

ROBERT E. MELICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

2019-2020

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Mission Statement of the Robert E. Melican Middle School

The mission of the Robert E. Melican Middle School is to pursue the highest level of educational excellence for all students by embracing our district's core values and Strategic Plan. Planning and implementing thoughtful curriculum, grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework documents, whose standards serve as the foundation for all educational development is the goal of all Melican staff. A professional learning community, with student learning at the forefront of all decision-making, provides the optimal environment for the successful development of students' cognitive, academic, physical, social, and emotional needs as they travel this "in the middle" pathway from elementary school to high school.

Belief Statements

The Robert E. Melican Middle School community is a partnership among teachers, staff, administrators, parents and students. These belief statements guide our work:

1. Melican Middle School is a professional learning community characterized by shared purpose, collaborative activity, continuous improvement and collective responsibility.
2. Students learn best in a safe environment characterized by a positive school culture which values respect, dignity and diversity.
3. A Standards-Based Curriculum model, with differentiated instructional experiences that offer multiple pathways for all learners to reach and exceed the Framework Standards, is the foundation for all classrooms.
4. Technological advances will continue to shape twenty-first century living; keeping practices current and understanding the impact on education is integral to our vision and success.
5. Communication between educators and parents must be ongoing and is vital for optimal student achievement.
6. Our ultimate goal is to prepare students to become self-sufficient adults and lifelong learners who will responsibly contribute in the global community.

School Structure & Curriculum

The Melican Middle School houses sixth, seventh and eighth graders, all of whom are in a process of transition. In grade six that transition is from the elementary school, and in grades seven and eight, that transition is toward the high school. It is a time of personal transition from pre-adolescence into young adulthood. It is a time to explore, to test, to reach toward new horizons, and to discover personal strengths and talents that will become the basis for higher learning and a productive existence.

The school is structured to support students during this important growth period. Each of the three grade levels is divided into two teaching teams, with four core teachers. Students are grouped heterogeneously as "sections" and move as a group through English, reading, science and social studies classes. Mathematics classes are grouped by ability into two levels in grades 6 and 7, a third level of "Fast-Paced Algebra" is offered in grade 8. Specialist subjects are taught throughout the week to each section, and students stay in the same configuration

for homeroom period each morning. For further information on school curriculum, please go to the school website at www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican. All curricula are guided by the Massachusetts State Frameworks.

General Information, A-Z

A

Absence (Including Extended Absences)

When a student is absent for the day, parents should call the absence line (351-7008) before 8:00 a.m. to give notification. If the school is not notified, a call will be made to verify the absence. A student must be in school by 11:00 a.m. to be considered Tardy Present. If dismissing, the student must stay in school until 11:00 a.m. to be considered Dismissed Present.

Each student must also submit a written excuse to the homeroom teacher within forty-eight hours for each day he/she is absent. The note should give the date(s) and reason for the absence(s) and be signed by a parent. In cases of excessive absence, the administration may seek the aid of the School Attendance Officer in accordance with Massachusetts General Law.

A documented absence or tardiness resulting from properly reported illness, medical appointment, court appearances, religious holidays, or urgent cause will ordinarily be excused. Parents will be contacted if we have not received notification from a parent of the reason for a student's absence within 3 days of the absence.

Making arrangements for missed assignments is the responsibility of the student. Parents and students are also encouraged to check teacher websites for assignments and updates.

In the case of long-term illness or hospitalization, a signed form from a doctor can verify the need for home tutoring. In such a case, please contact the school so arrangements can be made.

After School Activities

After school activities include a variety of intramural sports, performing musical groups, Yearbook, Student Council, Newspaper, Computer Club, special interest clubs, and interscholastic field hockey, basketball, baseball, softball, cross country, and track and field. Other activities are offered during the year such as MathCounts and the school musical. Each fall, a detailed list of after school offerings is sent home to parents and published in the school newsletter. Please visit our school website for a complete list of after school activities. Most activities are completed by 3:25 p.m. on Tuesday through Thursday when the late bus is provided. Activities extending beyond 3:25 p.m. require other transportation arrangements.

Arrival and Dismissal

School is open for student arrival at 7:25 a.m. Buses are scheduled to arrive at MMS on or before 7:40 a.m. When students arrive, seventh and eighth graders report to the cafeteria, and sixth graders report to the gymnasium. At 7:40, students report to their lockers and then to homeroom, which runs from 7:51-7:58.

School dismisses at 2:25 and bus riders exit from the front lobby directly onto their buses. Students who walk home or who are being picked up by parents wait in the cafeteria until the buses have left the school property.

Students who remain after school on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday may take one of two late buses, or get picked up by a parent. Late bus routes are different from regular runs. (Refer to **Late Bus**)

After school parent pickup follows a different plan than regular dismissal. Cars move into the inner parking lot, closest to the school. Cars line up curbside, pulling as far down by the tennis courts as possible. Students exit from the school, into their waiting cars. Students are not allowed to walk across the parking lot without a parent escort because of safety concerns.

For the safety and welfare of our students, parents are reminded that Massachusetts law prohibits the idling of motor vehicles on school grounds in excess of five (5) minutes. M.G.L. c.90, §16A. Violators will be subject to a fine.

Assault Policy Overview

An assault on school personnel is considered an extremely serious breach of conduct. Suspension and/or expulsion from school are probable consequences of such actions.

Athletics

There are numerous opportunities for students to participate in athletics. Some of them are intramural and club sports; others are interscholastic and involve contests against other schools. Some of the interscholastic teams require students to try out, while others are open to everyone. Safety is the top priority of our athletic program.

Medical Requirements and Safety Responsibilities

Medical Exams/ Permission Forms

All students who plan to participate in athletics must have written proof of a current physical examination (within 13 months of athletic involvement) signed by a physician. The coach will have the responsibility of making sure this documentation is on file in the Health Office.

Athletes will not be allowed to participate without the completion of the Medical Exam, Medical Information and Permission Form, and Team Contract.

Athletic Injuries

Injuries to athletes will occur in interscholastic athletics at all levels regardless of the amount of precautions taken.

The coach will have the responsibility of administering to all athletic injuries and making the proper recommendations. He/she must be prepared to recognize and properly administer first aid or refer injuries to the appropriate medical personnel.

Accident/Injury Report Procedures

The coach will complete an Injury Report form immediately for all athletic injuries or accidents that involve any student under his/her control during practice, contest, or while traveling to or from a contest. This form should be turned in to the Health Office the following morning with the coach retaining a copy.

Return to Participation

Student-athletes that are injured (concussions, broken bones, ligament sprains, muscle strains, dislocations) can only return to play when authorized by the student's PCP, orthopedic surgeon, or specialty physician. Written authorization must be presented to the Health Office prior to return.

Concussion Protocol

Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not be allowed to return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

If an athlete is removed from the contest, evaluated and allowed to return to play, no follow-up procedure is required. If, however, an athlete is removed from a contest, evaluated and not allowed to return to play, the following procedure must take place before the individual can return to play:

- The student-athlete's parents will be notified
- The student-athlete must see his/her primary care physician
- The student-athlete must have a signed note from his/her primary care physician stating his/her condition and recommendations for return to participation. Final clearance for participation must come from a physician and be on file in the Health Office prior to the athlete returning to play.

B

Backpacks

Students are not allowed to carry backpacks during the school day. However, they are necessary to carry homework, books, materials, and projects back and forth to school on a daily basis. During the day, backpacks are left in lockers. Students will have scheduled breaks in order to gather necessary materials for classes and lunch.

The dimensions of the lockers are 58" x 10" x 10.5."

Band/ Band Sectionals

Concert band introduces students to standard band literature and focuses on improving techniques for performance. All band musicians perform in grade-level concert bands, which meet twice a week, and perform in both winter and spring concerts. Concert bands for students in grades seven and eight also perform in the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association (M.I.C.C.A.) Festival each spring.

Other instrumental ensembles include the honors wind ensemble, chamber ensemble, stage band, and jazz bands. There are auditions at the start of the year to form these groups.

Band students also have weekly instrumental lessons called sectionals. In order to attend sectionals, students miss classes throughout the year. The sectional schedule is done on a six-week rotation so students do not miss the same class each week. Students should be able to attend sectionals if they ask the teacher AND if they do not have a test or quiz that period. Students are responsible for any and all missed work.

Bathroom Procedure

Students should use the bathrooms during break times. If there is an emergency during a class, however, students must get permission from their teachers. Teachers sign corridor passes and students sign out of the room. Students need passes at all times when they are out of classrooms.

Bicycles

Bicycle racks are located in the front of the building. Owners should provide locks to secure their bicycles in the rack. Bicycles are to be ridden only on hard topped surfaces.

Bullying Policy A-150*

The following information is taken from the Northborough Public Schools Policy Manual, A-150:

Bullying is prohibited. Northborough Public Schools shall not tolerate bullying on school grounds, school busses or any activity on or off campus.

Definition:

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

- Physical Bullying: any physical intimidation or assault
- Verbal Bullying: remarks of a demeaning nature, demeaning jokes, stories, rumors-spreading, repeated threats of any kind, stated or implied, name-calling, cruel jokes about appearance, disabilities, religion, gossiping, cruel rumors, or false accusations
- Relational or Psychological Bullying: deliberate actions to effect the social isolation/exclusion of another student or student

Violations will be addressed in conformance with existing disciplinary policies.

