



# **The Center School**

## **2021-2022 Parent and Student Handbook**

**403 Great Road  
Stow, MA 01775**

**(978) 897-0290  
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## **COVID-19 UPDATE FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR**

**Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, school protocols, procedures, offerings, and activities have been adjusted to meet safety guidelines. The physical and social emotional safety of our school community remains our priority.**

**Protocols and procedures for safety and daily operations will be communicated with families prior to the start of the school year, and will replace the corresponding wording herein as appropriate.**

## **Welcome to The Center School**

*Where...*

- students, teachers, parents and members of the community work together to educate each child to his or her fullest potential,
- respectful behavior and citizenship are displayed by all members of the school community,
- children are encouraged to pursue and express their learning creatively and collaboratively, and
- learning is connected to real-world opportunities positioning children for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **The Center School**

*“Preparing for tomorrow!”*

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August 2021

Dear Center School Community,

We are excited for the 2021-2022 school year! All summer our office team and custodial staff have been working on the transition from last school year. In the coming weeks, classroom teachers will be putting the finishing touches on the learning spaces that await our students on September 1st. The excitement for another year had begun!

This Parent/Guardian and Student Handbook is a resource for you and your child. I hope that you find the logistical information helpful to start the year and also as a source of reference when a question should arise. The handbook can also be viewed on our website at <http://center.nrsd.net>. *If you require a hardcopy of the handbook, please contact the office and we will supply you with one.*

While this handbook is a great resource, it does not replace open communication between school and home. Please reach out to your child's teacher or any member of the staff that you need to. I look forward to all of our work together for our students.

In partnership,

Ross Mulkerin  
Principal

## **School Council**

The Center School Council is an advisory group to the school principal and is comprised of staff, parents, and community members. The major function of the School Council is to develop and support the School Improvement Plan.

Please see our website for more information on membership and the 2018-2021 School Improvement Plan: [https://center.nrsd.net/families/school\\_council](https://center.nrsd.net/families/school_council)

## **SPTO**

The Stow Parent Teacher Organization (SPTO) is an all volunteer organization composed of active parent/guardian groups at both Center School and Hale School.

The Center committee is composed of parents/guardians who support the Center School community through planning and organizing a variety of events, fundraisers, parent/guardian education programs and school support volunteer activities. Meetings are held once monthly at Center School. Meeting time and location are always posted in the school newsletter or on the SPTO website. As a parent/guardian of Center School, you are automatically a member of the SPTO.

Events include the annual Halloween Dance and Party, January Science Festival, February Lip Sync, March Arts Buffet Festival, March Music Festival, and June Picnic. In addition, the SPTO sponsors parent/guardian education programs, including curriculum presentations, and other valuable additions to the education experience of our students.

Volunteer support of school activities includes the ProjectPrep Service so that teachers can spend more time with students and less time doing document preparation. The SPTO also publishes the annual Stow School Directory.

Funds raised are allocated annually and support all portions of the curriculum in addition to providing Arts and Cultural enrichment activities for students in grades K-5. Parents/guardians are encouraged to become actively involved in the SPTO. Feel free to contact one of this year's officers and/or attend the monthly meetings. The PTO also is located at the website: [www.centerhalepto.org](http://www.centerhalepto.org)

## SCHOOL OPERATIONS

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### School Calendars

Please use the following links to access 2020-2021 School Year calendars:

[2021-2022 NRSD School Year Calendar](#)

[2021-2022 NRSD 6 Day Cycle Calendar](#)

You may also access our Center School events calendar on our school home page under "Upcoming Events" [The Center School: Home](#)

### School Hours

#### NORMAL SCHOOL HOURS:

Preschool (1/2 Day) 8:45 AM - 11:15 AM

Preschool (Full Day) 8:45 AM - 2:15 PM

K – Grade 5 8:35 AM - 3:05 PM (building opens at 8:25 AM)

#### EARLY RELEASE DAYS ([please see NRSD Calendar for assigned dates](#)):

Preschool (1/2 Day) 8:45 AM - 11:15 AM

Preschool (Full Day) 8:45 AM - 11:45 AM

K - Grade 5 8:35 AM - 12:15 PM (building opens at 8:25 AM)

Please remember to **send a note with your child** at the beginning of the day **only if there is a great need to make a change in his or her routine at dismissal time**. **When making play dates do not plan on using the bus to transport your child** to his or her friend's house (this includes birthday parties and other celebrations). We simply cannot handle the volume of requests for daily and short term play arrangements that either move children from one bus to another, or from one bus stop to another, and still provide for safe bus transportation.

### School Cancellations/Closings

Announcements of closings and delays will be communicated via SchoolMessenger, local tv and radio stations, and the NRSD website. **Please do not call the school or police department** to learn if school has been cancelled or has a delayed opening.

[Local tv and radio stations](#)  
[NRSD Website](#)

**IMPORTANT:** For SchoolMessenger purposes, it is **critical** that emergency contact information is kept up to date. This includes cell phone numbers, home and work phone numbers, and email addresses.

### Delayed Openings



In the event of a 2 hour delayed opening, students should not be dropped off prior to 10:25 AM. Delayed openings provide additional travel time for both students and staff and ensure the safety of both. There is no NRSD Extended Learning Morning Program on delayed start days.

### **Early Release in the Event of an Emergency**

In the event that school is canceled before the normal end of a school day, School Messenger will be used to notify parents/guardians. *In the event of an emergency closing, emergency contact information will be used.*

### **Student Drop-Off Procedure and Student Pick-Up Procedures**

Please note that **Student Drop-Off Procedure and Student Pick-Up Procedures** will be updated in late August based on COVID-19 protocols during the 2021-2022 school year.

#### Preschool:

- Teachers stand inside the playground fence that is closest to the front door and farthest from rte.117 and in front of the front door to the school. (Children and families may not enter the playground at the entrance closest to 117 during drop off.)
- Please pull up in the fire lane as far as you can for drop off. You can pull over in the fire lane and walk your child to the teacher who is closest to the car. Please do this as quickly as possible as others will be waiting.
- Please do not pass any cars that are parked in the fire lane during pick up and drop off.
- You are welcome to park your car in the parking lot and walk your child into the playground. If you need or want to have a conversation with other parents or the teachers, please park your car in the parking lot (not in the fire lane) and walk in.
- Please do not leave siblings or other children in your car while you walk your pre-school age child into school.

### **School Bus Transportation**

- Bus routes with approximate pick-up and drop-off times are published on the district website ([Bus Routes](#)) and in the Stow Independent during the month of August. **The 21-22 bus routes will be posted as soon as they are available.**
- The purpose of our bus service is to provide safe and reliable transportation to and from our students' homes. Bus conduct is related to school conduct and our standards are equal in both places. The Bus Driver is in a position of authority and has an enormous responsibility. He or she needs to get our children to school and back home safely every day.
- The District will provide transportation to students residing within the Nashoba Regional School District, from the student's home address to the student's designated district school.
- The District will provide student transportation from child care locations to school in the morning, and to child care locations from school in the afternoon, whenever it is within reason to provide such services, and providing the child care location falls within the district and student's school boundary.

- There will be no changes made to any student's bus schedule without the prior approval of the local school office. Should special circumstances occur which require a change in a student's schedule; parents/guardians will be responsible for contacting the local school office in advance to arrange for this accommodation.
- The District will not provide transportation for individual or one-time "play-dates", private lessons/activities, or for nonschool related events without the permission of the school administration. Parents'/guardians' notes sent to school, stating permission for this purpose, to allow a student to take an alternate bus or change pick-up/drop-off location **will not** be acceptable.
- The District may provide transportation to and/or from school sponsored athletic events and other activities, at the discretion of the school district, and when it is within reason to provide such services.
- Please refer to the district website for further guidelines regarding transportation

### **Parking**

We appreciate the patience and flexibility that visitors use when parking on our campus:

- Parents and visitors should use the Visitor Parking Lot off of Great Road.
- The Hartley Road parking lot is for staff members, but can be used for events when the main parking lot is full.
- During events, visitors may also park on Hartley Road on the sidewalk side.
- If the parking lot at Saint Isadore's Church is available for special events, the school will notify visitors if the lots is available at the time of the event. Otherwise, please do not use this lot.

