teacher will give you specific information). *Please do not park in the car queue.*

Placards

At the beginning of each school year, students are given two placards to be used at dismissal time. The placards list the student's last name, grade and teacher. If a family has more than one student attending the Bresnahan School, all students' last names (if applicable), grades and teachers are listed.

This is particularly helpful for both the walker line and car rider queue as it allows a staff member to use the walkie-talkie to let teachers know their student's car is in queue. If at any point during the school year another placard is needed (grandma, babysitter, etc.), please call the office and we will be happy to make one for you.

If you need one temporarily for a specific day (e.g. using a rental car,) please feel free to make your own, with the last name, grade and teacher in large writing.

Bus

The Coach Company. provides bus and van transportation for the Newburyport Public School system. They are a family owned company with over 60 years of experience.

All students who ride the bus must have a bus pass. Bus passes are distributed once a student has registered for the bus. By law, mandated transportation, which is free, must be provided to all students in grades K-6 who live 2 miles or more from school to qualify for free transportation.

Students who are not mandated to be transported are eligible for ridership by paying a transportation fee. Transportation fees for the 2026-2027 school year are \$300.00 per student for the first 2 students in a family. Additional family members over 2 students will be at the rate of \$100.00 per student. Only full day passes are available, although students may opt to ride the bus only one way. All students who qualify for free and reduced lunch qualify for free transportation (you will need to submit this form to transportation).

Bus registration is coordinated through the Central Office. Forms are available on the District website under the Transportation icon. Departments Tab, under Transportation. For information regarding bus transportation (forms, how and when to sign up, bus routes, etc.) visit the website, email transportation@newburyport.k12.ma.us or call Central Office at (978) 465-4457.

To contact The Coach Company directly dial 603-382-6623.

School Bus Rules

Please review these School Bus rules with your children:

1. The bus driver has complete authority on the bus.
2. Students may only ride their assigned bus (e.g. students cannot ride home on a friend's bus).
3. Students will be picked up and dropped off only at regularly scheduled bus stops.
4. All school rules are in effect on the bus. Students will demonstrate safe, kind, and responsible behavior towards peers and bus drivers.
5. Students are expected to use appropriate and respectful language at all times (no profanity or name calling).
6. Students will use appropriate voice levels (no yelling or screaming).
7. Do not push or shove when entering or exiting the bus.
8. Keep hands, arms and heads inside the bus.
9. Students are to remain seated throughout the bus ride. Feet are to be kept out of the aisle.
10. Do not throw things in the bus, at the bus, or out the window.
11. No food, gum or beverages, pets, skateboards, rollerblades or exceptionally large projects are allowed on the bus.
12. Students who refuse to obey the directions of the bus driver promptly or who refuse to obey these regulations may forfeit their privilege to ride the bus to and from school.
13. **STATE LAW OFFENSE:** "Whoever willfully throws or shoots a missile at a school bus, or at a person on such, or any way ASSAULTS or interferes with an operator while in the performance of his/her duty on or near such school bus, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both." A snowball is considered a missile.

Any student who consistently breaks the bus safety rules will receive a warning slip from the driver. School administration will receive the warning slip and review the situation with the student and their family. Repeated offenses may result in suspension from taking the bus.

Attendance

Newburyport Public Schools require a high level of participation in engaged learning. Regular class attendance enables students to benefit from classroom discussions, presentations and interactive activities. These shared academic experiences are integral to the learning process and cannot be re-created or replicated.

Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for all students. Chapter 76, section 1 of the Mass General Laws states that all children between the ages of six and sixteen must attend school.

A school district may excuse up to seven day sessions or fourteen partial day sessions in any six-month period. The school must uphold the law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons: illness or quarantine; bereavement or serious illness in family; weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; and observance of major religious holidays.

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

Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence or tardiness of their child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

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

Our school social worker will reach out to parents if a student accrues more than 5 unexcused absences. This is not a punitive call, but rather a call to uphold our legal obligations per Massachusetts Law and build relationships with families. The call from our social worker will be followed up with a letter from the office documenting steps forward to improve attendance.

Excused Absence

- Documented illness or injury
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Extended or multiple medical or dental appointments
- If the weather conditions are so severe the parents are concerned for the student's safety
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal)

Unexcused Absence is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

- Repetitive or chronic absence due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Truancy
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situations

If a student has...

- Five (5) or more consecutive days absent, parents must obtain a doctor's note and submit it to the school.
- Seven (7) absences (excused or unexcused), a letter of warning will be issued to parents reminding them of the school's attendance policy, and that they will be contacted to schedule a meeting should

absences approach 10 days.

- Ten (10) absences (excused or unexcused), a parent conference will be scheduled to discuss the attendance policy and to develop a proactive attendance plan.
- Fifteen (15) absences (in disregard of the personal attendance plan), an attendance hearing will be held with the parents, administrators, and School Resource Officer.
- Twenty (20) absences (in disregard of the personal attendance plan), a 51A (neglect) or CHINS (child in need of services) may be filed.
- Twenty-five (25) absences or more, it could result in retention.

Absent/Tardy Notification

Parents should notify the school when students will be absent or tardy. Our preferred method of communication is via School Dismissal Manager (more information below). Please go into the appropriate day and select “Absent” from the pull down menu under “Add Exception”. Please be sure to include the reason in the “Notes” field. Please note our school nurses track illness; please add symptoms if your student is absent due to illness. If your student will be tardy, please click the green “Late Arrival” button under the student’s name. If you prefer, you may call the office to report your student absent or tardy.

You may also call the school and notify the office of an absence or tardy.

Tardy

Students arriving late to school must report to the main office with a parent and be signed in. A child is considered late at the Bresnahan for grades K-3 if arriving after 8:20am and preschool after 8:30 am.

A tardy may be excused if the student was at a medical or dental appointment or there are extreme extenuating circumstances. All other reasons are considered an unexcused tardy. After the 8th tardy, families will receive a call from our school social worker and a letter home. After the 10th tardy, families will be invited to a conference with the principal. Subsequent tardiness may result in the child being referred to the Student Resource Officer.

Dismissal

If your child will be leaving during the school day, please use School Dismissal Manager [here](#).

If your child will be LEAVING EARLY, COMING BACK, please click the “Leaving Early, Coming Back” button and fill in the box with the time, who is picking up and the expected time back.

If your child will be LEAVING EARLY, NOT COMING BACK, choose “Leaving Early, NOT Coming Back” from the drop down menu after clicking on the “Create Exception” box.

Plan to pick up your child at the main office at door #1 where personnel will call the homeroom to notify the child and teacher.

We recognize that emergencies occur and you may not be able to use SDM. In that case, please call the office to notify them of the need to dismiss your child.

Independent Walkers

Starting in 3rd grade, as many families encourage their children to become more independent by walking/biking home alone, we do offer the opportunity for your child to be an independent walker. An

independent walker is defined as a child that is walking home to their house (or caretaker's house). *Please note independent walkers are not able to meet parents or caretakers on school property or at the senior center. If you wish to pick your child up on school property your child would qualify as a "walker" not an "independent walker" and you would need to bring your placard and wait in our Walker Line by Door 1.*

*If you would like a sibling to walk home with your 3rd grader, please reach out to Jamie Sokolowski.