Responding to Bullying Reports (Please see also Northborough Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan on our website)

Bullying may involve but is not limited to:

- Unwanted teasing
- Threatening/intimidating behavior
- Stalking or cyber-stalking
- Cyber-bullying
- Physical violence
- Theft or destruction of school or personal property
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
- Spreading of rumors and/or falsehoods

When the Northborough Public Schools (NPS) receive a report of bullying, the following steps will be taken:

- Listen to parent, teacher, and/or students to gather information – initial reporting stage.
- Have staff member/parent/student complete the Northborough Public Schools Harassment/Bullying Form (*if not completed already*).
- Involve administrators (*if they are not yet involved*).
- Interview all parties involved (including the aggressor, target, and witnesses), focusing on the incident(s).
- Discuss behavior with guidance counselors, school psychologist, special education liaison (*if appropriate*), and teachers to assess the situation.
- Determine if bullying behavior has occurred. (**Other inappropriate behavior that does not constitute bullying will be handled as indicated in the handbook.*)
- Decide on consequences for unacceptable behavior (*if any*).
- Follow-up with the aggressor.
- Follow-up with the target.
- Follow-up with the parent who reported, the parent of the aggressor, the parent of the target, and the parents of the witnesses (*when appropriate*).
- Administrators will acknowledge receipt of a report within three school days.
- If warranted, an investigation will be conducted and completed within 10 school days.
- Parents of the target and bully will be notified of the results of the investigation and the school will take appropriate action.

All reports of bullying are dealt with respectfully and confidentially. We treat each student as an individual and use each case as a learning opportunity. When appropriate, a range of disciplinary consequences may be utilized as noted in the student handbook including, but not limited to, loss of privileges, removal from part of all of the school community, and suspension from school.

Please be aware that M.G.L. c.71, §37O, also requires that legal action be taken against those who file false reports or who make unfounded accusations.

Bus Procedures

For safety reasons, students must

- Follow the driver's instructions
- Remain seated when the buses are moving
- Ride only on assigned buses

Students must not

- Distract the driver
- Throw objects or destroy property
- Roughhouse or use abusive language
- Put arms/items out the window

Bus routes are printed in the newspapers and posted on our website prior to the opening of school. Be sure to consult the schedules at the beginning of the school year.

Bus service is provided as a special privilege and should be treated as such. Drivers are instructed to report misconduct to the administration on a Bus Disciplinary Form, which the school then sends to the parent. Reasons for disciplinary action are stated, and the driver's decision about the need for a warning or a suspension is indicated. In case of suspension, dates are given, and the suspension begins the morning following the offense to give the parents an opportunity to arrange alternate transportation.

In cases when a student must take a different bus, a note from a parent stating which bus and why must be turned in to the office in the morning. The note, with office approval, is to be picked up by the student at dismissal. Students will not be allowed on a different bus without the approved note. At times, buses are full and students are not allowed to transfer to them.

C

Cafeteria (See Lunch)

Cancellation of School (See School Closings)

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not to be used during the school day (from the start of morning homeroom until student dismissal on or around 2:25). A parent or guardian may be asked to come and pick up the phone at the end of the school day.

Change of Address, Phone, Contact Information

Please notify the school office in writing of any changes to information on file. (See *Contact Information*)

Chorus

Choruses are performance based. They focus on music reading skills, continued development of the singing voice, and part-singing. Chorus is a graded course and available to all students; no audition is necessary. Each grade has its own chorus that meets twice a week within the regular schedule.

There is also a Select Chorus, an auditioned group of seventh and eighth graders, a Boys' Chorus and a Girls' Chorus. These groups meet before and after school.

Chorus students explore vocal styles of music and perform a variety of repertoires. Performance opportunities include concerts, special school-wide assemblies, and other events.

Conferences (See Parent-Teacher Conferences)

Contact Information

On the first day of school, students receive a contact form for parents to complete. Please return it within the first week of school. If changes occur throughout the year, please inform the main office immediately.

D

Delayed School Opening (See School Closings)

Detention (See Guide to Mutual Respect)

Directed Study Halls

Students have directed study halls each week. During these periods, students work on assignments and projects, receive extra help from classroom teachers, or participate in special enrichment activities. Students are responsible for bringing the necessary materials and assignments to these sessions.

The number of directed study halls in each student's schedule depends upon involvement in band, chorus, and other learning considerations

Discipline (See Guide to Mutual Respect) *Dismissal Policy (See Arrival and Dismissal)*

Dress Code

Student dress is a matter of personal pride as well as an indication of respect for the learning environment. Students are encouraged to remember that learning is hard work and distractions that can be eliminated, such as defining the type of dress that is appropriate for the school environment, enable everyone to go about this important task more successfully. While clothing styles will change over time, and specific articles of dress or accessories may emerge and require further review, we provide the following general guidelines for dressing as a student at the Robert E. Melican Middle School:

Hats or head coverings of any type, except those worn for religious purposes, shall not be worn by either male or female students.

Clothing shall not reveal any part of a student's underwear.

Garments with messages or labeling that advocate or promote drugs, alcohol, violence, vulgarities, ethnic slurs, are of a questionable nature, or are generally considered to be in bad taste, shall not be worn.

Garments that do not sufficiently cover the torso, chest, legs, back, or feet are not appropriate.

Accessories that are deemed a safety hazard, or which could cause injury to the wearer or others, including wallet chains, and spiked jewelry are not appropriate.

Students will be asked to change the article in question at the request of any staff member. This dress code is in effect for all school events.

Dropping off Items Procedure

Items brought in during the day for students should be left in the main office. Items should be clearly labeled with first and last name and grade. Students are called to the office to pick up items at 7:58, 9:26, and 11:00 a.m.

Drugs and Alcohol

Illegal drug and alcohol use is a fact of life in today's society. To use or not to use such substances is a decision that all young people must address for themselves at an early age. Governments, schools, and social programs have attempted to prevent such abusive behavior by young people through school and the community. The Robert E. Melican Middle School strives to harbor an environment that is safe and conducive to our students learning. Drugs and alcohol take away from both of these aspects.

In order to maintain a safe and optimal educational environment, the school forbids drug and alcohol possession and use. Possession, use and/or sale of unlawful drugs and/or alcohol are crimes and will result in disciplinary action including but not limited to: confiscation of materials; parent/guardian notification; suspension or expulsion from school; police involvement; arrest; criminal prosecution; etc.

E

Early Dismissal

For early dismissal, students should turn in a written request to the office in the morning. In an emergency, parents should phone the school.

In order to pick up a student, parents **must** come into the office, identify themselves, and sign the student out. The student will then be called to the office. Please allow ample time for this procedure. For safety reasons, parents may be asked to show identification. Parents do not need to sign students back into school.

Early School Closing (See School Closings)

Electronic Devices

If students bring electronic devices to school, they should keep them locked in their lockers. The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. If students use these devices during school, they will be taken away and given to the assistant principal. If a student has an electronic device taken away twice, a parent may be asked to pick it up from the office.

Elevator Use

A student who has a medical condition that necessitates the use of the elevator along with a doctor's note may have his/her parents request an elevator pass for his/her use. Students pick up elevator passes from the nurse in the morning and then return them at the end of the school day.

Emergency Contact

During the first week of school, students bring home a data sheet to secure information and update school records.

Emergency Response Plan

Melican Middle School, in collaboration with other town departments, has created an emergency response plan that is made available to and reviewed with all staff members on an annual basis. Due to public safety guidelines, copies are not available to the public.

F

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to support school activities. Please contact the guidance department for more information.

Field Trips

Curriculum enhancing field trips occur throughout the year. Notification and permission slips are sent home with students in advance of the trip. Permission slips **must** be returned in order for students to participate.

Financial Obligations

Students who have been permitted the use of school property (textbooks, chromebooks, library books, locks, etc.) or who have borrowed school monies are responsible for the return or payment of these items before transfer to another school or the close of school in June. Refunds will be given for any monies paid should the items be returned or found later.

Fire Drills

A fire drill procedure sign is located in every room. Students and teachers will evacuate the building quickly and quietly according to these directions. Safety is dependent upon the orderly evacuation of all.

The fire drill procedures are reviewed and rehearsed on the first day of school and periodically throughout the year.

G

Guidance Counselors

Guidance support is available to all students. Appointments can be made in the guidance office before or after school. Parents may also make appointments with a guidance counselor by phoning the school. Each student is assigned a guidance counselor in grade six, and this counselor works with him/her for all three middle school years.

Guide to Mutual Respect (See Table of Contents)

H

Half Days

Half days for students occur throughout the year. They are listed on the Northborough Public School Calendar; they typically include parent conference days (two in the fall and one in the winter), Open House, the days before Thanksgiving and December vacation, and the last day of school.

Harassment

Harassment in any form is not tolerated. Situations are managed expediently, in accordance with the Guide to Mutual Respect and state and federal laws.

Hazing Law Overview

Hazing is not an acceptable means of encouraging bonding with an organization, club, or athletic team. It is a crime in the State of Massachusetts. If a student organizes or participates in hazing, criminal prosecution may follow.