### **School Lunch**

The school lunch program is offered daily. The [school lunch menu can be found online](#) or in the main lobby of the school. Children are welcome to bring their own lunch from home. In our cafeteria we offer separate seating for students with allergy needs, including nut-free and gluten-free tables. Any student is welcome to sit at one of these tables provided their food meets necessary criteria to maintain the safety of students with allergies. **For the 2021-2022 school year, seating of students may be impacted by COVID-19 protocols.**

### **Snack**

All children should bring a healthy snack to school for our snack break. We suggest such items as fruit, vegetables, popcorn, crackers, etc. Students in the kindergarten program should bring two snacks with them each day. The school principal will notify classrooms at the start of the school year regarding any food restrictions within the classroom due to life threatening food allergies.

### **Food in School Protocols**

The Nashoba Regional School District seeks to provide a safe and healthy environment for all students in the school district. This includes promoting healthy eating and managing the school environment to keep all children safe, including those with life threatening allergies and other food issues.

District personnel will adhere to the following guidelines when dealing with food issues. Specific allergy related information is available in the District Life Threatening Allergy protocols.

- Encourage all students to wash their hands before and after eating.
- Provide information to staff, including tutors, aides, and cafeteria employees about food allergies. This will also include epi-pen training.
- When necessary, Individual Student Health Care Plans may be developed by School Nurses, in collaboration with parents/guardians and teachers.
- Establish a communication system (telephones, walkie-talkies, intercom) for staff in the classroom, on the playground, and on trips in case of an allergic reaction or other emergency.
- Provide safe tables in the classroom and cafeteria for students with specific food issues.
- Food products will not be used to support the curriculum.
- The building principal must be consulted and made aware that food is being considered to be part of special events such as cultural fairs. The parents and guardians of all students must receive timely written notification of “the menu” requesting written permission approving participation. This notice must be approved by an administrator.
- Food will not be used as a reward or incentive in the classroom.
- Food and gum are not to be consumed on the school bus.
- Trading or sharing of food by students is not allowed.

## **STUDENT RULES**

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### **A Caring Community for Learning**

All members of the school community are expected to treat each other with respect and courtesy at all times. In our school community, all staff members, parents/guardians and students are expected to treat each other respectfully in words and actions, and to work toward resolving problems fairly, cooperatively and peacefully in the best interest of the child.

All of our staff members strive to remain calm, caring and consistent in our disciplinary interactions with children. When we model respect and empathy, the children will be more likely to treat each other in a similar fashion, with the same caring and understanding. We actively look for opportunities to praise and encourage children and “catch them being good,” while we balance our positive approach with the following proactive strategies, problem solving, and logical consequences.

### **Code of Conduct**

The Center School implements the non-discrimination policy adopted by the school committee which is consistent with the federal and state requirements. The full policy can be viewed in the appendix of this document.

Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly-attended public schools. No person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. (M.G.L c 76, s.5)

### **Consequences and Discipline**

When there is a violation of school rules and/or safety, a teacher and/or an administrator may impose a consequences that may include a loss of privilege or discipline that may include in-school or out-of-school suspension. Everyone in our school buildings must feel safe at school. For school rule violations of a very serious nature, such as those involving a threat to the safety of others, property damage, great interpersonal disrespect, or refusal to follow reasonable adult directions, a child’s parent/guardian may be called immediately to remove the child from school. A child may be placed on an in-school suspension or sent home and additional consequences may be imposed when behavior is threatening or found to be dangerous, destructive or severely disruptive. All such decisions are the sole responsibility of the Principal, Assistant Principal (or the discretion of the Building Administrator’s designee).

These consequences apply for infractions that occur anywhere in the school buildings, on the playground, on a school-related trip, at the bus stop, on the way to or from school,

and on school busses.

For an in-school suspension, parents/guardians will be notified by phone or e-mail. This call or e-mail will inform parents/guardians of the reason for the suspension and the length of the suspension.

For an at-home suspension, parents/guardians will be notified by phone. This call will inform parents/guardians of the reason(s) for the at-home suspension and the length of the suspension. A letter will also be sent to the parents/guardians identifying the reasons for the suspension. Additional information regarding our policy can be found in the Appendix.

### **Bullying**

Nashoba Regional School District is committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere to students, parents, employees, and visitors free from bullying/harassment (sexual harassment, cyber-bullying, hazing and intimidation.) Such action may occur on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or for any other reason.

It is a violation for any employee, student, or visitor to engage in or condone bullying/harassment in school or at school related functions, or to fail to report or otherwise take reasonable corrective measures when they become aware of an incident of bullying/harassment.

The school will take remedial and/or disciplinary action when such bullying/harassment occurs in or out of school, but has a nexus to school, or is disruptive to an employee's or student's work or participation in school related activities. This includes reports of bullying/harassment, verbal, physical, electronic or in any other form.

Parents and guardians of students alleged to have engaged in bullying/harassment (verbal, physical or electronic) will be invited to attend a meeting at which the activity, words, or images connected to the complaint will be reviewed. A student disciplined for bullying/harassment will not be readmitted to the regular school program until parents or guardians have come into the school to discuss the circumstances of the event(s).

It is the responsibility of every employee, parent, and student to recognize acts of bullying/harassment and to take every action necessary to see that necessary protocols and procedures are followed. An employee, parent or student who believes they have been the target of bullying/harassment has the right to file a complaint and receive a prompt, confidential response in accordance with district protocol and policy. In some cases, in order to proceed, outside agencies may be contacted and involved so information relating to the complaint may be released.

Bullying is legally defined "as the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that: (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; (ii) places the victim in

reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.”

(<https://malegislature.gov/laws/generallaws/parti/titlexii/chapter71/section37o> )

### **Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

See Appendix for additional information/policies regarding disciplining students with special needs.

### **School Bus Rules**

Students that use the school bus for transportation are expected to adhere to the following expectations:

1. Follow the Bus Driver's Directions Immediately.
2. Keep your Hands, Feet and Objects to Yourself.
3. Be Kind to Each Other.
4. Stay in Your Seat.
5. Talk Quietly and Respectfully.
6. Keep the Bus Neat and Clean.
7. No eating or drinking on the bus.

Additionally, the following additional rules have been adopted by the Nashoba Regional School Committee:

Students should:

- stand back from the road, and remain out of the street, waiting at their regularly scheduled bus stops when the bus arrives (allow five minutes waiting time)
- board the bus in an orderly manner and go directly to their seats and remain seated until dismissed by the bus driver when they have reached their destination;
- be aware seat belts are available for student use but are not to be played with;
- keep their feet, books, etc., out of the aisles at all times;
- unload promptly in an orderly manner, **ONLY** when the bus comes to a full **STOP**, walk five steps ahead of the bus along the edge of the road, stop and look both ways before crossing;

Students cannot:

- consume any beverages or food on the bus;
- have pets or animals on the bus;
- open windows on the bus as this is the responsibility of the driver (when windows are open it is important to stress the fact that the students and their personal belongings are to be kept inside the bus)

Please note that there may be additional bus protocols for students based on COVID-19 protocols during the 2021-2022 school year.

## **SCHOOL SAFETY**

We strive to maintain a school campus that is thoughtful and prepared in the event of an emergency. Staff participate in various types of training and drills along with administration, the Stow Police Department, and the Stow Fire Department. We teach our students about school safety in age appropriate ways and have them participate in various drills throughout the school year. If a member of the school community ever has a question or concern about school safety, they should reach out to the building principal. In the event of an emergency, please call 911.

### **Visitors/Guests**

All guests and visitors must sign in and out at the office. Student safety is of primary importance. Please wear a badge when volunteering or visiting for any reason and return it when you sign out.

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the school. Please “sign in” with the secretary to let us know when you are in the building. If you would like to visit and see a class in session, please contact the teacher directly to discuss the purpose of your visit. This visit should be scheduled for no longer than thirty minutes as approved by the teacher. As a rule, an observational session would not occur more than twice a year.