Procedures for Emergency Early Dismissal of Students

In the event it becomes necessary to dismiss the entire school early, the following actions will be implemented:

1. Staff will be notified as quickly as possible. All extracurricular activities will be canceled.
2. The Principal will utilize the system's voice messaging system to notify all parents and personnel of emergency procedures.
3. Bus students and walkers will be dismissed by the usual procedure.
4. Students of parents who have not been contacted will be housed at the school until their parents or other designated person picks them up at school or designated waiting area. A student will not be dismissed until his/her parent or other designated person has been contacted.
5. Teachers will be responsible for classroom supervision and for maintaining the accuracy of the student roster and attendance noting the whereabouts of every child released from the school.
6. Classroom teachers will be expected to remain at school until every one of their respective students has been safely accounted for. Other staff members will be expected to assist in the process and will be released as the emergency subsides.
7. Custodians will perform duties as assigned by the Principal. In their capacity as special officers, they may be required to help manage traffic of parents picking up children and supervise the embarkation of bus students.
8. In the event of power loss and the school is unable to broadly communicate to the public on the suddenness of any contingency, the school will act in the best interest and safety of its students. Parents can reasonably assume that their children are being held at school. Children will be released if picked up by parents or a person designated in their emergency information.
9. If the building needs to be evacuated due to fire; loss of power, heat or water; or other cause, students and staff will be moved by bus to another local building and parents will be called.

**It is very important that emergency information be kept up to date. Please send new names and numbers for us to add as it becomes necessary.

Vacations

Parents and students are reminded that Massachusetts Law requires compulsory attendance for students. We strongly discourage family vacations when school is in session. Vacations are not considered excused absences. In addition to compromising the attendance law, family vacations interrupt the educational process of each course in ways that make-up work cannot reverse. Teachers are not required to give out homework assignments prior to a family vacation. Additionally, 3rd grade parents are asked not to schedule vacations during MCAS administration dates.

Early Release Days

There are a limited number of Early Release Days each year. The afternoons are set aside for staff professional development. Three other Early Release Days are: the day before Thanksgiving, the day before Christmas (depending on where Christmas falls on the calendar) and the last day of school for Grades 1-3.

On Early Release days all Preschool and Prekindergarten programs end at 11:15 am.

Kindergarten - Grade 3 dismiss at 11:40 am

A single option bagged lunch is served on Early Release Days.

Report Cards/Parent Conferences

Progress reports will be issued twice a year for all students: **January 29** and the last day of school June. Children receiving special education and/or Title I services will also receive a report from their service provider(s).

Conferences between parents and teachers are slated for the afternoons of **November 4th and November 10th**. As these times draw near, your student's teacher will provide additional specifics regarding the sign-up process and daily logistics.

Breakfast/Lunch Program

Our school breakfast/lunch program is managed by Chartwells Dining Services, a Division of Compass Group of North America. The school district uses the Nutrikids POS System which allows students to put money in their individual account and simply use their 4 digit pin # when going through the register line. Additional information regarding Chartwells can be found on the district website. Low-income families may be eligible for free or reduced lunch. Free and reduced lunch applications are sent home and are available in the office.

We are happy to announce that school breakfast and lunch are free to any student for the 2026-2027 school year. Milk ordered al la carte, outside what is included in the school lunch, will be charged to the students account (\$.60 a carton).

Payment for milk can be made through MySchoolBucks.com. Please reach out to Food Services Director, Tammie Titelbaum (ttitelbaum@newburyport.k12.ma.us) with any questions.

School Pictures

Individual student school pictures will take place on **September 23rd and 24th**. Your classroom teacher will provide you with specific information. A make-up day is held for students who were absent or whose photo was unsatisfactory. There is no obligation to purchase school pictures. Classroom school pictures are taken in the late spring, typically in the end of April. Newburyport Public School currently has a contract with Sullivan Studios in Salisbury for providing school pictures.

Field Trips

Teachers schedule field trips with the approval of the Principal. It is the School Committee's policy that the school must gain permission from parents whenever teachers are involved in off campus activities with students. Permission slips will be sent home, and must be returned before a child is allowed to go on a field trip. If a family is in need of financial assistance for a field trip, please contact the principal.

Lost and Found

Students are responsible for their own property. All valuable items found are turned in to the office. Other items are placed in lost-and-found. All hats, coats, lunch boxes, etc. should be labeled with student names to facilitate return. Periodically, all unlabeled lost articles will be discarded or donated to charity.

Technology Integration at the Elementary Level

The Newburyport Public Schools are committed to a future in which high standards and expectations are set for all students; where students are fully prepared to be productive members of society. To that end, we embed technologies throughout the curriculum to improve student learning.

We also recognize that it is important to educate students on how to use technology as a responsible digital citizen within his/her school community. Building these foundational skills at this level is an important step in preparing students to be productive citizens.

For further details regarding the Newburyport Public Schools' Acceptable Use Policy please click on this link: [District Policy](#)

Google Workspace for Education Overview and Consent

Newburyport Public Schools (NPS) use Google Workspace for Education software services to support our students' education. Google Workspace for Education is a set of education productivity tools including Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Sheets, Classroom, and more.

Upon enrollment, a Google Workspace for Education account (a Google account managed by NPS) is created for every student. Students use their accounts to complete assignments, explore content, communicate with their teachers (grades 6-12 only), and learn 21st century digital skills. Students access and use the following "Core Services": Calendar, Classroom, Drive & Docs, Gmail, and Sites.

In addition, educators may create course content where students use what Google calls "Additional Services". These include YouTube (school restricted mode), Google Maps, Google Earth, and Google Translate.

Google requires schools to obtain parental consent before allowing students under 18 to use these "Additional Services". For more details, please review the [Google Workspace for Education privacy policies](#).

By signing the NPS Handbook form, you give NPS permission to provide your child access to "Additional Services" through their Google Workspace for Education account. **To opt out of "Additional Services"** please print and [complete this form](#) and return it to your child's principal.

If you have questions about our student Google educational accounts, please contact our Tech Department at support@newburyport.k12.ma.us.

School Policies

Discipline

Teachers and staff all have access to the same resources that allow them to respond consistently to misbehaviors. For Minor Behaviors, staff handle these using strategies that help redirect the student and allow them, and others, to continue working in the classroom. If behaviors continue to increase, or there is a Major Behavior, staff will notify administration for support. Major behaviors are managed by administration and need a higher level of support to be addressed. The student may receive support from a School Adjustment Counselor/Teacher, Principal, or Asst. Principal based on the severity of the issue. Staff will communicate with the parents/guardian so that they may follow up with their student regarding the issue.

Appropriate behaviors and expectations will be routinely practiced throughout the school year in individual settings and as a whole school. Students will have reminders in all areas of the building, including the hallways for transitions. This will help make our school climate more friendly, welcoming, safe, and supportive for all students and staff.

Minor Behaviors	Possible Interventions
• Disruptive/disrespectful behavior or language towards teacher or peers (words and tone) • Use of profanity • Work refusal • Inappropriate use of technology • Intentional defiance • Teasing, being unkind • Stealing • Unsafe body to self and others	• Apology and making amends by: repairing, cleaning, replacing, writing an apology note • Loss of privileges • Parent Notification • Make an environmental change: move seat, adjust schedule, increase level of supervision
Major Behaviors	Possible Interventions
• Property Destruction • Physical Aggression • Bringing dangerous items to school • Elopement (attempting to leave area without permission) • Verbal threats of violence • Sexual Harassment (teasing, touching, exposing of self)	• Parent Notification • Loss of privileges • Making Amends: School-based Community Service, Writing an apology note • Student Behavior Plan/Counseling • In-school suspension • Out-of-school suspension • Make an environmental change: move seat, adjust schedule, increase level of supervision

All behaviors that are identified as minor will be considered a major if repetitive, or of extreme nature. This includes any school related behavior (bus, field trips, clipper courses).

