

# **ROBERT E. MELICAN MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2021-2022**

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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 a 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/guardians, and students. These belief statements guide our work:

1. The Robert E. 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/guardians 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 Robert E. 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 elementary school, and in grades seven and eight, that transition is toward 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. Students are grouped heterogeneously as "sections" and move as a group through ELA, science, social studies and specials. 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. For further information, please go to the school website at <https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican>. All curricula are guided by the Massachusetts State Frameworks.

## **General Information, A-Z**

*For your reference, we have linked Northborough policies to this handbook. Policies evolve over time, and by including live links, this handbook will remain current. For the complete Northborough Policy Manual, please click [here](#).*

### **A**

#### **Absence (Including Extended Absences)**

When a student is absent for the day, parents/guardians should call the absence line (508-351-7008) 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. (and remain in school until the end of the day) to be considered Tardy Present. If dismissed, the student must stay in school until 11:00 a.m. (and have been in school since the start of the day) to be considered Dismissed Present.

In cases of excessive absence, the administration may seek the aid of the School Resource 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/guardians will be contacted if we are not notified of the reason for the student's absence.

Making arrangements for missed assignments is the responsibility of the student. Parents/guardians and students are also encouraged to check teacher Canvas pages 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 rocket club and the school musical. Each fall, a detailed list of after school offerings is sent home to parents/guardians and published on the school website. Most activities are completed by 3:15 p.m. on Tuesday through Thursday when the late bus is provided. Activities extending beyond 3:15 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 The Robert E. Melican Middle School on or before 7:40 a.m. When students arrive, sixth and seventh graders wait outside on the tennis courts, and eighth graders wait on the basketball courts. During inclement weather and colder months, sixth grade students will proceed to the gym, seventh grade students will go into the cafeteria, and eighth grade students will report to the TC. At 7:40, students are dismissed into the building to homeroom, which runs from 7:48-7:53.

School dismisses at 2:15 and bus riders exit from the front lobby directly onto their buses. Students who walk home or who are being picked up by parents/guardians wait in the cafeteria until the buses have left school property.

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

After school, parent/guardian 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 should not walk across the parking lot without a parent/guardian escort because of safety concerns.

For the safety and welfare of our students, parents/guardians 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. For more information, contact the Assistant Principal/Athletic Director, Jen Callaghan at [jcallaghan@nsboro.k12.ma.us](mailto:jcallaghan@nsboro.k12.ma.us).

For more information about our interscholastic sports program, please click [Middle School Athletics Handbook - Families and Students](#).

### **Athletics - Medical Requirements and Safety Responsibilities - Interscholastic Sports**

#### **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 addressing all athletic injuries and making the proper recommendations. The coach(es) 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/their control during practice, contest, or while traveling to or from a contest. The coach is responsible for contacting the athletic director regarding the injury as soon as possible. The injury form should be turned in to the Health Office the following morning with the coach retaining a copy.

#### **Return to Participation**

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 athlete's parents will be notified
- The athlete must see his/her/their primary care physician



- The athlete must have a signed note from his/her/their primary care physician stating his/her/their 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.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [J-340 Concussion Policy](#).

## B

### **Backpacks**

To begin the 2021-2022 school year, students will carry backpacks during the school day.

### **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 wind ensembles, chamber ensembles, stage band, and jazz band. 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 implemented on a six-week rotation so students do not miss the same class each week. Students should be able to attend sectionals 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 a teacher. Teachers sign corridor passes and students sign out of each classroom and learning space.

### **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 Prevention and Intervention Policy**

It is the policy of the Northborough Public School District to maintain educational environments that are free from bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation. Allegations of bullying based on a protected classification under state or federal law, shall also be investigated and responded to in accordance with the procedures set forth in [District Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy A180](#) and/or [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy A190](#) and applicable federal laws.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [A-150 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy](#).

### **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. Additionally, our Assistant Superintendent of Operations, emails all families their bus routes before the start 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/guardian. 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/guardians an opportunity to arrange alternate transportation.

In cases when a student must take a different bus, a note from a parent/guardian 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. There may be other circumstances, i.e. a global pandemic, when students are not allowed to ride another bus.

## C

**Cafeteria (Refer to [Lunch and Brain Break](#))**

**Cancellation of School (Refer to [School Closings](#))**

### Canvas Information

Canvas is a course management system that supports online learning and teaching. It allows assignments, notifications, and grades to be posted online. This system can be accessed by students, parents/guardians, and staff. Parents/guardians and students are given log-in information at the beginning of each year. Parents/guardians who have children at Algonquin use the same login information to access all children in middle and high school.