Health Information

A registered nurse is available during school hours from 7:30 to 2:30. The Robert E. Melican Middle School has one full-time nurse and one half-time nurse. All nurses are licensed by the MA Board of Registration and by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Nurses provide first aid for injuries, intervention for chronic health problems, referrals to physicians and health professionals, and act as liaisons for community health concerns. Nurses maintain a medical record for every student, which is kept on file throughout the student's school career. Nurses are members of the school's Crisis Team, the Child Protection Team, and the Student Support Team. They work closely with administrators to ensure a healthy and safe school community.

A Health Emergency Contact form is sent home at the beginning of school. Please use this form to indicate any significant medical conditions, including medications taken at home. It is important to inform the nurse about any changes in your child's medical history, or medication updates throughout the school year. Also included are Emergency Contacts, who will be contacted in the event of a medical emergency should parents be unavailable.

Immunization and Physical Exams

Massachusetts State Law mandates written documentation of up-to-date immunizations before entrance into the Northborough-Southborough Public School district. A copy of a recent physical exam is required before students enter kindergarten, fourth grade, seventh grade and tenth grade, and for all new students.

At the middle school level, all students entering grade 7 must present a certificate of immunization stating that a tetanus (Tdap) booster has been administered, as well as documentation of two varicella vaccinations. Students are not able to start seventh grade without this documentation.

Students who intend to try out for interscholastic sports (Field Hockey, Cross Country, Basketball, Track, Baseball, and Softball) must follow the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) guidelines related to health documentation. Documentation includes a recent physical examination (within 13 months of trying out), which must be delivered to the Health Office prior to try-outs. Without this documentation students are not permitted to participate.

Medication at School

Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 105 CMR-1171, our nurses must have a medication order from a licensed prescriber in order to administer any medication, whether it is a prescription drug or an over-the-counter medication. The following policy applies in the Northborough-Southborough Public School District:

- A. Students are prohibited from carrying medications of any kind on their person or having them in their possession without prior approval of the school nurse.
- B. No medication will be administered in school without a written order from a licensed prescriber. This written order must be signed and dated for a closed period of time and include instructions for dispensing.
- C. In addition, a written dated request signed by a parent/guardian must be submitted to the nurse concerning the dispensing of medication.
- D. Prescribed medications, over-the-counter medications, and inhalers to be administered under the conditions stated above must be brought to the nurse by the parent or guardian in the original properly labeled container.
- E. For short-term prescription medication, those requiring administration for ten (10) school days or fewer, the pharmacy labeled container may be used in lieu of a licensed prescriber's order. If the nurse has a question, she may request a written order from a licensed prescriber.
- F. Each school calendar year requires a new written order from the licensed prescriber, and written parent/guardian request for the dispensing of the medication. Written parent/guardian consent forms and licensed prescriber order forms may be obtained from the school nurse.

Screenings

Massachusetts mandates the following screenings be completed:

Vision – Grades K-5, 7 and 10

Hearing – Grades K-3, 7 and 10

Postural – Grades 5-9

Results of Vision, Hearing and Postural screenings are reported to parents when outside referrals appear necessary.

Parents who want their child excused from the above screenings must submit a written note to the Health Office for each screening.

Guidelines for Student Absences

Fever: A temperature higher than 100.4°F is considered a fever. Students should be fever-free, without the use of fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.

Vomiting and Diarrhea: Student should be symptom-free for at least 12 hours before returning to school.

Strep throat - A sore throat in conjunction with a fever, headache, stomachache, or dizziness may indicate strep throat. Strep is verified medically. Upon verification, please notify the Health Office. Students must complete 24 hours of medication and be fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication before returning to school.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye): The signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis include redness in the eye area, itchy eyes, and yellow or green crusty discharge. Contact your pediatrician for a proper diagnosis. Students may attend school within 24 hours of treatment.

Chicken Pox: If a pediatrician has confirmed Chicken Pox, it is imperative that the Health Office be contacted immediately, according to Department of Public Health Guidelines.

A healthy body maximizes success in school. Please contact the Health Office with any medical questions throughout the year.

Homeroom

Morning homeroom runs from 7:50 to 7:53 a.m. During this time, opening routines are conducted: attendance and lunch count is taken, requests for late buses are noted, and parent notes are collected. Upon arrival to homeroom at 7:50 students should have all of their materials for first period class. Afternoon homeroom runs from 2:22 to 2:25 p.m.

Announcements are also made during this time, and it is important that students listen carefully as reminders are given concerning activities, schedule changes, room changes, and items of community interest.

Homework Policy

Overview

Homework is a necessary part of our educational program, which fulfills both academic and non-academic purposes. It refers to work assigned by a teacher to be completed by the student outside of class time and is not limited to that which can be written. Homework is intended to provide an opportunity for integrating home and school experiences. It should help foster the concept of learning as a lifelong process.

Consistent with the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, we believe homework should serve many purposes:

- Improve academic performance
- Help students organize and budget their time
- Extend learning and critical thinking beyond the school day
- Develop individual responsibility, decision making skills and independent study skills
- Provide additional time for the application and reinforcement of new skills and concepts
- Encourage innovation and creativity
- Develop diverse interests that might enhance later experiences in life
- Keep parents involved in and informed about curriculum, skills and strategies being developed.

Suggested time guidelines are as follows:

Grade 6 an average of 60-90 minutes per day

Grades 7-8 an average of 60-120 minutes per day

Naturally, some students may require more or less time to complete assignments. In general, students will receive homework on a daily basis Monday through Thursday. At times, homework assignments may involve weekend and holiday work as well. Teachers should take into account student commitments when assigning long-term projects that encompass a holiday or vacation.

A successful homework program depends on a successful partnership of student, teacher, and parent.

Responsibilities of students:

- Receive and/or record assignments daily.
- Ask for clarification or help if an assignment is not understood.
- Show evidence of effort and concern for quality work.
- Inform the teacher of any difficulties in completing tasks assigned.
- Complete/deliver assignments on time.
- Make up missed assignments.

Responsibilities of teachers:

- Communicate to students and parents, in writing, at the beginning of the school year, homework expectations, including the effect of homework on the grade, and the consequences for not completing assignments.

- Provide time for student questions to clarify directions.
- Ensure that homework assignments are meaningful and varied.
- Coordinate assigned work to meet recommended time guidelines.
- Consider the individual needs and abilities of all students.
- Monitor the progress of long-term assignments.
- Respond to each assignment promptly (research indicates that prompt feedback on homework leads to greater academic achievement).
- Accept late homework with the understanding that it may accrue less credit.

Responsibilities of parents:

- Promote a positive attitude toward homework and reinforce its value.
- Foster pride in the completed task.
- Provide a quiet time and place in which homework and the necessary materials to complete the assignment.
- Communicate with the teacher if there are questions or difficulties regarding assignments.
- Provide assistance in meeting an assignment when needed.
- Encourage and help the child to grow into an independent worker.
- Support the consequences when homework is not completed.

Adopted: June 3, 1987
Revised: September 6, 1995
Revised: January 5, 2000
Reviewed: October 2, 2002

I

Immunizations

Our nurses enforce the schedule of immunizations issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. At the middle school level, the target year is grade seven. Prior to enrolling in 7th grade, the student must have fulfilled all of the immunization requirements, and documentation must be in the health office before the start of the school year. Students without documentation are excluded from school.

Inappropriate Items

Electronic devices may not be used before, during, or after school. If students choose to bring them to school, they must be kept in their lockers and they must be turned off. The school cannot be responsible for items taken from student lockers.

If discovered, electronic devices are confiscated and returned at the end of the day. If confiscated more than once, a parent must pick them up.

Internet Use

All students sign an Internet Acceptable Use Policy form at the beginning of the school year. This outlines appropriate use of the Internet at school.

Insurance

Student insurance forms are sent home at the opening of school to give parents the option of coverage during school hours, twenty-four hour coverage, or no insurance at all. The form must be signed and returned even if no coverage is desired.

L

Late Bus

There are three late buses, A, B, and C, and they run on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons at 3:30 p.m. Late bus routes, which are different from typical daily bus routes, are posted on the school's website and are published in the newsletter. These buses are available for students who stay after school for any reason.

Locks and Lockers

Each student is assigned two locks and lockers at the beginning of school, one for coats and books, and one for gym clothes and sneakers. The care of both is the responsibility of the student.

Only school issued locks may be used on school lockers. Parental permission slips and student signatures are required for locks, and such agreements will be binding. Students must keep the combinations to themselves, and they are responsible for returning the locks in June. If a lock is lost, a charge of \$5.00 must be paid before another is issued.

The dimensions of the corridor lockers are 58" x 10" x 10.5".

Lost and Found

Lost items should be given to the office. A lost and found box is located in the cafeteria; students should check there and the office for missing items.

Lunch

The school provides two or more lunch options every day. To assist in the selection process, a menu is posted on our website. It is important that students indicate their lunch choices during homeroom so the cafeteria staff can prepare the appropriate number of servings. A juice vending machine is available in the cafeteria.

You may wish to pre-pay for student lunches. Please visit our website and click on the link to do so.