Playground Use

We are fortunate to have two playgrounds at the Bresnahan School. Both playgrounds are designed and developmentally appropriate for specific age ranges. The pirate ship playground is for ages 2 - 5 and the other is for ages 5 - 9. The playgrounds are reserved for school use only during the school year and for the duration of the school day. Both playgrounds are ADA compliance and handicap accessible. Please note that dogs are not allowed on the playgrounds.

Bresnahan School Playground Rules/Expectations

BE SAFE

- Hands and feet to self
- Body in control
- Freeze and line up when told the first time
- School safe games

BE KIND

- Include others
- Use kind words and actions
- Share and help others
- Take turns

BE RESPONSIBLE

- Listen to monitors
- Accept consequences
- Be a good role model
- Seek adult help when you need it

Bresnahan Cafeteria Rules/Expectations

We align PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) terminology with the cafeteria rules and expectations as follows:

BE SAFE

- Hands and feet to self
- Walking feet
- Quiet voice
- Stay seated
- Eat your own food

BE KIND

- Let others join table
- Use good manners
- Use kind words and actions
- Help others

BE RESPONSIBLE

- Listen to monitors
- Accept consequences
- Raise hand for help
- Clean up after yourself

Lunch Seating

Students will begin the year sitting with students from their class. Most grades assign seats to support building relationships and consistency. There are times throughout the year where students may have open access to the cafeteria seating or unassigned seats within their class. Seating may be determined on a case by case basis, ensuring that students are receiving what they need in order to be successful in an unstructured environment.

Health

Newburyport Public Schools employs Registered Nurses to meet health care needs in our schools. The role of the school nurse has changed significantly in the last decade, with a focus on case management and optimizing student time on learning. The school nurses manage a variety of health issues, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and primary care. This ensures optimal health for all students in the Newburyport Public School system.

Newburyport Public Schools provide:

- Acute, Emergent and Chronic Care
- Health Counseling
- Mandated Health Screening
- Administration and Evaluation of Medications and Prescribed Treatments
- Case Management for Significant Health Needs
- Health Education of Parents, Students, and Staff
- Monitoring of Immunizations
- Monitoring of Comprehensive Physical Exams (required on entrance to school and for Grades 4, 7, and 10)

It is imperative that the school nurses receive updated health information for your child/children each year. The yearly health update and Permissions to treat may be found in our secure Parent Health Portal. We utilize this portal to easily and securely communicate with parents and request you complete the health update prior to the start of school each year. To access this portal, please follow instructions provided on our Health Services webpage. [Parental Health Portal](#)

For a comprehensive list of health and wellness policies, and health related forms, please visit the district website [Health Services page](#).

Student Illness and Injury

- Our school nurses will assess children who are in school and feeling unwell, or have an injury. If the child is unable to return to class, a parent or guardian will be informed and the child dismissed.
- Though we are unable to contact parents or guardians regarding every office visit, you will be informed of any notable visit for illness or injury even if your child does return to class.
- If a student is injured or becomes ill during the day, the nurse will notify the person or persons provided as emergency contacts. If the injury or illness is severe, the child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital, accompanied by a school staff member.
- If your child is unwell and not able to attend school, please follow the attendance protocols outlined in this Handbook.
- If your child has a contagious illness, we ask that you notify the nurse directly. In turn, the nurse will work with the student team as needed to protect the health of students and staff.
- A Physician's order is required for your child to be excused from physical education, with date of return to PE defined by the prescriber. Any student who has an extended absence (5 days or more) from school must have medical clearance before returning to school.

Students must stay home for 24 hours in the following circumstances:

- A rash or skin condition not diagnosed/under treatment by a physician
- A fever that causes chills, sweats or a temperature above 100 within 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Inflamed eyes, yellow or green drainage from the eyes
- Untreated head lice
- Untreated bacterial infection such as Strep Throat (must be on antibiotic at least 12 hours before return to school)

Medications

Our health office will dispense medications to students, as ordered, during the school day. Daily or two times per day medications should be administered at home, in most cases.

- All medications must be delivered to the school nurse/health office by an adult. All medications must be delivered in a current pharmacy labeled container, or in original packaging (over the counter medications). No medications delivered in baggies or other alternative packaging will be administered.
- School policy requires both parental consent and physician prescription for regularly scheduled and as needed medications.
- All medications are administered by the school nurse, or under the school nurse supervision or direction. In very specific situations, self administration may be an option. Consult with the school nurse for more information regarding self-administration.
- For short term medications such as antibiotics, parental consent is required along with a current prescriber order and/or the current prescription on the original medication container or bottle. Parents should take advantage of services offered by local pharmacies. Medications may be dispensed in two separate containers; one for home and one for school use.
- Parental Consent forms may be accessed via the Health Services web page, or from the school nurse.
- Our School Physician provides us with Standing Orders for a number of basic over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Ibuprofen, topicals (Hydrocortisone cream), etc. To ensure timely administration of these over the counter medications, please provide permission for these medications via our [Parent Health Portal](#).

Allergy Aware School

Bresnahan is an allergy sensitive school, meaning we work to assure we are aware and plan regarding student allergies, and assure staff are trained in prevention, mitigation, and emergency response.

Peanut and nut products continue to be the most prevalent allergens, and pose the greatest danger. When students consume even a trace amount of the allergen they are at risk for anaphylaxis, a potentially life- threatening allergic reaction. Strict avoidance is the best way to provide a safe environment.

In order to provide a safe learning environment for all our students throughout the year, we need your help. For this reason, we are asking that you do not send your child to school with snacks or lunch items that contain any **peanuts or tree nuts**.

Before sending in any food to be eaten in the classroom (snacks) or cafeteria, please do the following:

- Read the product label—do not send in foods that list nuts or peanuts as an ingredient or possible ingredient.

- Send foods in their original packages or attach the ingredient label to the outside of a sealed package (ask your child to bring the labels home so they can be reused). Home baked goods should not be given for snack but can be consumed at lunch.
- Please remind your child not to share snacks or lunches. Although sharing is well intended by your child, it could have serious consequences. Sharing of food is not promoted at the Bresnahan School.

Fragrance Aware School

Allergies to fragrances is on the rise and we currently have students and staff sensitive to fragrances. We ask you and your students to avoid substances such as hair spray, grooming products, and make-up that contain fragrances as a courtesy to our fellow NPS members.

If you have any questions, please contact your school nurse.

Valorie Natoli, RN, Grades PK-Gr 1 phone: (978) 465-4435 ext. 3127, vnatoli@newburyport.k12.ma.us

Michelle Thivierge, RN Grades 2-3 phone: (978) 465-4435 ext. 3939, mthivierge@newburyport.k12.ma.us

Dress Code

We encourage school appropriate attire, and will take into account individual preferences and needs as long as it remains appropriate for a school setting. This includes outdoor clothing during colder months. We partner with parents in creating good habits around dressing for success in a school setting.

Emergencies

On occasion, emergencies do occur. It is important that the school be kept informed of situations and changes in a parent or guardian's residence, employment, or emergency contact numbers. Accurate phone numbers help us to facilitate successful response to an emergency.