Please note that there may be additional visitor protocols based on COVID-19 protocols during the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Volunteers**

School volunteers play a key role in meeting the needs of Stow students. When parents/guardians or other community residents work with the children or faculty at the school, a number of benefits are derived.

Volunteers provide services by: working with small groups of students in the classroom, by reading to students, by working in the school library cataloging, shelving and checking out books, by chaperoning class field trips, by adding to the experience of children by sharing interests, hobbies, and skills with them, by supporting activity centers and classroom projects, and by lending support and assistance on school and SPTO sponsored programs and activities. These activities require the volunteer’s complete attention. Thus, volunteers cannot be accompanied by siblings or other children.

Parents/guardians and community residents are encouraged to contact the school office in order to volunteer their time or services. To insure the safety of our children, all volunteers must agree to a CORI check. CORI is an acronym for *Criminal Offender Record Information*. It must be filled out and passed in at least 2 weeks before you begin to volunteer. For parents/guardians who volunteer on a regular basis, this form has to be filled out and filed with the school system every 3 years according to Mass. General Law. The CORI forms are also available in the main office.

Please note that there may be additional volunteer protocols based on COVID-19 protocols during the 2021-2022 school year.

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

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The school must provide, upon request, a complete list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by the school district. In Lancaster, each student has a cumulative record maintained at the Center School which may contain: a log (for use in monitoring access of any part of the record); report cards; academic and medical information forwarded from previous schools; standardized test scores; a registration form; an emergency information; records of formal disciplinary action.

- Health records are maintained in the nurse's office
- Complete (official) Special Education records are maintained at the central office.

### **Right to Review**

Parents or guardians are permitted to review education records that have been collected and maintained by the school district, which pertain to their children. Such review is granted within two consecutive days of the request, unless the parent and school personnel agree upon a longer period of time.

### **Requests for Access**

Requests for access to the regular education records maintained in the school building are made to the principal or guidance counselor. Requests for access to the complete special education records, maintained at the central office, are made to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services or the building Special Education Chairperson. Advanced notice is expected.

Parents may also request that the records be interpreted for them, that copies be made of material within a record, and that a representative of the parent reviews and inspects the record. In the latter case, written release of the record to the representative is to be provided by the parent. Forms are available in the office.

### **Deleting or Adding Information**

A parent or guardian may request of the principal that information be deleted from the student record. The principal is to respond to a request within a week of receipt. A parent or guardian may add information, comments, data or other relevant material to the student record.

#### **Copies of Regulations**

If you would like to obtain a copy of the student record regulations, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Education.

### **Student Record Transfers**

When a family leaves the community for another place of residence, a transfer card will be issued and a release form must be signed by the parent/guardian to permit the



transfer of records to the new school. Student records will be sent via the US Postal Service to the new attending school. Duplicated copies of pertinent information from the student records will be made available to parents/guardians for hand delivering to the new school upon request. Please give a minimum of 48 hours notice to help meet your needs. Parents/guardians of students transferring into our schools are asked to contact the main office of the appropriate school to get instructions on information that is needed to enter.

## **SCHOOL HEALTH OFFICE**

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### **School Nurse**

The school nurse is available during school hours to care for students who may become ill or injured while at school. The nurse's phone number is 978-461-0009.

### **Nashoba Regional School District Health and Wellness Policy**

It is the policy of the Nashoba Regional School District to promote actions that create a healthy and safe environment for all students, faculty, staff and citizens. The school district is committed to taking the necessary precautions that will enable all users of our schools to learn, teach, and visit in our schools.

It is our goal to promote the students' physical, emotional, and social well being through a coordinated school health program. This includes providing a healthy environment, school nurse services, nutritious school meals, health education and opportunities for physical activity. It is the intent of this policy to enable students to become independent and self directed learners by taking initiative to meet their own health and nutritional needs as developmentally appropriate.

Furthermore, it is our expectation that specific actions will take into account the health needs and well being of all children without discrimination or isolation of any child. It is the School Committee's belief that education and open and informative communication are vital for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. In order to assist children to assume more individual responsibility for maintaining their safety as they grow, it is the policy of the School Committee that the guidelines reflect student development as children advance from the primary grades through secondary school.

The following protocols regarding food and instruction are being highlighted from the Health and Wellness Policy for your information:

When food is the focus of the curriculum activity and its presence is central to the understanding of the concepts, themes, or objectives, it is incumbent on the teacher to inform the parents and to make an alternative plan as necessary. The curriculum activity should be planned so that all students can participate.

Teachers may plan celebrations in which food is consumed; however, each student is responsible for bringing his/her own food to the event. If held in the classroom, teachers

are responsible for ensuring tables and chairs are cleaned and that students wash their hands. Such events must be communicated in advance to all parents, administration and school nurse.

### **Immunizations**

A compulsory school immunization law has been in effect in Massachusetts since 1967. The law currently requires students to be vaccinated against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, varicella, haemophilus, and influenza type B (H16). Massachusetts immunizations specify minimum immunization requirements for enrollment in school. These regulations are revised periodically to incorporate any changes in the requirements. The law and regulations provide for exclusion of students from school if immunizations are not up to date, but permit exemptions for medical and religious reasons.

Nashoba Regional School District has established a policy that restricts students from starting school as a new or transfer student, unless the school has received a copy of the student's immunizations record and all of the requirements are met.

### **Medication Administration**

Prescription medications may not be accepted or administered by the School Nurse unless it is accompanied by a physician's order and permission from a parent/guardian. Prescription medications are to be kept in the original pharmacy container with the following label: student name and prescribing doctor, date prescribed, medication time and method of administration. The School Nurse is allowed to give over-the-counter medications including Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Motrin), Tums and Benadryl with parent permission as the District's School Physician has written a standing order for these medications.

Self Administration of Inhalers or Epipens will be determined on an individual basis after written orders are obtained. Students may not transport or store any medications with the exception of the above named inhalers or Epipens with permission.

### **Health Screenings**

Health screenings: including vision, hearing, postural, growth, and body mass index (BMI) will be done for students based on M.G. L. Chapter 71, Section 57 and 105 CMR 200.00. In February 2009 Massachusetts amended regulations to require reporting of BMI for all students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10 (or of comparable age). Parents/guardians will be notified if screening procedures identify possible problems and referred to their own physician or specialist for follow-up evaluation and treatment.

## ATTENDANCE

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### Residency

Students must be living in Stow with a parent or legal guardian in order to attend the Center School. Proof of Residency and Occupancy documentation will be required at time of registration. Students will not be registered until Proof of Residency and Occupancy are verified and on file. [NRSD- JFAA - RESIDENCY POLICY](#).

### Daily Attendance

The Nashoba Regional School District believes that excellence comes through participation, engagement, and commitment, and is integral to learning. The District believes that consecutive daily attendance is the best way to foster all of these to fulfill a student's fullest potential. The District is committed to helping students learn that taking part on a continual basis demonstrates commitment to self and others. This commitment further expands the student's ability to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered.

Our attendance protocols are governed by Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.), specifically Chapters 76, Sections 1, 2, and 4 and the Nashoba Regional School District policies. [NRSD- JH - STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES](#)

Parents/guardians should call the main office or use the attendance email address [centerattendance@nrsd.net](mailto:centerattendance@nrsd.net) before 8:45 AM if their child will be absent or tardy. Please include the parent's name, the name of the child, and the reason for the absence. Parents can report planned absences (vacations, appointments) as well as daily notifications for illness/injury/etc., and this e-mail will go to both the main office and the nurse's office. The school will contact the home for any unreported absence. If no one can be reached at home or work, we will then try to contact those individuals listed as the emergency contacts. If we are unable to establish contact with any of the before mentioned, we will report the unreported absence to the police department for investigation. *For convenience of parents/guardians, we have a voice mail system in operation at all times for reporting absences (978.461.0009).* Absences are monitored by the principal.

If parents do not e-mail about an absence, students will need to bring in a note to the main office to excuse the absence.