Carbonated beverages and glass containers are not allowed at lunch.

M

Make-Up Work (see Absences)

Math Placement

Mathematics is the only core subject where students are not heterogeneously placed. Two ability levels exist in grades six and seven. Placement decisions are made using teacher feedback, MCAS scores and report card grades. In grade eight, a third level, called "Fast Paced Algebra" is offered for students who meet the criteria. This course is a high school freshman course intended to accelerate those learners ready for Honors Geometry in grade nine. The curriculum leader is in contact with parents about curricula and placement decisions.

MCAS Testing

MCAS testing occurs in the spring for grades 6, 7, and 8. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website details the testing date windows and the subject tests for each grade.

Medication (See Health Office)

N

Newsletter

The newsletter is published monthly and is posted on the school's website.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Northborough-Southborough Public Schools, in accordance with federal and state laws, prohibit discrimination in their operations and provide equal employment and educational opportunities to all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, marital status, homelessness, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin or disability. Northborough-Southborough complies with all applicable State and Federal Laws, including but not limited to, Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151C, c.76, §5, and c. 71B.

Northborough-Southborough has a duly appointed individual responsible for the overall monitoring, auditing and ensuring compliance with this policy as it pertains to students attending the Northborough-Southborough Public Schools. For compliance issues, or in the event that individuals believe they have been discriminated against in any of Northborough-Southborough's educational activities, please contact Barbara Goodman, Section 504 Coordinator, 53 Parkerville Road, Southborough, MA 01772 (508-486-5115). Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Superintendent of Schools or directly to the United States Department of Education, Region 1 - Office for Civil Rights, 5 Post Office Square, Boston, MA 02110

Non-Discrimination/ Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action / Title IX/ ADA/Title 1/Section 504 / Chapter 622 Grievance Procedure

The Northborough-Southborough Public Schools, in accordance with federal and state laws, prohibits discrimination in its operations. This policy, providing equal employment and educational opportunities to all persons regardless of their race, color, gender, gender identity, religion, marital status, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or homelessness, will apply to all persons affiliated with the Northborough-Southborough Public Schools including students, parents, employees and prospective employees. The Director of Student Support Services, Barbara Goodman, 53 Parkerville Road, Southborough, MA 01772, telephone number (508) 486-5115, is responsible for the coordination of Title IX, Section 504, ADA, Title I, the Age Act and Chapter 622 in the Northborough, Southborough and Northborough-Southborough Regional School Districts and will be responsible for coordinating the following grievance procedures:

A grievance shall be a complaint by a student, parent, prospective employee or staff member, alleging discrimination on account of race, color, gender, gender identity, religion, marital status, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability, which is filed no more than 30 business days after the alleged act and/or statement.

An aggrieved party must institute proceedings hereunder within **30 business days** of the event or events giving rise to the grievance or with **30 business days** from the date the aggrieved party had knowledge or reasonably should have had knowledge of the event or events giving rise to the grievance. Exceptions to this timeliness requirement will be made for good cause in the discretion of the Director of Student Support Services. The four levels of the grievance process for complaints include:

LEVEL 1

Any person who believes they have been discriminated against or harassed should report their concern promptly to any teacher, guidance counselor, or building Principal/Supervisor. The school staff member should then promptly report the concern to the school principal or Director of Student Support Services. In the event that the complaint is made against the Principal or the grievant's Supervisor, the complaint will be investigated by the Director of Student Services. District staff is expected to report possible incidents of discrimination or harassment of students and fellow employees to the building Principal/Supervisor. The discussion shall be documented in written form.

The Principal/Supervisor will promptly investigate every complaint of discrimination and consult with the Director of Student Support Services as necessary to complete the investigation of the complaint. If the Principal/Supervisor determines that discrimination or harassment has occurred, he/she shall take steps to eliminate the discriminatory or harassing environment, which may include but is not limited to determining what disciplinary action should be taken against the person(s) who engaged in discrimination or harassment, if any; and determining what corrective and/or remedial steps are necessary to prevent recurrence of any discriminatory behavior, including but not limited to harassment, and to correct its discriminatory effects if appropriate. This investigation and determination by the Principal/Supervisor shall be within fifteen (15) business days after the receipt of the complaint by the Principal/Supervisor. The investigator may extend the investigation period beyond fifteen (15) school days because of extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to availability and cooperation of witnesses, complexity of the investigation, school vacation periods, and the involvement of law enforcement and other outside agency investigations. If the investigator extends the investigation, he or she will notify the Complainant of the extension.

The investigator will inform the alleged target of the discrimination and/or harassment and the person(s) who was the subject of the complaint of the results of the investigation (in accordance with applicable state and federal privacy laws) in writing within fifteen (15) school days of receipt of the complaint, unless the investigation is extended in the discretion of the investigator. This notice of the outcome of the investigation will inform the complainant as to whether or not the investigation determined that the conduct occurred, any individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant or any sanctions imposed on the perpetrator that directly relate to the complainant (e.g., stay away order or no contact order), and other steps the school has taken to eliminate the discrimination or hostile environment, if one has been found to exist, and prevent recurrence. The perpetrator should not be notified of the individual remedies offered or provided to the complainant (e.g., counseling; alternative classes, etc.). This determination shall be final unless the aggrieved party elects to appeal to the next Level II.

LEVEL II

If the complainant or the student's parents/legal guardians are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, an appeal may be made to the Director of Student Services within ten (10) school days after receiving notice of the outcome of the investigation. In the appeal, the appellant should identify any specific alleged factual or legal errors and explain why the errors should result in a different conclusion. The Director of Student Services shall review the investigation and may conduct further investigation if deemed appropriate. Within five (5) school days of receipt of any such appeal, the Director of Student Services shall decide whether or not to reopen the investigation, uphold the principal or designee's determination, or reverse the principal or designee's determination. The Director of Student Services shall provide written notification of that determination to both the Complainant and the accused.

The Director of Student Services' decision shall be final, subject to further written appeal to the Superintendent within five (5) days of receipt of the decision of the Director of Student Services.

LEVEL III

The Superintendent of Schools or his /her designee shall issue a written response to the complainant within ten (10) business days after the receipt of the written appeal.

Confidentiality will be maintained during all grievance and investigation procedures to the extent consistent with the District's obligations under law and under applicable collective bargaining agreements. See the Algonquin Conduct and Discipline Guidelines to address disciplinary procedures related to issues violating this policy. NOTE: The Northborough, Southborough, Northborough-

Southborough Regional School Districts urge all individuals in the school community to bring any concerns or complaints of discrimination to the attention of school personnel so that they can resolve the issue; however, individuals are hereby notified that they also have the right to report complaints to:

The United States Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
5 Post Office Square, 8th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02110-1491
Telephone: (617) 289-0111
Fax: 617-289-0150
TDD: 877-521-2172
or
Program Quality Assurance Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Telephone: 781-338-3700
TTY: N.E.T. Relay: 1-800-439-2370
FAX: 781-338-3710

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (E.E.O.C.)
One Congress Street, 10th floor
Boston, MA 02114
1-800-669-4000

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (M.C.A.D.)
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108
617-727-3990

No School (See School Closings)

O

Office Hours

The Melican Middle School office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Two secretaries work to respond to the needs of parents, students, and staff.

Open House

In September, parents have the opportunity to meet the principal, assistant principal, teachers and specialists during the annual Open House. During the evening, parents meet with teachers to learn about curriculum, procedures, and special events.

P

Parental Concerns

Parents are encouraged to call the school to talk with teachers about concerns at any time. Guidance counselors are also available to consult with parents. If problems arise that are not resolved in communications with the teacher or staff member involved, parents should contact the principal or assistant principal. All staff members have email accounts, which use the following format:

First initial last name@nsboro.k12.ma.us
(i.e. mkarb@nsboro.k12.ma.us)

Please check the school's website at www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican for a current listing of staff email addresses.

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

Melican Middle School has an active and supportive PTO. This organization supports field trips, teacher grants, projects, and special events.

The PTO plays an additional positive role in the following ways: conducts election of parents for the School Council, holds fund raising events, helps finance innovative teaching practices, and promotes teacher appreciation activities. PTO meetings are held monthly and are open to all parents. Check the MMS website for dates and times of the meetings.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year, once in the fall and once in the winter. Fall conferences span two days; a student whose last name begins with the letters A-K is scheduled on the first day, and a student with a name beginning with the letters L-Z is scheduled on the second day. Appointments, which are required, are arranged on a first come, first served basis, organized on the return of the flier that is sent home with students. Winter conferences are held on one day in February.

During other times of the year, parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time if a concern arises.

Parking Lot Protocol (See Arrival and Dismissal)

Personal Property and Valuables

Two lockers are loaned to students for personal use, one near homeroom and one in the locker room. Throughout the year, students need to lock their possessions in them. For safety reasons, it is recommended that students do not bring items of value to school.

Preparation for Class

While expectations among teachers may vary, each student is required to come to class with his/her textbook, agenda, pen, pencil, and homework. Success in class is contingent upon being prepared.

Professional Development Days

Days are scheduled during the school year for teacher professional development. Students are not in attendance on these days.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are issued mid-way through each trimester. The report is sent home with the student and requires a parental signature before being returned to the homeroom teacher.