As part of the Newburyport Public Schools policy, cell phones are not allowed in school. If your child becomes injured or ill they will be evaluated by the nurse. The nurse will then notify the parent or guardian of the situation.

There is no nurse available during after-school programs and organized activities (e.g. sports, clubs). If an emergency arises, staff will activate the emergency medical system and the student will be transported to the nearest hospital. Note that after-school personnel cannot deliver medical procedures or obtain or administer medications. Students with special health needs are encouraged to carry necessary items (e.g. inhalers, EpiPens) during these times. If your child requires specific assistance during an after-school event, please contact your child's school nurse for guidance.

Animal/Pets

As much as we love animals, we ask that you leave your pets at home. Some students are afraid of dogs, some people have allergies to animals and not all pet owners are good about cleaning up after their pets. We want our school grounds to be accessible and clean for all students to enjoy.

Special Education

Special education services are available in the elementary schools to students with disabilities who meet state and federal regulations for such services. Before services can be provided, a student must have a team evaluation consisting of multi-source assessments to determine if he/she has a disability as defined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is not making effective progress in school, that the lack of progress is related to the identified disability and that he/she requires specialized instruction and/or related services in order to access the general curriculum.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the evaluation team must answer the following questions:

1. Does the student have a disability? If so, what type of disability?
2. Is the student making effective progress in school? If not, is the lack of progress a result of the student's disability?
3. Does the student require specially designed instruction in order to make effective progress in school or does the student require related services in order to access the general curriculum?

There is a continuum of special education services available in the Newburyport Public Schools. The Bresnahan School provides specialized instruction and support in areas such as reading, math, writing, and organization, as well as related services such as speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling. The school system also offers district-wide programs to service lower-incidence populations.

School districts are required to provide the student's parents an opportunity to consult with the Special Education Administrator or his/her designee regarding the evaluators who will be used by the school district to conduct the assessments comprising the team evaluation, including the initial evaluation to determine eligibility and any subsequent reevaluations. This requirement may be met by meeting with the parent prior to an evaluation or by incorporating information on this consultation opportunity in the notice sent to the parents when a district is requesting permission to conduct an evaluation. The intent of this requirement, in conjunction with the requirement to consult with the parent on the types of assessments recommended by the school district, is to allow the parent to be involved in planning the evaluation conducted by the school district, so as to maximize parental satisfaction with the school district's evaluation.

If you have any questions about special education regulations, please call Brad Brooks, the Director of Student Services at 978-465-4453.

Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 is an anti-discrimination civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

NPS Notice of Parent/Student Rights

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as "Section 504", is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. One purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that students with disabilities have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to non-disabled students.

An eligible student under Section 504 is a student who (a) currently has, or (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working or performing manual tasks.

Section 504 Rights

The enabling regulations for Section 504 as set out in 34 CFR Part 104 provide parents and/or students with the following rights:

1. You have a right to be informed by the school district of your rights under Section 504. (The purpose of this notice form is to advise you of those rights). 34 CFR 104.32.
2. Your child has the right to a free, appropriate public education designed to meet his/her individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met. 34 CFR 104.33.
3. Your child has the right to free educational services except for those fees that are imposed on non-disabled students or their parents. Insurers and similar third parties are not relieved from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or pay for services provided to a disabled student. 34 CFR 104.33.
4. Your child has a right to placement in the least restrictive environment. 34 CFR 104.34.
5. Your child has a right to facilities, services and activities that are comparable to those provided for non-disabled students. 34 CFR 104.34.
6. Your child has a right to an evaluation before an Initial Section 504 placement and any subsequent significant change in placement. The district shall consider, as appropriate, information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, adaptive behavior, physical or medical reports, student grades, progress reports, parent observations, anecdotal reports, and other sources. 34 CFR 104.35.
7. If eligible under Section 504, your child has a right to periodic formal or informal re-evaluations, generally every three years. 34 CFR 104.35.
8. You have the right to notice prior to any action by the district in regard to the identification, evaluation, or placement of your child. 34 CFR 104.36.
9. You have the right to examine relevant records. 34 CFR 104.36.
10. On Section 504 matters, you have the right to file a complaint with the district's Section 504 Coordinator (or designee), who will investigate the allegations to the extent warranted by the nature of the complaint in an effort to reach a prompt and equitable resolution.
11. If you wish to challenge the actions of the district's Section 504 Committee in regard to your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, you should file a written Notice of Appeal with the district's Section 504 Coordinator after you receive written notice of the Section 504 Committee's action(s).
12. You may also request a hearing directly from the Massachusetts Bureau of Special Education Appeals in Malden: (781) 338-6407. You have the right to an impartial hearing with respect to the district's actions regarding your child's identification, evaluation, or educational placement, with opportunity for parental participation in the hearing and representation by an attorney. 34 CFR 104.36.
13. If you disagree with the decision of the impartial hearing officer, you have a right to a review of that decision by a court of competent jurisdiction. 34 CFR 104.36.
14. You also have a right to file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights. The address of the Regional Office which covers Massachusetts is:
Office of Civil Rights, Region 1
U.S. Department of Education
John W. McCormack, POCH
Room 701
Boston, MA 02189-4557

District Policies

For a comprehensive and current list of District Policies, please visit the district website at <https://www.newburyport.k12.ma.us/District--Parent-Info/Policies/index.html>

Some policies of particular interest include:

- JICD Anti-Bullying Policy (Adopted 6-19-17)
- Policy Against Harassment (Adopted 6-20-16)
- Wellness Policy (Updated 3-2018)
- Home Schooling Policy and Application
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy (Adopted 6-9-16)

For all policies regarding students, including admission, conduct and discipline policies, please refer to School Committee Policy J: Students.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L) c. 119, § 51A, requires that certain persons in their professional capacity are mandated to report child abuse and neglect when they have reasonable cause or suspicion to believe that a child under the age of 18 years is suffering physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse that causes harm or substantial risk of harm to the child's health or welfare, including sexual abuse, or from neglect, including malnutrition. All employees of the NPS are mandated reporters.

Anti-Bullying Policy

I. LEADERSHIP

A. Public Involvement in Developing the Plan: During the 2008-2009 school year, a group of stakeholders from the Newburyport School Community was formed that worked to develop a comprehensive anti-bullying policy. This group, the Anti-Bullying Policy Working Committee consisted of administrators, teachers, counselors, psychologists, parents, community organization members, and students.

After eight months of work, an Anti-Bullying Policy that is an integrated approach which incorporates disciplinary action, behavior management, preventative education, and restorative justice (a balanced approach to the needs of the victim, wrongdoer and the community through processes that preserve the safety and dignity of all) was implemented. The Policy identifies a hierarchy of bullying behaviors and their possible interventions.

In the development of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, as required by MGL c. 71 s. 370, we found that the Anti-Bullying Policy Working Committee that had developed the comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy achieved significant groundwork as required by the Plan. Therefore, we brought together a sample population of that group to facilitate incorporating components of the Anti-Bullying Policy in drafting the Plan and then brought it to the full constituency group. This is the group that will be responsible for the review and updating of the Plan as not only required, but as needed.