### Excused Absences

A parent or guardian may excuse a student's absence through a written note up to seven (7) full days or fourteen (14) half days within a six (6) month period. After this, the student's absence is only excused if a note on official stationery is provided for a bereavement, family or catastrophic event, observation of a legal holiday, illness or legal event for any of these to be excused. (Principals may accept any reasonable documentation if determined to be authentic.)

Family vacations and trips that are scheduled when school is in session are not considered valid reasons for absence. Per district policy, parents or guardians taking their child out of school for a vacation will not have any such days excused. Students miss important instruction when absent. While teachers will allow students to make up missed assignments, tests, and quizzes, they will not be required to prepare work in advance for a vacation related absence. In addition, teachers are not required to re-teach or tutor students when they return from a vacation. Make-up work is the student's responsibility when he/she returns to school.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences regarding time on learning and stresses the importance of being in school.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any absences, or quantity of absences, determined to be unexcused may result in the inability of the student to participate in school-sponsored activities, including but not limited to field trips and overnight field trips.

### **Tardiness**

Students who are tardy beyond seven (7) times, regardless of how late, will be considered as having an unexcused absence one (1) day for each multiple of seven (7) times that they are tardy.

Teachers take attendance at 8:35 AM and students are expected to be in class at that time; otherwise, students are considered tardy and must stop at the office before proceeding to class. Excessive tardiness to school may result in disciplinary action. Four unexcused tardies per trimester may result in office detention. Students arriving after 11:45 AM on a full day or after 10:00 AM on an early release day are considered absent due to tardiness. Participation in any after school activity for students under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the school administration.

### **Dismissals**

Students dismissed, regardless of how early or close to the end of the day, beyond seven (7) times, will be considered as having an unexcused absence one (1) day for each multiple of seven (7) early dismissal times.

Dismissal before the end of school day should be for important matters only. The parent/guardian **must report** to the office and sign out his/her child. If parents know they will be picking up their children, they should send in a note stating what time they will be dismissed. Students who are dismissed before 11:50 AM on a full day, or before 9:45 AM on an early release day, are considered absent due to dismissal. Participation in any after school activity for students under these circumstances will be at the discretion of the school administration.

A student who becomes ill or injured may be dismissed only after assessment by the School Nurse. In this instance, parent permission will be required for dismissal and the student will only be released to the contacts named on the Student Health and Emergency form.

No child will be released to anyone but the parent/guardian or those listed on the emergency form on file in the nurse's office without a signed request from the parent/guardian. Identification of the person who is picking up may be required if the person is unknown to the school. If we question a request for pick up, we will attempt to verify the note with a call to the home. If we cannot verify that the parent/guardian has given permission for a particular person to pick up his/her child, we will not release the child to that person.

### **Registration or Withdrawal**

New student registration and emergency forms are completed by parents/guardians online through our school's website. Once the online registration is completed, parents/guardians must contact the school office to make an appointment for verification of documents (residency, birth certificate, health records, etc.) By law, no student can be admitted without a health record signed by the student's health care provider. This documentation provides evidence of state mandated immunizations. When new students register, our school office requests records from the previous school.

When a student withdraws to move to another school, parents/guardians must sign a release giving us permission to forward student records to the new school. Records cannot be hand-carried by the parents; the new school must request them. A photocopy of the child's immunization record can be made, if requested, to facilitate speedy enrollment in the student's new school.

## HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

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As positive partners we must be focused on meeting the individual needs of all of our children. To accomplish this goal, as parents/guardians and educators, we must work together both in good times and difficult times. It is in our children's best interests that we **establish an ongoing and positive dialogue**.

Thus we encourage the active and open communication of all members of our school community. It is only through direct exchange that we can improve our system and have it become more responsive to the needs of parents/guardians and children. Open and empathetic communication is the cornerstone of our important work. Teachers' email addresses can be found on the school's website and is typically the first letter of the first name followed by the last name at nrsd.net. An example would be [ateacher@nrsd.net](mailto:ateacher@nrsd.net).

In order to accomplish our goal, the following **problem solving guidelines** have been established for parents/guardians and teachers, when either party has a concern, question, or would like to offer input relevant to the child's education and/or welfare.

### **Report Cards**

A progress report (report card) is issued 3 times per year for all grades, K to 5. We ask that the copy be signed and returned back to your child's homeroom teacher within 3 school days. If you have any questions about the report card, please get in touch with your child's teacher.

## **HOMEWORK**

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Homework is one of the many links forged between home and school. We urge parents/guardians to assist their children in establishing a quiet, well lit area for homework production and to be involved in this aspect of their children's academic lives. We try to be certain that assignments are meaningful and developmentally appropriate. Homework time should not be a time of stress, but rather a time for children to review concepts they are learning in school and/or an opportunity to practice their "new" skills.

The type, amount, and regularity of homework varies with each grade level. Homework will be given as support and enhancement of the regular curriculum. Homework is not given in every subject, every night.

Patterns that are established at an early age become habits in adult life. We intend to help children with their everyday and long term planning in order to prepare them for success in the future. The school has made a substantial investment in purchasing assignment books for each child attending the third, fourth and fifth grades. Your child's assignment book is similar to your "to do" list. The staff of Center School will be working with your child to enhance their organizational skills by teaching them how to use their assignment book each day. Students in grades K-2 presently do not use assignment books.

Please show an interest in your child's new assignment book. This is an excellent way for you to check on what your child needs to do for homework. Encourage and expect him/her to use it every day. Support our work in helping your child develop strong independent study skills by checking his/her assignment book and assignments *daily at the beginning of the school year and intermittently later on.*

Children will have homework assignments while attending grades K-2. These may involve practicing spelling words or math facts, observing or gathering materials from home, and interviewing family members for a special project.

The amount of homework will vary according to the units of study. Assignments often involve reading and/or writing. Sometimes homework is "artistic" or involves research, and parents/guardians become involved as "research partners."

Should you experience difficulties, please discuss the situation with your child's teacher. If homework becomes too stressful, our advice is to skip the assignment(s) that evening and contact the teacher the next day to problem solve.

Homework should be done by the child with encouragement and guidance from parents/guardians. We ask that parents/guardians teach their children to be responsible for bringing the work back to school when it is due. We will not allow students to call home from the school office for a parent/guardian to bring the forgotten homework to school unless there are very unusual circumstances.

Our goal is to develop a sense of competence, organization, and responsibility among our students and to help them establish effective work habits that will help them now and in the future.

The General Expectations/Guidelines for Amount of Time (per night) that children may be expected to put into homework by grade level follow. Some children will require a little more, or a little less time to complete their assignments; however children who regularly exceed these guidelines may need to have the amount or kind of homework adjusted to meet their different needs. When this is the case, the parent/guardian should bring this to the attention of the teacher and the parent/guardian and teacher should develop a plan to meet the needs of the child.

#### **Homework Time - Nightly Guidelines**

Kindergarten	5 to 10 minutes
1st grade	10 to 20 minutes
2nd grade	20 to 30 minutes
3rd grade	30 to 40 minutes
4th grade	40 to 50 minutes
5th grade	50 to 60 minutes



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT TOPICS**

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### **Extended Learning**

The NRSD Extended Day program is offered before and after school at The Center School. Contact the Extended Day Coordinator, (978-779-0539, Ext. 3042), for more information.

Please note that there may be additional Extended Learning protocols based on COVID-19 protocols during the 2021-2022 school year.

### **Party Invitations**

It is our policy not to allow party invitations to be delivered at school. Please send them by mail so as not to hurt any child's feelings.

### **Deliveries to Students**

The school will not accept deliveries of balloons, flowers, etc. for a student during the school day. Limousine service is not allowed unless authorized by the school administration.

### **Balloons**

All balloons in the school building or on school grounds must be latex-free.

### **Electronic Devices/Technology from Home**

Electronic devices, (i.e. iPods, Gameboys), are not allowed to be used on the bus unless authorized by the school administration. They are not to be used at any time during the school day unless approved by an adult. The school is not responsible for any electronic devices that become lost, broken or stolen.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Requirements for participation do not limit access on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness.

### **Hats**

Hats are not allowed anywhere in the building except for special occasions as determined or approved by the administration.