For more information, please click [Student and Parent Canvas Guides](#).

### 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 2:15). Staff will take possession of phones being used during the day. A parent/guardian may be asked to come and pick up the phone at the end of the school day. As a reminder, student dismissal must occur through the main office or our health office. Students should not be texting parents/guardians throughout the school day.

### Change of Address, Phone, Contact Information

Please notify the school office in writing of any changes to information on file. (Refer to [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.

## **Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Public Schools of Northborough is committed to maintaining school environments free of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [A-180 Civil Rights Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

**Conferences (Refer to [Parent-Teacher Conferences](#))**

## **Contact Information**

On the first day of school, students receive a contact form for parents/guardians 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 (Refer to [School Closings](#))**

**Detention (Refer to [Guide to Mutual Respect](#))**

**Discipline (Refer to [Guide to Mutual Respect](#))**

**Dismissal (Refer to [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, cultural or medical purposes, shall not be worn by 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, or back are not appropriate.
- Accessories that are deemed a safety hazard, or which could cause injury to the wearer or others.

The dress code is in effect for all school events. If there are any questions regarding a student's attire, a school administrator may have a discussion with a student and/or make a phone call home.

## **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 the end of morning homeroom, during the mid-morning break, and during sixth grade lunch. We do our best to get items to students outside of these call down times.

There may be circumstances, i.e. a global pandemic, when visitors are not permitted to enter the building. During these times, items will be left outside on a table under the awning.

## **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 or parents/guardians should call the main office and speak with an administrative assistant.

In order to pick up a student, parents/guardians **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/guardians may be asked to show identification. Parents/guardians do not need to sign students back into school.

There may be times (i.e. a global pandemic) when visitors are not permitted in the building. During those times, parents/guardians should call the office and arrangements will be made to dismiss your child.

### **Early School Closing (Refer to [School Closings](#))**

### **Electronic Devices**

The school cannot be responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices. Families should decide whether or not their student is responsible enough to take electronic devices to school.

### **Elevator Use**

A student who has a medical condition that necessitates the use of the elevator, may have his/her/their parents/guardians request an elevator pass for his/her/their 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**

The Robert E. 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 signed by a parent/guardian and 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.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [J-200 - Student Financial Obligations for School Loaned Materials](#).

## **Fire/Evacuation Drills**

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

## **FLEX Blocks**

Many students have Flex Blocks throughout the week. During these periods, students engage in silent reading, work on assignments and projects, receive extra help from classroom teachers, or participate in special enrichment activities. Students are responsible for bringing necessary materials and assignments to these sessions.

The number of Flex Blocks in each student's schedule depends upon involvement in band, chorus, and other learning considerations.

## **G**

### **Guidance Counselors**

Guidance support is available to all students. Appointments can be made in the guidance office before or after school. Parents/guardians 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/them for all three middle school years.

**Guide to Mutual Respect (Refer to the [Guide to Mutual Respect](#))**

## **H**

### **Half Days/Early Release Days**

Half days for students occur throughout the year. They are listed on the Northborough Public School Calendar; they typically include parent-teacher 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.

For more information, please click [M.G.L.c. 269, §§ 17–19](#).

## **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/guardians be unavailable.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [J-100 School Immunization Requirements](#).

### **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 and a Meningitis vaccine. 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, Soccer, 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 tryouts. 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- In addition, a written dated request signed by a parent/guardian must be submitted to the nurse concerning the dispensing of medication.
- 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/guardian in the original properly labeled container.
- 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.
- 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/guardians when outside referrals appear necessary. Parents/guardians 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: Students 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.

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

## Homeroom

Morning homeroom runs from 7:48 to 7:53 a.m. During this time, opening routines are conducted: attendance and lunch count are taken and parent/guardians notes are collected.

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

The Public Schools of Northborough believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn and grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Time to think, to sleep, to read, and to play should be considered as important to student development as is time to complete homework.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-190 Homework Policy](#).

I

## Immunizations (Refer to [Health Information](#))

## Internet Use

All students sign the Responsible Use Policy form at the beginning of the school year. This outlines appropriate use of the Internet and devices at school and on the district network.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-200 Student Responsible Use Policy](#).

## **Insurance**

Student insurance forms are sent home at the opening of school to give parents/guardians 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 late buses, which 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. These buses are available for students who stay after school for any reason.

### **Locks and Lockers**

Typically, 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. To begin the 2021-2022 school year, students will not be using hallway lockers.