B. Accessing Needs and Resources: At least once every four years, the district will administer a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education developed student [survey](#) to assess school climate

and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

C. Planning and Oversight: The principal at each school is responsible for : 1) receiving reports on bullying; 2) collecting and analyzing building and/or school-wide data on bullying to assess the present problem and to measure improved outcomes; 3) creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors; 4) planning for the ongoing professional development that is required by the law; 5) planning supports that respond to the needs of targets and aggressors; 6) choosing and implementing the curricula that the school or district will use; 7) developing new or revising current policies and protocols under the Plan, including an Internet safety policy, and designating key staff to be in charge of implementation of them; 8) amending student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated; 9) leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials; and 10) reviewing and updating the Plan.

D. Priority Statement: The Newburyport Public Schools expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. We 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.

The Newburyport Public Schools is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation in our school buildings, on school grounds, or at school-related activities.

The Newburyport Public Schools will take specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for all students and for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide education to all students around strategies to prevent or respond to bullying. We will investigate all reports and complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation, and take prompt action.

The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and the Newburyport Public Schools is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence. This plan provides for the same protection of all students regardless of their status under the law.

II. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Annual Staff Training on the Plan: Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years.

B. Ongoing Professional Development: The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil

communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of schoolwide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- i. developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying;
- ii. developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- iii. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying;
- iv. research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- v. information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying; and
- vi. Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying.

Professional development will also address ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Additional areas identified by the school or district for professional development may include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language,
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference,
- building relationships and communicating with families,
- constructively managing classroom behaviors,
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies,
- applying constructive disciplinary practices,
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others,
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making,
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students, and
- engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors.

C. Written Notice to Staff: The school or district will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff duties and bullying of students by school staff, in the school or district employee handbook and the code of conduct.

III. ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SERVICES

A. Identifying Resources: Newburyport Public Schools will offer access to resources and services to students impacted by bullying. The resources may include the following: establishing safety planning teams and identifying other agencies that can provide services. In conjunction with existing school personnel, the principals at each school will identify existing and needed resources, including but not limited to those listed below.

B. Counseling and Other Services: The District offers culturally and linguistically appropriate resources for families within the district. In addition, the principal and other school staff will develop safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, provide social skills programs to prevent bullying, and will offer education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting

bullying behaviors. Newburyport Public Schools will consider using behavioral intervention plans and social skills groups.

C. Students with Disabilities: As required by M.G.L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

At least once every four years beginning in 2015/2016 school year, the district will administer a Dept. of Elementary and Secondary developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature and severity of bullying in our schools. Additionally, the school or district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department.

D. Referral to Outside Services: The Superintendent and the principals at each school, in conjunction with other staff, may refer students and families to outside services. Referrals will comply with relevant laws and policies. Additionally, if administration determines that a bullying situation requires responsive services for either the target or the aggressor, school counseling staff, in consultation with other staff members, are responsible for the initial assessment of students' academic progress as well as personal/social concerns. Where necessary, the counselor will make available to the target or the aggressor and appropriate family members responsive services which may include individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling, referral to other agencies or professional resources. The counselor will cooperate and assist other agencies when there is a referral for responsive services. Student information will not be provided to outside agencies until the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) have signed a release of information form. All staff will comply with the state and federal child protection laws in reporting to appropriate protective service agencies.

IV. ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC SERVICES

A. Specific Bullying Prevention Approaches: Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- using scripts and role plays to develop skills,
- empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance,
- helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyberbullying, including the underlying power imbalance,
- emphasizing cybersafety [and digital literacy], including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies,
- enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful communications, and
- engaging students in a safe and supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

Each year, District staff will review the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with the students. Initiatives will also teach students about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

B. General Teaching Approaches that Support Bullying Prevention Efforts: The following approaches

are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives:

- setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines,
- creating safe and supportive school and classroom environments for all students, including students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, students experiencing homelessness, students who are in foster care settings, migrant students and military-connected students.
- using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline,
- using positive behavioral supports,
- encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students,
- modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors,
- using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development,
- using the Internet [and social media] safely, and
- supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING AND RETALIATION

A. Reporting Bullying or Retaliation: Reports of bullying or retaliation may be made by staff, students, parents or guardians, or others, and may be oral or written. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing. A school or district staff member is required to report immediately to the principal or designee or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor, any instance of bullying or retaliation the staff member becomes aware of or witnesses. Reports made by students, parents or guardians, or other individuals who are not school or district staff members, may be made anonymously. The school or district will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school community including, but not limited to, an Incident Reporting Form, a voicemail box, a dedicated mailing address, and an email address.

Use of an Incident Reporting Form is not required as a condition of making a report. The school or district will: 1) include a copy of the Incident Reporting Form in the beginning of the year packets for students and parents or guardians; 2) make it available in the school's main office, the counseling office, the school nurse's office, and other locations determined by the principal or designee; and 3) post it on the school's website. The Incident Reporting Form will be made available in the most prevalent language(s) of origin of students and parents or guardians.

At the beginning of each school year, the school or district will provide the school community, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, paraprofessionals, students, and parents or guardians, with written notice of its policies for reporting acts of bullying and retaliation. A description of the reporting procedures and resources, including the name and contact information of the principal or designee, and the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, will be incorporated in student and staff handbooks, on the school or district website, and in information about the Plan that is made available to parents or guardians.

1. Reporting by Staff: A staff member will report immediately to the principal or designee, or to the superintendent or designee when the principal or the assistant principal is the alleged aggressor, or to the school committee or designee when the superintendent is the alleged aggressor when he/she witnesses or becomes aware of conduct that may be bullying or retaliation. The requirement to report as provided does not limit the authority of the staff member to respond to behavioral or disciplinary incidents consistent with school or district policies and procedures for behavior management and discipline.

2. Reporting by Students, Parents or Guardians, and Others: The school or district expects students, parents or guardians, and others who witness or become aware of an instance of bullying or retaliation involving a student to report it to the principal or designee, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor. Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report. Students, parents or guardians, and others may request assistance from a staff member to complete a written report. Students will be provided practical, safe, private, and age-appropriate ways to report and discuss an incident of bullying with a staff member, or with the principal or designee, or superintendent or designee when the principal or assistant principal is the alleged aggressor.

B. Responding to a Report of Bullying or Retaliation Allegations of Bullying by a Student: In response to an allegation report of bullying or retaliation by a student, the following is recommended.

1. Safety: Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The principal or designee will take additional steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary.

The principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting from bullying or retaliation a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who provides information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

2. Obligations to Notify Others: The principal or designee is obligated to notify the following of an allegation.

a. Notice to Parents or Guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, the procedures for responding to it, and notice of actions to prevent further incidents. There may be circumstances in which the principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations at 603 CMR 49.00.

b. Notice to Another School or District: If the reported incident involves students from more than one school district, charter school, non-public school, approved

private special education day or residential school, or collaborative school, the principal or designee first informed of the incident will promptly notify by telephone the principal or designee of the other school(s) of the incident so that each school may take appropriate action. All communications will be in accordance with state and federal privacy laws and regulations, and 603 CMR 49.00.

c. Notice to Law Enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirements of 603 CMR 49.00 and locally established agreements with the local law enforcement agency. Also, if an incident occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in school, the principal or designee shall contact the local law enforcement agency if he or she has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor.

In making this determination, the principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer, if any, and other individuals the principal or designee deems appropriate.

C. Investigation: The principal or designee will investigate promptly all reports of bullying or retaliation and, in doing so, will consider all available information known, including the nature of the allegation(s) and the ages of the students involved.