### **Illnesses and Schoolwork**

When a student has been absent for 3 consecutive day because of illness, parents/guardians may call and request that schoolwork be put together for the child. Please call the secretary the morning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to make this request. The parent/guardian and teacher should work together to develop a reasonable schedule that will meet the child's needs so as not to overwhelm the child, yet not go beyond the present trimester that the illness takes place in whenever possible.

### **Room Parent Guidelines**

The Room Parent is an important volunteer role for the purpose of coordinating classroom events and acting as a liaison to the SPTO. We ask the parent to be familiar with the following guidelines:

1. The classroom teacher will solicit and choose room representatives based on interest and availability.
2. Class projects, field trips, class celebrations, and SPTO-related activities will be jointly planned with the classroom teacher and the room representative.
3. Communication between the room representative and the teacher should be arranged at a mutually convenient time.
4. Room volunteers will not divulge confidential information to which they have access. Children's behavior, needs, and interactions must not be discussed outside of school. Any questions or concerns should be brought to the teacher or an administrator.
5. All communications sent home by the room representative must be approved by the teacher or an administrator. All verbal solicitations to parent/guardian must also have prior approval.
6. All volunteers are required to sign in and out of the office and wear a volunteer badge when in the building.

### **Lost and Found**

We recommend that all items coming to school with your child be well marked with his/her name. There is a Lost and Found in the building. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

### **Phone Calls Home**

As a rule, we limit the use of the phone for non-emergency purposes. We provide students with no more than two opportunities to make these non-emergency calls throughout the year. When they make such a call, we will give them a reminder. Please keep in mind that important calls will still be allowed, and, when necessary, all children will be offered an alternative food selection at lunchtime.

### **Recess Proper Dress**

The School Policy is to have all students go out for recess except during inclement weather or severe cold. Please be sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather. Early fall and spring require light jackets or sweatshirts. Winter requires a warm jacket, hat, gloves, neck warmer or scarf. It is also recommended that boots and snow pants be worn when there is snow on the ground. A student will be asked to remain off the snow if they are not properly dressed. This will prevent the need to change their clothes and interrupt their school day in the afternoon. If, due to a health related issue, you do not feel your child should go out for recess, a note to the teacher is required to allow the student to remain indoors on that day, and on each subsequent day. Administration or the Health Office will contact you if there is a question or concern about the request.

The administration reserves the right to determine if a student's clothing/appearance is appropriate for an elementary school setting. *(See Student Dress Code in the Appendix.)*

### **School Functions**

Children must be supervised by an adult at all times when attending school functions before, during, and after the school day. Teachers cannot be responsible for children who come to a school function without a parent/guardian for an event. Any student who is recorded as absent from school on a particular day will not be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored activities for that day. A student must attend a minimum of half (0.5) of the school day to be considered present for the day. Students on suspension (internal or external) are not allowed to participate in any after school activities on that day.

### **Selling and Trading**

Solicitations and the sale or trading of merchandise or any items by students is prohibited.

### **Toys and Games**

Toys and games are only allowed with prior approval from the teacher. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken toys. Sports equipment and trading cards are included in this policy.

### **Student Gifts**

There is no gift giving between students at school. Families may not send in gifts for the classroom. Please contact the Principal for further information or clarification.

### **Vacations and School Work**

When family vacations and trips are scheduled while school is in session, teachers are not required to prepare schoolwork, assignments, or projects for the student in advance. The absences will be recorded as “unexcused absences” by the school. Teachers are not required to re-teach or tutor students when they return from vacation. It is solely the responsibility of the parent/guardian to obtain assignments deemed to be appropriate by the teacher upon their return. A time table of when the work is to be completed by the student should be set to not overwhelm the child, yet not go beyond the present trimester that the vacation takes place in whenever possible.

### **Video Recording and Photographing Students**

Videotaping and picture taking of children on school grounds or school sponsored events must have prior approval of the Principal, with the exception of special concerts, all school meetings, and performances.

## APPENDIX

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## **NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

The Nashoba Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation in admission to, access to, treatment in, or employment in its programs or activities.

All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and the full range of any occupational/vocational education programs offered by the District.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Anne Marie Stoica, HR Manager  
**Title IX** Coordinator  
NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
50 Mechanic Street  
Bolton, MA 01740  
Tel: (978) 779-0539 ext. 3009  
Fax: (978) 779-6812

Inquiries concerning the application of nondiscrimination policies may also be referred to the Regional Director, Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education, J.W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse, Room 701, 01-0061 Boston, MA 02109-4557.

### **THE CENTER SCHOOL BUILDING COORDINATORS TITLE IX**

**978-897-0290**

<b>Ross Mulkerin</b>	Principal
<b>Kim Terwilliger</b>	Interventionist
<b>Alison Quinn</b>	Interventionist

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR FILING, PROCESSING, AND RESOLVING ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS**

## **Procedural Requirements Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA (Students, Applicants, Employees)**

### **I. Definitions:**

A. *Discrimination Complaint* - A written complaint alleging any policy, procedure or practice that discriminates on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender or disability.

B. *Student Grievant* - A student of the Nashoba Regional School District who submits a complaint alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender or disability.

C. *Employee Grievant* - An employee of the Nashoba Regional School District who submits a complaint alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, or veteran status.

D. *Applicant Grievant (under ADA)* - An applicant for employment of the Nashoba Regional School District or applicant for admission to postsecondary education who submits a complaint alleging discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability or veteran status.

E. *Title VI (if applicable), Title IX, Section 504, and ADA Coordinator* - The person(s) designated to coordinate efforts to comply with and carry out responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other state and federal laws addressing equal educational opportunity. The compliance coordinator is responsible for processing complaints and services as moderator and recorder during hearings.

F. *Respondent* - The person alleged to be responsible for the violation alleged in a complaint. The term may be used to designate persons with responsibility for a particular action or those persons with supervisory responsibility for procedures and policies in those areas covered in the complaint.

G. *Day* - Day means a working day. The calculation of days in complaint processing shall exclude Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

### **II. Pre-Filing Procedures**

Prior to the filing of a written complaint, the student or employee is encouraged to visit with the Compliance Coordinator and reasonable effort should be made to resolve the problem or complaint.

### **III. Filing and Processing Discrimination Complaints**

A. Grievant submits written complaint to compliance coordinator stating name, nature, and date of alleged violation; names of persons responsible (where known); and requested action. Complaint must be submitted within 30 days of alleged violation. Complaint forms are available in the school office

B. Compliance Coordinator notifies respondent within 10 days and asks respondent to:

1. Confirm or deny facts;
2. Indicate acceptance or rejection of student's, employee's, or applicant's requested action; or
3. Outline alternatives.

C. Respondent submits answer within 10 days to Compliance Coordinator.

D. Within 10 days after receiving respondent's answer, the Compliance Coordinator refers the written complaint and respondent's answer to the Principal. The Compliance Coordinator also schedules a hearing with the grievant, the respondent, and the Principal.

E. The Compliance Coordinator conducts the hearing.

F. The Compliance Coordinator issues within 10 days after the hearing a written decision to the student, employee, or applicant, and the compliance coordinator.

G. If the grievant or respondent is not satisfied with the decision, they must notify the Compliance Coordinator within 10 days and request a hearing with the superintendent.

H. Compliance Coordinator schedules, within 10 days of request, a hearing with the grievant, respondent, and superintendent.

I. The Superintendent conducts a hearing.

J. The Superintendent issues a decision within 10 days following the hearing.

K. If the grievant or respondent is not satisfied with the decision, they must notify the Compliance Coordinator within 10 days and request a hearing.

L. Compliance Coordinator notifies the Principal within 10 days after receiving request. Compliance coordinator schedules hearing with the governing board. Hearing is to be conducted within 30 days from the date of notification to the Compliance Coordinator.

M. The Compliance Coordinator conducts hearing.

N. The Compliance Coordinator issues a final written decision within 10 days after the hearing regarding the validity of the grievance and any action to be taken.

#### **IV. General Provisions**

A. Extension of time: Any time limits set by those procedures may be extended by mutual consent of parties involved. The total number of days from date that complaint is filed until complaint is resolved shall be no more than 180 days.