Only school issued locks may be used on school lockers. Parent/Guardian 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 hallway lockers are 58" x 10" x 10.5".

### **Lost and Found**

Lost items should be given to the office. A lost and found table is located in the school's lobby across from the elevator. Students should check there for lost items.

### **Lunch and Brain Break**

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.

Lunch is free to all students. Second lunches and a la carte snacks and drinks may be purchased. Information about pre-paying is emailed to families before the start of the school year. Student ID badges are generated once annual school pictures are taken. Students then utilize the bar codes on these ID badges to access their MySchoolBucks account.

For more information about MySchoolBucks, please click the link. [MySchoolBucks](#)

Soda and glass containers are not allowed at lunch.

Weather permitting, students have the opportunity to go outside for Brain Break each day for 12-14 minutes. Students will be monitored by staff outside on the courts and in the fields.

## **M**

### **Make-Up Work (Refer to [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" (Honors) is offered for students who meet the criteria. This course is a ninth grade course intended



|  |   |
|--|---|
| to accelerate those learners ready for Honors Geometry in grade nine. The curriculum leader is in contact with parents/guardians about curricula and placement decisions.  |   |
| <b>MCAS Testing</b>  |   |
| 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.   |   |
| <b>Medication (Refer to <a href="#">Medication at School</a> under <a href="#">Health Information</a>)</b>   |   |
|  | N |
| <b>No School (Refer to <a href="#">School Closings</a>)</b>  |   |
|  | O |
| <b>Office Hours</b><br>The Robert E. Melican Middle School office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Two administrative assistants work to respond to the needs of parents/guardians, students, and staff.  |   |
| <b>Open House</b><br>In September, parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the principal, assistant principal, teachers, and specialists during the annual Open House. During the evening, parents/guardians meet with teachers to learn about curriculum, procedures, and special events.  |   |
|  | P |
| <b>Parent/Guardian Concerns</b><br>Parents/guardians are encouraged to call the school to talk with teachers about concerns at any time. Guidance counselors are also available to consult with parents/guardians. If problems arise that are not resolved in communications with the teacher or staff member involved, parents/guardians should contact the principal or assistant principal. All staff members have email accounts, which use the following format: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● First initial last name@nsboro.k12.ma.us (i.e. mkarb@nsboro.k12.ma.us)</li></ul> |   |
| Please check the school’s website at <a href="https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican">https://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us/melican</a> for a current listing of staff email addresses.   |   |
| <b>Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)</b>   |   |
| The Robert E. 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/guardians 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/guardians.   |   |
| <b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b>  |   |
| Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year, once in the fall (two days) and once in the spring. Fall conferences are held on two days in October. Spring conferences are held on one day in March. MMS uses Sign-Up Genius to schedule conferences. Information is sent to families and families are able to schedule conferences during times that work best for them.  |   |
| During other times of the year, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school at any time if a concern arises.  |   |

**Parking Lot Protocol (Refer to [Arrival and Dismissal](#))**

The safety of our students and staff is a key priority. We work collaboratively with the bus company to establish arrival and dismissal procedures. If you choose to drive your child to and from school, please adhere to our parking lot protocols. If arriving before 7:40 a.m. for student drop-off and/or before 2:15 for student pick-up, drivers should enter the parking lot and take the first left. This lane is used as the morning drop-off (single lane) and afternoon pick-up (two lanes). If arriving after 7:40 and/or after 2:25 (once buses have departed the parking lot), drivers can use the lane closest to the overhang. There may be staff on duty assisting you with this procedure. Please proceed with caution when driving in the parking lot.

**Power School Information**

Our district uses PowerSchool as our student information system. Information such as student biographical data, parent/guardian contact information, and student attendance are housed here. Additionally, student schedules and report cards are generated through PowerSchool. Parents/guardians and students will receive login information at the beginning of each school year.

**Preparation for Class**

While expectations among teachers may vary, each student is required to come to class with his/her/their materials (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 Checks**

Parents/Guardians receive emails when we reach the mid-way point in a trimester. At that time, they are encouraged to check Canvas for student progress and reach out to teachers with questions.

**Pupil Absence Notification Program**

When a student has accumulated 5 absences in a school year or misses 2 or more classes in a week due to tardiness to school, the parents/guardians may be contacted for a meeting 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 comments. These are emailed to families and/or viewed through PowerSchool.

For trimester dates, please click [Trimesters 2021-2022](#).