During the investigation the principal or designee will, among other things, interview students, staff, witnesses, parents or guardians, and others as necessary. The principal or designee (or whoever is conducting the investigation) will remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Interviews may be conducted by the principal or designee, other staff members as determined by the principal or designee, and in consultation with the school counselor, as appropriate. To the extent practicable, and given his/her obligation to investigate and address the matter, the principal or designee will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process. The principal or designee will maintain a written record of the investigation. No discipline will be taken against an alleged aggressor based solely because of an anonymous report.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation will be consistent with school or district policies and procedures for investigations.

D. Determinations: The principal or designee will make a determination based upon all of the facts and circumstances. If, after investigation, bullying or retaliation is substantiated, the principal or designee will take steps reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence and to ensure that the target is not restricted in participating in school or in benefiting from school activities. The principal or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. The principal may impose a range of disciplinary actions against an aggressor for bullying or retaliation; provided, however, that the disciplinary actions shall balance the

need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.

Depending upon the circumstances, the principal or designee may choose to consult with the students' teacher(s) and/or school counselor, and the target's or student aggressor's parents or guardians, to identify any underlying social or emotional issue(s) that may have contributed to the bullying behavior and to assess the level of need for additional social skills development.

The principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the aggressor about the results of the investigation and, if bullying or retaliation is found, what action is being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of student records, the principal or designee cannot report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about the disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

The principal or designee shall inform the parent or guardian of the target about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's problem resolution system and the process for accessing that system, regardless of the outcome of the bullying determination. In addition, the principal may refer targets, aggressors, and families for counseling.

E. Responses to Bullying: The District will include the following to remediate or prevent further bullying and retaliation.

1. Teaching Appropriate Behavior Through Skills Building: Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the school or district use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior. M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (d) (v). Skill-building approaches that the principal or designee may consider include but are not limited to:

- offering individualized skill-building sessions based on the school's/district's anti-bullying curricula,
- providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with guidance counselors and other appropriate school personnel.
- implementing a range of academic and nonacademic positive behavioral supports to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals,
- meeting with parents and guardians to engage parental support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home,
- adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and
- making a referral for evaluation.

2. Taking Disciplinary Action: If the principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior. Discipline will be consistent with the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

Discipline procedures for students with disabilities are governed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), which should be read in cooperation with state laws regarding student discipline.

If the principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, that student may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. Promoting Safety for the Target and Others: The principal or designee will consider what adjustments, if any, are needed in the school environment to enhance the target's sense of safety and that of others as well. One strategy that the principal or designee may use is to increase adult supervision at transition times and in locations where bullying is known to have occurred or is likely to occur.

Within a reasonable period of time following the determination and the ordering of remedial and/or disciplinary action, the principal or designee will contact the target to determine whether there has been a recurrence of the prohibited conduct and whether additional supportive measures are needed. If so, the principal or designee will work with appropriate school staff to implement them immediately.

F. Responding to a Report of Bullying by School Staff: The Newburyport Public Schools will respond to and resolve a report of bullying of a student by school staff in accordance with district policy and procedures. This includes safety planning, notification to parent or guardians and others, investigation, and response similar to when a student is alleged to have bullied another student (see Sections B, C, D & E above). The district emphasizes the importance of an investigation, the need for the aggressor, target, and witnesses to be truthful, and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

VI. PROHIBITION AGAINST BULLYING AND RETALIATION

The law requires the Plan to include a statement prohibiting bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. The statement is included in the Plan, in the student handbook, and the staff handbook. The following statement is incorporated directly from M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O (b), and describes the law's requirements for the prohibitions of bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district of schools; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create even a hostile environment at school for the target or witnesses, infringe on their rights at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

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

As stated in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, nothing in this Plan requires the Newburyport Public Schools to staff

any non-school related activities, functions, or programs.

VII. PROBLEM RESOLUTION SYSTEM

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the district may do so with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Program Resolution System (PRS). That information can be found at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/prs>, emails can be sent to DESECompliance@mass.gov or individuals can call 781-338-3700. Problem Resolution System. Hard copies of this information will also be available at each school or district's Superintendent's office.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

Aggressor is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation.

Bystander/Witness a person who observes bullying behavior that he/she has witnessed and may or may not assist in the situation

CMR Code of Massachusetts Regulations

MGL Massachusetts General Law

Bullying as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, is the repeated use by one or more students 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 of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
2. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
3. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
4. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
5. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

The Newburyport Public Schools also defines bullying as unfair and one-sided and involves an imbalance of power. It happens when someone is repeatedly hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out on purpose.

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, photographs, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, text messages, Internet postings, and social media.

Cyberbullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; or the knowing impersonation of another person. Cyberbullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one persons 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 of bullying.

Hostile environment as defined in M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, 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 a student's education.

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

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

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

IX. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Newburyport's Plan reflects the requirements under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O to provide ongoing professional development for all staff, including but not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, and paraprofessionals.

M.G.L. 71, § 37O lists six topics that must be included in professional development. The law defines two levels of professional development that school systems must provide for all staff:

A. Annual staff training on the Plan: Annual training for all school staff on the Plan will include staff duties under the Plan, an overview of the steps that the principal or designee will follow upon receipt of a report of bullying or retaliation, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades throughout the school or district. Staff members hired after the start of the school year are required to participate in school based training during the school year in which they are hired, unless they can demonstrate participation in an acceptable and comparable program within the last two years. The principal of the building is responsible to ensure this training occurs for any new staff member. The annual training will be conducted at the beginning of the school year. Most training will occur under the direction of the principal at each school. Any Newburyport Public School employee with training in recognized training programs may also lead trainings in each school building. Use of law enforcement to assist in training components of M.G.L. 71, § 37O will also be utilized.

The Superintendent shall ensure that:

1. Training is provided to all school staff, including teachers and para-educators; secretaries, cafeteria workers, administrators, nurses, guidance counselors; maintenance staff; coaches; advisors, and bus drivers on an annual basis as required by state law.
2. Bullying prevention programs and anti-bullying curriculum is formulated and regularly reviewed, as well as training provided for staff in implementing the curriculum.
3. The professional development plan is published annually and provided to every staff member.
4. We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable targets of bullying, harassment, or teasing based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sensory disability, or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics. The school or district will identify specific steps it will take to create a safe, supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community, and provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying,

harassment, or teasing.

B. Ongoing professional development: The goal of professional development is to establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Professional development will build the skills of staff members to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O, the content of school wide and district wide professional development will be informed by research and will include information on:

- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies to prevent bullying
- Developmentally (or age) appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents
- Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witnesses to the bullying
- Research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- Information on the incidence and nature of cyberbullying
- Internet safety issues as they relate to cyberbullying

Ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities that must be considered when developing students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This will include a particular focus on the needs of students with autism or students whose disability affects social skills development.

Each school leadership team may design professional development in-service based on a determination of staff needs. Additional objectives of professional development may include:

- promoting and modeling the use of respectful language
- fostering an understanding of and respect for diversity and difference
- building relationships and communicating with families
- constructively managing classroom behaviors
- using positive behavioral intervention strategies
- applying constructive disciplinary practices
- teaching students skills including positive communication, anger management, and empathy for others
- engaging students in school or classroom planning and decision-making and maintaining a safe and caring classroom for all students
- maintaining a safe and caring classroom environment for all students

The district will work with the bus company that serves the Newburyport Public Schools to ensure that professional development is provided to bus drivers on an annual basis and meets the district's expectations for quality professional development.