B. Access to regulations: The Nashoba Regional School District shall provide copies of all regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, qualified disability, or veteran status upon request.

C. Confidentiality of records: Complaint records will remain confidential unless permission is given by the parties involved to release such information. No complaint record shall be entered in the personnel file. Complaint records shall be maintained on file for three years after complaint resolution.

The responsibility for the dress and appearance of the students will rest with individual students and parents.

They have the right to determine how the student will dress providing that attire is not destructive to school property, complies with requirements for health and safety, and does not cause disorder or disruption. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements.

This does not mean that student, faculty, or parent groups may not recommend appropriate dress for school or special occasions. It means that students will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

## **IJNDB - EMPOWERED DIGITAL USE POLICY**

### **Purpose**

The School Committee recognizes the need for students to be prepared to contribute to and excel in a connected, global community. To that end, the district provides ongoing student instruction that develops digital citizenship skill sets for using technology as a tool. Information and communication technology are an integrated part of our curriculum across subjects and grades in developmentally appropriate ways and are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and standards, including seeking knowledge and understanding; thinking critically and solving problems; listening, communicating, and interacting effectively; and engaging and competing in a global environment.

### **Availability**

The Superintendent or designee shall implement, monitor, and evaluate the district's system/network for instructional and administrative purposes.

All users shall acknowledge that they understand that using digital devices, whether personal or school owned, and the school district network is a privilege and when using them in accordance with School District guidelines they will retain that privilege.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement administrative guidelines, regulations, procedures, and user agreements, consistent with law and policy, which shall include but not be limited to the following:

- Digital devices, software, and networks shall be used in school for educational purposes and activities.
- An individual's personal information (including home/mobile phone numbers, mailing addresses, and passwords) and that of others shall be kept private.



- Individuals will show respect for themselves and others when using technology including social media.
- Users shall give acknowledgement to others for their ideas and work
- Users shall report inappropriate use of technology immediately

These procedures shall be reviewed annually by district administration together with students and teachers and shall provide a springboard for teaching and learning around topics such as internet safety, digital citizenship, and ethical use of technology.

### **IJNDD - ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY**

NASHOBA Regional School District recognizes the educational benefit of online conversation and collaboration among staff, students, parents and guardians using internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of information. Our policy is to allow our staff to use district-owned resources and personal devices with care and professionalism to conduct such exchanges. All such interactions will be governed by the state and federal laws governing online communications and violations of such laws could result in work related sanctions. The district will provide staff with this policy each year which will include references to applicable laws and regulations.

Staff and volunteers may communicate and collaborate online with students, parents, guardians and other staff in agreement with NASHOBA Regional School District policies and protocols.

- Such accounts should be expressly for the intended audiences related to NASHOBA Regional School District and privacy settings should clearly be set to enforce this provision.
- Such interactions may not contain any verbiage or photography that is in violation of this or any other district policy, regulation or law, state or Federal.
- In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) the Nashoba Regional School District includes the appropriate use of online tools in its curriculum. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) protects children under the age of 13 from websites that collect personal information. Staff must verify that the school administration obtained parental consent prior to the use of any social networking applications with students age 13 and under. To the extent practical, staff supervises and monitors appropriate usage of the online applications.
- At all times, and in the use of any form of communications, staff members must adhere to

- student privacy rights (FERPA) and the rights of the employees to have their personal or medical information kept confidential.
- Information that is protected by state and Federal law from disclosure to third parties may not be communicated online in any way.
- When a staff member communicates electronically as an employee of the district, and the intended audience is another staff member, student, parent or guardian, staff must use their NRSD email account and comply with all current and future policies relative to conduct becoming of an employee.
- In all communications with guardians, staff, parents, and students, staff must use professional etiquette and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Professional etiquette is further defined in the protocol along with appropriate boundaries. Any actions that are suggested to be unbecoming will result in a thorough investigation of such actions and could result in disciplinary action.
- Said communications are made with the full understanding that they can be made public at any time and there should be no misunderstanding of a right to privacy once they are released to the public.
- Staff members who use personal devices for online activities that involve other staff, students, parents and guardians must know that those devices are subject to court-ordered subpoena and their private email relative to the above may be reviewed if questions of alleged activities arise that violate the law. The burden falls on the staff member to comply with all public record laws when using personal devices, email or social network accounts, or other software used to communicate.

In conjunction with this policy a protocol has been written to support its successful implementation.

### **ECAC - VANDALISM**

The School Committee recognizes that acts of vandalism committed against public and private property are costly and require positive action through educational programs. Consequently, the Committee will support various programs aimed at reducing the amount of vandalism.

Every citizen of the town, staff members, students, and members of the police department are urged by the School Committee to cooperate in reporting any incidents of vandalism to property under control of the school department, and the name(s) of the person or persons believed to be responsible. Each employee will report to the Principal of the school every incident of vandalism known to him/her and, if known, the names of those responsible.

The Superintendent is authorized to sign a criminal complaint and to press the charges against perpetrators of vandalism against school property, and is further authorized to delegate, as he/she sees fit, authority to sign such complaints and to press charges.

Parents and students will be made aware of the legal implications involved. Reimbursement will be sought for all or part of any damages.

## **JIC - STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

The School Committee believes that all students deserve every opportunity to achieve academic success in a safe, secure learning environment. Good citizenship in schools is based on respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a way that the rights and privileges of others are not violated. They will be required to respect constituted authority, to conform to school rules and to those provisions of law that apply to their conduct. It is the expectation of the Committee that all members of the school community are expected to treat each other with courtesy, dignity, kindness and respect in both actions and words.

The goal of this policy is to encourage reflection on one's actions and words, acceptance of responsibility for their choices, and learn effective ways to solve problems, manage behaviors and self regulate.

It is the responsibility of all educators to work with parents, guardians, students and colleagues to educate each other about appropriate student conduct and accountability for one's actions and words. It is understood, that to be effective, this policy needs to be implemented through consistent, fair and respectful interactions and interventions among all members of our school community.

### **Interventions**

In order to learn, educators must continuously build relationships and create learning opportunities that are creative, engaging, and exciting. This creates an environment conducive to learning.

As students become distracted and less engaged, educators must intervene by using strategies that vary by developmental and cognitive level of the students involved. Each Principal shall include prohibited actions expectations that describe what engagement looks like in the student handbook or other publication to be made available to students and parents. It should also outline best practices it uses to redirect, reframe and regroup as a means to engage the student in learning. Principals and staff shall not use academic punishment of any form as a consequence to inappropriate behaviors/actions by students.

The Principal may, as a disciplinary measure, remove a student from privileges, such as extracurricular activities and attendance at school-sponsored events, based on the student's misconduct. Such a removal is not subject to the remainder of this policy, law, or regulation.

The Superintendent shall provide each principal with a copy of the regulations promulgated by DESE and shall have each principal sign a document acknowledging receipt thereof, which shall be placed in their personnel file.

### **Suspension**

In every case of student misconduct for which suspension may be imposed<sup>1</sup>, a Principal shall consider ways to re-engage the student in learning; and use long-term suspension from school only after assessing alternatives. Alternatives may include the use of evidence-based strategies and programs such as mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

#### **Notice of Suspension:**

Except for emergency removal or an in-school suspension of less than ten (10) days, a Principal must provide the student and the parent oral and written notice, and provide the student an opportunity for a hearing and the parent an opportunity to participate in such hearing before imposing suspension as a consequence for misconduct. The Principal shall provide both oral and written notice to student and parent in English and in the primary language of the home if it is not English. The notice shall include the rights enumerated in law and regulation. To conduct a hearing without a parent present, the Principal must be able to document reasonable efforts to include the parent.

### **Emergency Removal**

A Principal may remove a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school, and, in the Principal's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption.

The Principal shall immediately notify the Superintendent in writing of the removal including a description of the danger presented by the student.

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

- Make immediate and reasonable efforts to orally notify the student and the student's parent of the emergency removal, the reason for the need for emergency removal, and other matters required in the notice as referenced in the applicable regulation;
- Provide written notice to the student and parent as required above;
- Provide the student an opportunity for a hearing with the Principal that complies with applicable regulations, allow the parent an opportunity to attend the hearing, before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for hearing is otherwise agreed to by the Principal, student, and parent;
- Render a decision orally on the same day as the hearing, in writing no later than the following school day; both of which meet applicable laws and regulations.