Pupil Absence Notification Program

When a student has accumulated 5 unexcused absences in a school year or misses 2 or more classes on 5 days due to tardiness, the parents will be contacted and a meeting will be held to develop an action plan to address the student's school attendance.

R

Report Cards

Report cards are issued three times each year. In each subject, students receive a letter grade, marks for effort and conduct, and up to three additional comments.

Report cards are sent home with students. Parents are asked to sign report card envelopes and have their children return them to their homeroom teachers within three days.

S

Schedules

A rotating schedule of nine periods each day is used at Melican Middle School. Each grade has a designated lunch period, with sixth graders eating first, followed by seventh and eighth graders.

School Closings

When school closings must be announced, the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough will make use of several different communication tools for notifying students and their families: the district website, local television and radio stations, and a computerized phone messaging system.

Early Closings and Delayed Openings:

When schools must close early or open late due to emergency conditions, the announcement will be posted on the district website, sent to local media stations for announcement, and sent directly to you by phone. This message will be sent to all home, work, and cell phone listings found in the contact information you have given your child's school. When schools close early, students will be bused from their school to their regular afternoon after school destination, unless you have given your child's school office different instructions specifically for early closings.

School Council

In keeping with the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, Melican Middle School has a School Council comprised of the principal, parents, a community representative, and teachers. The council meets monthly to review school needs and to create an annual School Improvement Plan.

Parents are encouraged to consider joining this important group. Openings are posted at the beginning of the school year. Contact the principal if you are interested.

School Transfers

When a student moves to another community and changes schools, a transfer card is issued to the student, and a release form must be signed by a parent to permit the transfer of records. Please notify the office as soon as possible to facilitate a smooth transfer. The student must turn in a checkout sheet, available at the office, indicating all materials have been returned and all financial obligations met.

Sexual Harassment Policy A-100*

It is the policy of the Northborough School Committee to promote and maintain a school environment that is free of sexual harassment. This duty arises from Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 151C, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

Definitions:

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for implementation of these procedures and for insuring that they are consistent with federal law.

Sexual Harassment is defined for student to student interaction as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Harassment is defined for adult to student interaction as any sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual Harassment is also defined as conduct of a sexual nature which:

- affects an individual's employment, academic status or progress
- has a negative impact on an individual's work or academic performance
- creates a work or educational environment that is intimidating, hostile or offensive
- affects benefits, services, honors, programs or activities available to an individual in the education setting

Student Council

Each fall, a Student Council is formed. Representatives from each grade level are elected. These students then elect officers to conduct the weekly meetings.

The Council's various responsibilities include: discussing school climate, representing student concerns, providing a "voice" for the student body, and planning school events.

Student Recognition

The Melican Middle School acknowledges student performance in various ways, including naming team students of the month. Students are also honored in curriculum specific areas such as technology education, physical education, art, and writing. Kindness Cards are given all year long, and a raffle is held once per month.

Student Support Services, Special Education

The Melican Middle School provides many support services for special needs students: grade level learning centers, English Language Learners (ELL), speech therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, and counseling.

Along with specialized services, every attempt is made to modify programs in the general education classrooms to conform to the Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and 504 Plans.

Referrals for students to be considered for special needs services may be initiated by the parents or by teachers and will be reviewed by the Middle School Student Support Team (SST).

Student Support Team (SST)

The Student Support Team meets weekly to discuss and develop plans for struggling learners. The Student Support Team includes the following members: principal, school nurse, guidance counselors, school psychologist, behavior specialist, special education teachers, assistant principal, general education teachers, and any other staff involved with the student(s) being discussed.

T

Tardiness for Class

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Consequences for excessive tardiness vary by teacher.

Tardiness for School

Students who arrive tardy to school are required to check in with the office and pick up a "pass" for their class. Parents are encouraged to help students arrive to school on time. Students should be in school by 7:40 a.m.

Teacher/ Staff Communication

Teachers can be reached by any of the following ways:

1. by email at first initial followed by last name@nsboro.k12.ma.us
2. by calling the office at 508-351-7020
3. by sending in a note with your child or writing in his/her agenda

Team Structure

Each grade is divided into two teams. The eighth grade teams are red and gold. The seventh grade teams are blue and green. The sixth grade teams are orange and purple. Five heterogeneous sections, or classes of students, comprise each team.

Telephone Usage and Messages

The office staff will relay an emergency message to a student as appropriate.

Office phones are for emergency use only. Students are encouraged to make plans for after-school activities before leaving home in the morning.

Cell phones are not to be used during the school day (from the start of morning homeroom until student dismissal on or around 2:25). A parent or guardian may be asked to come and pick up the phone at the end of the school day.

Textbooks

Textbooks are distributed at the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to cover their books and keep them in good condition. Costs will be assessed for lost or damaged books.

If a book is lost during the school year, the student must pay for the cost of that book (typically ranging from \$25-\$75) before receiving another book.

V

Vacations

School vacations are published in the school calendar. Parents are asked to support the need to have students present in school and to schedule their vacations when school is not in session. If students miss school due to vacation plans, the absence is considered unexcused and students are responsible for making up all missed work. Teachers are not required to provide work in advance of vacations.

Visitors

Doors are locked during the day. Visitors are buzzed into the school via a security system. Visitors may be asked to show identification upon arrival, and they will be issued an identification badge.

Other students are not permitted to visit the Middle School during school hours unless arrangements have been made in advance through the main office. Students wishing to visit former teachers may do so after 2:25 p.m. after checking in at the office.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to help in many areas such as tutoring, clerical and library aide work, the sharing of hobbies or special interests, or participation in career awareness programs. The Parent Teacher Organization sends home a sign-up sheet at the start of the year to solicit volunteers and coordinates and accesses these parent volunteers as needed. Other volunteer opportunities are announced throughout the year (e.g. chaperoning field trips, planning the Eighth Grade Farewell Dance).

W

Written Notices

Written notices and reminders are distributed during afternoon homeroom on Friday. Written notices are also posted weekly on the school website in the Backpack Notices section.

*Please see *The Northborough Public Schools Policy Manual* for the complete sexual harassment and bullying policies.

Guide to Mutual Respect

Introduction

The Melican Middle School community desires to maintain a positive learning environment for each and every student. To achieve that goal, each group within the larger community is expected to adhere to four basic behavioral guidelines:

1. Respect yourself,
2. Respect others as you would respect yourself,
3. Respect the physical environment of the school,
4. Respect the learning environment of the school.

Teachers exemplify these expectations by

- Modeling the behavior expected of students,
- Providing enriching educational experiences,
- Knowing and enforcing the citizenship code in a manner geared to prevent disciplinary issues.

Parents exemplify these expectations by

- Participating with the school and its staff in developing and supporting suitable behavioral guidelines,
- Participating appropriately with the school to resolve problematic disciplinary issues.

Students exemplify these expectations by

- Interacting respectfully with all school personnel,

- Supporting their classmates,
- Cooperating with teacher directives,
- Contributing to the learning environment through their positive actions.

The successful implementation of this guideline requires that each of us presume that all parties involved have worth and dignity and that they are contributing members of this educational community. We must interact with each other always remembering these precepts.

To assure that we reach these positive goals, it is necessary that we delineate those behaviors, which are unacceptable in our learning environment and make clear the consequences of such actions.

Offenses fall into three categories.

Category A - those that are monitored by the individual teacher and relate to classroom management or minor level building-wide offenses

Category B - more serious offenses that are referred to the building-wide disciplinary system

Category C - infractions that are of such a serious nature that immediate and severe action by the Administration is warranted

The Process

Parents will be notified of continued offenses in Category A by the appropriate teacher and/or administrator. Offenses in Categories B and C will result in a call to the home. Parents will be made aware of impending disciplinary action and have an opportunity to discuss ways of resolving the behavioral problems. Students and parents also have the right to speak to a teacher who has initiated the disciplinary action and to the administration if a further explanation or a hearing is necessary.

When a student is suspended, he/she will return to school accompanied by his/her parent/s. A parent conference will be required for the student's reinstatement. (Depending upon the nature and circumstances of the offense, school administrators may decide to hold this conference either prior to or during the suspension.)

Following a third suspension, the parents will be notified that one more suspension of their child will require meeting with the Superintendent of Schools who will decide on further action after examination of the student's entire disciplinary record.

Category A – Classroom Management

Teachers will monitor all elements of classroom/homeroom management. They will respond to inappropriate behaviors by personal interaction with the student, team discussions and communication with the home. Teachers will document these preventative efforts. However, when such actions are non-productive, this documentation will enter the discipline code under Category B. Once these actions have reached Category B level, continued inappropriate behaviors will go directly to Category B.

Examples of inappropriate classroom behaviors in Category A include, but are not limited to: tardiness to class, tardiness to homeroom, disruption of the learning environment, overdue materials, unprepared for class (e.g., no book, pencil).

Additional individual classroom expectations may be generated by the teacher in conjunction with the class.

Category A will also include minor misconduct throughout the building. When offenses in this category accumulate to indicate continuing inappropriate behavior by an individual, this documentation will also enter Serious Category B #11.

Examples of inappropriate school-wide behaviors in Category A include, but are not limited to: minor student abuse, tardiness to school, in corridor without a pass, minor property abuse, minor misconduct anywhere in the school.