**Responsible Use Policy**

All students sign the Responsible Use Policy form at the beginning of the school year. This outlines appropriate use of the Internet and devices at school and on the district network.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [I-200 Student Responsible Use Policy](#).

**S****Schedules**

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

### **School Closings and Delayed Openings**

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.

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, The Robert E. Melican Middle School has a School Council composed of the principal, parents/guardians, a community representative, and teachers. The council meets monthly to review school needs and to create a School Improvement Plan that is aligned with the District Strategic Plan.

Parents/guardians 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 District Calendar**

For the district calendar, please click [2021-2022 School Calendar](#).

### **School Transfers**

If your child is moving to another community and changing schools, a parent/guardian should notify as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition. A release form must be signed by a parent/guardian to permit the transfer of records. The student must return all materials and financial obligations must be met.

### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Public Schools of Northborough is committed to maintaining school environments free of sexual harassment.

For the complete Northborough policy, please click [A-190 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#).

### **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 Robert E. 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. Acknowledgement cards are given all year long, and a raffle is held once per month.

### **Student Support Services, Special Education**

The Robert E. 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/guardians 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 at 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/guardians are encouraged to help students arrive at school on time. Students should be in school by 7:40 a.m. Excessive tardiness to school may result in some form of communication by a school administrator.

### **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/their agenda

### **Team Structure**

We have five teams: Red Team (8th grade), Green Team (7th and 8th grade), Blue Team (7th grade), Orange Team (6th and 7th grade), Purple Team (6th grade).

Five heterogeneous sections, or classes of students, comprise each team. The team structure allows teachers who teach the same students to work together to create learning experiences that are beneficial to the specific needs of each student.

### **Telephone (Landline) Usage and Messages**

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

Office phones are available for students, but we encourage them to make plans for after-school activities before leaving home in the morning.

### **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 \$35-\$95) before receiving another book.

## **V**

## **Vacations**

School vacations are published in the school calendar. Parents/guardians 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 a visitor badge. There may be times (i.e. a global pandemic) when visitors are not permitted in the building.

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 2:15 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/guardian volunteers as needed. Other volunteer opportunities are announced throughout the year (e.g. chaperoning field trips, planning the Eighth Grade Farewell Dance).

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# **Guide to Mutual Respect**

## **Introduction**

The Robert E. 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/guardians 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/guardians will be made aware of impending disciplinary action and have an opportunity to discuss ways of resolving the behavioral problems. Students and parents/guardians 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/they will return to school accompanied by his/her/their parent/guardian. A parent/guardian 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/guardians will be notified that one more suspension of their child will require a 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 Category B - Serious, #11.

Examples of inappropriate school-wide behaviors in Category A include, but are not limited to: minor student abuse, tardiness to school, in the 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:
  - Purposefully inflicting bodily injury to another person.
  - Fighting.
  - Bullying.
  - Aggression toward an adult by word or gesture.
  - Other (as determined by the Principal).
2. Any illegal action such as, but not limited to:
  - Threatening individual or public safety such as pulling a fire alarm,
  - Possessing materials/articles used as incendiary devices,
  - Setting fires,
  - Possessing explosives (as defined by state and/or criminal statutes),
  - Smoking/Vaping,
  - Possessing and/or drinking alcoholic beverages,
  - Seriously vandalizing school property or another's possessions,
  - Stealing that may result in police involvement,
  - Possessing and/or using a controlled substance or any other substance used to alter either mental or physical perception or sensation,
  - 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,

- Harassing - including but not limited to verbal or physical taunting, threatening, ethnic or sexual harassment, flagging, singly or in a group,
  - Hazing,
  - Civil Rights Violation and/or Crimes of Hate,
  - 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 extracurricular 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 invite 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 parent 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 school days pending formal proceedings. Upon imposition of a short term or interim suspension or an interim suspension of ten (10) consecutive school 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.

### **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 school 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 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 school 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/their 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:
  - a. If the behavior involves weapons or illegal drugs or another controlled substance while at school or at a school function; or
  - b. If the student causes substantial bodily injury to another at school or a school sponsored event; or
  - c. 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/guardian 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.

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## **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.

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write to 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.
5. 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.
6. 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 refer to [Student Record 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 transfers 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)-
  - Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  - Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  - Sex behavior or attitudes;
  - Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  - Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  - Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  - Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student parents; or
  - Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.
- Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –
  - Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
  - 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;
  - 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 –
  - Protected information surveys of students;
  - Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes;
  - 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.
- C. 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.
- D. The principal of each public elementary and secondary school shall designate a staff member whose duties shall include the proper implementation of this section.
- E. 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.