- Ensure adequate provisions have been made for the student's safety and transportation prior to removal.

### **In School Suspension - not more than 10 days consecutively or cumulatively**

The Principal may use in-school suspension as an alternative to short-term suspension for disciplinary offenses.

The Principal may impose an in-school suspension for a disciplinary offense under this provision, provided that the principal follows the process set forth in regulation and the student has the opportunity to make academic progress as required by law and regulation.

### **Principal's Hearing - Short Term Suspension of up to 10 days**

The hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, the Principal shall discuss the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, and any other pertinent information.

The student also shall have an opportunity to present information, including mitigating facts, that the Principal should consider in determining whether other remedies and consequences may be appropriate as set forth in law and regulation.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.

The Principal shall notify the student and parent of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is suspended, the type and duration of suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal, as required by law and regulation. The determination shall be in writing and may be in the form of an update to the original written notice.

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

### **Principal's Hearing - Long Term Suspension of more than 10 days but less than 90 days (consecutive or cumulative)**

The purpose of the hearing with the Principal shall be to hear and consider information regarding the alleged incident for which the student may be suspended, provide the student an opportunity

to dispute the charges and explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the disciplinary offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.

At a minimum, in addition to the rights afforded a student in a short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights: In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the Principal may rely in making a determination to suspend the student or not; 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 produce witnesses on his or her behalf and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, although the student may not be compelled to do so; 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. If the student or parent requests an audio recording, the Principal shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio recording will be made and a copy provided to the student and parent upon request.

The Principal shall provide the parent, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the Principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.

The Principal shall, based on the evidence, determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as required by law and regulation, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent 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.

If the Principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:

- Identify the disciplinary offense
- The date on which the hearing took place
- The participants at the hearing
- Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal
- Identify the length and effective date of the suspension, as well as a date of return to school
- Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive educational services to continue academic progress during the period of removal from school as required by law and regulation
- Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, but only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension
- Ensure a notice of the right to appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information:

- The process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days; and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

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

### **Superintendent's Hearing**

A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the Superintendent.

The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within the time period noted above (see Principal's hearing - Suspension of more than 10 days). If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal, or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.

The Superintendent shall hold the hearing within three (3) school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven (7) additional calendar days, in which case the Superintendent shall grant the extension.

The Superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The Superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if he or she has made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate.

The Superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the date, time, and location of the hearing.

The Superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and if so, what the consequence shall be. The Superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or parent upon request. The Superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request. The student shall have all the rights afforded the student at the Principal's hearing for long-term suspension.

The Superintendent shall issue a written decision within five (5) calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of law and regulation. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision. The decision of the Superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district with regard to the suspension.



## **Expulsion**

Expulsion is defined as the removal of a student from school for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently as allowed by law for possession of a dangerous weapon; possession of a controlled substance; assault on a member of the educational staff; or a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony, if a principal determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantial detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

Any student expelled from school for such an offense shall be afforded an opportunity to receive educational services and make academic progress.

## **Academic Progress**

Any student who is suspended or expelled shall have the opportunity to earn credits, 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. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing, in English and in the primary language of the home, when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.

Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.

The Principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the education services that the school district will make available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students under the law.

The Principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

For each student expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in-school or out-of-school, the school district shall document the student's enrollment in education services. For data reporting purposes, the school shall track and report attendance, academic progress, and such other data as directed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **Reporting**



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

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#); [71:37H](#) ½; [71:37H](#) ¾; [76:17](#); 603 CMR [53.00](#)

## **ADF - SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS PROGRAM**

### **2018-2019**

The School Committee recognizes the relationship between student well-being and student achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive district wellness program. Therefore, the school district will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and physical education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

#### ***Wellness Committee***

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent/guardian, student, nurse, school food service representative, School Committee member, school administrator, member of the public, Physical Education and Health Education teachers, Community partners and other community members as appropriate. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee. The school committee designates the following individual(s) as wellness program coordinator(s):

Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. Wellness coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy.

This committee shall:

- Follow by-laws that are aligned with Massachusetts Standards for School Wellness Advisory Committees;
- Annually review, and if required, recommend district-wide policies/revisions to promote student wellness;
- Annually set committee goals and objectives as part of an action plan;
- Annually report progress on committee goals, objectives, policies, monitoring and evaluation of Health and Wellness Policy implementation;
- Convene at least quarterly each school year;
- Provide oversight of the implementation of district-level policies related to wellness;

- Annually review district policies related to wellness and if applicable, apply strategies to implement these policies;
- Assist in assessment of the schools' wellness status including the exact timeline and process for completing the selected assessments including the following surveys and audits to assess the district's wellness status:
  - o Monthly Quality Assurance Inspections for Food Safety
  - o Annual City Inspections
  - o School Health Index Profiles from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention
  - o District data such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and/or Communities that Care Survey
  - o Other district identified priorities;
- Create and implement a Health and Wellness Action Plan each year including timelines, processes, goals and school-based activities designed to promote student and staff wellness based on the results of the district's annual assessments;

### Cultural Proficiency

The District Wellness Committee shall provide guidance to the district administration on the examination of school learning environments and organizational traditions to identify inclusive practices and opportunities that celebrate diverse cultures and identities. This includes the physical environment, the academic environment, classroom curriculum and promotional materials. Cultural proficiency includes guidelines regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disabilities and guidelines that promote family and student engagement. With regards to nutrition, cultural/religious based food restrictions (e.g. kosher, halal, vegetarian) will be accommodated.

### ***Nutrition Guidelines***

It is the policy of the school district that all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with School Lunch Program nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. The district will create procedures that address all foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- Guidelines for maximizing nutritional value by decreasing saturated fat, sugars, and additives increasing nutrition density and moderating portion size of each individual food or beverage sold within the school environment;
- Separate guidelines for foods and beverages in the following categories:
  1. foods and beverages included in a la carte sales in the food service program on school campuses;

2. foods and beverages sold in vending machines, snack bars, school stores, and concession stands;
3. foods and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and
4. refreshments served at parties, celebrations, and meetings during the school day; and
5. specify that its guidelines will be based on nutrition goals, not profit motives.

### ***Nutrition and Physical Education***

The school district will provide nutrition education aligned with standards established by the USDA's National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program in all grades. The school district will provide physical education training aligned with the standards established by the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education. The wellness program coordinators, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition and physical education.

### ***Nutrition Education***

Nashoba Regional School District supports lifelong healthy eating habits for all students, families and staff and is committed to addressing the increasing rates of diet-related health consequences for all members of the school community. The district shall promote healthy lifestyles and appropriate nutritional practices for all students. Components of this approach include:

- Reviewing and assessing the food available in school meals to ensure safety, quality, visual appeal, cultural proficiency and accessibility and ensuring that it is consistent with recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children in nutritional content;
- Identifying opportunities to teach healthy eating habits in health and physical education classes, as well as through cafeteria and other school-wide promotions;
- Identifying opportunities to provide support to all students around appropriate nutritional practices for meals and snacks;
- Identifying opportunities to support school staff and parents around modeling healthy eating habits including appropriate nutritional standards and encouraging non-food alternatives for school fundraisers, student rewards and reinforcement, school parties and classroom celebrations;
- Promoting health and nutrition messaging that encourages the consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, low-fat dairy products and water and other messages consistent with research-based findings that indicate positive impact on health; and
- Establishing policy guidelines for food and beverage sales within school environments that meet or exceed those required by federal, state and local laws and regulations.

### ***Physical Education Activities***

The Nashoba Regional School District is committed to a district-wide, strategic effort to increase all students' physical activity and fitness. The district strives to incorporate physical education and physical activity in schools, improve the quality of physical education and recess as well as increase the equity of physical activity programs and resources across schools.