Category B – Serious

Offenses in this category represent serious infractions and will therefore result in a response from the administration. Consequences may include lunch detentions, after school detention, reflecting activities, and community service to the school.

Depending on the severity of the circumstances in which the infraction occurred, the administration could assign a suspension for an infraction in this category.

1. Profanity/disrespect to staff by either word or gesture
2. Stealing
3. Student abuse
4. Individual/group harassment of an individual/s
5. Behaviors that seriously disturb the learning environment
6. School vandalism
7. Fighting
8. Forgery of and/or interference with school/home communication
9. Truancy (absent for a whole or part of a day)
10. Inappropriate interaction with teachers or non-teaching staff members outside the classroom.
11. Accumulation of documented classroom misbehaviors documenting a lack of response to the preventive efforts of the teacher, the home and the team, or accumulation of minor offenses from Category A.
12. Blatant refusal to follow the directions of a teacher or administrator.
13. Possession and or use of stink bombs.
14. Possession of tobacco/nicotine substances or paraphernalia
15. Other - with full explanation

Category C- Major Infractions

Some infractions are of such a serious nature that immediate and severe action by the administration is warranted for the purposes of this document, suspension is defined as the temporary exclusion of a student from the regular school program for a specified number of days, generally not to exceed three (3). At the discretion of the administration, suspension can be served externally (student remains home) or internally (student remains at school under supervision). The number of suspension days assigned by the administration depends on the nature of the case.

1. Any aggressive behavior such as, but not limited to
 - A. Purposefully inflicting bodily injury to another person
 - B. Fighting
 - C. Bullying
 - D. Aggression toward an adult by word or gesture
 - E. Other (as determined by the Principal)
2. Any illegal action such as, but not limited to
 - A. Threatening individual or public safety such as pulling a fire alarm
 - B. Possessing materials/articles used as incendiary devices
 - C. Setting fires
 - D. Possessing explosives (as defined by state and/or criminal statutes)
 - E. Smoking/Vaping
 - F. Possessing and/or drinking alcoholic beverages
 - G. Seriously vandalizing school property or another's possessions
 - H. Stealing that may result in police involvement
 - I. Possessing and/or using a controlled substance or any other substance used to alter either mental or physical perception or sensation
 - J. Possessing and/or using any instrument of offensive or defensive combat, or anything used or designed to be used in destroying, defeating, or injuring a person
 - K. Harassing - including but not limited to verbal or physical taunting, threatening, ethnic or sexual harassment, flagging, singly or in a group
 - L. Hazing

- M. Civil Rights Violation and/or Crimes of Hate
- N. Other (as determined by the Principal)

3. Chronic or serious misbehavior that demonstrates complete disrespect for the learning environment and/or others.

Weapons Policy Statement

The Principal has the authority to expel any student who is found on school premises or at a school sponsored event in possession of a dangerous weapon. The Principal has the authority to determine whether an item or implement constitutes a dangerous weapon for purposes of this policy. Such action may result in:

- An immediate ten day out of school suspension
- A hearing to be held within ten school days of the offense
- Implementation of the recommendations of the hearing

Any student committing such a violation must receive:

- Notice in writing of an opportunity for a hearing before the Principal
- An opportunity to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within ten days of suspension or expulsion.

The Principal may choose to suspend rather than expel the student. Further sanctions will also apply if the student is involved in extra curricular activities by the school.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Definitions

Expulsion: the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) consecutive school days.

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

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

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

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

Due Process

In-School Suspension:

Prior to the imposition of an In-School Suspension, the student will be informed of the disciplinary offense and provided with an opportunity to respond. If the principal determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the principal will provide oral

notice to the student and parent of the length of the In-School Suspension and will make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent. On or before the day of the In-School Suspension, the principal will deliver written notice to the parent of the basis for and length of the in-school suspension and inviting the parent to meet to discuss the student's behavior if such a meeting has not already occurred.

Students have the right to appeal an in-school suspension that will result in their in-school suspension for more than ten (10) school days in a school year.

Out-of School Suspension:

In the case of disciplinary offenses not involving: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, the student and parents will be given oral and written notice of the disciplinary offense with which the student is charged and the opportunity to participate in a hearing prior to the imposition of an out-of-school suspension. Written notice of the date and time for the hearing will be provided in English and in the primary language of the Student's home and will identify the disciplinary offense with which the student has been charged, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the student's suspension, and inform the parent and student of the right to interpreter services if necessary to participate in the hearing. Where a student may be subject to a Long-Term Suspension, the Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's right to legal representation (at private expense), the right to present and examine witnesses, the right to review the student record and documents that may be relied upon by the Principal, and the right to request that the hearing be audiotaped.

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

Principal's Hearing:

Short-Term Suspension:

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

Long-Term Suspension:

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

- the right to be represented by counsel or a lay person of the student's choice, at the student's/parent's expense;
- the right to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not
- the right to produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident;
- the right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
- the right to request that the hearing be recorded by the Principal, and to receive a copy of the audio recording upon request.

Principal's Decision:

Based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the Principal will determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and the remedy or consequences to be imposed. The Principal shall exercise discretion in deciding the consequence for the offense and, in cases not involving possession of a controlled substance, a weapon, an assault on staff or felony charges, shall avoid using long-term suspension from school as a consequence until alternatives have been tried. If the Principal decides to suspend or expel the student, written notice of the Principal's decision will be sent to the student and parents in English and the primary language of the home identifying the disciplinary offense, the factual basis for the Principal's decision, the beginning and end dates of the suspension

or expulsion, and the process for appeal. The Principal will also notify the student and parent of the student's opportunity to make academic progress during the period of removal from school in accordance with M.G.L. c. 76, §21.

If the student is in a public preschool program or in grades K through 3, the principal shall send a copy of the written determination to the superintendent and explain the reasons for imposing an out-of-school suspension, whether short-term or long-term, before the suspension takes effect.

Appeals:

Where the student is excluded in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 §37H, the student shall have ten (10) calendar days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent of schools. For exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71 §37H1/2, the student shall have five (5) school days from the effective date of the exclusion to file a written appeal with the superintendent. And for exclusions imposed pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4, the Student shall have five (5) calendar days from the effective date of the suspension imposed by the Principal but shall be granted an extension of seven (7)calendar days upon request.

Academic Progress:

Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of his or her removal from the classroom or school. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, in accordance with the school's education service plan.

BASIS FOR EXPULSION

The following infractions may result in in a student's permanent expulsion:

- Possession of a dangerous weapon
- Possession of a controlled substance
- Assault of any member of the educational staff
- Admission or finding of guilt to a felony or felony delinquency charge

DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The following procedures apply to suspension of students with disabilities when suspensions exceed 10 consecutive schools days or when a pattern has developed for suspensions exceeding 10 cumulative days. These procedures include the responsibilities of the team and the responsibilities of the district.

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

- d. If the team determines that the behavior IS a manifestation of the disability, then the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment or review any existing behavior intervention plan and takes steps (with the consent of the parent) to correct the IEP, the placement, or the behavior intervention plan and the student will not be suspended for the violation found to be a manifestation of his/her disability.
- e. Regardless of the manifestation determination, the district may place the student in an interim alternative setting (as determined by the Team) up to 45 school days:
 1. If the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school or at a school function; or
 2. If the student causes substantial bodily injury to another at school or a school sponsored event; or
 3. If the district provides evidence that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others and a hearing officer/court orders the alternative placement.
- f. The parent shall have the right to appeal the manifestation Team’s determination, the imposition of a disciplinary change in placement, and the student’s placement in an interim alternative educational setting. The student will remain in the disciplinary placement imposed by school authorities pending a decision on the appeal or until the expiration of the disciplinary sanction, whichever comes first.

Positive Behavioral Intervention: A Differentiated Approach

We have implemented a differentiated approach to discipline, utilizing positive behavioral intervention strategies to help students take ownership of their mistakes and to learn from them. This approach is used in conjunction with the Guide to Mutual Respect.

The reasons to take a differentiated approach with discipline are the same as the reasons to differentiate instruction:

- a) One size does not fit all.
- b) The response to the behavior happens in a timely manner as optimal time spent learning is a school-wide goal.
- c) Each student mistake is treated as a learning opportunity.
- d) Students are empowered around the mistakes they make and are involved in the process of 1. “Owning” the mistake, 2. “Fixing” the mistake, and 3. Learning from the mistake.
- e) Students are reflective and thoughtful about the mistakes they make.

Research has shown us that positive behavioral interventions are typically more beneficial than punitive approaches to student behavior. There are always reasons *why* students make the choices they make, and helping them understand those reasons helps them understand how to avoid making the same mistakes again. The use of punitive approaches to discipline has proven largely ineffective and is often counterproductive. Effective positive behavior interventions ensure the safety and dignity of students and staff, preserve the integrity of the learning environment, and address the causes of a student’s misbehavior in order to improve positive behavioral skills and long-term outcomes.