C. Written notice to staff: The Newburyport Public Schools will provide all staff with an annual written notice of the Plan by publishing information about it, including sections related to staff responsibilities in each school's Staff Handbook.

X. COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

The law requires the district or school Plan to include provisions for informing parents or guardians about the bullying prevention and intervention curricula used by the school district or school including:

(i) how parents and guardians can reinforce the curricula at home and support the school or district plan; (ii) the dynamics of bullying; and (iii) online safety and cyberbullying. Parents and guardians must also be notified in writing each year about the student-related sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, in the language(s) most prevalent among the parents or guardians. School- or district-specific approaches to collaboration should take into account age, climate, socio-economic factors, linguistic, and cultural make-up of students and the parents.

The Newburyport Public Schools has developed a comprehensive anti-bullying curriculum most appropriate for each school and grade in which they are implemented. The curriculum incorporates bullying prevention, conflict resolution and asset building. Collaborative decisions were made about the curricula taking into account students' developmental stages, school culture, community contexts, and district goals.

- A. Parent education and resources: The school or district offers education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the bullying prevention curricula, anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or school. The programs may be offered in collaboration with the home and school organizations, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, athletics, Guidance Departments at the middle and high schools, Beacon Coalition and Youth Services organizations. Newburyport will host speakers, conduct parent forums on bullying and cyberbullying prevention on an ongoing basis. We provide parents with opportunities to participate in workshops held by agencies such as the Essex County District Attorney's Office and, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center (MARC).
- B. Notification requirements: Every year, the Newburyport Public Schools inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the bullying prevention and anti-bullying curricula that are being used. This notice includes information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyberbullying and online safety. The school or district provides parents information about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy through the schools' student handbooks. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic format and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The school or district posts the Plan and related information on its website.

XI. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS OR DISTRICT POLICIES

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the Newburyport Public Schools no person shall be discriminated against in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study on account of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, sexual orientation, or 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. Nothing in the Plan prevents the Newburyport Public Schools from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based on a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or school or district policies.

In addition, nothing in the Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the Newburyport Public Schools to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L. c. 71, §§ 37H or 37H ½, M.G.L. c.

71, §§41 and 42, M.G.L.c 76 § 5, or other applicable laws, or local school or district policies, or collective bargaining agreements, in response to violent, harmful, or disruptive behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

REFERENCES:

United State Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Letter on Harassment and Bullying - October 26, 2010

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

LEGAL REFERENCES:

Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

603 CMR 26.00 Mandatory Reporting

MGL 37H, 37H1/2 Policies relative to conduct of teachers or students;
student handbook

MGL 71:370 School bullying prohibited; bullying prevention plans

MGL 265:43, 43A Crimes against a person

MGL 268:13B Intimidation of witnesses and jurors

MGL 269:14A Annoying telephone calls

CROSS REFERENCE POLICIES:

JICD Anti-Bullying Policy and Hierarchy of Interventions

ACAB-1 Policy against Harassment

Translations

The following addendum is being proposed to the Newburyport Public Schools student-parent handbooks and will also be posted on the District website:

The Newburyport Public Schools is committed to its obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title 11). As part of the District's obligations, during initial student registration, all parents/guardians will be inquired, in their native language or a language they can understand, whether they would like notices and information from their child's school and the District to be provided in a language other than English. The District will record this information in all relevant student information files or folders and in any electronic student information system. In addition, during initial student registration, the District will also inquire whether parents/guardians require the student-parent handbook translated and, upon Parent request, the District will translate the parent-student handbook into the Parents' native language or a language they can understand.

All notices or documents containing essential information will also be translated for parents/guardians who have requested notices in a language other than English. Essential information includes but is not limited to the following: information about special education matters arising under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (e.g., IEP or 504 meetings); report cards and other academic progress reports; information about the disciplinary process; requests for parent/guardian permission for student participation in District/school sponsored programs and activities; promotional materials and announcements distributed to students that contain information about school and District activities for which notice is needed to participate in such activities (e.g., testing, activities requiring an application, parent-teacher conferences, open houses); Student-parent handbooks; documents concerning enrollment or registration; Documents concerning academic options and planning; documents concerning screening procedures requesting a student's language background and a parent's/guardian's preferred method of communication; information related to public health and safety; and any other written information describing the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians or students and the benefits and services available to parents/guardians and students. The District will also provide written or oral translations of information that is not deemed "essential information" upon receiving a reasonable, specific request for such information from limited-English proficiency ("LEP") parents/guardians.

In addition, when a District employee needs to communicate with an LEP parent/guardian orally regarding essential information, the communication will be provided, without undue delay, in a language that the parent/guardian understands by means of a qualified interpreter.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The Newburyport Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability in admission to, access to, employment in, or treatment in its programs and activities.

The Newburyport Public Schools is committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability. Harassment by administrators, staff, and support personnel, students, vendors and other individuals at school, or at school-sponsored events, is unlawful and is strictly prohibited. The Newburyport Public Schools 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.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination by Newburyport Public Schools on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion or to make inquiry concerning the application of Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, the ADA, the Age Discrimination Act, or applicable state laws and their respective implementing regulations, please contact:

District Level Title IX Coordinator, Brad Brooks Civil Rights Officer Newburyport Public Schools 70 Low Street Newburyport, MA 01950 978-465-4456	School Level Jamie Sokolowski Principal 333 High Street Newburyport, MA 01950 (978) 465-4431
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Inquiries concerning the applicability of the aforementioned federal laws and regulations to Newburyport Public Schools also may be referred to:

Office for Civil Rights
U.S. DOE
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02109-3921

Phone: 617-289-0111; or, 1-800-437-0833

FAX: 617-289-0150

e-mail: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

A grievant may file a complaint with OCR, generally,

1. within 180 calendar days of alleged discrimination or harassment; or, 2. within 60 calendar days of receiving notice of Newburyport Public School's final disposition on a complaint filed through Newburyport Public Schools; or, 3. within 60 calendar days of receiving a final decision by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, Bureau of Special Education Appeals; or, 4. instead of filing a complaint with Newburyport Public Schools

Inquiries relative to state law may be referred to the Massachusetts Department of Education, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906 (phone 781-338-3000, or, 1-800-439-2370) or the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination at One Ashburton Place #601, Boston, MA 02108 (telephone 617-994-6000).

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 requires that no qualified individual with a disability shall, because the district's facilities are inaccessible to or unusable by individuals with disabilities, 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 or 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 practices, 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.

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 and 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 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, assistive listening systems, and other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments.
2. Qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, Brailled 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.
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. The decision shall be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

Notice

The district shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provisions of Title II of the Americans 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 Title IX coordinator will serve the function of Compliance Coordinator.

The School system receives Federal financial assistance and must comply with the above requirements. Additionally, it is generally viewed that:

1. Discrimination against a qualified handicapped person solely on the basis of handicap is unfair.
2. To the extent possible, qualified handicapped persons should be in the mainstream of life in a school community.

Accordingly, employees of the school system will comply with the above requirements of the law and policy statements of the School System to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap.