Regularly engaging in moderate-to-vigorous exercise contributes to overall physical and mental health. Nurturing an exercise habit amongst children provides the foundation for lifelong fitness. Increased physical activity improves cognitive function, concentration and academic performance. Thus, as part of a strategic effort to improve academic performance, the district recognizes and promotes the benefits of a Comprehensive Physical Activity Program, where quality physical education is the cornerstone and additional physical activity is integrated throughout the school day and into before and after school programs.

All schools shall provide all students across all grades with opportunities for physical activity and standards-based physical education in accordance with Massachusetts Law MGL Chapter 71, [Section 3](#) which requires physical education and affords schools the authority to determine the hours of instruction for physical education. To that end, all schools shall offer in-school physical activity weekly in grades Pre-K through grade 8. Said activity shall include physical education, movement breaks, recess, lessons involving movement and before and after school activities. In grades Pre-K through grade 8, students shall have daily recess. In grades 9 through 12, students shall receive at least one semester of physical education per grade. Physical education activities shall be inclusive to meet the needs, interests, abilities and cultural diversity of all students, including students of all gender identities, students with disabilities and students with special health care needs.

Extended day programs and out of school time, which includes before and after school enrichment programs, shall offer an array of physical activity opportunities to ensure all students are able to participate.

The district is committed to a strong athletics program that offers a variety of athletic activities and is accessible to all students. Our athletic mission is to provide multiple educational athletic opportunities for students including intermural and interscholastic opportunities. Athletics participation contributes to student fitness, wellness, character development and a lifelong commitment to a physically active lifestyle. Additionally, by establishing a safe, supportive and engaging school environment, athletic programs encourage school connectedness and create a climate where healthy competition and support infuse the school with spirit and a sense of community. Research demonstrates that healthy children are better learners and connected students are more likely to stay in school.

### **Healthy Physical School Environment**

Nashoba Regional School District is committed to providing high-performing and safe school buildings. The physical environment standards include grounds that are clean and in good repair, buildings with adequate ventilation systems and the efficient use of resources that positively impact the health and wellness of all students.

Our collaboration with the Cities of Lancaster, Bolton and Stow shall ensure that all schools and departments comply with existing ordinances policies related to promoting and managing healthy school environments.

The District's Maintenance and Operations Department shall work with the following divisions in the City's Department of Public Works: Streets, Water, and Lands and Buildings as well as Inspectional Services relative to annual inspections. Additionally, the school department shall work in collaboration with the prospective Cities Fire and Health Departments for safety and health related inspections and guidance.

In order to further enhance school environments, the district utilizes Green Cleaners, Integrated Pest Management, Recycling, Infection Prevention and Control, Tobacco Free Environmental Policy and Laboratories and Chemical Inventories (Right to Know Law). A regular schedule of inspections for alarms, fire extinguishers and elevators shall be established and updated annually.

Schools shall regularly assess the quality and quantity of Nashoba Regional School District facilities for access to physical activity and physical education, including school yards. All maintenance needs for said facilities are to be reported to the NRSD Facilities Department.

#### Safe and Supportive Schools/Social and Emotional Climate

Nashoba Regional School District shall create a safe and supportive school environment for all students that is culturally proficient, engaging and inclusive. District and school-based support staff including guidance counselors and social workers shall work with school teams to provide tiered supports for students, families and staff including skill-based education to promote social and emotional learning, healthy relationships and access to support services.

NRSD shall provide supports to help all students' value healthy relationships and environments, possess the necessary knowledge and skills to use safe health practices and access resources and services to support their own health. Prevention and intervention-based work shall address and integrate social, emotional, behavioral and physical health, suicide prevention, safe inclusive climates for all students, violence prevention, sexual harassment and assault prevention, bullying prevention, school safety, substance use prevention and pregnant/parenting students education and supports. These efforts will afford all students equal access and create a safe and supportive learning environment that optimizes academic outcomes for all students. The district shall put in place systems to ensure that all students have access to resources and services that support health in a safe and supportive environment.

Schools shall implement evidence-based programs and/or curricula to equip all students with the skills, supports and services needed to address the multitude of challenges they face in our schools and community. Schools shall provide wrap-around systems of support including community linkages to promote positive behavioral health and reduce barriers to learning for optimal academic success for all students, based on tiered interventions and data to determine effectiveness. In addition, schools shall follow the code of conduct and related policies relative to safe and supportive learning environments. Schools shall also promote healthy relationships and follow policies related to the prevention of bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and assault.

#### ***Other School-Based Activities***

Nashoba Regional School District values family partnerships and encourages parents/guardians to actively participate in all aspects of their child's learning. All schools shall strive to:

- Invite families to participate in decision making and goal setting for their child;
- Engage families in two-way communication; that are truly reciprocal
- Provide learning activities for the home, school and in the community;
- Invite families to participate in program-level decisions and wider advocacy efforts; and
- Implement a system to support family engagement.

### ***Evaluation***

The Nashoba Regional School District Health and Wellness Committee, in collaboration with appropriate district departments, shall provide oversight of schools, including after school programs, to support policy compliance. Specific components of the policy shall be monitored, evaluated and supported by the district departments that currently oversee the various aspects of the plan. The District Health and Wellness Committee will develop an evaluation plan to further measure compliance including providing avenues for feedback from the school community.

The District Wellness Committee on an annual basis shall provide to the Superintendent, School Committee and the public a copy of an annual report that includes a summary of proposed action steps from the previous year, progress toward the previous year, action steps, identification of work still needed to be done as well as goals and objectives for the coming year. Wellness Action Plans and the associated assessment will be made public.

LEGAL REFS.: The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004,

Section 204, PL. 108 -265

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751 - 1769h

The Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 U.S.C. 1771 - 1789

CROSS REFS.: [EFC](#), Free and Reduced-Cost Food Services

[IHAMA](#), Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs

[KI](#), Public Solicitations/Advertising in District Facilities

### **[EEAA - BUS TRANSPORTATION](#)**

Bus transportation is provided as a service in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 16C for the core instruction day. Routes are established each summer by the regional school district prior to the start of the school year based on location of residences and efficient utilization of seats on the vehicles. An attempt shall be made to equalize the time children spend on the bus as far as is practical. Bus stops shall be established to ensure the safe



entrance and exit from the buses while providing reasonable safe walking distances to the domicile for the students.

Bus assignments may be changed, at the discretion of the Superintendent to accommodate arrangements parents or guardians make, provided such accommodations are within a school's attendance boundaries, within existing bus routes, and are detailed in a written request from the parent or guardian. No changes in routing shall be granted to accommodate non-district after-school activities or recreational programs.

Transportation of school choice students shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian. The Superintendent may allow choice students to ride the bus if space is available and may charge a fee for that service.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. [71. Section 16C](#)

### **IMD - SCHOOL CEREMONIES AND OBSERVANCES**

The United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Massachusetts and related court rulings clearly establish the concept of "church and state separation" and the "preclusion of sectarian instruction in public schools."

In order to help staff members abide by the spirit and letter of the law, and to avoid compromising any student's religious or conscientious beliefs or freedoms, the following guidelines have been established:

The observance of religious holidays is not the responsibility of the public schools.

While it is recognized that many activities are initiated with the approach of major holidays in order to capitalize on the readiness and interest that is generated at these times, it should be understood that such occasions frequently have religious underpinnings. Care should be taken to relate only to secular aspects of these holidays.

Music programs given at times close to religious holidays should not use religious aspect of these holidays as the underlying motive or theme. Although religious music is appropriate in the schools to the extent that it is sung or presented for musical rather than religious content, its use should not violate the secular nature of the school. Pageants, plays, recitals, and other literary or dramatic activities should not be used to convey religious messages. While the holidays represent a valid source of ideas for meaningful school art experiences, teachers should avoid assigning or encouraging art work that promotes religious aspects of such holidays. If, however, individual students choose to use a religious personage, event, or symbol as the vehicle for an artistic expression, they should be allowed to take this action.

The above statements should not be interpreted to preclude the factual and objective teaching about religions, religious holidays, and religious differences. Such instruction will be permitted in the schools since insights in this area can enhance the mutual understanding needed by all the people in a pluralistic society.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR [26:05](#)