Positive discipline strategies focus on increasing desirable behaviors instead of simply decreasing undesirable ones through negative consequences and/or punishment. Through the process, there are more opportunities for relationships with caring adults, which will prevent discipline problems in the future. When students have a secure relationship with their teachers they are more comfortable taking risks that enhance learning or asking questions when they are unsure and need guidance. Listening to student concerns, responding gently to poor choices and with explanations rather than harsh punishments, and showing positive emotions strengthen the teacher-student relationship, and help students in the long run.

Teachers at Melican have made an effort to go out of their way to show a personal interest in all students and to truly “connect” with them, complimenting positive behaviors, showing interest in students’ lives outside of school, listening to student problems, and collaborating with them to help them.

Through positive behavioral interventions, discipline is fair, corrective, therapeutic, and individualized based on students and their needs. Students also tend to feel less alienated because they are involved in the process. Part of the process involves determining

possible consequences. Aside from the natural consequences that result in a poor decision (i.e. missing a class or classes, meeting with parents, completing a reflection sheet), students are also asked for their input around other consequences that might be necessary. The learning process is long and can be difficult for students, but the overall outcomes are meaningful for students, and they learn from their mistakes.

Sources:

Ausdemore & Marchand-Martella. (Sept. 2005). "School- Wide Positive Behavioral Support: A Continuum of Proactive Strategies for All Students. *New Horizons for Learning* [On-Line]. Available: www.newhorizons.org.
"Fair and Effective Discipline for All Students: Best Practice Strategies for Educators." (2002). *National Association of School Psychologists* [On-Line]. Available: www.naspcenter.org.
Spaulding, Angela (2 Aug. 2005). "The Impact of High School Teacher Behaviors on Student Aggression." *Current Issues in Education*[On-Line]. Available: <http://cie.ed.asu.edu>

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Northborough, Southborough, Northborough/Southborough Regional School Districts

Acceptable Use Policy for Technology – I-200 (6134)

Overview

The Northborough Public School District provides students and staff access to a robust technology infrastructure that includes Internet access. The district's goal in providing this technology is to support and promote educational excellence and a sense of community in our schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication.

All those who use district information technology resources must comply with the written policies covering their use as well as the spirit and intent of those policies. Use of school technology resources must be in support of education and research consistent with educational objectives.

The district is required to comply with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) (<http://www.fcc.gov/cgv/consumerfacts/cipa.html>), which obligates the schools to block or filter Internet access to content that is: (a) obscene, (b) child pornography, or (c) harmful to minors.

No filter is one hundred percent effective and use of such filtering does not guarantee that network users will not come in contact with inappropriate sites. All users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk.

Users are expected to abide by the guidelines listed below for acceptable use of technology. The user is personally responsible for his or her actions in accessing and using district technology resources. Users should be careful not to have their own statements mistakenly attributed to the district. Network storage areas may be reviewed by an administrator to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the system is being used responsibly. Computer storage space is not private and contents may be viewed at any time.

Guidelines

Students are expected to abide by the guidelines listed below for acceptable use of technology resources. The school district has instituted these guidelines to protect students and foster the use of technology in a safe environment. Students are personally responsible for their actions in accessing and using the school's technological resources. Inappropriate use may result in network use and/or account being denied, revoked or suspended, and/or other disciplinary action.

General information

- Illegal activities, including violation of copyright or other contracts, and unauthorized access, including "hacking," are strictly forbidden.
- Network storage areas may be reviewed by school personnel to maintain system integrity and to ensure that the students are using the system responsibly. Network storage should be used only for educational purposes.
- Computer storage space is not private and contents may be viewed at any time.

Acceptable Uses

- Access the school computers, network, Internet and email only for educationally relevant purposes.
- Use personal electronic devices such as cell phones, handhelds, MP3 players, or laptops only for educational purposes, directly related to the curriculum, and at the discretion of the teacher. School rules must be adhered to; see student handbook.
- Connect or install any computer hardware, software, or other electronic devices only with prior approval of the teacher.
- Respect the rights of copyright owners by citing your sources and do not plagiarize work that you find on the Internet.
- Use web based blogging or social networking sites only when directly related to the curriculum and with *direct adult supervision* and permission.
- Promptly disclose to a teacher or administrator any misuse of or damage to equipment.

Safety Issues

- Do not share your personal account or password with anyone, leave the account open and unattended, or use an account assigned to another user.

- Never provide last name, address, telephone number, or school name online.
- Never respond to and always report to a teacher or parent, any messages that make you feel uncomfortable or that are from an unknown origin.
- Promptly disclose to a teacher, if by accident, you encounter materials that violate the rules of appropriate use or if you observe another user accessing inappropriate sites.
- Never arrange a meeting in person with someone you met on-line.
- Do not publicly post private information about another person or publicly post confidential communications without the author’s consent.
- Do not download any files or execute any attachments which are not from a trusted source.

Examples of Prohibited Uses

- Causing any damage to any computer, software, or service on the school network or sending a file or command that may damage another computer.
- Interfering with the operation of the network in any way. This includes installing shareware, freeware, illegal software or software that you own personally.
- Sending any material that is likely to be offensive, objectionable or could be deemed as harassment or threatening to recipients. This includes cyber bullying. Please see the definition of cyber bullying on the following page under

“Code of Conduct.”

- Knowingly posting or forwarding any information that is not true.
- Using the school computers or networks for personal or financial gain, advertising, or for political activity.
- Using any social networking sites (examples: chat rooms, instant messaging, Facebook, Myspace) unless directly related to the educational curriculum and with teacher or administrator supervision.
- Accessing or attempting to access unauthorized or restricted network resources or the folders, data or documents of another person.
- Transmitting any obscene or pornographic material. This may also be a violation of local, state or federal law as well.

Code of Conduct

- Cyber bullying is prohibited. Cyber bullying, which is the repeated use by one or more students of an electronic expression alone or in combination with any written or verbal expressions or physical acts or gestures, directed at a victim that:
 1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property;
 2. Places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself or of damage to his/her property;
 3. Creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
 4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school;
 5. Materially and substantially disrupts the education process of the orderly operation of the School. See Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71. Section370.
- Use appropriate language and do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- Carefully choose wording because in the absence of face-to-face communication, messages may be misinterpreted.
- Never change the content of photos, videos, or media for personal use or to misrepresent the owner.
- Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation and disabilities.
- Be responsible and use citations for any information you gather electronically.

Resources: Acceptable Use Policies from the Hampton-Dumont Community Schools, Florida Institute of Technology, University Liggett School, Shrewsbury Public Schools, Classroom Connect Internet site, Lightspan.com, Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual, section 604.1, and Acceptable Use Policy of Forsyth County Schools, Georgia.

Adopted: March 15 1997
Revised: June 6, 2000
Revised: January 2, 2002
Revised: February 8, 2011

Student Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Agreement

I/We have read the Internet Acceptable Use Policy, understand it, and agree to adhere to the principles and procedures detailed within. I/We understand and accept the conditions stated above. I/We understand that my/our student is expected to use good judgment and follow the Policy in making electronic contact with others. Parent permission will be obtained prior to a student's work with their name being put on a school's home page on the Internet.

Should my student breach this policy, I understand that the consequences of this violation could result in but are not limited to:

- revocation of all network access on the School Districts' network
- suspension of computer access
- revocation of computer access
- school suspension
- legal action and prosecution by the authorities.

If you choose to deny direct Internet access to your student at this time, you are refusing permission for individual exploration only. Students may still be exposed to information from the Internet in guided curricular activities at the discretion of their teachers. A student will not have individual Internet access without a signed Acceptable Use Policy.

Student's Name (Print): _____

Section: _____

Handbook

We have read and understand the Robert E. Melican Middle School Handbook.

Student signature

Date

Parent signature

Date

Student Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Agreement

We have read and agree to the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy.

Student signature

Date

Parent signature

Date

Please return this to your homeroom teacher.

Massachusetts Statutes: Student Behavior and Discipline

M.G.L. c.71, §37H

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 37H:

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

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

(C) Any student who is charged with a violation of either paragraph (a) or (b) shall be notified in writing of an opportunity for a hearing provided, however, that the student may have representation, along with the opportunity to present evidence and witnesses at said hearing before the principal. After said hearing, a principal may, in his discretion, decide to suspend rather than expel a student who has been determined by the principal to have violated either paragraph (a) or (b).

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

(E) When a student is expelled under the provisions of this section, no school or school district within the commonwealth shall be required to admit such student or to provide educational services to said student. If said student does apply for admission to another school or school district, the superintendent of the school district to which the application is made may request and shall receive from the superintendent of the school expelling said student a written statement of the reasons for said expulsion.

M.G.L. c.71, §37H1/2

(1) Upon the issuance of a criminal complaint charging a student with a felony or upon the issuance of a felony delinquency complaint against a student, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled may suspend such student for a period of time determined appropriate by said principal or headmaster if said principal or

headmaster determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

M.G.L. c.71, §37H3/4.

(a) This section shall govern the suspension and expulsion of students enrolled in a public school in the commonwealth who are not charged with a violation of subsections (a) or (b) of section 37H or with a felony under section 37H1/2.

(b) Any principal, headmaster, superintendent or other person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding the consequences for the student, shall exercise discretion; consider ways to re-engage the student in the learning process; and avoid using expulsion as a consequence until other remedies and consequences have been employed.