LEGAL REFS. Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504

Education For All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)

Title II, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992

Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78

Gifts to School Employees

During the holidays and throughout the year we receive many inquiries about the state ethics law surrounding gift-giving for teachers. We hope that the following guidelines found on the official website of the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission may serve as a guide for families and class liaisons this holiday season:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/gifts-to-public-school-teachers-and-staff>

In general, a public employee may not accept any gift worth \$50 or more that is given because of the position he or she holds. Public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they have to disclose in writing that they have done so if, based on the specific circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the public employee might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child, or be influenced by the giver. The law prohibits gifts to public employees, not gifts to public agencies. You may give gifts to a public school, or a particular classroom, and the \$50 limit does not apply. Your school district may have its own additional rules about gifts, which you should follow.

Example: A Parent-Teacher Organization wants to give \$75 gift cards to teachers to buy classroom supplies.

The teachers may accept the gift cards but must use them to buy classroom supplies, and should keep receipts to show that they did so. Supplies bought with the gift cards are the property of the school, not the teachers.

Exemption- Class Gifts

The Ethics Commission recently created an exemption to permit class gifts to teachers. A teacher may accept a gift, or several gifts during the school year, from public school students and/or their parents and guardians, with an aggregated value of up to \$150, if the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the identity of the givers and the individual amounts given are not identified to the recipient. Gifts received pursuant to this exemption are not required to be disclosed. The donor is unknown, so a reasonable person would not conclude that the gift would influence the teacher's conduct with regard to any individual or would cause the teacher to favor any individual.

Example: A teacher has a class with 23 students. Parents of 20 of the students collect money and give the teacher a \$150 gift certificate to a bookstore, indicating that it is a class gift.

The teacher may accept the \$150 class gift certificate and no disclosure is required. The teacher may not knowingly accept any additional gift from any of the parents who participated in the class gift. A teacher may accept a class gift and also individual gifts from persons who did not contribute to the class gift. Unlike class gifts, which are not required to be disclosed, individual gifts must be disclosed if, based on the specific circumstances, a reasonable person might think that the teacher's actions would be influenced by the gift.

Example: A child who did not participate in the class gift gives a plate of homemade cookies to the teacher.

The teacher may accept the cookies, and no disclosure is required, because a reasonable person would not think that the teacher would be influenced by a gift that has no retail value. Similarly, a teacher would not be required to disclose acceptance of other homemade food items, hand-picked (not purchased) bouquets of flowers, and handmade gifts, candy, or other gift items worth less than \$10, because a reasonable person would not think that the teacher might unduly show favor to the giver of such gifts or the giver's child, or be influenced by the giver.

Example: Parents of a child who did not contribute to a class gift and whose child is awaiting a college recommendation gives the teacher who is writing the recommendation a bottle of wine worth \$40.

The teacher must disclose the gift in writing to her appointing authority, because a reasonable person might think that such a gift might influence the teacher to write a better recommendation for the student.

Gifts to teachers from individual students should not total more than \$50.00 for the entire school year.

Massachusetts General Laws

Massachusetts General Laws regarding student discipline may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-student-discipline#:~:text=may%20be%20expelled%20MGL%20c.,student%20can%20appeal%20the%20decision.>

Student Rights

Right to Education

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts guarantees “an adequate publicly supported education to every child resident.” This right cannot be denied “on the basis of national origin, sex, economic status, race, religion, and physical or mental handicap.” Any person pregnant or married has the same right to an education.

In Massachusetts, a child between the ages of six and 16 is required by law to attend an approved educational institution unless legally excused. All persons from 3 through 21 have the right to an education to suit their individual needs as may be determined through an evaluation process. This process is designed to provide all children unable to function in the regular educational program with an educational plan suited to their special needs. This plan is created as a result of assessments made by psychologists, social workers, physicians, teachers and other professionals.

The evaluation process guarantees due process rights for parents, individualized educational plans, careful and non-discriminatory use of testing, and educational placements in the least restrictive settings. Questions about referrals and eligibility for support services should be directed to the school principal.

Equal Educational Opportunity

Discrimination on account of sex is prohibited by the United States Constitution and federal law. In Massachusetts, the law is more comprehensive than the federal law. For example, Chapter 622 and its implementing regulations include in their coverage the prohibition of sex bias in instructional materials, an area not covered in the federal regulation. It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to afford all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, economic status or handicap, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions within the State, as described by the guidelines of school policy.

Freedom of Religion

It is the responsibility of the school to protect the religious freedom of students. Students have the right to practice their own religious beliefs as long as they violate neither the constitutional rights of others nor the Supreme Court’s prohibition on the school’s extending the mantle of public sanction or support to any particular religion.

Students have the right to study, examine, discuss, and analyze religious ideas and institutions just as they might explore any other subject included in the curriculum of the Newburyport Schools; therefore,

the study of religion and religious holidays as an academic subject or as part of a foreign culture is appropriate.

Patriotic Ceremonies

Certain rights and privileges pertaining to patriotic ceremonies are afforded by the First Amendment. A student may decline to participate in the salute to the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the singing of the National Anthem. The school may not force the student to leave the room or otherwise punish the student. Students who choose to refrain from participation have a responsibility to respect the rights and interest of others who do wish to participate in the ceremony. The student may refuse to perform the ceremony in a manner that will not disrupt the ceremony for other persons.

Freedom of Expression

The First Amendment provides, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Not only is Congress prohibited from infringing upon rights guaranteed by this amendment, but also state officers and employees, school directors, superintendents, principals, and teachers.

The chief purpose of the First Amendment is to encourage a free expression and exchange of ideas however unusual, unpopular, distasteful, or radical, without threat of punishment or reprisal. This free expression and exchange is vital to education in a democracy.

Therefore:

Students have the right of freedom of expression, subject only to the responsibilities to keep such expression from disrupting the educational process, and to allow other points of view to be expressed. Students also have the right to be free from dress codes, subject only to the responsibility to observe reasonable standards of health, safety and cleanliness.

Free speech and expression include not only the actual saying of words, but also symbolic speech such as the wearing of buttons, armbands, decals, and the like. (A student's right to exercise this freedom may not be limited merely because there is a hypothetical fear of disturbance).

Freedom of press includes not only the printing and distribution of a school newspaper, but also the printing and distribution of other newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, leaflets and other literature.

Right to Privacy

Parents, students and former students are guaranteed the rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records. Specifically:

A parent has the right to inspect the school records of his/her child; A parent has the right to a hearing to contest records that are allegedly inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the rights of privacy of the student; Search of an area assigned to a student shall be made in the presence of a witness and, when reasonably possible, in the presence of the student; Illegal items as defined by federal, state, or local law or a provision of this policy and which may reasonably be determined to be a threat to health, safety, or security of others may be seized by the school authorities and turned over to the police department; and Items which are used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process may be temporarily removed from a student's possession.

Confidentiality of Records

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel

working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without the specific, informed, written consent of the parent or the student.

Freedom from Corporal Punishment

While “reasonable” corporal punishment is permissible in certain other states, Massachusetts law clearly forbids it: The power of the School Committee or of any teacher or other employee or agent of the School Committee to maintain discipline upon school property shall not include the right to inflict corporal punishment upon any pupil.

The above statement, however, refers only to punishment. As the student has the right to protection from bodily harm, so do all other members of the community. Therefore, in instances where there is a need for a teacher, Principal, or other school official to defend himself or others, to divest a student of a dangerous instrument, or to prevent injury to property, reasonable force may be used. All acts and threats of physical violence are inconsistent with the maintenance of the humane institution and are prohibited.