(c) For any suspension or expulsion under this section, the principal or headmaster of a school in which the student is enrolled, or a designee, shall provide, to the student and to the parent or guardian of the student, notice of the charges and the reason for the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student. The student shall receive the written notification and shall have the opportunity to meet with the principal or headmaster, or a designee, to discuss the charges and reasons for the suspension or expulsion prior to the suspension or expulsion taking effect. The principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall ensure that the parent or guardian of the student is included in the meeting, provided that such meeting may take place without the parent or guardian only if the principal or headmaster, or a designee, can document reasonable efforts to include the parent or guardian in that meeting. The department shall promulgate rules and regulations that address a principal's duties under this subsection and procedures for including parents in student exclusion meetings, hearings or interviews under this subsection.

(d) If a decision is made to suspend or expel the student after the meeting, the principal or headmaster, or a designee, shall update the notification for the suspension or expulsion to reflect the meeting with the student. If a student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year, the student and the parent or guardian of the student shall also receive, at the time of the suspension or expulsion decision, written notification of a right to appeal and the process for appealing the suspension or expulsion in English and in the primary language spoken in the home of the student; provided, however, that the suspension or expulsion shall remain in effect prior to any appeal hearing. The principal or headmaster or a designee shall notify the superintendent in writing, including, but not limited to, by electronic means, of any out-of-school suspension imposed on a student enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 prior to such suspension taking effect. That notification shall describe the student's alleged misconduct and the reasons for suspending the student out-of-school. For the purposes of this section, the term "out-of-school suspension" shall mean a disciplinary action imposed by school officials to remove a student from participation in school activities for 1 day or more.

(e) A student who has been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 school days for a single infraction or for more than 10 school days cumulatively for multiple infractions in any school year shall have the right to appeal the suspension or expulsion to the superintendent. The student or a parent or guardian of the student shall notify the superintendent in writing of a request for an appeal not later than 5 calendar days following the effective date of the suspension or expulsion; provided, that a student and a parent or guardian of the student may request, and if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days. The superintendent or a designee shall hold a hearing with the student and the parent or guardian of the student within 3 school days of the student's request for an appeal; provided that a student or a parent or guardian of the student may request and, if so requested, shall be granted an extension of up to 7 calendar days; provided further, that the superintendent, or a designee, may proceed with a hearing without a parent or

guardian of the student if the superintendent, or a designee, makes a good faith effort to include the parent or guardian. At the hearing, the student shall have the right to present oral and written testimony, cross-examine witnesses and shall have the right to counsel. The superintendent shall render a decision on the appeal in writing within 5 calendar days of the hearing. That decision shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension or expulsion.

(f) No student shall be suspended or expelled from a school or school district for a time period that exceeds 90 school days, beginning the first day the student is removed from an assigned school building.

M.G.L. c.76, §21

Principals and headmasters shall ensure that students who are suspended from school for 10 or fewer consecutive days, whether in or out of school, shall have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension, to make up assignments and earn credits missed including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers and projects missed. Principals shall develop a school-wide education service plan for all students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than 10 consecutive school days, whether in or out of school. Principals shall ensure these students have an opportunity to make academic progress during the period of suspension or expulsion, to make up assignments and earn credits missed, including, but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, papers and projects missed. Education service plans may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, alternative placement, Saturday school, and online or distance learning. In developing the education service plan, principals may seek the cooperation or input of relevant health and human service, housing and nonprofit agencies education collaboratives, and other service providers. Any school or school district that expels a student or suspends a student for more than 10 consecutive school days shall provide the student and the parent or guardian of the student with a list of alternative educational services. Upon selection of an alternative educational service by the student and the student's parent or guardian, the school or school district shall facilitate and verify enrollment in the service. Students exempt from attending school under section 1 of chapter 76 shall not be subject to this section.

M.G.L. c.71, §37L

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

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

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

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

STUDENT RECORDS

NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS UNDER FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School Principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School Principal (or appropriate school official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

SUMMARY OF MASSACHUSETTS LAWS AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO STUDENT RECORDS

I. Inspection of the Student Record

A parent, or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least 14 years old (eligible student), has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The parent and/or eligible student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee may be charged for the cost of duplicating materials. The record must be made available to the parent or eligible student no later than ten (10) calendar days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and/or eligible student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school, or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

II. Rights of Non-Custodial Parents

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 34H and 603 CMR 23.07 specify detailed procedures that govern access to student records by parents who do not have physical custody of their children. For more information, please see ‘ACCESS FOR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS’ below.

III. Confidentiality of Student Records

With a few exceptions, no individuals or organizations but the parent(s), student, and authorized school personnel are eligible to access information in or from a student record without the specific, informed written consent of the parent or the student. One such exception is the authority of the school district to forward, without consent, the complete student record to schools or school districts to which a student transfer or enrolls.

IV. Amendment of the Student Record

Eligible students and/or parents have the right to add additional information, comments, data, and/or other relevant material to the student record. Eligible students and/or parents also have the right to request in writing that the student record be amended. Any such request should be directed to the principal. The building principal will render a written decision on such a request within one week. A denial of a request to amend a student record may be appealed to the Superintendent.

V. Destruction of Student Records

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed within seven (7) years of a student's transfer or graduation. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent and eligible student must be notified, and provided with the opportunity to obtain a copy of any records to be destroyed.

VI. Directory Information

Federal and state regulations authorize school districts to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the district to the contrary in accordance with district procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Northborough-Southborough Public Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent.

If you do not want directory information from your child's education records disclosed without your prior written consent, please notify the Principal in writing. The Southborough Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Email address
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended

The above is only a summary of some of the more significant provisions of the laws and regulations pertaining to student records. If more detailed information is desired, a copy of the regulations may be obtained from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These state regulations are designed to insure parent and student rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and

destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records. The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that the student may be individually identified. The applicable regulations may be found at 603 CMR 23.00.

Notification of Rights under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding our conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

- Consent before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)-
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
 3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
 7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student parents; or
 8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
 1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
 2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law;
 3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.
- Inspect, upon request and before administration or use –
 1. Protected information surveys of students;
 2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
 3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The Northborough – Southborough Public Schools has developed and adopted policies in consultation with parents regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The Northborough – Southborough Public Schools The Northborough, Southborough, Public Schools will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The Northborough – Southborough Public Schools will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the District has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

Student Record Access for Non-Custodial Parents

Chapter 71: Section 34H. Noncustodial parents; receipt of information for child enrolled in public elementary or secondary schools; notice to custodial parent.

- A. Each public elementary and secondary school shall provide student records, including, but not limited to, the following information, in a timely and appropriate manner to the parents of a child enrolled in the school if the parents are eligible for information under this section and request the information in the manner set forth in this section: report cards and progress reports; the results of intelligence and achievement tests; notification of a referral for a special needs assessment; notification of enrollment in an English language learners program established under chapter 71A; notification of absences; notification of illnesses; notification of any detentions, suspensions or expulsion; and notification of permanent withdrawal from school. Each school shall also make reasonable efforts to ensure that other written information that is provided to the custodial parent but not specified in the preceding sentence be provided to the requesting parent if that parent is eligible for information under this section. All electronic and postal address and telephone number information relating to either the work or home locations of the custodial parent shall be removed from information provided under this section. Receipt of this information shall not mandate participation in any proceeding to which notification pertains, nor shall it authorize participation in proceedings and decisions regarding the child's welfare which are not granted through the award of custody. For purposes of this section, any parent who does not have physical custody of a child shall be eligible for the receipt of information unless: (1) the parent's access to the child is currently prohibited by a temporary or permanent protective order, except where the protective order, or any subsequent order which modifies the protective order, specifically allows access to the information described in this section; or (2) the parent is denied visitation or, based on a threat to the safety of the child, is currently denied legal custody of the child or is currently ordered to supervised visitation, and the threat is specifically noted in the order pertaining to custody or supervised visitation. All such documents limiting or restricting parental access to a student's records or information which have been provided to the school or school district shall be placed in the student's record.
- B. A parent requesting information under this section shall submit a written request to the school principal. Upon receipt of a request for information under this section, the school shall review the student record for any documents limiting or restricting parental access to a student's records or information which have been provided to the school or school district and shall immediately notify the custodial parent of the receipt of the request. Notification must be made by certified mail and by first class mail in both the primary language of the custodial parent and in English. The notification shall also inform the custodial parent that information requested under this section shall be provided to the requesting parent after 21 days unless the custodial parent provides to the principal of the school documentation of any court order which prohibits contact with the child, or prohibits the distribution of the information referred to in this section or which is a temporary or permanent order issued to provide protection to the child in the custodial parent's custody from abuse by the requesting parent unless the protective order or any subsequent order which modifies the protective order, specifically allows access to the information described in this section.

- D. At any time the principal of a school is presented with an order of a probate and family court judge which prohibits the distribution of information pursuant to this section the school shall immediately cease to provide said information and shall notify the requesting parent that the distribution of information shall cease.**
- E. The principal of each public elementary and secondary school shall designate a staff member whose duties shall include the proper implementation of this section.**
- F. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this section. Said regulations shall include provisions which assure that the information referred to in this section is properly marked to indicate that said information may not be used to support admission of the child to another school.**